

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

# WE SPEAK



## NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2021

THEME:

*"GROWING TOGETHER MAKING A DIFFERENCE."  
"THEREFORE ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER AND BUILD ONE ANOTHER UP, JUST AS YOU"  
1 Thessalonians 5:11*



**COME ALIVE**  
Anointed Leaders Intentionally Validating Excellence  
**VIRTUAL EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING**

**3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup>**  
**DECEMBER**  
**2021**

**Featured Presenters:**

**SARAH C. BUTLER**

Director of Advising & Career Enrichment Services (ACES)  
The Johnson College of Business and Economics

**REV. DR. JULIUS H. MCALLISTER, JR.**

Senior Pastor of Bethel A.M.E. Church, Tallahassee, Florida



**BISHOP STANFFORD WICKER**  
CLO COMMISSION CHAIR

**MATIKANE A. MAKITI**  
CLO PRESIDENT

**JAMESHA WILLIAMS**  
CLO YOUNG ADULT REPRESENTATIVE

[HTTPS://AMECLAY.ORG/](https://ameclay.org/)

**PATRICIA WRIGHT**  
CLO DIRECTOR OF LAY ACTIVITIES

**DIANNE H. BATTLE**  
CLO DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

**f LAYORGANIZATION**

*"Laitly walking Humbly with God, To do Justice and to love kindness."*

**MICAH 6:8**

**AN OFFICIAL PUBLICATION  
OF THE CONNECTIONAL  
LAY ORGANIZATION**

*AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH*

**THE CONNECTIONAL  
LAY OFFICERS**

**Lay Commission Chair  
Bishop Stafford J. N. Wicker (8)**

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*1st Vice President*

**Dr. Dorothy L. Henderson (12)**

*2nd Vice President*

**Simon R Letsoko (19)**

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**Charlie Nichols (11)**

*Historiographer*

**William E. Ayers, Jr. (2)**

*Director of Lay Activities*

**Patricia Wright (11)**

*Director of Public Relations*

**Dianne H. Battle (9)**

*Young Adult Representative*

**Jamesha Williams (7)**

**The Connectional  
Director of Public Relations**

**Mrs. Dianne H. Battle  
3947 County Road 19  
Greensboro, Alabama 36744  
clodopr16@gmail.com**

*Email Address: ameclayorg@gmail.com*

*Website: ameclay.org*

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**ADVISORS**

**Mrs. Bernella Knight Rose - 9**

**Dr. Dorothy Henderson - 12**

**Mr. James C. Bonner, Jr. - 9**

***Graphics, Design/Layout Artists***

**Ms. Martinique Mix - 6**

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***Database Assistants***

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**Ms. Anna Vengesayi - 20**

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## LAY COMMISSION CHAIR

### Bishop Stafford J. N. Wicker

#### Greetings!

At this season of Advent, I am happy to greet you and to serve as your Commission Chair. As we look with great anticipation to the celebration of Jesus' birth and the difference He makes in our lives as Christians, I also anticipate our working together indeed to make a difference in the life of this Lay Ministry and our AME Church.

The Lay Organization is special to me; it is a ministry! I attribute my service in the gospel ministry and in leadership to the lay people of our church connection. It has been lay people who showed me the Church; lay people who supported and encouraged me from my childhood, from my call and continuation as a pastor, and from my campaign and election as a Bishop in the AME Church. I am grateful that your leadership saw me as the Commission Chair for such a time as this.

You saw me as Commission Chair, and I saw you as the people who have undergirded me in my quests and work all of my life. The Lay Organization is one of the main teaching ministries of our Zion. In fact, the spiritual mandate of the AME Church is to implement a most powerful and effective ministry of equipping God's disciples for growth in the knowledge of Christ and in Kingdom-building. As we seek to teach and train lay people to love the AME Church and spread the gospel of this faith, we must work together and act on this faith.

The theme, "Growing Together Making a Difference," is quite fitting. The challenging work to make it come alive in our time, I believe, should be a fourfold ministry: Help, Embrace, Enhance, Encourage. Your remaining true to the tradition of "strong lay" will require an intentional look at the diversity of world problems through new lenses and your seeking God's guidance in solving many of the problems.

As believers, each of us is part of something greater than ourselves: our global, our cultural, and our faith communities. Our calling is to grow together, making a difference in each community.

Yours in His Service,

**Bishop Stafford J.N. Wicker**  
**Presiding Prelate**  
**Eighth Episcopal District**





## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT – “WE SPEAK”

My Brothers and Sisters ----- Allow me to greet you once again in the matchless name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus, the Christ. My hope and prayer are that this December 2021 edition of the “We Speak” Magazine finds you and your families healthy, safe, and managing to the best of your ability under these extraordinary circumstances for all of us.

In the previous edition of the “We Speak”, I alluded to the new CLO Vision that was unveiled during the August 2021 Executive Board, which is aimed at guiding and directing the CLO for the next coming four (4) years. Most importantly, the CLO Vision is premised on the overall mission and vision of the Lay Organization which is to provide greater leadership opportunities for the lay members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. I am therefore pleased that the December 2021 edition has incorporated a summary of the vision to allow all members in the connection to acclimatize themselves with the contents thereof. Please read the next pages 6-7 on the CLO Vision.

The past three (3) months have been the busiest for the CLO elected officers and Chairpersons of the various Committees. Soon after the Vision was unveiled, the President embarked on a series of one-on-one meetings with all elected Officers and the appointed Committee Chairpersons to chart the way forward in bringing the Vision “To life.” I therefore would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to the exceptional work done by the elected Officers and the Committees ---your wonderful work did not go unnoticed. The spirit of teamwork and collaboration that you display is in line with the ethos as captured in the vision and makes us a formidable team. I am grateful o God for all your work.

To all the laypersons across the connection, the “We Speak” Magazine is our flagship publication. Since its inception, we had witnessed its growth both in terms of numbers and the substance of the content of articles featured. I am requesting that members to continue to use this communication platform to learn and share vital information from all the Episcopal Districts, by continuing to send articles and relevant material that will enhance and grow the Lay Organization.

Our Historical Journal is still up for sale ---- a lot of effort went into the development and production of this publication, and my humble request is for the Episcopal Districts and our members at large to support this great initiative by ordering copies online.

On behalf of the Connectional Lay Organization, I thank you for being part of the illustrious organization. I take this moment to wish you and your loved one a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

Please take care of yourselves and your loved ones during this trying period and where possible, please get vaccinated and continue to play your part in slowing down the spread of COVID- 19.

Ebenezer and God bless!!!

Your Servant Leader

Matikane Abe Makiti  
President:: Connectional Lay Organization



### OFFICERS

*Lay Commission Chair*  
Bishop  
Stafford J.N. Wicker

*President*  
Matikane Abednego  
Makiti

*1st Vice President*  
Dr. Dorothy L. Henderson

*2nd Vice President*  
Simon R Letsoko

*3rd Vice President*  
Lovie Aaron

*Recording Secretary*  
Monique Hudson Green

*Asst. Recording Secretary*  
Edna Watson

*Corresponding Secretary*  
Cheryl Hammond  
Hopewell

*Treasurer*  
Kathy Drayton

*Financial Secretary*  
Lyndia M. Mayo, I

*Chaplain*  
Charlie Nichols

*Historiographer*  
William E. Ayers, Jr.

*Director of Lay Activities*  
Patricia Wright

*Director of Public Relations*  
Dianne H. Battle

*Young Adult Representative*  
Jamesha Williams

## THE CONNECTIONAL LAY ORGANIZATION (CLO) VISION FOR THE NEXT FOUR – YEARS UNVEILED

At the August 2021 Executive Board meeting of the Connectional Lay Organization (CLO), President Makiti moved expeditiously to unveil the Vision for the Connectional Lay Organization. The Vision will guide and direct the CLO for the next coming four (4) years and is premised on the overall mission and vision of the Lay Organization which is to provide greater leadership opportunities for the lay members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

In his opening statement, Makiti emphasized that the CLO should strive to meet the needs and aspirations of the Church's lay persons and those of other auxiliaries because they are the CLO's most important stakeholders. He further encouraged the Connectional Lay Organization Executive Board members ---- and by extension, their constituent members in the entire connection to have greater passion and enthusiasm for the Lay ministry and always embrace, express, live and emulate the values of Servant Leadership as were espoused by Jesus Christ, when transacting in God's business and ensure that all decisions taken are in the interest of advancing the mission of the Lay Organization --- which is to prepare our laypersons for greater leadership roles.

Regarding the new theme slogan for the coming tenure, President Makiti assigned the capable Director of Lay Activities, Sis Patricia Wright to coordinate the process, which he said should be biblically premised and include all the scriptural references. A competition will be undertaken to encourage members of the Lay Organization to participate in the formulation of the slogan that should contain key elements of unity and excellence. The competition will be spearheaded by the Director of Public Relations, Sis Dianne Battle and will be publicized in all the AME Church and CLO communication platforms.

The much-anticipated Vision for the CLO for the period 2021 – 2025 prioritized teaching and training. Makiti said that the CLO needed to continue to embark on programs that ensures that teaching and training remains the core of the CLO business and that in doing that, the CLO embraces unity, collaboration with other Auxiliaries to achieve personal and professional development of members in a caring and prayerful manner. He emphasized that all this would be achieved if the Lay Organization go “back – to – basics” and introduce empowerment programs that will resonate with our constituencies. “We will be introducing Masterclasses, Lectures on Leadership development, embark on Mentorship Academy and Exchange Programs amongst Episcopal Districts” said Makiti.

Makiti further affirmed that he envisions the Connectional Lay Organization that is spiritually, biblically – based and anchored in prayer – a Lay Organization that could be a home where both new and old members can grow spiritually through programs that fulfils, nurtures and ministers to the spiritual needs of our constituent members.

As a connectional organization, Makiti encouraged members to embrace global inclusion and participation, constantly learning from each other, embracing diversity, valuing and respecting the rights and views of all members regardless of where they originate – because “all voices matter”. He further implored members to continue to provide support to Episcopal District 14- 20 and empower them through “Twinning Agreements” to allow for cross - pollination of teaching, training and empowerment, but also to look out for each other from a social action perspective.

Openness in communication is one of President Makiti's passion – he therefore urged the CLO to communicate and listen to the members needs and requirements, whilst at the same time ensuring that members are well - informed and that communication is timely, relevant and professional. This; he stated that that it will be done in a cohesive and collaborative manner to safeguard the integrity and brand image of the organization, leveraging technology using both traditional and social media to profile and market and publicize the Lay Organization and its work. The CLO communication platforms will continue to serve as our communication resource tools, while embracing and enhancing the uptake of technology as a means of business communication and help bridge the digital divide amongst the Episcopal Districts.

From the stakeholder perspective, President Makiti emphasized the need for the CLO to have sound and cordial relationships with the clergy. These congealed relationships will extend to the other auxiliaries in the church to determine their training needs and embark on joint programs and share training resources. As the Head of the Lay Organization, he (or his designee) therefore assumes a position of being the face and Chief spokesperson for the Lay Organization in all matters related to stakeholder engagements both within and outside of the church.

President Makiti however, raised concerns around the dwindling membership numbers in all Episcopal districts. He advised the CLO to carefully evaluate its efforts in the past years and identify the most effective tools to reach the many members as possible. He further advised the CLO to refine its recruitment and retention strategy and use research to determine why membership is not growing.

Regarding the CLO resources, President Makiti reiterated his commitment to maintain healthy financial management and long-term fiscal health. Important to mention was the fact that the 2021 Biennial Session ended in the green, with the CLO using some of the income to pay up the debt incurred from the 2019 Biennial Session with the Church's Treasury. He urged the CLO to look at other income generating streams such as corporate funding and sponsorships to ensure that the CLO's finances are always in a healthy state.

For an effective administration, President Makiti emphasized the need for collaboration to utilize the resources better and effectively, as well as streamlining processes and function to promote unity, peace and collaboration, to avoid unnecessary duplication of functions.

For agility and future sustenance of the CLO, President Makiti emphasized the need to provide an opportunity to young adults to develop relevant and pointed programs aimed at growing their participation in the Organization. He also mentioned the importance of preserving the CLO history and nurturing the heritage and tradition of the CLO as the luminous, glorious and inspiring Organization.

"All of the above will not come alive if the CLO does not have an implementable and sound strategy that is realistic and can be measured. Our focus and priority in this tenure, will be on performance assessment by the 2nd Vice President and the Organizational Effectiveness Committee and report back to the President and the Executive Board," said Makiti.

Over and above, he indicated that he has identified some projects, which will be done under the auspices of the President's Special Projects, which he declared will be to the benefit of the Organization

He concluded by thanking God for allowing him to serve again and thanked the bishops who supported and prayed for him during his journey. He also thanked the Executive Board and members who continue to support him as he leads the Connectional Lay Organization to a higher trajectory by quoting from 1 Samuel 7:12.

