

# "FIRST IN TOUCH"



## FIRST EPISCOPAL DISTRICT LAY NEWSLETTER

March 2023

Mid-Year Convention Edition

*"The purpose of this organization shall be to organize and train the laity of the African Methodist Episcopal Church so that each layperson may utilize to the maximum the abilities and skills granted by God, in assisting with the improvement and extension of God's kingdom, and creating happiness, peace, and harmony among its members."*

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### *Greetings from the First Episcopal District Lay President Cheryl Hammond Hopewell*



and the Lay Organization.

We had another wonderful Virtual Annual Meeting in July, and we give God the Glory. I would like to thank our DOLA, Brother Thomas Davis who is in charge of programming and worship. Our theme was "Reporting and Accountability." For our Friday night worship, our speaker was the 9th District Lay President, Sister Bernella Knight Rose. She truly blessed us with her message. Many from the 9th District joined us in our virtual worship including

I am thankful to Almighty God for His many, many blessings and I am grateful to each of you for all you do for African Methodism

her Bishop. Unfortunately, the Lord called her home in October. We will miss our dear sister. We thank all of those who participated in the worship experience.

On Saturday, we took care of business with the Memorial Service and our Annual Reports. We thank the elected officers, conference presidents and committee chairpersons who got their reports into me in a timely manner so they could be sent out ahead of time. It also works well with the reports all being uniform.

Our workshop was excellent. It was also on "Reporting and Accountability" and was presented by the Connectional Lay Organization DOLA, Sister Patricia Wright.

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# Greetings from the First Episcopal District Lay President

(Continued)

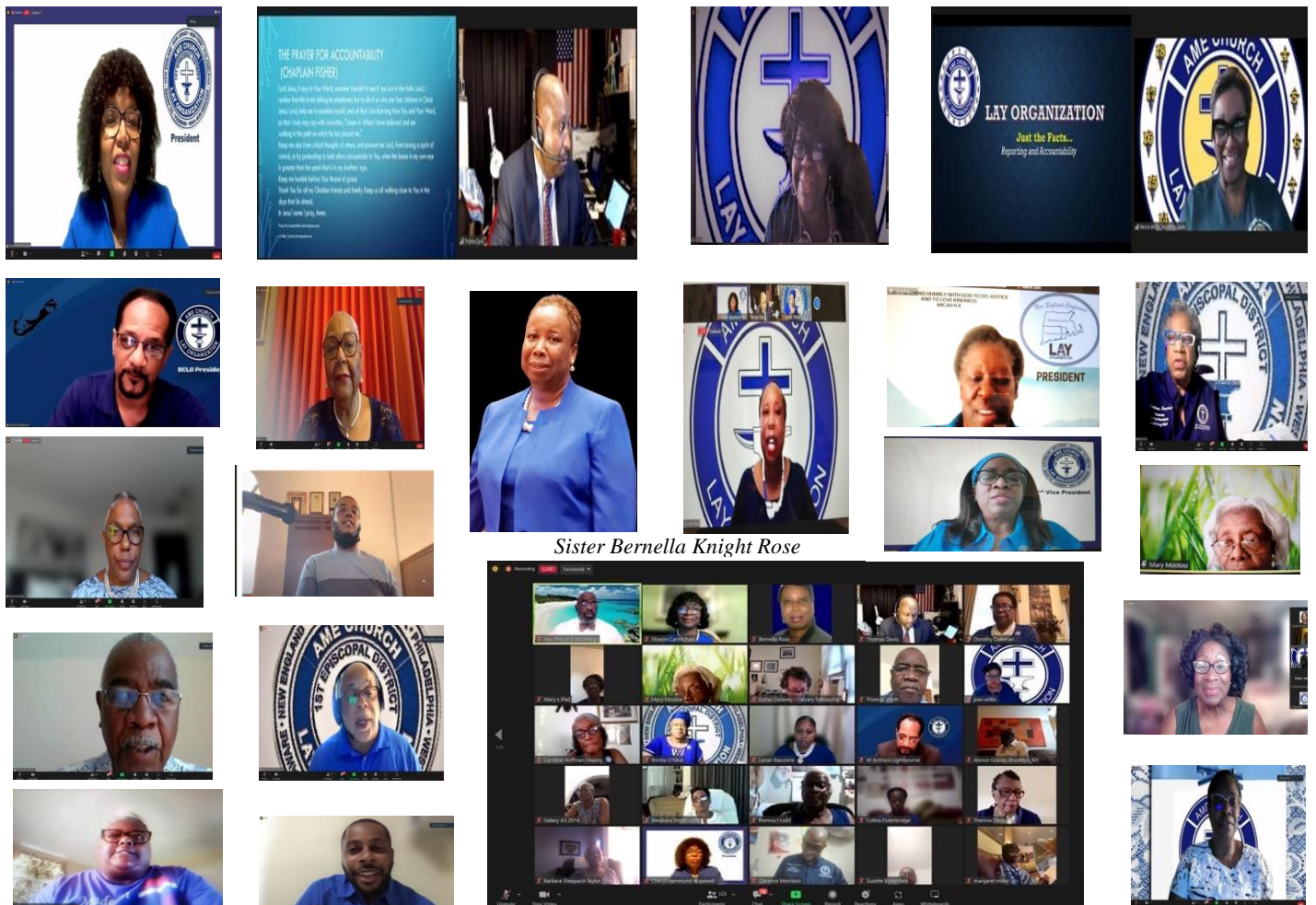
We are looking forward to our Mid-Year Convention hosted by the Western New York Conference in March 2023 in Rochester, New York. Our theme is “Serve with Integrity, Strive for Excellence.” We have outstanding presenters in the persons of the Rev. Kevin Taylor, the Rev. James Simmons, Dr. Charmaine Cohen, the Rev. Dr. Faye Banks Taylor, and Sister Clara Winchell. Our worship preacher is the Rev. Paul J. Thomas. We know we will be blessed by what is in store.

