

President's Address
Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization
Mid-Year Focus: Reconnect. Refocus. Recommit.

Grace and peace to each of you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To our Episcopal leader, Bishop Francine A. Brookins, Supervisor Miriam J. Burnett, our Presiding Elders, pastors, conference presidents, district officers, and every faithful lay member of the Fifth Episcopal District, I greet you today with thanksgiving, expectation, and renewed purpose.

It is truly a blessing to gather once again as the Lay Organization of this great district.

As I reflect over this past year, I am reminded of the faithfulness of God and the resilience of His people. This year has been filled with challenges, opportunities, lessons, and growth. Through it all, we have remained committed to the mission of lay ministry.

This year, we moved under the banner of **Activate 2.0**, a vision centered on Mission, Music, and Mental Health. It was a call to move beyond maintenance into meaningful ministry.

And while we made progress, I must be honest with you today.

During our planning meeting, we introduced what I believe is one of the most important strategic frameworks for the future of this organization our **Activate 2.0 Mission Strategy Plan**.

That strategy was designed with one purpose in mind:

To build a sustainable and scalable leadership training model that deepens the understanding of the Lay Organization's mission, purpose, and power; equips lay members as trainers, mentors, and ministry partners; and strengthens collaboration with pastors, auxiliaries, and community partners.

It was ambitious. It was timely. It was necessary.

But if I'm transparent, while we introduced it, we did not fully implement it.

Not because the vision was wrong— but because the timing, transitions, and demands of ministry required us to pivot in ways we did not anticipate.

And today, I stand before you to say this:

What was introduced last year will become our core focus moving forward.

Because the strategy is still sound. The need is still present. And the assignment is still ours.

This plan gives us structure.

Quarter One focuses on **Lay Foundation and Alignment**, ensuring every lay member understands who we are, why we exist, and how we serve.

Quarter Two centers on **Skill Development and Activation**, moving members from knowledge into action.

Quarter Three emphasizes **Train-the-Trainer Empowerment**, building conference leaders who can multiply the work.

And Quarter Four focuses on **Multiplication and Legacy**, ensuring sustainability and district-wide impact.

This is not just a plan.

It is our pathway forward.

And as we prepare for Mid-Year, we are entering a new season under three guiding principles:

Reconnect. Refocus. Recommit.

First: Reconnect.

Reconnect to the mission.

Reconnect to the ministry.

Reconnect to each other.

Over the last few years, we've seen the impact of disconnection. Some members became distant. Some local organizations slowed down. Some conferences struggled to maintain momentum.

But now is the season to rebuild.

We must reconnect at every level—local, conference, and district.

Reconnect with our pastors.

Reconnect with our auxiliaries.

Reconnect with the young adult and youth voices that will carry this church into the future.

Reconnect with the purpose of the Lay Organization—not just as workers, but as witnesses.

This past year, I'm proud that we created spaces for connection.

Through **Blue Table Talk**, we opened dialogue.

Through **Faithful Fridays**, we united in prayer.

Through district newsletters and communications, we strengthened awareness.

Through scholarship initiatives and Lay Witness Sunday, we invested in our future.

And through collaboration with our Conference Presidents, we built stronger bridges across this district.

That matters.

Because ministry moves at the speed of relationships.

Second: Refocus.

Refocus on the essentials.

Not distractions. Not division. Not personal agendas.

But purpose.

We must refocus on training.

Training matters.

A strong church requires strong lay leadership.

We cannot expect people to lead what they do not understand.

This is why the Activate 2.0 Strategy Plan will be our priority.

We must become a district known for leadership development.

Known for doctrinal understanding.

Known for excellence in stewardship.

Known for strong class leaders, informed officers, equipped presidents, and empowered members.

Mid-Year will become more than a meeting.

It will become a training ground.

A leadership lab.

A place where learning becomes action.

Because the future of our organization depends on how well we prepare people now.

And third: Recommit.

Recommit to the work.

Recommit to accountability.

Recommit to sacrifice.

Let me say this plainly:

The Lay Organization cannot thrive on a few people doing all the work.

It takes all of us.

Every conference. Every local church. Every officer. Every member.

Recommitment means showing up.

Recommitment means being prepared.

Recommitment means investing our time, talent, and resources into the Kingdom.

And it means embracing the uncomfortable work of growth.

Growth requires discipline. Growth requires trust. Growth requires change.

And I believe God is calling this district into another level.

At Mid-Year, our focus will be clear:

We will begin strengthening Quarter One of this strategy, Foundation and Alignment.

We will reinforce our identity.

Clarify our mission.

Strengthen our partnerships with pastors and Presiding Elders.

And begin preparing conference leaders to become trainers and builders.

This is how we scale the work.

This is how we create sustainability.

This is how we leave legacy.

To our Conference Presidents, I thank you.

Your collaboration this year has been critical.

Your willingness to support district efforts, engage your conferences, and align with the vision has helped us move forward.

To our District Officers, thank you for your labor, your sacrifice, and your commitment.

To every lay member, thank you for staying in the work.

And to Bishop Brookins, thank you for your leadership, your support, and your vision for this district.

As we move ahead, let us remember:

This next season is not about doing more.

It's about doing what matters most.

Reconnect with the mission. Refocus on the work. Recommit to the call.

And if we do that—

the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization will not just grow...

it will multiply.

It will train leaders.

It will strengthen churches.

It will transform communities.

And it will leave a legacy that outlives us all.

The work is before us.

The vision is clear.

The time is now.

Let us move forward together, Activated. Aligned. And fully committed to the Kingdom.

May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization.

Thank you.