

64th ANNUAL CONVENTION
FIFTH DISTRICT LAY ORGANIZATION
CHRIST OUR REDEEMER A.M.E. CHURCH
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI
JUNE 3-4, 2021

The Convention began at 10:05 a.m. CST on Thursday June 3, 2021, with a welcome by President Simeon Rhoden. Due to COVID restrictions, only 25 people were in attendance in person while everyone else attended virtually. Devotion was led by Chaplain Jene'l Sconier who offered a prayer and read the scripture from Revelations 3:20.

President Rhoden called the meeting to order at 10:14 CST and gave guidelines for those persons joining virtually. All delegates must display their full name and show their face on the video during the business sessions. If you wish to speak, you should raise your hand or put it in the chat room, otherwise you should remain muted. All delegates were asked to keep their phones on mute. President Rhoden then asked Secretary Nixietta Williams to conduct the roll call.

President Rhoden called for the Registration and Credential reports. Both committees were chaired by Sis. Judith Bradley (Finc. Sec.). There were 205 registered delegates and 200+ alternates/clergy/observers. The breakdown of conference delegates was as follows:

Pacific Northwest Conference (29), Southern California Conference (66), Desert Mountain Conference (24), California Conference (8), Midwest Conference (33) and Missouri Conference (45) for a total of 205.

These numbers were used to seat the delegation in the following order: SCC, DMC, CAC, MWC, PNW and MOC.

President Rhoden called the Rules Committee report chaired by Sis. Monice Crawford (Parl.). All delegates attending the conference virtually were panel members so that they could participate in the meeting. The members of the IT team would serve as marshals and keep the virtual meeting boundaries. All resolutions were due by 9 p.m. PST on June 3, 2021. Sis. Sylvia Payne (PNW) moved to adopt all the rules. Dr. Verda Bradley (Hist.) seconded the motion. The rules were adopted.

Dr. Verda Bradley moved to accept the agenda with any necessary changes. The agenda was accepted.

At this time, we received greetings from our presiding prelate Bishop Clement W. Fugh and from Lay Commission Chairperson Bishop E. Earl McCloud, Jr. They encouraged everyone to continue taking precautions for COVID and were interested in observing our

election process during this time of restrictions. We also received greetings from Mayor Ella Jones who is the first elected African American female mayor of Ferguson, Missouri, and a member of the A.M. E. Church.

President Rhoden called for the Election Committee chairperson, Nedra Locke (MWC) to begin the election process. Sis. Locke called for the final Nomination Committee report. Chairperson JoAnn Thompson reported that Sis. Marilyn Lovelace Grant withdrew her nomination for 2nd VP and Sis. Melba Salter withdrew her nomination for Director of Public Relations (DOPR). This left no candidates for Second Vice President and one candidate for Director of Public Relations. The only contested office was for district President. Sis. Barbara Moore (3VP) moved, and Bro. Randy Scott (CAC Pres.) seconded that the report be accepted. The motion passed. Chairperson Locke thanked the committee for their work.

Chairperson Locke called for nominations for an election secretary. Sis. Nixietta Williams (Rec. Sec.) was elected. Nominations were taken for tellers and clerks for the election. Sis. Wanda Moose (MOC) and Sis. Barbara Moore (3VP) was elected as tellers, Sis. Brenda Simpson (MOC) and Sis. Marilyn Lovelace-Grant (DOLA) was elected as clerks. The election team began to open the mailed in ballots. The election committee mailed out 205 ballots and 194 ballots were returned and received by the deadline.

Bro. Bill Dickens (PNW) and Sis. Jackie Dupont Walker (SCC) moved to have visitors give their greetings while we waited. The motion passed. While the delegation watched the election team open the ballots and cut off the ballot numbers, we received more greetings. We were greeted by the host Conference President Pamela Willams and the members of the Missouri conference Lay Organization. Both Presiding Elders of the Missouri Conference, P.E. Darlene Singer-Smith (St. Louis-Columbia) and P.E. Edmund E. Lowe (St. Louis-Cape Gir.) greeted the body and welcomed them to St. Louis. We also received greetings from the two standard bearers for the Fifth Episcopal District for the upcoming General Conference- P.E. Harold Mayberry (Candidate for Pres. of the Episcopal Committee) and Rev. Francine Brookins (Candidate for the Episcopacy). Corresponding Secretary Frances Settles acknowledged those in attendance from other districts who had checked in via the chat area.