Thank you for all you do to make the First District Lay Organization something we can be proud of. Your efforts are very much appreciated. Together we will continue to build a strong, solid lay ministry. Special thanks to our elected officers, conference presidents, committee chairpersons and our advisors. I truly believe our team is the best team in any Episcopal District. None of it is possible without YOU. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart. Please know that:

*“We can do all things through Christ who gives us strength”. Philippians 4:13*

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## A Snapshot of the First Episcopal District Lay Virtual Annual Meeting – July 22-23, 2022



Sister Bernella Knight Rose



*Congratulations Brother Anthony Williams !*





# ***“FIRST IN TOUCH”***

## **Spotlight on Our Conferences**





# Delaware Conference Lay Organization (DCLO)

Sharon D. Drew, President

Submitted by President Sharon Drew

## Annual Recognition Banquet



The Delaware Conference Lay Organization celebrated its First Recognition Banquet since the Covid Pandemic began. After careful consideration regarding Covid, the Ways and Means Committee set out to get back to some of

our normal activities. So, they decided to have their first banquet last Fall. The Banquet was held on a beautiful Saturday afternoon, October 22, 2022 at the Modern Maturity Center in Dover, Delaware. The afternoon highlighted the Men of the Delaware Annual Conference. The men included young adults or more seasoned seniors who was honored by the Honorees and participants on the program were males from various churches. What a wonderful sight to see the twenty-two male Honorees seated before us as we honored them for their outstanding contributions to their various churches. Included among the Honorees was one Pastor who was pleasantly surprised to be considered as one of the Pastor Honorees for 2022. This was a new addition for the Ways and Means Committee.

The Lay Organization entertained over four hundred persons for this event. What a blessing to Behold. Presiding Elder Ellis B. Loudon, Dover District, Presiding Elder Dr. Stanley Justice, and Consultant Darlene Justice of the Wilmington District, Retired Presiding Elder Richard H. Worthy and Consultant, Rev. Vera Worthy, First Episcopal District President Cheryl Hammond Hopewell and her spouse, Brother Irvin Hopewell, many pastors of the Delaware Annual Conference, family members, and friends were all in attendance and it proved to be an exciting and spirit filled afternoon.

Brother Daniel Mitchell of Bethel AME Church in Wilmington was the Master of Ceremonies for the occasion. Presiding Elder Ellis B. Loudon, Dover District, Brother Gary Dawkins, Plain Truth Baptist Gospel Church, Hartley, Delaware and Brother Calvin Suggs, Trinity AME Church, Middletown, Delaware shared their excellent musical talents, and each brought the house down. What a blessing we received from each soloist. The Pastor of each church introduced their honoree or the Lay President from the church if the pastor was not available.