Submitted by:  
Lebo Lesito  
PA - CLO President



## CLO-DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC RELATIONS DIANNE H. BATTLE

“GROWING TOGETHER MAKING A DIFFERENCE”

Greetings,

I greet you in the joy of Jesus,

The success of the ministry of the PR Team depends largely on developing a strong team with a deep sense of team spirit. I've witnessed the incredible power of a unified team to create growth. A team spirit is never accidental; it is always intentional. Teamwork is built with many factors: A compelling purpose, crystal clear communication, and a code of commonly held values. In the Connectional Lay Organization, we express teaching and training. Therefore, a team must be in place to accomplish this cycle. I am excited to announce the Teamwork of the PR'S from districts 1-20 for their hard work in the production of the “December 2021 We Speak Edition.” Together we formed a team, and as a result, we have compiled the information received in an effort to create,

### T.E.A.M.W.O.R.K.:

**Trust** among our team is the emotional glue that binds us together; it's essential to producing true confidence with each other. Consistency is a factor. People will trust you if, time after time, they see you responding in a consistent and reasonable manner. You also need to be readable, in the sense that they need to know where you are coming from in your decisions and responses.

**Loyalty** of our team is also important. When we are criticized and then later together we check the facts later in private, always assuming the best until there is concrete evidence to the contrary.

**Delegation** among team members allows them to make decisions, with this you're essentially telling them: “I trust you!” People trust leaders who trust them. I trust the PR team members that surrounds me. Even a thoroughbred horse can't run at a full gait all the time. When you allow people to work at different energy levels they will work energetic. In the long term, slow and steady always outlasts the fast and furious. Allow flexibility in schedules when possible. Make the work fun! We have had fun in receiving your articles and enhancing them to become a part of the publication.

**Affirmation** shows everybody need affirmation. It's amazing how a smile and a simple word of encouragement can change a team member's entire day. I have tried to implement ways to affirm our team by valuing their ideas, appreciating their uniqueness, commending their efforts, and praising their loyalty.

**Management of Mistakes:** The Bible teaches: “Even though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again.” (Proverbs 24:16, NIV) This Scripture points out that even righteous people make mistakes and stumble occasionally. Mistakes are not failures, mistakes are significant ways to grow and is indeed in line with our December Theme. Please remember when you flip through the pages of this publication and you see a mistake know that we are **“Growing Together Making a Difference.”**

I am excited, and count it all joy for this high honor to work with, Bishop Wicker, President Makiti, DOLA Wright, the CLO Executive Board Members, PR'S, and Advisors. Truly Teamwork gets the job done. “Together We Have Done This!”

Dianne H. Battle  
CLO-Director of Public Relations







## CLO-DIRECTOR OF LAY ACTIVITIES PATRICIA H. WRIGHT

### From Your Director of Lay Activities' Pen...

We are gearing up for our Winter Executive Board meeting which is scheduled virtually for December 3-4, 2021. You won't want to miss this inspirational, informative virtual experience!

Please plan now to attend the Executive Board meeting which will include the President's vision, the work of the officers that has already begun, reports from committees and the newly proposed quadrennial theme, as well as the opportunity to participate in a learning lab that will center around anointed leadership. The theme of the executive board is "Come ALIVE -- Anointed Leaders Intentionally Validating Excellence."

It is both reassuring and exciting to know of all the opportunities for training that are available across our Connectional Church. I get invitations to and notifications of the many learning labs with which you are engaged. Though I cannot attend them all, I find myself going to your websites or social media sites to watch the available recorded versions. What I have seen so far speaks to a high level of planning and preparation on the part of your leadership. Bravo to each of you!

I have been able to meet with the Episcopal Directors of Lay Activities and we have begun a plan to tackle the scope of the work that is before us. As we review and restructure committees such as Scholarship, Lay Person and Young Adult of the Biennial, Banquet, and Study Guide, I invite you to bring your skills, experience and sense of volunteerism to the table. Reach out to your Episcopal Director or when they reach out to you and ask you to step up, PLEASE do not hesitate. Together we will elevate teaching and the activities of the Lay Organization to an even greater level.

I am grateful for the work of the Directors who have preceded me. Ametta Reaves, Edith Bartley-Cartledge, Florence Warren, Ethel M. Wallace-Jenkins, and the many who have gone before, it is upon your shoulders and the established framework you have laid that I mount the next rung of the ladder to excellence.

**COME ALIVE**  
Anointed Leaders Intentionally Validating Excellence  
**VIRTUAL EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING**



**THE CONNECTIONAL LAY ORGANIZATION  
WINTER EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING**



**December 3-4, 2021**

**Begin at 10:30 A.M. EST (7:30 A.M. Pacific, 9:30 A.M. Central, and 4:30 P.M. SAST)**

**THE AGENDA**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Speaker/Officer</b>	<b>Time frame</b>
Call to Order	President Matikane A. Makiti	10:30 EST
Devotion	Chaplain Charlie Nichols	15 minutes
Roll Call of Officers/EBoard Members	Secretary Monique Green	
Approval of Agenda	President Matikane A. Makiti	
Approval of Minutes	President Matikane A. Makiti	
<b>The Greetings</b>		
Greetings from Commission Chair	Bishop Stafford J. N. Wicker	
Women in Ministry	Reverend Dr. Erika D. Crawford	
Women’s Missionary Society	Dr. Deborah Taylor King	
Sons of Allen	Mr. Monroe Miller	

**COME ALIVE**  
Anointed Leaders Intentionally Validating Excellence  
**VIRTUAL EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING**



**Friday - December 3, 2021**

# The Work

**Begin at 10:30 A.M. EST (7:30 A.M. Pacific, 9:30 A.M. Central, and 4:30 P.M. SAST)**

Action	Speaker/Officer	Time frame
<b>Officers' Reports</b>		
Presidential Report	President Makiti	
Director of Lay Activities	P. H. Wright	25 minutes
CLO First Vice President	Dr. Dorothy Henderson	10 minutes
CLO Second Vice President	Simon Letsoko	10 minutes
CLO Third Vice President	Lovie Aaron	10 minutes
Corresponding Secretary	Cheryl Hammond Hopewell	5 minutes
Treasurer	Kathy Drayton	5-10 minutes
Financial Secretary	Lyndia Mayo	5 minutes
Historiographer	William 'Bill' Ayers	5 minutes
Director of Public Relations	Dianne H. Battle	5 minutes
Young Adult Representative	Jamesha Williams	5 minutes
<b>Wellness Break 'KYC Check'</b>		15 minutes
<b>Committee Reports</b> CLO First VP Dr. Henderson - Presiding		
Budget and Finance	Cynthia Gordon Floyd	10 minutes
Organizational & Officers Effectiveness	Keith Britton	5 minutes
AMEV –Alert	Jackie Dupont Walker	5 minutes
Legislation	Mark Johnson	5 minutes
Constitution and Bylaws	Libertha Mutambo	5 minutes



District	President	Time frame
<b>Episcopal Districts Presidents' Reports</b>		
<b>CLO Second VP Letsoko- Presiding</b>		
2	Matthew Douglas	5 minutes
4	Jerry Turner	5 minutes
6	Alfreda Brooks	5 minutes
8	Patricia Campbell	5 minutes
10	Dr. Roderick Moore	5 minutes
<b>CLO Third VP Aaron - Presiding</b>		
12	Natalie Horton	5 minutes
14	Garfield E. Mason	5 minutes
16	Shirlane Hendrickson Thomas	5 minutes
18	Phillip Thage	5 minutes
20	Qedindaba Khumalo	5 minutes

## The Worship

*After hearing the reports of the work, let's end Day 1 with a moment of praise ....*

**Laymen's Song #582**

**Prayer**

President Jerry Turner

**Scripture** (Luke 4:18-19 NIV)

President Bernella Knight Rose

**Musical Selection**

**Responsive Reading/Litany**

President Keith Britton & President Alfreda Brooks

**Presentation of the Commission Chair**

President Patricia Campbell

**Special Centering Message**

Bishop Stafford J. N, Wicker

**Remarks**

President Matikane A. Makiti

## Saturday - December 4, 2021

**Start time:** 10:30 A.M. EST (7:30 A.M. Pacific, 9:30 A.M. Central, and 4:30 P.M. SAST)

### The Witness

Action	Speaker/Presenter	Time frame
Call to Order	President Matikane A. Makiti	10:30 EST
Devotion	Chaplain Charlie Nichols	5 minutes
<b>Morning Glory</b>	The Reverend Lucinda Burgess <i>16th Episcopal District</i>	20 minutes
Welcome and Overview of Day	DOLA P. H. Wright	5 minutes
<b>LEARNING LABS (SIMULTANEOUSLY)</b>		75 minutes
<b>Anointed Leadership</b>	<b>The Reverend Dr. Julius McAllister, Jr.</b>	
<b>Growing Leadership Team Building</b> <i>(Breakout session for E-Board)</i>	<b>Ms. Sarah C. Butler</b>	
Brain Break - <b>Wellness Moment</b>	Team DOLAs	15 minutes
Think Pair Share - Reactions of the Day	YAR Jamesha Williams	30 minutes
CLEDC Report	Derek Anderson	15 minutes
Closing Remarks	President Matikane A. Makiti	
<b>Lay Benediction</b>		

Planning Ahead ...

Spring Executive Board Meeting April 8-9, 2022

New Orleans





## First Vice President Dr. Dorothy Henderson, Ph.D.

### Greetings In the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ:

We thank Almighty God for the opportunity to serve as the Connectional Lay Organization First Vice President.

The Cooperative spirit of the Episcopal District Lay Presidents, Episcopal District Lay First Vice Presidents, Conference Lay First Vice Presidents, Local Lay First Vice Presidents, all other Laity and Clergy throughout the Global Church creates a positive atmosphere for Membership Recruitment and Retention from District 1-20.

With God's help, we have communicated with each Episcopal District requesting an updated Membership Database which is an ongoing process. We thank God for those District who have submitted their Database and for those who are still working on their Database.

President Matikane Abednego Makiti's VISION FOR THE CONNECTIONAL LAY ORGANIZATION FOR THE PERIOD 2021 – 2025 as it relates the First Vice President Position- is in Item number five (5) as listed below:

#### **Develop a Solid Ministry and Membership Growth**

5. A solid ministry and Membership Growth – Our CLO membership numbers from District 1 - 20 are not growing. We will not be able to determine the number of members that we have and hope to attract, unless we implement and work on more effective strategies that increase our membership.

This means that we need to carefully evaluate the efforts of the past years to identify and determine the most effective tools to reach out to as many people as possible and how to galvanize resources for the kingdom building.

Working with the Office of the 1st Vice President, the CLO should work on refining the Membership Growth and Recruitment Manual/Guide to assist Episcopal Districts to continue to embark on programs that will guarantee growth and agility of the Connectional Lay Organization. Of utmost importance is the need for the CLO to grow and strengthen our footprints in all Districts, 1-20.

#### **The Membership Recruitment and Retention Strategy Plan**

Through the office of the First Vice President, Membership Recruitment, and Retention Strategies will be developed. The office will continue a collaborative working relationship with the office of the Director of Public Relations. The First Vice Presidents Team will spearhead a drive to find ways to grow the Lay Organization in all Districts and especially assist our brethren in Africa and the Caribbean.

Continue Developing Surveys and Strategies to address issues raised from the results of those surveys.