The election process resumed, and a unanimous vote was cast by Secretary Williams for all candidates who were unopposed. The tellers only read the votes cast for President since this was the only contested office with three candidates. Two ballots were disqualified. The following persons were elected as officers of the Fifth District Lay Organization for 2021-2025:

PRESIDENT	LAMAR ROSE (MOC)
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT	PATRICIA MAYBERRY (SCC)
RECORDING SECRETARY	JACKIE PAYTON (MOC)
CORRESPONDING SEC.	FRANCES SETTLES (SCC)

FINANCIAL SEC.	FLORETTE HAMPTON (MOC)
TREASURER	JUDITH BRADLEY (SCC)
PARLIAMENTARIAN	MONICE CRAWFORD (MWC)
DIR. OF PUBLIC REL.	PAMELA WILLIAMS (MOC)
DIR. OF LAY ACTIVITIES	FAYE BROWN (PNW)
YOUNG ADULT REP.	DALLAS RICHARDSON (PNW)

The offices without candidates will have to be filled by President Rose and the Executive Board. Those offices are – Second VP, Third VP, Assistant Rec. Sec., Chaplain and Historiographer.

After the elections, Bro. Lamar Rose (1VP) assumed the chair while Pres. Rhoden gave his final President's Message. We should not let others define our potential and we should surround ourselves with those who support and encourage and us. If we follow these guidelines, we will be like the eagles and not like the chickens. Laity, It's Time to Soar! Patricia Mayberry (2VP) moved that the 5th District Lay Organization receive this address with high commendations. There were several seconds, and the motion passed. Chair Rose recognized several individuals who thanked Pres. Rhoden for his outstanding leadership over the past 10+ years. Melvin Jenkins (MWC) gave thanks on behalf of the conference presidents; Judith Bradley gave thanks on behalf of the Executive Board and the advisors; Louise Welch gave thanks on behalf of the Health Committee; and Roxanne Buchanan, Faye Brown and Dallas Richardson represented the Pacific Northwest Conference. Dr. Dorothy Vails-Weber reflected on Pres. Rhoden's start in the Lay Organization. The chair was returned to Pres. Rhoden, and we took a 15-minute wellness break from 1:12-1:27 p.m. CST.

After the break we decided to skip the reading of the minutes and instead send them to the Corresponding Secretary for dissemination to the conferences. President Rhoden recognized all the first timers in attendance. The reports from Treasurer Florette Hampton and Finc. Sec. Judith Bradley were read. For confidentiality, the details were not presented. The full report will be sent to the Corr. Sec. for disbursement. Our ending balance as of May 21, 2021, is \$53,549.32. Bro. Randy Scott (CAC) moved to accept the reports with commendations to both officers for their work. The reports were accepted.

Bro. Lamar Rose (1VP) and the finance/budget team presented the proposed budget for 2021-2022. The conference fair shares would return to their original amounts that were in place before the pandemic. Carla Stevens and Linda Smith moved for approval of the proposed budget. Several questions were raised at that time:

1. Why doesn't the DOLA have a per diem like the President and YAR? *It can be added*
2. When are the details of the scholarship account given out? *Included in Treasurer's report*

3. Can we add lines for training expenses? *Yes, for the DOLA and YAR*
4. Can we add funds for Social Action activities? *Maybe, actual figures are needed.*

The votes were cast, and the budget was adopted.

Director of Lay Activities Marilyn Lovelace Grant introduced the presenter of our first workshop, Dr. Jeffery Cooper, the General Secretary and CIO of the A.M.E. Church. Dr. Cooper did a workshop on “This is How We Do It- Good and Regular Standing in the A.M.E. Church”. Dr. Cooper gave a brief definition of “good and regular” as complying (meet or exceed) with the obligations of the organization. This requirement is listed in several organizations of the church as a prerequisite for seeking an office or position. This term first appeared in the 1896 Book of Discipline and originally only applied to laity, not clergy. In the 1900 Discipline, it was applied to the clergy, and it meant good and regular attendance. In the 2016 Discipline on page 819 a definition is given that includes the giving of a person’s time, talent, and treasure. The Lay Organization submitted legislation in 2012 to better define the term “good and regular standing”, but the legislation failed. Those people who decide if you are in “good and regular standing” are the pastors for the laity and the bishops for the clergy. Information from annual conference reports, class leaders and the steward board’s reports are used as references. Consideration needs to be given to those who have affiliate memberships and those who are participating in live-streamed activities. Whatever we do, in the church or outside the church, it should be to the glory of God. If this is followed you will be in good and regular standing.