The following persons were Honorees for the 2022 Recognition Banquet:

Brother Linden W. Tunnell, Jr.  
Brother Joseph Ward  
Rev. Joseph Walston  
Brother William Majett  
Brother Hector Serrano  
Brother Tony Hall  
Brother Roland Fooks  
Dr. Garcia "Gus" Walker  
Brother Charles Fountain  
Brother William Palmer  
Brother James Riley  
Brother Drequan Harman  
Brother Charles Horsey

Antioch AME Church, Frankford, DE  
Asbury AME Church, Chester, PA  
Bethel AME Church, Smyrna, DE  
Bethel AME Church, Wilmington, DE  
Burton Chapel AME Church, Milton, DE  
Emmanuel AME Church, Hartley, DE  
Graham AME Church, Greenwood, DE  
John Wesley AME Church, Dover, DE  
Macedonia AME Church, Seaford, DE  
Mt. Calvary AME Church, Concord, DE  
Mt. Friendship AME Church, Smyrna, DE  
Mt. Hebron AME Church, Linwood, PA  
Mt. Pisgah AME Church, Laurel, DE

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# Delaware Conference Lay Organization (DCLO)

(Continued)

Brother Les Berry  
Brother Edward Johnson  
Brother Thomas Drummond  
Brother Edward Garrison  
Brother Boehnflahn "BJ" Herring  
Brother Dana Brinkley  
Brother Robert Grady  
Brother Dennis Bordley

Mt. Plymouth AME Church, Felton, DE  
Mt. Zion AME Church, Dover, DE  
Mt. Zion AME Church, Ellendale, DE  
New Beginnings Community AME Church, Frederica, DE  
New Elizabeth AME Church, Glasgow, DE  
Ringgold Chapel AME Church, Middletown, DE  
Trinity AME Church, Middletown, DE  
Zion AME Church, Camden, DE

Congratulations to the Rev. Marcus Bridell, Pastor of Trinity AME Church, Middletown, Delaware who was the surprise Pastor Honoree for 2022.

Hats off to the Ways and Means Committee for another outstanding and successful event. We look forward to the next activity for the Delaware Conference Lay Organization.



Rev. Marcus Bridell



President Sharon D. Drew,  
Delaware Conference Lay Organization



Pictured above:  
L to R: President Hopewell,  
Irvin Hopewell,  
PE Ellis B. Louden



Pictured above:  
PE Dr. Stanley Justice



L to R: President Drew with  
Honorees

# *New Jersey Conference Lay Organization (NJCLO)*

*Elizabeth Clark, President*

Submitted by President Elizabeth Clark



The New Jersey Conference Lay Organization held their Annual Meeting on October 15, 2022, which included the election of new officers and a worship service. First Episcopal District Lay President, Cheryl Hammond Hopewell, conducted the election and installation of the officers.

The Reverend Crystal James, Pastor of Union AME Church in Allentown, New Jersey, preached a wonderful message titled, “A New Start” from Romans 12:1-8.

Following are the newly elected officers:

|                                          |                                                |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| President - Elizabeth Clark              | Financial Secretary – Keith Coston             |
| First Vice President – Jannie Foxworth   | Treasurer – Wanda Duckett                      |
| Second Vice President – Melanie Woods    | Young Adult Representative - Tracee Baker      |
| Third Vice President – Elfrieda Johnson  | Chaplain - Evangelist Rebecca Sellers          |
| Recording Secretary – Carol Massey       | Parliamentarian – Andrea Felder                |
| Corresponding Secretary – Brenda Skinner | Director of Lay Activities – Francine J. Davis |

On October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022, newly elected New Jersey Conference Lay Organization (NJCLO) President Elizabeth Clark held a “Breakfast with the President” event. During this workshop, President Clark presented the following vision for the NJCLO for 2022-2024 to the conference:

“The mind of a person plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps”, Proverbs 16:4, New Standard Bible.

“This is a New Beginning”

Our vision for the New Jersey Conference Lay Organization is to revive our conference by promoting Love, Peace, and Unity among our Lay Sisters and Brothers.