**Committee Volunteers Needed:  
Select Your Committee and email  
[DorothyLHenderson@att.net](mailto:DorothyLHenderson@att.net)**

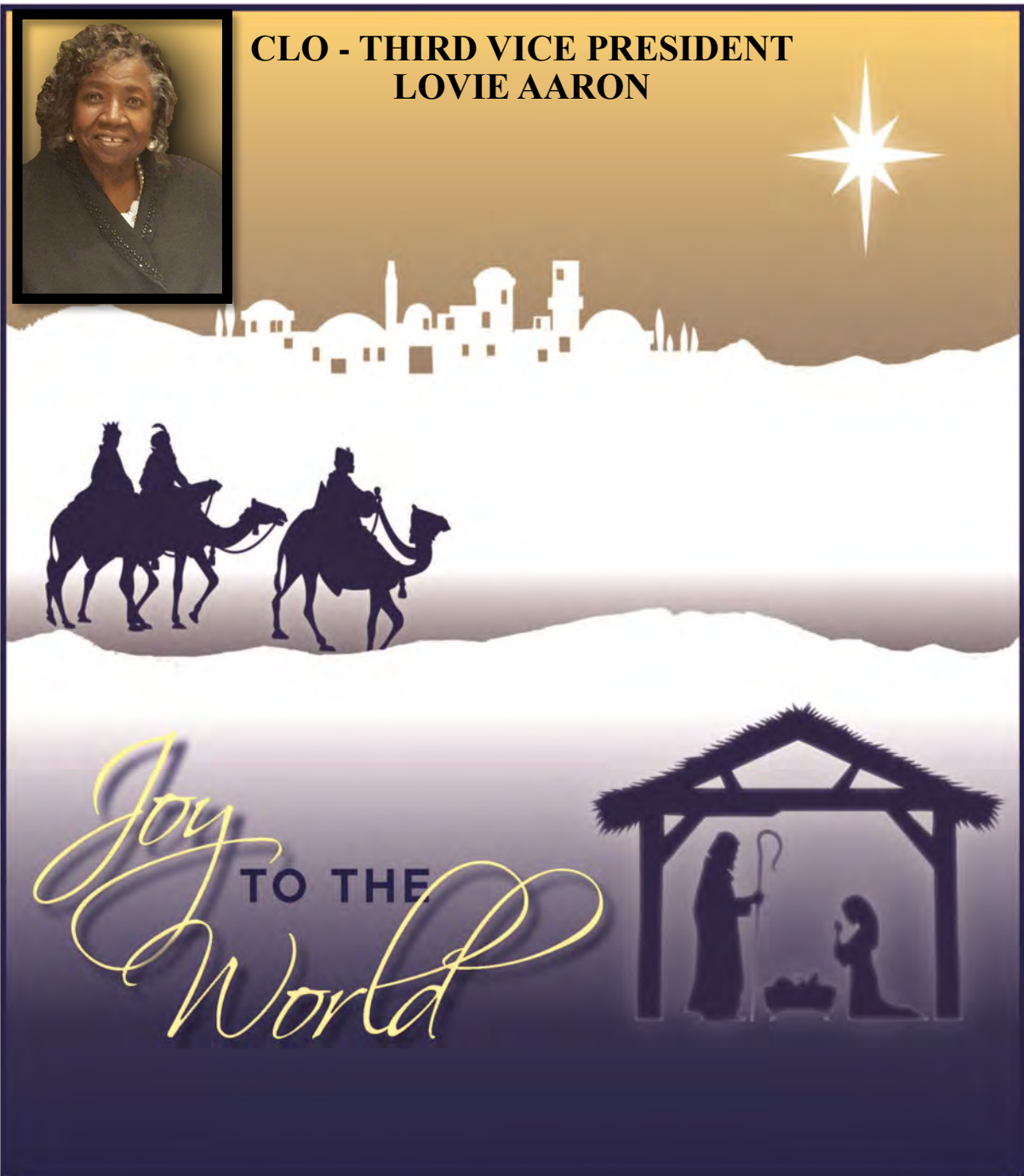
**To: Episcopal District Lay First Vice Presidents, Conference Lay Organization First Vice Presidents, Presiding Elder District Lay Organization First Vice President, Local Lay Organization First Vice Presidents.**

1. A work group to assist with the development of a Lay Organization Membership Training Guide/ Manual on Recruitment, Retention and Reclaiming strategy for the organization on all levels of the Lay Organization.
2. A work group to initiate and assist in developing a Motivational Lay Membership Drive Newsletter.
3. A work group to develop an attractive and inviting tool for the CLO website in an effort to Recruit new Lay Members.
4. A work group to establish the best date and time for the Global Lay Membership Recruitment Day of Explosion!!
5. A work group to develop Membership Recruitment Training Workshops for 1st Vice Presidents on all levels and schedule the best date and time for the Global Training.
6. A work group to develop a Survey Form relating Membership Recruitment to include survey questions and timeframe for submitting and returning the form as well as audience the form will be sent and posting the form on the CLO Website.
7. A work group to glean Success Stories and What motivated the individual to join the lay organization.
8. A work group who will collaborate with other component heads in an effort to develop partnerships.





**CLO - THIRD VICE PRESIDENT  
LOVIE AARON**



*Joy* TO THE  
*World*

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

— Luke 2:8-14 (KJV)



Thank You!

I greet you in the Matchless Name of Jesus Chris.

To those of you globally that participated in a Lay Witness Service, you are to be commended.

Let us remember, A lay witness is an ordinary person who testifies based upon their personal knowledge and life experiences.

**CONNECTIONAL LAY ORGANIZATION**  
OF THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

**AME CHURCH LAY ORGANIZATION**

**FAITH, HOPE  
AND CHARITY**  
**THEY MAKE ALL THINGS WORK**

*1 Corinthians 13:1-13*

**LAY WITNESS**  
*Sunday*  
**OCTOBER 10, 2021**

**BISHOP STAFFORD J. N. WICKER, COMMISSION CHAIR**  
**MR. MATIKANE ABEDNEGO MAKITI, PRESIDENT**  
**MS. LOVIE AARON, 3RD VICE PRESIDENT**  
**MRS. PATRICIA H. WRIGHT, DIRECTOR OF LAY ACTIVITIES**  
**MS. JAMESHA J. WILLIAMS, YOUNG ADULT REPRESENTATIVE**



**CLO-CORRESPONDING SECRETARY  
CHERYL HAMMOND HOPEWELL**

**THE CORRESPONDING SECRETARY REPORTS:**

Congratulations to the newly elected 12th Episcopal District Lay President. We welcome you to the CLO Executive Board.

President Natalie Horton, 12th Episcopal District President

Happy Birthday to the following Elected Officers or Episcopal District Lay Presidents who have upcoming birthdays prior to the next edition on January 2022:

Mr. Caesar Kalenga, 17th Episcopal District President – December 8



**THE CLO-CORRESPONDING SECRETARY  
WISHES ALL OF YOU A  
WONDERFUL HOLIDAY SEASON  
AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR!**



## CLO - Treasurer Kathy Drayton

### A DROP IN THE BUCKET

The Connectional Lay Organization (CLO) of the African Methodist Episcopal Church has a legacy of providing financial support in times of disaster. Some of our outreach efforts include allocating funds to provide clean water in Michigan, rebuilding homes after hurricanes, and aiding those affected by extreme weather.

In that vein, during a meeting in September 2021, the Executive Board voted unanimously to donate \$10,000 to assist in rebuilding after a devastating earthquake struck Haiti on August 14, 2021. It was one of the deadliest earthquakes and natural disasters of 2021. Before recovery could begin, a hurricane brought further destruction to the area in September 2021, which added to the woes of the Haitian people.

Three African Methodist Episcopal churches were destroyed during the earthquake. By donating funds to help rebuild the churches, the CLO will provide a long-lasting impact. The AME Church Finance Department will channel donations to support greater relief efforts.

In addition to giving, the CLO will launch a campaign to receive matching funds to assist with the rebuilding effort. These additional funds will provide a more significant impact supporting our sisters' and brothers' efforts to rebuild Haiti. After the match to Haiti, any remaining donations will support the CLO disaster relief fund. As noted by 3rd District President Brogdon-Wyatt, "...every drop in the bucket helps." We will ask each of you and others for a 'drop.'

Even though the crisis in Haiti is no longer in the news cycle, there is much to be done, and we are committed to helping. We look forward to you joining in this work. Be on the watch for the rollout of the matching relief funds campaign. We can all make a difference.

Kathy Drayton, Treasurer  
Connectional Lay Organization

**COME ALIVE**  
Anointed Leaders Intentionally Validating Excellence  
**VIRTUAL EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING**



## CLO - HISTORIOGRAPHER WILLIAM AYERS, JR.

### Question 1: What is a historian?

Answer: An expert in or student of history, especially that of a particular period, geographical region, or social phenomenon.

### Question 2: What is the role (duties and responsibilities) of a Historiographer in the Connectional Lay Organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Church?

Answer: According to the latest version of the Connectional Lay Organization's (CLO) Constitution and Bylaws, and the 2016 edition of the Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church, the duties and responsibilities of the Historiographer is defined as follows:

- Gathering, assembling, and maintaining a written and pictorial record of the activities achievements of this organization;
- Acts as custodian for all photographs, citations, awards, trophies, and other mementos of the Connectional Lay Organization;
- Compiles a written Biennial history of this organization and submits it as a report to each Biennial Session, place a copy in the archives to be kept in the headquarters of the AME Church; and
- Archives, find a place to keep historical records.

The local and district lay organization Historiographer should follow the mandate as established in the Constitution and By-Laws of the Connectional Lay Organization in terms of duties, responsibilities and practice.

Each local church lay organization historiographer is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of their individual written records, pictures and other documents of a historical nature.

Likewise, each district lay organization historiographer is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of their individual written records, pictures and other documents of a historical nature.

#### **Changes in electronic storage of documents/written material/pictures**

Before the dawn of disk drives, thumb drives and other means of electronic storage, information of a historical nature was stored in books, folders, and binders. Some of this material was kept at various lay members' homes, at church libraries and other archival places. However, because there was no designated permanent space for archiving or storage, some Lay Organization information was lost or destroyed.

Since the usage of electronic medium, information gathering regarding the history of the Lay Organization at the local, district and Connectional levels can become readily assessable for presentation, sharing and storage (pictures/written material not artifacts).

We now have electronic devices to store our documents that take up less space than a half dollar. These devices can store up to over a decade of historical information. This can ease the work of the historiographer in terms of storage and retrieval of information. This retrieval ability can also ease the efforts of telling the local lay organization story or event. Now you use a thumb drive and a computer screen to share the materials you gathered. This process also allows you to update the presentation in the comfort of your home or church office.

Now, when the lay organization has an election and a new historiographer is elected, transferring the information is simply a thumb drive handoff or a cloud ID number, and new information/material is added thus keeping the history updated, relevant and accurate.

**Question 3: What resources/tools are available to help the Historiographer get the word out?**

- Answer:
- Facebook page (local, conference, and district churches and the CLO);
  - **“We Speak”** (submit to have an article placed in the publication and viewed);
  - **The Christian Recorder** (submit to have an article placed in the publication or prepare an article - available to lay organizations at all levels);
  - Public Relations Officers at various levels;
  - Correspondence Secretaries at various levels; and
  - Various District Websites/Newsletters (at the local, conference, district, and connectional levels - see what others are doing in terms of creativity in getting the word out - including the use of our Google drive CLOUD storage).

**Acquisition of Material**

Because of modern methods of storing and preserving information, local lay organizations can receive pictures/material/written information along with disseminating information at local lay meetings. Newly acquired material from various sources can be photographed, digitized, and stored on a thumb drive. The original can remain with the person sharing the information. When giving a presentation, retrieve it and share at local lay meetings, district meetings, church newsletters/newspapers, and local newspapers or with the CLO newsletter or flipping book “We Speak” and the AME Christian Recorder. Another great technical source that we will explore is housing/placing information in our Google drive CLOUD storage. Whatever method or choice, always give credit to the individual or source that shared the information/material with you. It is recorded as part of the history of your organization

**Question 4: What should be included in the history of the Local Lay Organization?**

- Answer:
- Basic information must be included in all presentations/records so that the material remains relevant to all audiences who read/view the presentation, and everyone comes away telling the same story/facts. This includes, dates, time, relevance to the lay organization, all pictures identified with correct spelling of individual names and places and the name of the president, chairperson, and event(s).

This should also include names of individuals in your lay organization who have served with distinction at the local, conference, district and connectional levels of the Organization and church. All significant achievements members of the Lay Organization have earned to en-

It is important to remember that a goal of the Lay Organization is to train and educate the organized lay and others. The Historiographer plays a major role in helping the Organization reach that goal through an accurate portrayal of the history of the group you represent.

### Question 5: What's New?

**Acquisition of new archival storage facility** - In 2017, the Connectional Lay Organization obtained storage space for housing/storing CLO papers, artifacts, written materials, pictures and other historical documents. The facility is properly climate controlled and is in Pine Bluff, AR. With your help and support, we will add to the collection from districts 1-20 AND placing information in the CLOUD for future generations to see our humble beginning to our present state as an outstanding and meaningful organization within the AME Church.

**Election of a new CLO Historiographer** - William "Bill" Ayers was elected at the 37<sup>th</sup> Lay Biennial. Bill has served as CLO Director of Public Relations, 1<sup>st</sup> vice-President of the Washington Conference Lay Organization and DOPR, and a former president of the Dr. Joseph C. McKinney Lay Organization at Ward Memorial AME Church in Washington, DC. He brings a wealth of knowledge in the areas of fundraising, administration, public relations, public speaking, music and marketing. More importantly, he brings the science of Historiography because of his service as the historiographer of the Dr. Joseph C. McKinney Lay Organization and having managed a staff of associates at the Library of Congress where he served as the the Director of Human Resources (Senior Executive Service).