We took a lunch break until 3:35 p.m. CST.

After lunch, Sis. Settles (Corr. Sec.) acknowledged other visitors in attendance virtually.

DOLA Grant introduced the presenters for our second workshop. Dante Buckson, Shakeia Hampton and Dallas Richardson spoke about “Building Inter-Generational Partnerships: The Value of an Age-Diverse Lay Organization”. Bro. Dante Buckson spoke on “Identity Check” and some of his main points were:

1. Identify who you are in God/Christ because God does not change
2. Follow three steps to bridge a divide- make sure everyone understands the goal; tie every proposed change to the goal; make changes/decisions that help all reach the goal
3. Inclusivity leads to productivity

Sis. Shakeia Hampton focused on “Offering Social Services that promote recruitment through Evangelism” and some of her main points were:

1. The Church and Social Services both help the people
2. Through Evangelism we bring services to the people
3. Through Social Action we mobilize the community to promote change
4. Through Social Justice we challenge injustices in the community

5. Social media is the quickest way to evangelize (share, connect, talk, meet, invite)
6. Remove all barriers and stigmas (anything different from the norm)
7. Debate vs. Mandate, Competition vs. Commission, Work of the Church vs. church work

Sis. Dallas Richardson (YAR) spoke on “Intergenerational Investments” and her main points were:

1. Adjust and prioritize relationships between all – that is what God intended
2. Have mentorships – both ends benefit
3. Have leaderships represented by all ages
4. Stay relevant
5. Be patient

This entire workshop will be available on the Fifth District Lay website.

President Rhoden asked if there were any District Officer or Conference President reports that included recommendations. All the reports will be posted on the website but the reports with recommendations will be presented on Friday. The reports from the Recording Secretary, the Corresponding Secretary, the Director of Lay Activities, the Southern California Conference, and the Missouri Conference all had recommendations. This concluded the business for Thursday June 3rd. and we adjourned for dinner and our evening worship service.

Sis. Dallas Richardson served as the Worship Leader for the evening service. Musical selections were presented by the choir of Mother Bethel AME Church and Bishop Clement W. Fugh delivered the sermon on the “Essentials to Victorious Living- Faith and A Clear Conscience” with scripture from 1 Timothy 1:18-19. We presented \$750 to Jessica Hill of the Safe House for Women in Cape Girardeau, MO for the LAOS (Lay Agape Outreach Services) award. Sis. Settles read the names of new guests who had joined the service virtually and in person. The next business day will begin at 8 a.m. PST and delegates should sign on at 7:15 a.m. PST.

FRIDAY JUNE 4, 2021

Chaplain Jene’l Sconier began the session with devotion from 9:55 a.m. CST to 10:00 a.m. President Rhoden acknowledged the presence of the AME MCAM Director; the DOLA from the 11th District and Bro. Simon Lesoko (CLO Second VP). Sec. Williams conducted the roll call. Sis. Brittany Griffin (Living Legends/Awards co-chair) was excused due to her brother being shot. Chaplain Sconier offered a special prayer to Brittany and her family.

We heard the reports with recommendations and the reports of the standing committees.

Corresponding Secretary Recommendations- Sis. Settles recommended that the local lay presidents be included in the distribution list with the conference presidents. No vote was needed as this should be standard practice.

Director of Lay Activities Recommendations – Sis. Lovelace-Grant recommended that the Evening of Elegance be held virtually from now on. This year we had a 400% increase in profits and 300 people in attendance. Bill Dickens moved for adoption and Dr. Verda Bradley seconded. After much discussion, a vote was taken, and the motion failed. (Yes-60, No-62, Abstain-11)

President Rhoden allowed Rev. Roger Richardson, the pastor of the host church Christ Our Redeemer, to greet the delegation.