- We will re-establish our Fifth Sunday Service Fellowship with the local churches in the New Jersey Conference.
- Looking forward, our conference must start thinking of new ways for how we want people to see the Lay Organization, for now and the future.
- NJCLO will develop partnerships in which we will respect each other’s callings. We must also be honest and transparent with one another to help build the Kingdom of God.
- Finally, we must not forget our Founder Richard Allen, who laid the foundation of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

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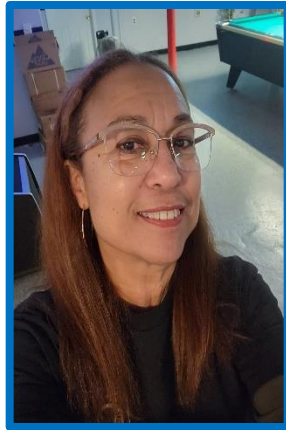
# New Jersey Conference Lay Organization (NJCLO)

(Continued)

## Officers



Jannie Foxworth – 1<sup>st</sup> VP



Melanie Woods – 2<sup>nd</sup> VP



Elfrieda Johnson – 3<sup>rd</sup> VP



Carolyn Massey – Rec.  
Secretary



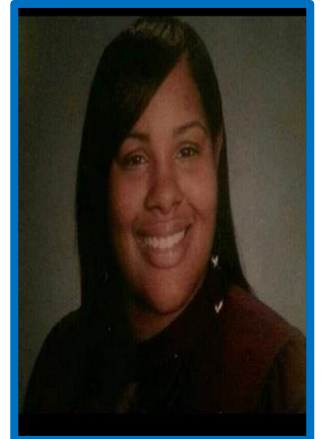
Brenda Skinner – Corr.  
Secretary



Keith Coston – Financial  
Secretary



Wanda Duckett – Treasurer



Tracee Baker - YAR



Evangelist Rebecca Sellers - Chaplain



Andrea Felder - Parliamentarian



Francine J. Davis - DOLA



***Mae L. Felder Lay Organization Worship Service Uplifts Organized Laity***

On Sunday, November 13, 2022, the Lay Organization at Bethel AME Church, Freeport, New York celebrated its Annual Lay Organization Worship Service. The highlight of the service was the attendance and participation of several of the elected officers of the New York Conference Lay Organization. The spirit-filled worship service was well-attended, both in person and virtually.

Pastor Stephen Michael Lewis and the laity of Bethel Church were pleased with the presence of the organized lay leaders from the New York Conference and the district. Sister Bonita O'Neal, president of the New York Conference Lay Organization, served as the guest speaker and delivered a powerful message which focused on a true model of lay teaching and training. The worship service was further enhanced by greetings from Sister Cheryl Hammond-Hopewell, President, First Episcopal District; and program participants New York Conference Lay Organization officers Sister Joyce Washington, Recording Secretary; Dr. Alicia Collins Dennis, Director of Lay Activities; Sister Carol Francis, Director of Public Relations; and Sister JoAnn McCaslin, President, Lay Organization at Bethel A.M.E. Church, Babylon. The theme

of love and appreciation for organized laity was uplifted throughout the service.

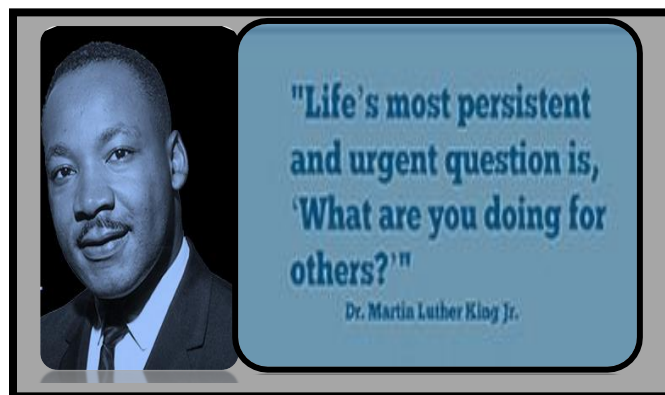
Following in the tradition of the pre-pandemic years, local Lay President Velma Rhodes-Ward and members hosted a post-service reception in the Fellowship Hall.

Guests and members of the congregation enjoyed light refreshments, shared memories of past Lay Organization gatherings, took photos and reflected on how to model the "global witness ministry" in their daily lives.