### References/Sources

- 2016 Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church
- 2016 Edition of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Connectional Lay Organization
- 2016 1st Episcopal District's Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization/Churches History Power Point Presentation
- 2021 CLO 36th Biennial Election results (July 2021)
- 2021 CLO Executive Board Minutes
- 2021 Microsoft Bing Dictionary



### KNOW YOUR LAY LEADERS - (part one)



Pictured above are *four outstanding laypersons* of the Connectional Lay Organization (CLO). Each rose through the ranks to share their outstanding leadership skills within the AME Church and the Lay Organization. Because of their commitment, people skills, visionary acumen, love for God and His people, they were highly effective in their leadership roles within the Lay Organization and the AME Church. We acknowledge them and their significant contributions. We also thank them for their service to the CLO and the AME Church. Messrs. Joseph McKinney, Herbert Dudley and Jason David (JD) Williams are with the encampment of angels up above. Dr. Jayme Coleman Williams, who is 102 years young now resides in Atlanta, GA.

The late **Dr. Joseph Columbus McKinney**, a member of Ward Memorial AME Church in Washington, DC., was the second president of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Episcopal District Lay Organization. He, like the other leaders in the picture, made a significant difference in the Church of Allen because he cared and was a visionary. He became the Treasurer of the AME Church and also served as a consultant to a number of CLO presidents. The AME Church Finance Office located in downtown Washington DC, is named in his honor. Joe had a great sense of humor and was committed to the AME denomination.

**Dr. Jayme Coleman Williams**, a former member of St. John AME Church in Nashville, TN., was one of the outstanding presidents of the 13<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District Lay Organization. She was an ardent team player and when asked to run for the office of *Editor of the Christian Recorder*, she accepted and was elected as the first female General Officer in the AME denomination to hold that position. Dr. Williams made a tremendous difference as editor with a number of firsts. She helped elect the first female Bishop of the AME Church and helped “elevate” a number of other AME’s to higher office.

The late **Mr. Herbert Lawrence Dudley, Esquire**, a member of Ebenezer AME Church in Detroit, MI., was a sought after attorney by major people in high places and honored by then President of the USA, Lyndon B. Johnson. Attorney Dudley was one of the major players in organizing the Fourth Episcopal District Lay Organization and elected Chair of the organization. He later became President of the Connectional Lay Organization where he served first as President of the then Lay College and as President of the Connectional Lay Organization. Dudley served as a valued President because of his academic knowledge and background. He loved helping humankind at every level.

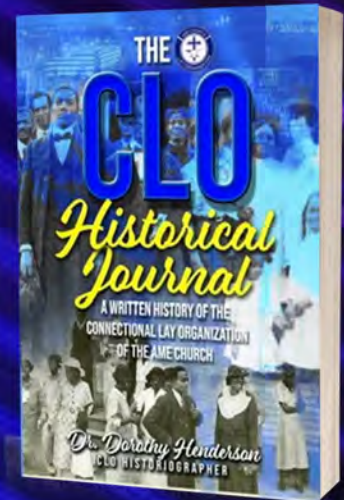
The late **Mr. Jason David ((JD) Williams**, a member of Bethel AME Church in Kansas City, MO., was the longest serving (over 21 consecutive years) out-spoken President of the Connectional Lay Organization. He believed that the organization should be self-sufficient and started the Connectional Lay Economic Development Corporation (CLEDC). He believed in surrounding himself with the brightest and best minds to support the programs and goals of the CLO and the AME Church. He was a champion for self-help and supported others in job training, financial acumen and furthering their educational pursuits at his church and in the community he served.



The Connectional Lay Organization of the A.M.E. Church presents:

# THE CLO

## *Historical Journal*



This invaluable historical Lay Journal highlights some of our major struggles and outstanding achievements. This book will also serve as an inspirational resource tool of our shared history and values to the AME Church denomination now and for generations to come.

Our Former CLO Historiographer, Dr. Dorothy Henderson of the 12th Episcopal District, lovingly compiled this Journal with the help, input and support of the Episcopal District Historiographers from all AME Church Districts.

**ON SALE NOW - HURRY TO GET YOUR COPY!**

Paperback \$30 plus \$5 shipping

**GO TO [WWW.AMECLAY.ORG](http://WWW.AMECLAY.ORG) TO ORDER TODAY**

The Connectional Lay Organization of the A.M.E. Church  
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# The Episcopal Districts



**FIRST EPISCOPAL DISTRICT  
CHERYL HAMMOND HOPEWELL - PRESIDENT**

**“GOOD NEWS FROM THE FIRST”  
Sister Sharon Carmichael**

In line with this CLO *We Speak* edition’s theme of “Growing Together, Making a Difference”, we are delighted to share some of the recent good news happening in the First District Lay conferences.

At the Delaware Conference Lay Organization Annual Meeting on November 6, fourteen officers were elected and installed. The election and installation were conducted by our First District Lay President, Mrs. Cheryl Hammond Hopewell. The Delaware Conference Presiding Elders Ellis B. Loudon and Richard H. Worthy, as well as several clergy were present in support of the laity.

President – Sharon Drew	Treasurer - Ronell Brown
First Vice President – Louise Hudson	Chaplain - Sandra Griffin
Second Vice President - Eyerce Armstrong-Poston	Director of Lay Activities - Terri Lynn Fisher
Recording Secretary - Doris Palmer	Director of Public Relations - Denise Hope
Assistant Recording Secretary - Delema Carter	Historiographer - Cecilia Sanders
Corresponding Secretary - Rosalynne Hart	Parliamentarian - Alice Mitchell
Financial Secretary - Katrina Smith	Young Adult Representative - Rogjena Fisher

Congratulations to the newly elected and installed officers:

In support of Delaware Conference Youth and Young Adults, Book Scholarship Awards were presented. Congratulations to the scholars!

Ayo J. Mandela – Howard University	Jessica C. Simmons – Hampton University
Justin Morgan – Delaware State University	Faith Skinner – University of Delaware
Maya Rochester – Kutztown University	

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The New England Conference Lay Organization and President Linda Gant celebrated their 50th Golden Anniversary on October 30. Presiding Elder Jocelyn Hart Lovelace delivered the inspiring message from Colossians 3:23-24, with the theme "From the Heart". The anniversary theme, “Worshipping Under the Sky; I Was There” indicated that the celebration was planned to be outside. However, due to inclement weather, Bethel AMEC, Bloomfield, CT (Rev. Daylan K. Greer Sr., Pastor) graciously allowed the program to be held inside. Praise God for their support!

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DE Conference Lay President Sharon Drew and President Cheryl Hammond Hopewell



Book Award Recipients



NE Conference Lay President Linda Gant (Right)



Front L to R: Mrs. Ethel Wallace Jenkins, Charles Pelote Sr., Retired PE Herman Eddy. Row 2- L to R: PE Lovelace, NE Lay President Linda Gant, Program participant, Josephine Anderson (Committee Chair). Row 3 - L to R: Henry McMillan, President Hopewell, Program participants, Consultant Lovelace.



Miss Starsha Frierson - Young Adult of the Year



L to R: President Hopewell, Starsha Frierson, "Pop-Pop" Frierson



## FOURTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT JERRY TURNER, JR. PRESIDENT

On behalf of the Fourth Episcopal District Lay Organization, We thank you for attending the Fall Executive Board Meeting, Officer Training and Rededication Service.

The Training by our Episcopal District Lay Officers was magnificent. We appreciate the hard work and dedication of our Episcopal Lay Leadership. We are also grateful to our out of District guests as innovative presenters and preacher for our weekend:

Rev. Conitras Houston Dickens ---- Pastor, Dupage AME Church --- Rededication Preacher Mr. Gabriel Cloud --- Connectional First Vice President -- Opening Plenary Session Energizer Mrs. Darlene Williams-Ravenel -- Director of Lay Activities, 7th Episcopal District -- General Lay Member Presenter

To our Guests Episcopal Presidents of the 5th, 6th, 7th, 13th and 19th Districts and Guest Episcopal District Lay membership of the 7th and 19th Episcopal Districts -- thanks for your attendance and participation in our sessions.

We are also thankful to the Tech Dream team for your hard work through Zoom and technology --- Timothy Cousin --- Jamesha Williams --- Martinique Mix ---Great Job.

We are also thankful to our Most Talented and Creative Director of Lay Activities --- Michael A. Cousin, Jr. -- you have taken the training and activities of the Fourth Episcopal District Lay Organization to a higher and great level. We are blessed by your leadership and organization--**WE ARE PROUD OF YOU!**

Finally, I am so blessed and humbled to have the opportunity to serve as the President of the Fabulous, Faithful fruitful and always in the Forefront Fourth Episcopal District Lay Organization. Thank you Fourth Episcopal District for being a premier ministry in our Zion.

May God Bless and Keep you in Perfect Peace --- We appreciate all you do.

*Jerry Turner, Jr., President  
Fourth Episcopal District Lay Organization  
African Methodist Episcopal Church  
(414)350-2024  
[jrtturnerjerry@gmail.com](mailto:jrtturnerjerry@gmail.com)*



## EIGHTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT PATRICIA CAMPBELL, PRESIDENT

### The Eighth Episcopal District Lay Organization Has It “Going On” in Jesus’ Name!

The members of the Eighth Episcopal District are thankful and appreciative for the leadership of Bishop J. N. Wicker, Connectional Lay Organization Commission Chair, and for receiving him as our Presiding Prelate and joy in receiving Supervisor, Reverend Dr. Constance B. Wicker.

The Lay Organization held its election of Episcopal District Officers on June 11, 2021. The enthusiastic, dedicated persons elected are: Ms. Patricia Campbell, President; Mr. Milton Chambliss, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President; Ms. Earline Blackmore, Recording Secretary; Ms. Irma Ross, Assistant Recording Secretary; Ms. Frances Jones, Treasurer; Mr. Brandon Jones, Chaplain; Dr. Shirley Hopkins Davis, Historiographer; Ms. Audrey Hall, Parliamentarian; Mr. Ton Brady, Director of Lay Activities; MS Florine Herron, Director of Public Relations, and Mr. Samuel Sarpong, Young Adult Representative. Advisors to the President are: Mr. Melvin Davis, Immediate Past President; Ms. Glenda Minor, Mr. Robert Chambliss Ms. Cynthia Holman, and Ms. Stephanie Burks.

Participation in the Annual Lay Witness Sunday worship experience on October 10, 2021 afforded members to become more proud of their association within the Lay Organization as they gave witness to their faith in Jesus and referenced the ongoing purpose and goals of the Connectional Lay Organization.

The Annual Conference Lay Witness Night Worship yielded a gumbo of several themes: “What Does The Lord Require” “Holiness Is Not Just For Preachers” “Are We Doing What God Requires?” and “Who Is A Servant?”

We are pressing on the upward way, gaining new heights to the glory of God, serving our great Zion, the Global African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Submitted by: Ms. Florine Pernell Herron,

Director of Public Relations





*The Rev. Kimberly Martin,  
Pastor*

## NINTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT BERNELLA KNIGHT ROSE, PRESIDENT

### The 12th Session of the Northwest Alabama Conference Lay Night Worship Service 2021 By Jeremy B. Joseph

The Northwest Conference Lay Night held a spirit-filled worship service on September 9, 2021. Mrs. Dianne Stevens Battle, Conference Director of Lay Activities was the presiding officer. She welcomed the conference and visitors, which included retired Bishop Carolyn Guidry, to the annual program. The service began with the Doxology followed by the Call to Worship to welcome the Holy Spirit into the digital worship service which was streamed virtually using the Zoom and Facebook live.

The Opening Hymn was the Layman's Hymn #582, "Laymen now have thus assembled, In the blessed name O God. Guide us in our true endeavor, Light the pathway that we trod." The hymn was truly appropriate not just because it is the official hymn of the Lay Organization but also because it signifies that during the Covid-19 pandemic, God has allowed us the ability to assemble in his names through non-traditional avenues.

The prayer was done by Mrs. Bettye West, treasurer of the Northwest Conference. She gave thanks to God for just being alive. She asked that the Holy Spirit be sent down and for It to rain down upon us. Her prayer was genuinely answered throughout the program. She proclaimed that God is a good God. She thanked God for loving us so much that we could come together this time. The theme of togetherness was present throughout the program. Even though the laity did not meet face to face, the program was that of thanksgiving in hard times. Mrs. West proclaimed about God, "You are there at the beginning, the middle, and You will be there at the end."

Ms. Andree Kater, Conference Corresponding Secretary, read the scripture, Micah 6:6-8 NIV. Sharyn Menzies, Conference First Vice President, read a litany that told the laity to be inspired and restored during these uncertain times. The litany boldly proclaims to the Church that the Covid-19 Delta variant is real, but the litany also states that we have gone through hard times before and will get through this together with God's help.

Mrs. Tamara Bonner Royster, Conference Lay President, introduced the preacher for the worship service, The Reverend. Kimberly Martin. Reverend Kimberly Martin is a product of the Birmingham City School System. She attended Alabama State University, Montgomery, Alabama and the Southeastern School of Cosmetology. She also is a 2016 graduate of the Birmingham Baptist Bible College with a Bachelor of Arts in Christian Education. Rev. Martin attended Beeson Divinity School, Birmingham, Alabama and obtained a Master of Arts in Theology Studies.