Recording Secretary Recommendations- Sis. Williams recommended that all secretaries take notes during the meetings so that all information is captured. No vote was necessary since this should be standard practice. Sis Williams recommended a retention schedule be created for all the documents the secretary must keep. President Rhoden said there the ballots should be kept for three years and that there is a retention policy listed in the Discipline (no one was able to find this listed in the Discipline). No votes were necessary.

Missouri Conference Report – Pres. Pamela Williams did not have any recommendations but was allowed to give her report as the host president and as her last conference president report. During her report, President Williams commended the district officers that were also members of the Missouri Conference. President Rhoden thanked the Missouri Conference for hosting this convention and Sis. Brenda Simpson (MOC) gave special commendations to Pres. Williams on behalf of the members of the Missouri Conference.

Southern California Conference Report – Pres. Linda Smith recommended that the district provide quarterly training and that the information flow from the district down to the local levels. This would be training outside of the conventions. This was sent to the newly elected DOLA for consideration.

Pacific Northwest Conference- Pres. Bobby Brown commended Pres. Rhoden for his service as District President and thanked him for being a friend and a member of the PNW conference.

At this time, we went to the updates on the Connectional Lay Organization Biennial Convention and the General Conference. President Rhoden reported that the Biennial will be held in Orlando, Florida on July 11-12, 2021. The schedule has not been released. Observer registration is \$150 and should be completed online. Sis. Jackie Payton is the registration representative for the Fifth District Lay. We have 95 registered delegates for the Biennial. The Biennial will begin with a Worship Service on Sunday July 11th and the offering will be \$100. Please wear all white. The business sessions will begin immediately after the worship service and the elections are on the

first day of business. All the Biennial delegates will be in one room in Orlando and virtually in districts not travelling to Orlando. No one is offering transportation from the airport to the hotel, but our district may be able to work something out. Please send your travel information to your conference president, President Rhoden, and Jackie Payton by June 10, 2021. Sis. Pamela Williams volunteered to put all the information on a spreadsheet for the district. For the opening day, the Fifth district delegation is asked to wear a touch of yellow with your all-white attire.

Rev. Edgar Boyd gave updates on the General Conference. The General Conference will be held July 6-10, 2021, in Orlando, FL. The delegates will assemble in hotel assembly rooms by episcopal districts and the sessions will begin early to accommodate the delegates in South Africa. There will be a General Conference meeting on June 19th with Bishop Fugh for the 5th District delegates. There is a candidate forum on July 8th at 4 p.m. EST. The legislation may be out by June 19th. At this time, they do not know where the observers will be.

Annual Conferences- The Annual Conferences will be virtual again this year. Every conference has a RAYAC team lead, and they will offer training via Zoom. All Lay services are on Wednesdays from 4-6 p.m. and your information needs to be in one month before your conference starts. Send everything thru wetransfer.com to 5ITinfo@ame5IT.org. Pres. Rose will work with DOPR Pamela Williams, DOLA Faye Brown and YAR Dallas Richardson to create proper Lay protocol for the conferences. Dr. Dorothy Vails-Weber gave highest commendations to RAYAC and the IT Team for all the work they have done for the district over the past year.

President Rhoden recognized the Health Team that was on site at this Convention. Dr. Brown, Sis. Trotter and Sis. Welch performed daily temperature checks and made sure we followed local COVID guidelines for assemblies. Sis. Trotter was working on her birthday, so President Rhoden led the delegation in singing happy birthday to her. Sis. Settles acknowledged more visitors and then we took a 30-minute break for lunch.

At 1:20 p.m. CST we resumed with our third training session. Sis. Patricia Mayberry (1VP) presented a workshop on "Laity, It's Time to Break Loose" and some of her main points were:

1. Become Effective Laity- establish priorities, collaborate, find/use your voice
2. Develop Laity – become a visionary, implement the plan, accept the challenge
3. Move to the Next Level- Agape Love; Jesus did not exempt anyone whether sinful or broken; forgiveness is for your health; God demonstrated His love when Christ died for us
4. Bridge the Gap – Remove the spiritual cataracts that prevent us from seeing the good in others; become a trusted agent; show mutual respect
5. Leadership Directed by God – leadership is a ministry not a self-validation tool; selfless not selfish; reliance through God, not people

6. Discover your Spiritual Gifts – Everyone has at least one spiritual gift; some gifts last forever and others are only there for a season; take assessment test with clergy guidance
7. Laity Liberation Through the Word of God – Incorporate prayer in everything; step into your own being; develop patience and compassion; be Christ-led

We returned to the reports and heard from the standing committees.