Gerald H. Tootle, Director of Public Relations

Wilma H. Tootle, Director of Lay Activities

Article Collaborators



Continued on Page 10

# New York Conference Lay Organization (NYCLO)

(Continued)



L to R: NY Conference Lay President Bonita O’Neal and local Lay President Velma Rhodes-Ward



L to R: Sisters Joyce Washington, Conference Recording Secretary, JoAnn McCaslin, President, Bethel A.M.E., Babylon, NY, Bonita O’Neal, Velma Rhodes-Ward and Wilma Tootle, local Lay Director of Lay Activities



Sister Bonita O’Neal, New York Conference Lay President



Brother Gerald Tootle, Sister Shirley McAllister, Sister Wilma Tootle, Sister Mattie Gates, Sister Bonita O’Neal, Sister Velma Rhodes-Ward, Sister Christine Fagin, Sister Yvonne Ladson, Sister Vera Morant.



# Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization (PCLO)

Andree' Turner, President

Submitted by Constance Williams, PCLO Director of Public Relations

## PCLO Awards Luncheon Lauds the Best of the Vineyard

*“since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving”. Colossians 3:24 NIV*

October 1, 2022 at 12 noon at the Springfield Country Club in Springfield PA was a remarkable moment in the life and history of the Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization. This gathering represents the PCLO's legacy of blessing and acknowledging those members of the laity who have provided above and beyond service work in the vineyard known as the local churches in the Philadelphia Annual Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. What made the occasion particularly special was that this signature event was always held annually, but due to the Covid 19 pandemic, was not held in 2020 or 2021. The last pre-pandemic Awards Luncheon was held in 2019 which led to a three-year loss of the wonderful experience of fellowship, good food, highly spirited messages, and inspirational music and singing culminating in awards and expressions of appreciation to those being honored for their dedication and hard work.

The looming question was, “Can the 2022 Awards Luncheon match the excellence and joy of previous ones during persistent rules and limitations required by Covid 19?” Was it possible to hold a memorable and enjoyable event in 2022 that would be as special and festive to those deserving appreciation and acknowledgement of their work and service to Christ and Church?

Sister Bernice Green of Bethel AME Church in Ardmore, PA and Sister Yvette Bayne of Mother Bethel were appointed to chair the Awards Luncheon by President Andree A. Turner, Sr. This proved to be a major factor in creating a successful were able to lead and inspire their committee. The result was a wonderful celebratory event that

was different but certainly maintained the standard and joy of previous occasions.

After a musical prelude by Brother Earl Knight III, PCLO Director of Music, Sister Cynthia Douse, PCLO 3rd Vice President, introduced Dais guests as they processed in. Sister Phyllis Ruffin, Local Lay President of St. Paul AME Church in Elmwood, introduced Brother Kevin Lamb of Jones Tabernacle AME Church, who served as Master of Ceremonies. The Laymen's Hymn, table blessing by Sister Juanita Bryant, PCLO Chaplain; the Welcome and recognition of Special Guests and 26 Unsung Heroes by Sister Shirley Moore-Harris; the Occasion by Sister Anita Hannah Matthews, of Monumental AME Church Steelton, PA and a selection by Sister Shenelle Cooper proceeded the meal.

After lunch, Brother Shawn Lee, Local Lay President of Bethel AME Church in Bryn Mawr, PA, and Historiographer of the First District Lay Organization, received his honors as **Lay Person of the Year**. Brother Shawn joyfully responded to much applause and cheers with humble thanks as he spoke of his love and regard for the laity and the work of service he has been blessed to do. The Unsung Heroes were then presented with their awards.

The audience received encouraging remarks from the chairs of the luncheon, PCLO President Andree A. Turner, Sr., and First Episcopal District Lay President and Corresponding Secretary of the CLO, Sister Cheryl Hammond Hopewell. The closing prayer was given by Reverend Glenn Shepherd, Pastor of Bethel A ME Church in Bryn Mawr, PA.

The event ended with a festive, triumphant atmosphere and the Lay Benediction. At the end of the day, there was a mood of joy and satisfaction.

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# Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization (PCLO)

(Continued)

All those who were honored felt appreciated and thankful to God and the Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization. The 2022 Awards Luncheon was a success and a blessing to all the honorees, attendees and the PCLO.