While Reverend Martin attended Beeson Divinity School, she received the T.D. Peters Theological Scholarship, named in honor of Mrs. Theopolis D. Peters, the second President of the 9th Episcopal District Lay Organization. The T.D. Peters Theological Scholarship sponsored by the 9th Episcopal District Lay Organization awards scholarship to students who attend accredited seminaries funds for ongoing education. The scholarship exists to promote the advancement of clergy education studies. Beyond the academic achievements, Reverend Martin is a person that wants people to see Jesus through her life. She says that her motto in life is, "It's not about me, It's all about Jesus."

Reverend Kim Martin thanked the Lay Organization for her reception of the TD Peters Theological Scholarship at the commencement of her sermon. She says that she was thankful for all the opportunities that the Lay Organization had provided her. Reverend Martin opened the sermon with the anchor scripture Psalm 78: 19:

**They spoke against God.  
They said, "Can God really  
spread a table in the wilderness?"**

Reverend Martin's answer to the question posed in Psalm 78: 19 was the subject for her sermon, "God Can." Reverend Martin asked the Lay Organization to think of all the mighty miracles that God had performed and know that "God Can.". Reverend Martin sermon main points were:  
God can save the un-savable.

**God can restore the un-restorable.  
God can do the unthinkable.  
God can supply the un-suppliable.**

Reverend Martin explained that God can save those that we might think are un-savable and "don't through away anybody." She uses the example of Saul on the Road to Damascus. Saul, then a persecutor of God's people, could even be converted. David, to some, might have been an example of a man that could not be restored, but God can restore anyone. Reverend Martin expounds on the power of words when she says that we need to watch what we say. She explains, "God can recall every idle word that comes out of our mouths." We as Lay people must realize the omnipotent nature of God and that God can do the unthinkable. Reverend Martin further reveals that "When God supplies, we can promise money that we do not have." The answer to "Can God really spread a table in the wilderness?" is an emphatic YES! God can do all things!

President Royster thanked the homilist, program participants, and everyone watching for a spirit-filled service. The prayer that was delivered by Mrs. West earlier had indeed been answered. A word from God has been given to His people, and His spirit manifests itself. Mrs. Bernella Knight Rose, the Ninth Episcopal District Lay Organization president, thanked the President Bonner-Royster and the Northwest Lay Organization for an outstanding Lay night program. President Rose said, "What a mighty Word." President Rose quoted Dottie Peoples, "God can and God will, he will fix it for you, he will fix it for me."

Finally, Bishop Harry Lee Seawright remarked, "The Lay means so much to us." Bishop Seawright told the conference, "If we did not have lay folks, we would not have a Ninth Episcopal District." Bishop Seawright further thanked the Lay Organization for all the work they have done to further the education of the clergy. The worship service ended with the singing of the Lay Benediction.



**The Alabama River Region Lay Organization Lay Night Worship Service at Annual Conference**

Submitted by: E. Ann Clemons, President, Alabama River Region Lay Organization

The Alabama River Region Conference Lay Organization presented a pre-recorded Worship Service for the Alabama River Region Lay Organization’s Annual Conference Lay Night Service. We held a recorded Worship Service at Ward Chapel AME Church, where Reverend Darryl Ervin, serves as the Pastor. Sister Darlene Burt made wonderful arrangements at her home church including implementing COVID-19 safety measures with the assistance of Brother Vernon King, also of Ward Chapel. The Ward Chapel Choir were in their usual brilliance in their singing praises and bringing the spirit of the Lord to that Sanctuary!

Participants of the Worship Service were: Sister Rose Brown, DOLA - Worship Leader; The Call to Worship, Recording Secretary, led The Call to Worship; Sister Mary Salaam, led the Laymen’s Hymn, followed by the Prayer, delivered by Brother Don Clemons; Sister Valinda Underwood read our scripture Isaiah 43:18-19; The Litany was led by Sister Pat Patterson; Brother Dale Gamble provided the introduction of the Speaker, our very own Brother Kenneth Strong, former President of the Alabama River Region Lay Organization Brother Strong veered off script and delivered a powerful message taken from Matthew 5: 13-16 with a focus on the *You are Light of the World*, to an audience absent of a pew presence, but the presence of the Lord was in the atmosphere! Sister E. Ann Clemons, President of the ARRC Lay Organization presented a Memorial Observance for: Brother Richard Bowden, Brother Jerry Pratt and Centenarian, Brother Jimmie Lott and closing remarks.

Brother Justin Townsend of Ward Chapel recorded the service and submitted it to Reverend Roosevelt Williams and aired via Zoom at Lay Night at the ARRC Annual Conference. *To God be the Glory for the great*



*things He has done!*







**Laypersons Challenged to Love Mercy,  
Walk Humbly, Do Justice and Love Kindness on  
Lay Witness Sunday  
Speaker: Dr. Andrew Hugine Jr.  
Submitted By Mr. Hodges Washington, Local President**

Officially, the Connectional Lay Witness Day was designated for observance throughout the AME Church on the 2nd Sunday during the month of October, at the Eleventh Biennial Session, in 1969. Lay Witness Sunday provides laypersons with the opportunity to witness about their faith in Jesus Christ and their commitment to fulfilling His mission in the world. This day was established for laypersons to carry out morning worship services at their respective

local churches.

On the second Sunday in October, October 10, 2021, the laypersons of St. John AME Church, Huntsville, led the worship service. The Quadrennial theme approved by the Connectional Lay Organization (2017-2021), “Laity Walking Humbly with God to Do Justice and to Love Kindness,” was the theme for the service. The scripture reference was “And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8 NASB).

Working within the guidelines of the CDC to reduce the risk for worshippers and to slow the spread of COVID-19, the service integrated in person participants and prerecorded virtual participants. Sister Pamela Whitehead gave announcements for the week. Sister Erica Harbin, first vice-president of the St. John Lay Organization, was the worship leader. Brother Reginald Pearson, director of Music and Christian Arts at St. John and musicians led the music for the service. Their music was augmented with the opening hymn, “Layman Hymn,” recorded by the Connectional Music and Christian Arts Choir of the AME Church.

Brother Clifton Miller, chaplain of the St. John Lay Organization, offered the morning prayer. Sister Patricia Grier, secretary of the St. John Lay Organization, read the scripture from Micah 6:6-8. The occasion was given by Sister Claudinette Purifoy-Fears, St. John Lay Organization. She informed worshippers of the purpose of Lay Witness Sunday and highlighted the mission of the Lay Organization. She noted that the Lay are instruments of God’s peace and emphasized that Laypersons should execute their mission with love, kindness and strive for service to all mankind. The Lay Litany was led by Sister Sharon Butler, Director of Lay Activities of the St. John Lay Organization. This litany was written by Evelyn Welch Graham (11th Episcopal District Director of Lay Activities, 2003).

The speaker for the service was introduced by Sister Abbiegail Hugine. She introduced Dr. Andrew Hugine, Jr. from a special viewpoint that only a lifelong friend and wife of almost 49 years could do. Dr. Hugine is a son of the parsonage of the AME Church, has served in church leadership at the local, district and conference levels. He began his career as a mathematics instructor, has served in various administrative positions in higher education including former president of South Carolina State University, and is currently the 11<sup>th</sup> president of Alabama A&M University. They are the parents of two adult children and grandparents of three wonderful grandchildren.

Dr. Hugine brought an informative, inspirational, and challenging message as he highlighted how the church, the Lay, can carry out its mission. He related the AME church’s mission and the theme for this Lay Witness Sunday, focusing on justice. He gave four areas where the church should walk in justice.

1. The Lay must be concerned about the less fortunate. Do good. He highlighted issues of concern for those who do not have safe drinking water as well as the disproportionate employment and income ratios of blacks and whites in the state. He said the Lay must be concerned and adopt as their theme song “If I Can Help Somebody.”

2. Lay must have a spirit of discernment to see that economic problems are political problems. It must be involved politically on issues such as health care racial discrimination, youth violence, and childcare. Elected officials must be held accountable and voter education drives must be expanded. He referenced Zachariah 7:8 as he highlighted the need to stop oppression.

3. Dr. Hugine stated that the Lay must address issues facing families and children. He supported his statement that families are under attack with numbers that state 29% of children in Alabama live in poverty. He noted that there is too much exposure to violence. He challenged the Lay to help with the instruction of children and to promote education. He gave examples of the AME colleges and universities that the church has sustained over the years. Dr. Hugine gave a plan that he calls the Nehemiah giving plan for higher education to support HBCU institutions. The plan would entail the 2,000,000 HBCU graduates giving \$100 per year. This plan would result in 200 million dollars for HBCUs a year and a billion dollars over a five-year period.

4. Using an acrostic, he gave the final challenge for what is required of the Lay to “do JUSTICE.”

J – Jesus teaches love, love of each other

U – Understand the issues and problems

S – Service

T- Truth

I – Integrity

C – Commitment to change

E - Equity for every man and woman.

Following this outstanding message, Pastor Wright extended the Invitation to Discipleship. Remarks and presentations were made by Brother Hodges Washington, president of the St. John Lay Organization. Prayer was offered by Sister Charlsie Brooks, followed by the Lay Benediction.

All members of St. John who are not clergy are Lay and are invited to actively participate in the St. John Lay Organization. Meetings are held bi-monthly, on the third Monday. If you missed this service, it is available for replay on St. John’s media platforms of Facebook Live, the church’s website and the church’s YouTube channel.

Written By: Sister Nedra McDaniels





## Twelfth Session of the Northeast Alabama Annual Conference Lay Night Worship Service

On Thursday, October 7, 2021, at 7:00 p.m., the Twelfth Session of the Northeast Alabama Annual Conference gathered virtually for the Lay Night Worship Service. Sister Jewel Harris, Director of Lay Activities for the Northeast Alabama Conference Lay Organization, led worship.

Following the Doxology (AME Hymnal No. 647), Brother Odies Perry led the Call to Worship. Brother Glenn Persons sang the Hymn of Praise, "The Laymen's Hymn," followed by The Prayed by Brother Henry Goshay. "God Wants to Heal You" is the prayer response that followed. Brother Glenn Persons offered a selection "Shine On Me." Brother Earnest Harris read the Scripture Lesson from Micah 6: 6-8 (KJV), and Sister Robinese Turner Williams sang the Hymn of Preparation, "Hallelujah, Thine The Glory (Revive Us Again)." Brother Robert Turner introduced the speaker for the evening, Dr. Joel McCloud, Jr., MD, a medical doctor practicing with Mulberry Medical Associates, P.C. in Montgomery, Alabama. Dr. McCloud is a graduate of the University of Alabama School of Medicine and Tuskegee University, where he graduated Summa Cum Laude.

Dr. McCloud titled his presentation "COVID-19 Virus and Pandemic." Highlights from his presentation include the following:

There have been 42 million cases in the U.S. as of October 7, 2021, and 673,000 deaths.

There have been 776,000 cases in Alabama since February 2020 and 13,000 deaths.

COVID's most common symptoms are fever, cough, chills, sore throat, headaches, breathing difficulties, loss of taste and smell, diarrhea, and body aches that occur between 2-14 days after being exposed to COVID-19.

Rapid tests produce lots of false positives. The PCR is most accurate with 1-3 days to get results.

The best weapon we have to treat COVID-19 is the vaccines.

The effects of COVID-19 other than death are pneumonia, blood clots, chronic lung disease, congested heart failure, strokes, paralyzes, kidney injury, and long hauler syndrome, which can last months or even years after a COVID infection.

Should be more concerned about the side effects of the virus than the side effects of the vaccine, which are very mild.

Recommend that pregnant women get the vaccine.

A trailblazing Black woman scientist, Kizzmekia Corbett, 34 years old, is a key developer behind the Moderna vaccine.

Step up, be a leader, and be an example to your family and friends. Save your family and friends. The life you save may be your own.

The Facebook chat lit up in response to Dr. McCloud's comments on preventing and responding to the spread of COVID-19.

Following the Speaker, Sister Robinese Turner Williams sang the Hymn "If I Be Lifted Up."

Sister Sharon Massingale led a memorial to celebrate the lives of the Northeast Alabama Conference laity, who passed during the conference year. While Sister Massingale read the names of the following laity and gave a brief description of their work, Sister Cynthia lit a candle in their memory:

Sister Mattie Jones, Gains Chapel AMEC, Phenix City, Alabama

Sister Serrette Reed, Washington Chapel AMEC, Tuskegee, Alabama

Brother William Graham, Salem Chapel AMEC, Salem, Alabama

Brother Alfred J. Davis, Sr., President of the Northeast Alabama Conference Lay Organization, Sister Bernella Knight Rose, Episcopal District President, Reverend Sherita Moon Seawright, Episcopal Supervisor, and Bishop Harry L. Seawright, Presiding Prelate gave remarks.



## TENTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT DR. RODERICK MOORE, PRESIDENT

### LAY WITNESS SERVICES - ANNUAL CONFERENCE SERIES 2021

#### Northwest Texas Conference

During Lay Witness Night, the Northwest Conference Lay Organization honored those who had passed on this conference year in a memorial service – Sis. Donnie Thomas Davis of Adams Chapel AM.E. Church, Harker Heights, TX and Sis. Suzanne Smith of Joshua Chapel AME Church, Waxahachie, TX. The Presidential Trailblazer Award was presented to Mr. George L. Banks of Edwards Chapel AME Church, Waco, TX. The Layperson of the Year was presented to Sis. Sandra Dancy of St. James AME Church, Fort Worth, TX. The Conference donated \$3,500 to Paul Quinn College's Gap Fund with Rev. Marlon Jones, Pastor of St. Luke AME Church, Waco, TX, who delivered a spirit-filled message.

#### North Texas Conference

The North Texas Conference Lay Organization had a powerful Lay Witness Night. The guest speaker, Rev. Dr. James Morris from Hamilton Memorial A.M.E spoke on "Gods Call" from Mark 1:16-20. Mrs. Claudia Dunemann conducted the Memorial Service in remembrance of Mrs. Delanda Johnson (Johnson Chapel A.M.E). The Lay Person of the Year was sister Sandra Richardson who retired from the educational system of 30 years. She has served in many capacities from the Local Church, Greater Dallas District and the North Texas Conference levels.

#### Southwest Texas Conference

The success of the Southwest Texas Conference Lay Witness Night program was a result of many... Beginning with our Program Chairman, Brother William Taylor and program participants, Worship Leader, Sis Dierdre Rockeymoore; Devotion Team, Bro Michael Gross and Sis Natalia Parker; Welcome, Sis Patricia Merritt; Memorial, Sis Vicki Houston; Lay Person of the Year, Sis Patricia Ritcherson; Scholarship, Sis Audrey Herring; Offertory, Sis Vanessa Crawford; Intro of Speaker, President Rockeymoore; Speaker, YAR Sis Chasity Hattley; Invitation, Rev Dr Lemelle Taylor; Introduction of Bishop and Supervisor, 10<sup>th</sup> District President, Dr. Rodrick Moore; Bishop Adam J. Richardson's words of encouragement; Lay Benediction, Sis Linda Vaughn. The speaker's subject was "Disciple-making."

#### Texas Conference

The Texas Annual Conference Lay Witness Service was held on Thursday evening, November 4, 2021 with a spirit filled Service that included a good mix of Young Adults and seasoned Lay participants and a "Social Action Moment" that featured Harris County Criminal Court Judge Ronnisha Bowman, who spoke, passionately, about voting rights. The Speaker of the Hour was General Officer John Thomas III—Editor of the Christian Recorder Newspaper, and the highest-ranking Layperson in the AME Church. As the highlight of the service, he spoke about Social Justice, and appealed to our consciousnesses, as he made us proud that we elected such an intelligent Layperson to lead the world's oldest Black Newspaper still in existence today.

Information compiled by: Royce Smith (NW), Robert Valentine (NT),  
Thomas Rockeymoore (SW) and Ruben Braziel, II (TX)

Submitted by: Ava Knapp Parker  
Director of Public Relations



## ELEVENTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT PATRICIA WRIGHT, PRESIDENT

### Lay First Vice Presidents “Learn to Recruit, Reclaim and Retain”

The night was filled with laughter as 133 laymen—presidents, first vice presidents and guests from every level of the organization—gathered via Zoom to discuss their mission for 2022 and receive training from Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Organization (EEDLO) Officers.

On Nov. 9, officers assembled to hear from on how to “Recruit, Reclaim and Retain” lay members. The focus was best practices and strategies for bringing people into the organization and keeping them engaged as they grow in Christ. EEDLO Young Adult Representative Ashley Blakely presented recruitment and talked passionately to the officers about recruitment, adding in jokes and asides that raised group morale.

“I talked about relationships and thinking outside the box,” Blakely says. “You can have your meetings in different places and use social media to send reminders about events. I also encouraged them to tap into other organizations for young adult recruitment including the Young People’s Department and Richard Allen Young Adult Council.”

EEDLO First Vice President John Love talked retention with the group. As the membership chair for the district lay organization, he organized this training event for all the first vice presidents to get more comfortable in their roles in leadership. Guests at the event included representatives from the Connec-tional Lay Organization First Vice President Dr. Dorothy Henderson and representatives from Sixth Episcopal District Lay Organization.

“First Vice Presidents are so important because they are needed to step in if the president is unavail-able. They need to stay on top of all the activities the organization has going on and be able to keep eve-rything moving forward in the president's absence,” Love said.

EEDLO Director of Lay Activities Teresa D. Whit presented reclaiming, a strategy of going out to people who have left the organization and bringing them back into the fold. Love said reclamation is an important part of his three pronged membership strategy.

“What we’ve found is that in order to reclaim a person, you’ve got to find out why they left in the first place,” Love says. “If they were hurt, you’ve got to help them heal. If they were not engaged, you need to find a place for their talents.”

West Coast Conference Lay Organization First Vice President Alicia Cotton says she struggles with the idea of reclaiming members because it is still unclear if that will be a positive for the organization as a whole.

“We had a presentation at our St. Petersburg District Lay Organization Annual Convention by Pastor Dontavious Saunders who said to be careful not to bring back something that God may have severed for a reason,” Cotton said. “So if we are reclaiming people who have left, how does that work?”

Despite her questions, Cotton found the training informative and helpful. A good portion of the strate-gies suggested have already been implemented by her team in the West Coast Conference. “Overall, I thought it was a great start,” Cotton said.

By Robbyn Hopewell,  
EEDLO, Director of Public Relations

**TWELTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT**

**DR. DOROTHY L. HENDERSON Ph.D., PRESIDENT**



DEAUNDR A NASH  
DIRECTOR OF  
PUBLIC RELATIONS

*Greetings,*

What an honor it is to introduce myself as the newly elected Director of Public Relations for the Twelfth Episcopal District where our leadership is the dynamic duo, Team Mitchell, Bishop Michael L. Mitchell, Presiding Prelate and Supervisor Cordelia Mitchell. The Twelfth is also home to the Connectional Lay 1st Vice President, Dr. Dorothy C. Henderson, and the Connectional Lay 3rd Vice President, Sister Lovie Aaron. We proudly say the laity of the Twelfth District is actively engaged in the work of the AME Church!

*Honoring Our Leader*

On the evening of November 12, 2021, we celebrated our immediate past Twelfth Episcopal District Lay President, Dr. Dorothy C. Henderson with an Evening of Excellency in Leadership highlighting her life, work, and various accomplishments to include her becoming the first woman to serve as Episcopal Lay President of the Twelfth District. Her tireless service for the last eight plus years shall prove to have a lasting impact on our organization. Job well done Dr. Henderson!



*10th Annual Leadership Training Summit*

The following day, we began our training summit with the Theme: “Laity Walking Humbly with God to Do Justice and to Love Kindness” Micah 6:8. The Twelfth District Lay prides itself on fully promoting the teamwork approach which involves the collaboration of seasoned and young adult laity a technique proven to work. For example, this year’s summit included increased participation from the young adults. They served as Conference presidents presiding over designated sessions of the meeting as well as serving as breakout facilitators. Topics such as How Do We Deal with Change, Planning A Workshop Program, and Church Leadership were presented. Participant engagement and interaction were key to the overall success of the summit.

*Newly Elected Officers & Lay Queen*

At the conclusion of the summit, the election of officers was held. We were honored to have Connectional Lay Organization President, Abe Makiti to preside over the election and declare the results. Although we were sad to see our previous leaders leave, we feel confident in that there are others who have trained and are now transitioning into leadership positions. With open arms and hearts, we welcomed our newly elected president, Sister Natalie Horton and her cabinet of officers listed and shown below. We were also blessed to have a very active and energetic young adult as our new Lay Queen. Congratu-



PRESIDENT  
NATALIE HORTON



1ST VP  
HERMAN ELLIS



2ND VP  
PAT THOMAS



3RD VP  
DR. SHASON  
FLETCHER



RECORDING SEC.  
KATHERINE BAKER



EPISCOPAL LAY QUEEN  
MIKAYLA WOOTEN



ASST. RECORDING  
SEC.  
WILLIAM BOYCE



CORRESPONDING  
YVONNE STOVALL



TREASURER  
THOMAS GATHEN



FINANCIAL SEC.  
EFFIE SMITH



CHAPLAIN  
PHYLIS JOHNSON



HISTORIOGRAPHER  
GARY HUNTER



PARLIAMENTARIAN  
BETTYE MOULDEN



DOPR  
DORA RUTH-ROLFE



DOPR  
DEAUNDR A NASH



YPR  
JEQUETTA ROGERS

# Thank You!

I want to express my sincerest thanks to the 12th Episcopal District Lay Organization, the Celebration Committee and all who took the time to participate on the Celebration Program! I was so surprised and it went beyond anything I imagined. Your kindness and generosity will always be remembered.

*Dorothy C. Henderson*





## THIRTEENTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT Christopher M. Wilson, PRESIDENT

### The 13th Episcopal District Lay Elects New Leadership By Daniel E. Lewis

The 13th Episcopal District Lay held a successful Virtual Convention August 27-28, 2021. One of the key agenda items was the election of Episcopal District Lay Officers conducted by Matikane Abednego Makiti, Connectional Lay President.

The officers elected are as follows:

- Christopher M. Wilson, President
- Walter Searcy, 1st Vice President
- Charles Moore, 2nd Vice President
- Melinda Robinson, 3rd Vice President
- Brenda W. Odell, Recording Secretary
- Rita K. Nelson, Assistant Recording Secretary
- Pauline Guyton, Corresponding Secretary
- Retha Newsom, Treasurer
- Juanita Patton, Financial Secretary
- Lovie Jacocks, Chaplain
- Priscilla Sullivan, Historiographer
- Jarmen Watts, Parliamentarian
- Amanda Johnson, Director of Lay Activities
- Daniel E. Lewis, Director of Public Relations

After completing the election and installation of officers, CLO President Makiti thanked the outgoing 13th District President Sis. Dorothy Ealy for her eight years of faithful and superb leadership. President Wilson, formerly President of the Kentucky Conference Lay, also expressed his appreciation for Sis. Ealy's leadership and mentorship.

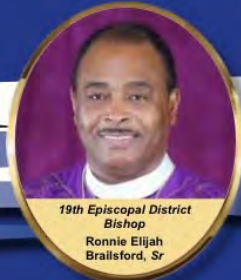




# 19th Episcopal District Lay Organization Officers 2021-2025



LAITY WALKING HUMBLY  
WITH GOD TO DO JUSTICE AND TO LOVE KINDNESS  
MICAH 6:8



19th Episcopal District Bishop  
Ronnie Elijah Brallsford, Sr



Bro A Makiti  
CLO President



Bro SR Letsoko  
CLO 2nd Vice-President



Bro H Mngadi  
CLO - GDC Chairperson



Sis NN Khoza  
NEDLO President



Bro BMR Mfolo  
NEDLO 1st Vice-President



ADV. TM Ngubeni  
NEDLO 2nd Vice-President



Bro PS Mokodutlo  
NEDLO 3rd Vice-President



Bro S Tsimane  
NEDLO Recording Secretary



Sis MM Kareli  
NEDLO Asst. Recording Secretary



Sis MM Rasetsoke  
NEDLO Corresponding Secretary



Sis G Phusoane  
NEDLO Treasurer



Sis M Kgari  
NEDLO Financial Secretary



ADV. L Mokone  
NEDLO Chaplain



Bro MS Thukani  
NEDLO Historiographer



Bro G Kgale  
NEDLO Parliamentarian



Sis P Matonkonyane  
NEDLO Director of Public Relations



Sis S More  
NEDLO Director of Lay Activities

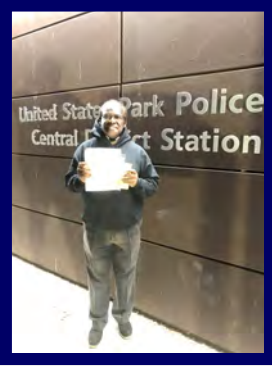


Sis K Mokhema  
NEDLO Young Adult Representative

# Welcome Contributing Writers!



## General Board Member Carl Davis Joins Voting Rights Rally at the White House



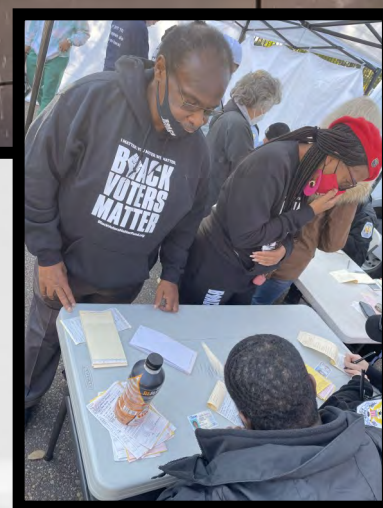
**Black Voters Matter (BVM)** joined People for the American Way, the League of Women Voters, the Declaration for American Democracy, and the Democracy Initiative for a protest march and rally in front of the White House to demand federal action on voting rights. The action, which led protesters from Black Lives Matter Plaza to Lafayette Square in Washington D.C., urged President Biden and Senate Democrats to pass much-needed voter protections to combat state-level attacks on voting rights. Advocates demanded the swift passage of federal voting rights legislation, including the

John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, the Freedom to Vote Act, D.C. statehood and other critical legislation.