AME V-ALERT/ SOCIAL ACTION – Sis. Lisa Collier asked that we keep Sis. Barbara Cox in our prayers as she continues to face health issues. Due to COVID, the committee met several challenges over the last year and was not able to obtain the voter rolls from the larger churches. Sis. Collier submitted a resolution to Remember the Tulsa Race Massacre which occurred on May 31, 1921 in Greenwood, OK (Black Wall Street); To Stand Against Voter Suppression wherever it occurs in our district (there are 600+ bills in progress across the USA); To hold watch parties for “Tulsa Burning” in each Annual Conference; To support Reparations Bills for Greenwood Survivors; and To urge all laity to support “The People’s Act”(now in the U.S. Senate) by going to Change.org and signing the petition. Sis. Jackie Dupont-Walker moved to approve and act immediately on this resolution. There were several seconds. The motion passed.

LEGISLATION- Sis. Sandra Nelson reported that the General Secretary would send the legislation to the Revisions committee soon and no new legislation will be considered at the 2021 Lay Biennial. The Connectional Lay Organization did submit some legislation, but they did not include the ones from the Fifth District, so we submitted those two pieces directly to the General Secretary. President Rhoden will send out the information on our legislation. This is Sandra’s eighth year serving as the legislation chairperson and she thanked Pres. Rhoden for assigning her to this committee. She had two recommendations: each conference president assign one person to this committee and that we support or representatives on the revisions committee (we must be on one accord). No votes were necessary to take these actions.

SCHOLARSHIPS – Dr. Dorothy Vails-Weber and the scholarship committee did receive several applications and were able to award several scholarships. The complete list of names is included in the Scholarship report.

The Awards Program – Sis. Brenda Simpson (co-chair), Pres. Simeon Rhoden and representatives of the committee presented the district lay awards, the Living Legends, and the President’s Choice Award. These are the awardees:

Evangelism Award – Sheila Roundtree (CAC)

Community Service – Lisa Collier (MOC)

Outstanding Pastor of the Year- Rev. Francine Brookins (SCC)

Outstanding Layperson of the Year – Bill Dickens (PNW)

Living Legends – Willard Anderson (CAC), Nixietta Williams (MOC), Mattie Cavitt (MOC), Esther Louise Jackson (CAC), Nona Simpkins (MOC) and Pamela Williams (MOC); They will receive their jackets at next year's convention

President's Choice Awards – Frances Settles (SCC/ Corr. Sec.) and Judith Bradley (SCC/Finc. Sec./Advisor)

TIME & PLACE REPORT – Sis. Angela Bostick gave the report of this committee. The next six conventions will be held in: California Conference (Bay Area)-2022, Midwest Conference (Kansas City, MO) -2023, Desert Mountain Conference- 2024, Pacific Northwest Conference- 2025, Southern California Conference – 2026 and Missouri Conference-2027.

CONNECTIONAL LAY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORP. (CLEDC) – The committee is still working on past financial issues and there have been no new reports or meetings with the district representatives. They will read a report at the Biennial.

MEMORIAL SERVICE – Chaplain Sconier conducted the memorial service to honor and remember the laymen soldiers who have been called home to glory.

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS – Since Pres. Matikane Makiti (CLO President) could not attend the convention, the installation ceremony was conducted by outgoing President Simeon Rhoden and Rev. Francine Brookins. The newly elected officers were called forward and took their oaths of office and were sworn in, thus assuming their roles immediately.

We acknowledged the presence of Sis. Dorothy Henderson (CLO Hist.). Several announcements of upcoming events were given. Pres. Rose gave special high commendations to outgoing Pres. Simeon Rhoden for his service to the Fifth District Lay Organization.

173 delegates were still in attendance when we closed with the Lay Benediction.

Nixietta Williams, Recording Secretary

Jackie Payton, Asst. Recording Secretary

Frances Settles, Corresponding Secretary

Simeon Rhoden, President