“May we stand before Thine alter, pledging Lord to work for Thee,  
In the Vineyard, in the pastures, Let us, Lord Thy Pilgrims be” **The Laymen’s Hymn**



Left: President Andree A. Turner with PCLO Unsung Heroes 2022



At the podium: Sister Bernice Green - Chair, Brother Shawn James Lee - PCLO Lay Person of the Year, President Andree A. Turner, Sr.






# "FIRST IN TOUCH"

## Inspirations

Submitted by Sharon Carmichael – First Episcopal District Lay DOPR

### Commemorating Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Black History Month

Rarely do we find men who willingly engage in hard, solid thinking. There is an almost universal quest for easy answers and half-baked solutions. Nothing pains some people more than having to think.



• Martin Luther King, Jr.

"LOVE IS THE ONLY FORCE CAPABLE OF TRANSFORMING AN ENEMY INTO A FRIEND."



"IF YOU CAN'T FLY THEN RUN, IF YOU CAN'T RUN THEN WALK, IF YOU CAN'T WALK THEN CRAWL, BUT WHATEVER YOU DO YOU HAVE TO KEEP MOVING FORWARD."

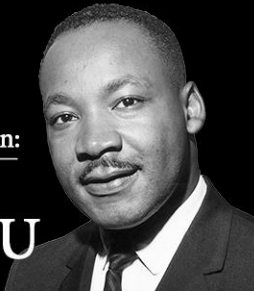
~Martin Luther King Jr.

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

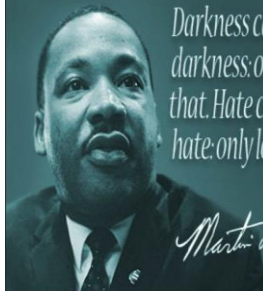
— Martin Luther King, Jr.

www.EmpowerNetworkVIPs.com

Life's most persistent and urgent question: What are YOU doing for others?




Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.




Martin Luther King Jr.

INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS A THREAT TO JUSTICE EVERYWHERE.




REVEREND, MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

"ONE HAS A MORAL RESPONSIBILITY TO DISOBEY UNJUST LAWS"



- MARTIN LUTHER KING JR

"Everything that is done in the world is done by hope."



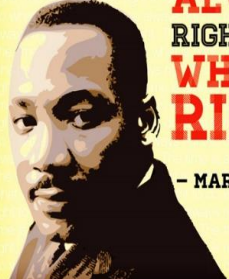
"OUR LIVES BEGIN TO END THE DAY WE BECOME SILENT ABOUT THINGS THAT MATTER"

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR

fb.com/TraumaAndDissociation

THERE IS NO RELIGION HIGHER THAN TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

"THE TIME IS ALWAYS RIGHT TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT."



- MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.



# ***First In Touch***



***International Health Commission: AME Purple Sunday (Virtual)  
March 19, 2023 4:00 pm (EST) Zoom Call***

***CLO Executive Board Meeting (Virtual)  
April 14-15, 2023***

***First Episcopal District  
Planning Meeting  
June 2023  
First Episcopal District Plaza, Philadelphia, PA***

***Council of Bishops and General Board  
June 19-21, 2023  
New Orleans, LA***

***Connectional Lay Organization 38<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention  
June 26 - 30, 2023  
Hilton Chicago Hotel  
720 S. Michigan Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60605***

**Bishop Julius H. McAllister, Sr.**  
Presiding Prelate  
1st Episcopal District, AMEC  
3801 Market Street  
Suite 300  
Philadelphia, PA 19104  
215-662-0506

**First District Lay Officers**

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Havertown, PA 19083  
(610) 853-0913

**Donna-Lee Chandler-Smith**  
1st Vice President

**Wanda Duckett**  
2nd Vice President

**Robin Batson**  
3rd Vice President

**Sharon Drew**  
Recording Secretary

**Dorothy Chandler**  
Asst. Recording Secretary

**Lanan Bascome**  
Corresponding Secretary

**Cheryl L. Ford**  
Treasurer

**Sandra Mosby**  
Financial Secretary

**Terri Fisher**  
Chaplain  
Shawn Lee

**Shawn Lee**  
Historiographer

Parliamentarian

**Thomas Davis**  
Director of Lay Activities

**Sharon Carmichael**  
Director of Public Relations

**Jyzelle Steplight**  
Young Adult Representative



***First Episcopal District Lay Organization***

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*Living a Global Witness Ministry that*  
**TRANSFORMS, TRANSCENDS, AND LIBERATES**