Today’s action comes as the Senate prepares to vote on — and likely filibuster — the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, a key piece of legislation that would enshrine voter protections into federal law. It follows several recent White House actions to elevate the issue of voting rights, including an [October 19 rally](#) where more than two dozen protesters were arrested while demanding federal voting rights protections.

“Today, we’re back at the White House to demand that President Biden use his bully pulpit and urge the Senate to do whatever it takes to protect voting rights,” **said Cliff Albright, co-founder of Black Voters Matter.** “For months, we’ve been calling on our elected officials to pass critical voting rights legislation. But despite their promises to Black voters during last year’s elections and forceful demands from advocates, President Biden, Senate Majority Leader Schumer, and the rest of Senate Democrats have failed to get it done. We need federal action to move the needle on voting rights, and we need it now — even if it means eliminating the Senate filibuster altogether.”

With approximately 800 protestors in attendance, the demonstration is the fifth and largest in a series aimed at spurring the White House to take action to get the Senate to pass both the *Freedom to Vote Act* and the *John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act*. Both pieces of legislation have been blocked in procedural votes.





## SEVENTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT KEITH E. BRITTON, PRESIDENT

### A PERSPECTIVE ON SERVICE: ARE YOU AN ARSONIST OR A FIREFIGHTER? *Reverend Jarrett Britton Washington, M.Div., MACE*

It is without a doubt we are living in unprecedented times and yet, we are still called to make an impact in the lives of the people God has given us charge. In fact, many pastors and church leaders have come to the greater realization that our service to our community is of greater necessity than it had been pre-pandemic.

Service, by all accounts, has become the mantra of our existence. Our lives have no longer been regulated to just being in worship, but our minds, bodies, and souls have been charged with how we can assist our brothers and our sisters through our intentional service as they encounter the challenges of this new season.

I recall hearing a sermon by the past Senior Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, The Right Reverend John R. Bryant, entitled, “Are You a Spirit-Filled Church?” In this sermon, Bishop Bryant discussed the many attributes of churches that have the spirit of Christ operating in their service and mission. In one of his many points, Bishop Bryant talked about the idea of fire in the church. In sum, Bishop Bryant argued that the church is divided into two distinct groups, the arsonists and the firefighters.

By his definition, the firefighter represents a church member who is not about a life of service. The firefighter will make others feel bad about the way they represent, praise, and worship God. Firefighters will fight the church’s vision and will consist of a group of people who are not concerned about the least of these. Service for a firefighter ranks low because at the end of the day, the idea is going to be an “us versus them” mentality.

Bishop Bryant went on to describe the arsonists in the church as the people who are committed to a life of service. In fact, the arsonist is not concerned about someone else’s fire, because of the fire that is already burning in them. Juxtaposed to the firefighter, the arsonist comes into the church ready to worship and to serve. The arsonist understands from whence they have come and it is their goal to see others make it to the place they yearn to be. Bishop Bryant sets up the argument that the church needs more arsonist than firefighters.

As a Pastor, I oftentimes consider the service we bring to the people we are called to serve in terms of the arsonist and the firefighter. Beyond the consideration of whether our church’s good would become evil spoken of; I think about how despite our economic means, the church is still called to service. In fact, biblical nomenclature says it this way in Matthew 20:28, “*just as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve*” (New Revised Standard Version). Our mission is service to God’s people. Service takes on many forms, but our service is always about what we do for someone else.

Even in this season of global pandemic, a time marked with so much grief and despair, there has been no change to the primary purpose of the ministry of the House of Hope, Hopewell African Methodist Episcopal Church of Hemingway, South Carolina. We are still the church called to teach the uncompromising Word of God and to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ! The ministry’s vision is plainly to reach the lost and teach the found through our service in the kingdom! All we have really done is turned up the ‘fire’ in our service, outreach, and ability to seek during this season of our lives.

For our local church, service has become the fire that helps us to make a difference in our community. Monthly we serve on average at least 400 families, consisting of thousands of individuals, through our free food and grocery distributions. Before the global pandemic our prayer line was open only one day a week, now we are consistently praying corporately four days a week, with countless special days scattered throughout the month. We provide free WIFI to our community through our parking lot routers where children and adults can get access to the internet at no charge. We've upgraded our computer lab hours to make our church available to parents and young people when they need to connect, work, or even locate employment. Service is even exhibited in our new Life Skills Center where the entire community can receive free assistance in at least 15 specific areas of their life and career.

The truth is, we are a thriving congregation because of our adherence to service. Without hesitation, we decided to be arsonists in our community. We took to heart what the founder of Methodism, John Wesley, said, "Light yourself on fire with passion and people will come from miles to watch you burn." Gratefully, we made the pivot to be arsonist and we will not lose our fire. Today, I challenge you as members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church a simple question, am I an arsonist or a firefighter? Is my fire lit for service? Am I doing what is necessary to help someone as they pass along this way? And finally, is my community better, brighter, and stronger because of my fire?

**Reverend Jarrett Britton Washington, M.Div., MACE**  
**Pastor, Hopewell African Methodist Episcopal Church, Hemingway, SC**  
[www.HOPEWELLAME.org](http://www.HOPEWELLAME.org)





## FIFTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT Simeon P. Rhoden, Past President

### Factors Hindering Church Influence – Remembering the Great Commission

While visiting my home district and state this past Fall – Florida, the 11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District, my family and I journeyed with my nephew on a Floridian, Historically, Black, College & University (HBCU) tour. You should note that there are four HBCUs in the state of Florida.

This article is not about HBCUs, but more about identifying and eradicating issues that hinder effective church influence in the social lives of those Young Adults attending HBCUs, particularly those colleges or universities continuing traditions of the AME Church.

Starting from the top of the state with the city of Tallahassee, we began our tour at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), my first alma mater. There were not very many students on campus, but those we encountered, I introduced him/her to my nephew, chatted it up a bit...laughing and just having fun, but inside of me was burning 2 questions.

My first question: Are you a registered voter? If the answer was no or somewhere around that, I encouraged them to please register and gave a little narrative on why it was important to register and vote. If the answer was yes, I reminded him/her or discussed with them the election that would occur November 2<sup>nd</sup>, and the upcoming 2022 general elections.

My second question: Do you have a church home now that you're in college? If the answer was yes...of course with enlightenment we shared our affiliations and love for Jesus. However, most of the time, the answer was "no"; and this revelation was not just with the students attending FAMU, but throughout the entire tour.

Hearing some of the "no" responses from these young people did something to my spirit. I began to weep on the inside. The ram in the bush nevertheless was that many of them still believed in God the Father almighty, but most of them had given up on the church.

After the first visit, my family and I reflected on the responses and much to our surprise, my nephew was somewhat feeling the same as the others who responded that they did not have a church home. You see, my nephew grew up in the AME Church, and he said religion hasn't played a big role in his life...and there was not one thing that led to it, but rather something just tapered off.

In his own words, *"It just kind of happened naturally, as I developed more opinions of my own,"* he said. *"With my generation, there's a lot of openness and access to information and people can make their own opinions."* I then asked my nephew directly, *"Do you feel that what you have learned from attending church regularly connected with you and who you want to be in life?"* His response, *"My own opinion is that if the church wants to continue to appeal to young people, then they will need to adapt,"* he said. *"And it will need to be less emphatic and less oppressing in its religious pronouncement about issues, whether it be abortion or sexuality."*

Although my nephew's age is of Generation Z, we must remember that the young and inexperienced person(s) often can be remarkably wise. Referencing the scripture lesson found in Psalms 8:2, I'm providing my shortened and revised thought; and reminded of the adage..." Out of the mouths of babes."

This conversation and mindset led me to add a third question to this tour experience. One that would follow the “no” answer response to the second question. What are some of the obstacles preventing you from attending church? Here are some of the responses that I thought we as Laity should begin thinking about how and why we must work to eradicate and bring back effective church influence:

Some members have a ‘Holier than thou’ attitude/ self-righteousness/individualism.

Different ideologies are introduced...most which I do not believe in or choose to participate in.

Partiality treatment of church members is based on materialism /education /social status.

The rise of self-styled leaders/preachers who bring confusion to those they try to minister to.

Inadequate training of some church leader/lack of training and are stuck in the old preaching styles.

Mismanagement/misappropriation of church funds/resources by some church leaders.

There is power struggle within the churches/disunity.

### Encouragement Towards Effective Evangelism

The responses listed above may seem discouraging or daunting, yet this tour experience presented great opportunities in my mind. Laity, the audience we’re trying to engage may feel this way, but many of them are still open. It’s up to us to show the community how we are working together to eliminate these thoughts; and we must begin offering organized religion in a way that does not come across in the manners described. Yes Laity – we have a charge to keep, and this era is not a discouraging time to be involved in evangelism—far from it!

I trust these responses from the students will remind us that the Great Commission is still operative – the gospel is “good news”—it has been good news and it always will be good news. The task we call “The Great Commission” (Matt 28:18-20) is

still in force today. In a much greater way, Christ says to each new generation of

believers, “Orders Remain Unchanged.” Evangelism, as the heartbeat of theology, directs our energy to that goal toward which the Lay Organization is moving—the return of Christ and the hastening of his kingdom. We shall be witnesses of Jesus Christ!

Simeon P. Rhoden, Past President

Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization

*Acknowledgements to Sister Dianne H. Battle, Director of Public Relations, for this opportunity to share with all of you; and I look forward to writing many more articles that will forge the Laity forward.*





## AME V-ALERT JACQUELYN DUPONT-WALKER

To: Connectional AME Church  
From: AME V-Alert Committee

**Re: AME V-ALERT..... HOLD THE DATE - NOVEMBER 8, 2022. MID-TERM ELECTIONS IN USA.** (This Election Outcome impacts the world. Especially the 38 other countries on 4 continents where the AME Church does ministry and provides services.)

The Call to Action is clear for the Entire AME Church and for AMEV-Alert. It's our time! It's our watch! The Council of Bishops declared that we would mobilize at least 1.5 million voters to the polls in 2020. That commitment was corporate and personal, leading each active bishop in the 13 USA based episcopal districts to mobilize where (s)he was shepherding. What say ye for 2022? Stay tuned!

### WHY YOUR VOTE IS IMPORTANT

The entire House of Representatives, and 1/3 of the US Senate will be elected to serve in Washington, DC. Dozens of local, county, and state offices will also be on the ballot. Thirty-six states and three territories will have elected Governors. Judgeships will be on the ballot. Sales tax initiatives will be on the ballot. Initiatives to change the quality of life, your rights as citizens, and your access to services will be on the ballot.

Legislation pending at state and federal levels can make a difference. Action in DC that will bring change to our communities and lives are: The John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2021, The Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act (HR 40), Build Back Better framework, and the fate of HBCUs (historic Black Colleges and Universities). In 47 of the 50 states, voter suppression legislation threatens our right to vote.

### MID-TERM TURNOUT HISTORY

In 2018 the voter turnout was 53% of eligible voters compared to 36% in 2014. The 2018 turnout was the highest of any midterm election since 1914 and the 2014 turnout represents the lowest. Among eligible minority voters, the turnout rate in 2018 was 51.4% Black, 40.4% Hispanic (Latinx), and 40.2% Asian Pacific Islander compared to 2014 turnout rate of 40.6% Black, 27.0% Hispanic (Latinx), and 26.9% Asian Pacific Islander. For the same elections, the white turnout rate was 57.5% in 2018 and 45.8% in 2014. Among the cultural minority eligible voters, the Latinx numbers nearly doubled from 6.8 million to 11.7 million.

What were the motivators?

Who IS/was the President? Important because that election either empowers or stops the work of the President.

2018 \_\_ Donald Trump \_\_\_\_\_ 2014 \_\_ Barack Obama \_\_\_\_\_

The US Congress has two houses: 1) US Senate (100 members) 2) US House of Representatives (435 members)

Note: There are non-voting members from DC and US Territories in each house.

Every Representative in the US House of Representatives stands for election every two years.



See below for Congressional membership by political party:

	Democrat	Republican	Other Parties
2018 - US HOUSE	235	199	1
2014 - US HOUSE	188	247	
2018 - US Senate	45	53	(counted with Democrats)
2014 - US Senate	44	54	

On November 8, 2022, we will be electing or re-electing members of Congress. Based on 2020 elections, see HOW YOUR VOTE will impact:

	Democrats	Republicans	Others
2020 - US HOUSE	222	213	
2020 - US SENATE	50	50	

(Insert Map graphics here)

**NEXT STEPS:**

The Connectional components, organizations and ministries are signing on with goals, messaging, boots on the ground, and resources. In 2022, all are ready to “keep on keepin’ on.” It takes all of us.

Partners are vital. In 2022, the partners include interfaith and community allies, and new advocates and game changers with whom we can create collaborations. If you know any who are not listed on our website, “hook us up.” Together, we will be victorious!

**NEXT MODULE:** “What You Need to Know & Be Ready For”

Research the offices for election November 8, 2022. Ask yourselves –

Am I called to Public Service? Should I seek an office?

What has been the track record of the Incumbents I will vote for?

What promising civic leaders can we encourage to seek office?

How can we impact the Judicial Justice system? Who is standing for election? Judges? District Attorneys? City Attorneys?

**REPORT** your progress to us at [www.ame-valert.org](http://www.ame-valert.org). Contact Sis “Jackie” Dupont-Walker to brainstorm and network at 213-494-9493 or [ameValert@gmail.com](mailto:ameValert@gmail.com). Most importantly, make VOTING your highest priority and urge others to vote!!





## CANOEING THE MOUNTAIN

**By: Dr. Darryl R. Williams  
St. Stephen A. M. E. Church  
Detroit, Michigan**

There is a book that I keep in my briefcase all the time because it contains what I believe to be the state of the church, but it also has a roadmap to navigate us through that rough and changing culture terrain we are presently in. The book is called, *Canoeing the Mountain*, by Todd Boslinger.

In 1805, President Thomas Jefferson sent Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to find a water route from St. Louis to the Pacific Ocean. For days they canoed their way through the waters assuming nothing would change. But along their expedition, they came upon the Rocky Mountains. Surely they could not canoe their way through mountains! Their dream of connecting America by water coast to coast had died, or was this an opportunity to navigate differently? On their expedition using something other than a canoe and a paddle. Thankfully, they chose the latter.

This is where the church finds itself, even to a greater degree because of the pandemic. We are trying to canoe ourselves through the mountains, this changed culture, when it really requires a different set of tools, methods, and thinking for successful navigation.

Boslinger rightly points out that we, both laity and clergy have been trained to be expert canoers. For example, in seminary, clergy were trained in preaching. And in the church, you can find both clergy and laity who are well trained in programming. This was fine in a culture that was Christian and to those of us who are forty or more, that's the culture in which we know! But we live in a post-Christian culture, and in that kind of culture it would be wrong to assume that those things are as important to the people now. God is calling us to lead like we never have before.. So how do we navigate this new landscape where the people won't come to a building just because you preach and program? The answer is not to do more of what we've always done. We cannot canoe through the mountains!

Twenty-first century ministry requires us to come up with new methods and models to navigate this new cultural terrain. The new paradigm is we must be P minded and go where the people are. The measure of success is not how many people come to the buildings, but how many people are we engaging? How can we embody the love of Christ in our communities and cities in new and creative ways. That is and always was the mission. And if we are true to that mission, just maybe a few more may come to the buildings.

As important as preaching and programming are, an undue emphasis upon them assumes we are living in a Christian society where if you do those things well, the people will come. But, we live in a post-Christian society, where those things are not as important, but people still need connection; they still need God's love. So we cannot canoe through these mountains (this present culture), but it requires new tools and thinking for successful navigation.

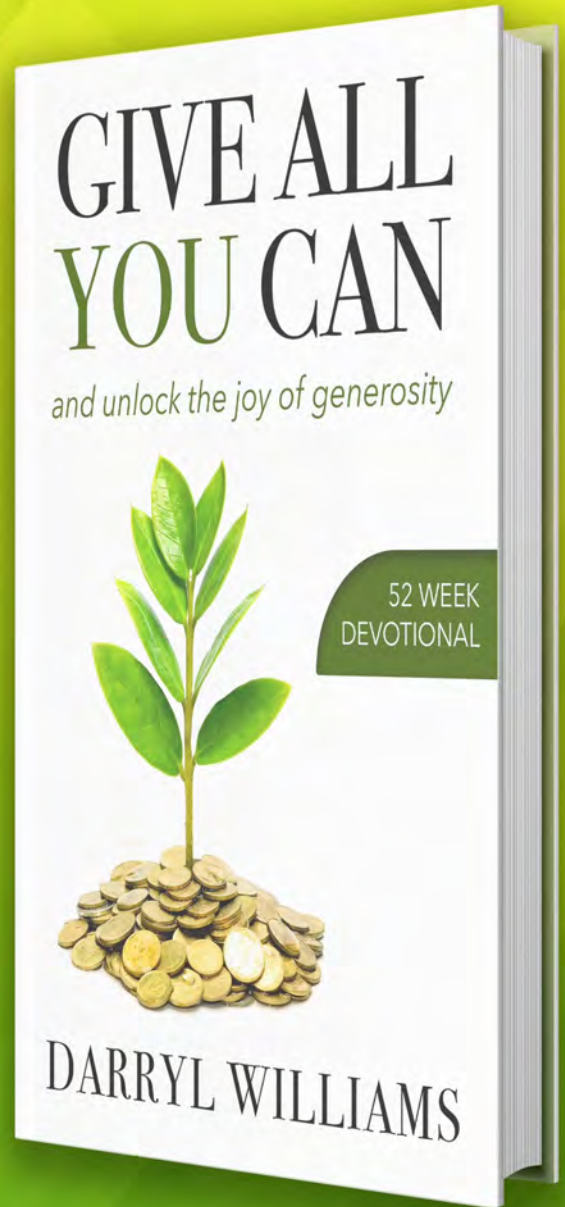
As clergy and laity trying to navigate this new cultural landscape that is quite different from what we have known, we find hope in the scripture. In the first chapter of Joshua, Joshua is about to lead the Israelites in the crossing over into the Promised Land. This expedition for them is frightening and challenging as any new venture would be. But God gives these assuring words to Joshua

“As I was with Moses, so I will be with you . . .

We are both Moses and Joshua. We are Moses when we were doing ministry in the former church friendly culture. When we would program and preach and people would come. The buildings were much fuller than they are now.

We are Joshua in the new culture ;the buildings are less full, Christianity is not as central in people's lives, but we're still tasked with serving and discipling the people. How do we navigate these mountains? The good news is just as God was with us when we were Moses, he's with us as Joshua as well, leading God's people into uncharted terrain.

*Reverend Dr. Williams can be contacted at [darryl.williams.1616@gmail.com](mailto:darryl.williams.1616@gmail.com).*



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## AHMAUD ARBERY “REST IN PEACE”

Posted: Nov 24, 2021 12:45 PM  
Updated: Nov 24, 2021 12:51 PM  
Posted By: Jessica Barnett

A jury has found the men accused of chasing down and fatally shooting Ahmaud Arbery guilty on most of their charges.

The men were each charged with one count of malice murder, four counts of felony murder, two counts of aggravated assault, one count of false imprisonment and one count of criminal attempt to commit false imprisonment.”

Travis McMichael was found guilty on all charges. Gregory McMichael was found guilty on all but the malice murder charge. William "Roddie" Bryan was found guilty on all but the malice murder, one count of felony murder and the aggravated assault charge. They all face up to life in prison.

This sparked national outrage after a video of his shooting was made public. Arbery was jogging in Brunswick, Georgia, when he was fatally shot in 2020.

The jury in the trial of three men for the death of Ahmed Arbery was made up of eleven (11) White people and one Black person, but prosecutors told CNN that they felt that when the jury heard their arguments, they would make the decision to find all three guilty, which they did. “I was hopeful based on the evidence that we presented in the case that we put forth that the jury would see the truth of what actually took place and bring justice for the Arbery family,” Cobb County senior assistant district attorney Linda Dunikoski said. “After we picked the jury, we looked at them and realized that we had very, very smart, very intelligent, honest jurors who were going to do their job which is to seek the truth. And so, we felt that putting up our case, it doesn't matter whether they were black or white, that putting up our case that this jury would hear the truth, they would see the evidence and that they would do the right thing and come back with the correct verdict which we felt they did today.”

One main goal for prosecutors Paul Camarillo, Cobb County senior assistant district attorney, said was to simply show that the defendant's claim of self-defense, simply wasn't a viable argument. “We had to show that it did not apply in this case and if they could not get past that hurdle, they never could get to self-defense,” Camarillo said. Larissa Ollivierre, Cobb County assistant district attorney, said she felt bad for Arbery's parents when one defense attorney began talking about Arbery's toenails. “I think the comments were unnecessary and they were low. and I just feel bad that Ahmad's mom and dad had to sit there and listen to all of those things,” Ollivierre said. Dunikoski said defense attorney Kevin Gough's comments about Black pastors-- though made without the jury present — was strategic. “Mr. Gough is a very, very good attorney, and he purposefully and intentionally and strategically, I believe, did what did he in an effort to attempt to insert potentially some error into the case in case he lost the case and it went up on appeal,” she said “Anybody in that position would be disappointed, would be hurt, would be shocked,” said Kevin Gough, Bryan's defense attorney, after he was convicted of murder and other charges in the death of Arbery.

"Here he is, he does everything he's supposed to do, he's fully cooperating, he's done everything that he can and now he's looking at spending the rest of his life in prison," the attorney continued as he spoke to members of the media Wednesday afternoon. Travis McMichael, who shot Arbery, and his father, Gregory McMichael, were also found guilty of murder and other charges. The three defendants are White, Arbery was Black. Gough said he planned to appeal the decision regarding his client, noting, "We believe the appellate courts will reverse this conviction." Gough was doubtful about the possibility of parole for Bryan. "At his age, 25 years before parole eligibility? I don't think parole is even something he's going to be worrying about right now," Gough said.

*CNN's Christina Maxouris contributed to this report.*



*Growth, Development and Evangelism*

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TOGETHER WE CAN  
**DEFEAT COVID-19**

# CORONA VIRUS

## AWARENESS

### COVID-19 WINTER PLAN

- Expand access to boosters
- Expand vaccinations for children
- Free at-home rapid tests
- Extend public transit mask requirements
- Stringent testing for international travelers

Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from cold to serious illnesses such as SARS and MERS.

### COMMON SIGNS

Common signs of infection include fever, cough and shortness of breath.

### PRECAUTIONS

Common measures to protect yourself are frequent hand wash, avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands and avoid close contact with sick people.





**Guidelines: Submitting Articles to “We Speak”**  
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**Brother Matikane Abednego Makiti, CLO-President**  
**Connectional Lay Organization**  
[clodopr16@gmail.com](mailto:clodopr16@gmail.com)  
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The Lay Organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Church is commissioned to teach, train, and empower its members for Lay Ministry, Global Leadership, and service following the tenets of Jesus Christ.

We Speak:

The process for submitting articles for inclusion in We Speak:

Articles should include the name of the author, date of event, and identification of district, conference, or local levels.

Articles must be two months (current) related to events of the AMEC. The “Episcopal District Director of Public Relations” is your Clergy articles will be sent to the Connectional Director of Public Relations for print. Articles MUST adhere to submission deadline date. Failure to adhere to guidelines may result in articles not being printed.

Articles must not be duplicated from previous Lay submission or any other component of the AME Church.

Articles will be subject to edits. The Director of Public Relations reserves the right to determine the layout and placement of articles within the magazine.

Articles must be no more than one page in length. A Microsoft Word compatible document (ONLY) singled spaced, font style “Times New Roman,” 12-point font size. The format to submit photos is in a JPEG, TIF, or PNG file. Photos must be credited to the photographer with approval from pictured person to publish his or her photo. Printed Photos or Hard copies is not acceptable.

Photos must not be embedded in the article. Photos must come with article as a separate attachment and identified if its your choice.

Electronic Versions of We Speak Publication and Due Dates.

Publication Months 2022: January 2022, March 2022, May 2022, July 2022, September 2022, and November 2022.

Publications Deadline: All articles are due on or before the 20th of the prior month of the publication month.

Upload Articles and photos via drop box: Click link below

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/sfh36kpw5ukyp2w/AACHuV6fn5NWsjMIXSIDlxmla?dl=0>

Share questions and concerns to: [clodopr16@gmail.com](mailto:clodopr16@gmail.com), Dianne H. Battle, Connectional Lay Organization, Director of Public Relations.



THE CONNECTIONL LAY ORGANIZATION



*Merry Christmas and  
a Happy New Year*



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**“Laity walking Humbly with God, To do Justice and to love kindness.” Micah 6:8**