

"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."

"FIRST IN TOUCH"



FIRST EPISCOPAL DISTRICT LAY NEWSLETTER

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February 2026

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Greetings from the First Episcopal District Lay President

Linda C. Gant



Greetings Laity of the First Episcopal District,

Grateful! Grateful! I am so thankful to serve as President of the First Episcopal District Lay Organization, and the work is truly divine. I can't thank God enough for this enormous opportunity, and I am excited and feel purposeful as we continue this journey together. We have journeyed through an amazing time during the 39th Session of the Connectional Lay

Organization Biennial held in Atlanta GA. I want to thank the delegation for their commitment to serving.

As we embarked on our theme of "Next Level Laity – God at the Center – Ready to Serve," we held a successful Virtual Annual Meeting. We are grateful to Dr. Eyerce Armstrong-Poston, the DOLA, for her diligent work and dedication to the event. Appreciation is extended to our workshop presenters: Bro. Juan Roach, Sis. Tonie Schoolfield and Sis. Katrina Smith. We are thankful to Rev. Darien Jones, Pastor of Mount Zion A.M.E. Church, Dover, DE, who delivered the sermon during the worship service. Additionally, gratitude is expressed to President Sharon Drew and the Delaware Conference Lay Organization for their excellent hosting of the event.

Looking ahead to the work that is before us, it is recognizable that no one person can do it alone, and that it is because of the dedication and commitment of members like you, and for that, I say "thank you."

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Greetings from the First Episcopal District Lay President

(continued)

As we move forward, our continued focus is on the use of collaboration of the gifts and talents of our members, as well as clergy, while exploring new opportunities that will elevate us to the next level, building upon our legacy.

Our continued prayer is, “May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us, yes, establish the work of our hands,” as stated in Psalm 90:17.

Below are highlights of activities this journey has brought me on thus far:

July – I attended Aspire 2025, held in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, where we participated in the community outreach project, donating several items to the Domestic Violence Shelter. Attended the 200th Church Anniversary of Bethel A.M.E. Church in New Bedford, MA where Rev. Dr. Sandra Whitley serves as Pastor.

August – I attended the Celebration of Life Service for Sis. Karen Jones-Williams, the sister of our financial secretary, Sis. Cheryl L. Ford, in Philadelphia, PA, and the Celebration of Life Service for Sis. Francis Mosby, the mother of our treasurer, Sis. Sandra Mosby, in Bloomfield, CT.

September – Attended monthly meeting of the New York Conference Lay Organization with Dr. Alicia Collins-Dennis serving as President. It was an enlightening experience to see laity in motion, as the conference officers gave reports, and the workshop focused on the objectives of the organization, which is the focus of the district. I attended the New Jersey Conference Lay Unsung Hero Luncheon with Sis. Elizabeth Clark serves as President. A great time was had as we witnessed the honorees being showered with gifts of love. I also attended the Campbell A.M.E. Church Lay Annual Day, virtually, where Sis. Marie Butler is the President. I attended the 180th Church Anniversary of Mount Zion A.M.E. Church, where Rev. Alvin Riley serves as Pastor, in Middletown, RI. I attended the 100 Men of Color in support of Rev. Kevin T. Taylor, Pastor of Israel A.M.E. Church in Albany, NY, and Rev. Marcus McCullough, Pastor of Bethel A.M.E. Church, Springfield, MA, who were being honored

October – I attended the Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization Annual Luncheon with Bro. Kevin Lamb serves as President. I was the guest speaker for St. Matthews A.M.E. Church in Orange, New Jersey, where Rev. Melvin Wilson is Pastor and Sis. Kathleen Turpin-Merritt is the local lay President. I traveled with the First District YPD to Stamford, CT, for their weekend district meeting; I attended First Bethel A.M.E. Church Lay Day in Harlem, NY, with the Edith Bartley Cartledge Lay Organization. Bro. Simeon Rhoden gave a powerful message. I attended the First District Church School Seminar at Mount Zion A.M.E. Church in New Brunswick, New Jersey. I attended the Alpha Nu Chapter's 60th Anniversary Gala in Norwalk, CT, where Sis. Josephine Fulcher-Anderson, Advisor to the President, was honored.

November – We held a virtual General Election Prayer Vigil, where the prayer warriors from the seven conferences led us to the throne of grace. I attended the Memorial Service for Sis. Tracee Baker, my Young Adult Advisor. I attended the annual Lay Days of Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church, Hartford, CT, with the Crosby L. Waite Lay Organization, with Sis. Linda Halloway is President, and Bethel Bloomfield, with the Priscilla Green Lay Organization, with Bro. Henry McMillan is President. I attended the Holy Convocation weekend held at Greater Allen A.M.E. Church in Queens, New York. I traveled to the 9th Episcopal District's Planning Meeting in support of Bishop Samuel L. Green, Sr., as the guest preacher.

December – Attended the Connectional Lay Organization Executive Board Meeting (Virtually); I traveled to the Advent Services of Western New York, New Jersey, New York, Delaware, New England, and Philadelphia.

January – Attended the Celebration of Life Service for Bro. James “Ollie” Ford, husband of Sis. Cheryl L. Ford in Philadelphia, PA. Preparing to attend the WMS Learning Experience being held in Cherry Hill, NJ, and also the 38th Session of Church Growth Seminar being held at Mother Bethel in Philadelphia.

The Work is ALL Divine!

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Greetings from the First Episcopal District Lay President

(continued)

This scripture continues to inspire me in this journey: “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” Colossians 3:17.

Blessings,

Linda C. Gant

Sis. Linda C. Gant - President



NY Conference Lay Annual Meeting



Mt Zion 180 Church Anniversary



Mt Zion 180 Church Anniversary



100 Men of Color



Philadelphia Unsung Hero Luncheon



St Matthew Annual Lay Day

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Greetings from the First Episcopal District Lay President

(continued)



First District YPD



First District YPD



Edith Cartlege Annual Lay Day



Edith Cartlege Annual Lay Day



Edith Cartlege Annual Lay Day



Edith Cartlege Annual Lay Day



Edith Cartlege Annual Lay Day

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*Greetings from the First Episcopal District Lay President
(continued)*



Church School Seminar



Alpha Nu Gala



Tracee Baker Memorial



Tracee Baker Memorial



Tracee Baker Memorial



Holy Convocation

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*Greetings from the First Episcopal District Lay President
(continued)*



Crosby L. Waite Annual Lay Day



WNY Conference Advent Service



NJ Conference Advent Service



WNY Conference Advent Service



Ninth Episcopal District Planning Meeting



Ninth Episcopal District Planning Meeting



"FIRST IN TOUCH"



Spotlight on our Conferences





Delaware Conference Lay Organization (DCLO)

Submitted by Dr. Eyerce Armstrong-Poston, President

Giving Honor to Whom Honor Is Due

On Saturday, October 4, 2025 laity, pastors and community converged to honor the fathers and mothers of the Delaware Conference African Methodist Episcopal Churches. This glorious occasion will forever be remembered for its gathering of living history. The local pastors of each honoree offered generous and kind words highlighting their laity service.

Solos were rendered by Presiding Elder Stanley Justice, Calvin Suggs and Reverend Justin Powell.

Our nonagenarian honorees were Brother Maurice Gray, Sr., Sister Bertha Cole Freeman, Mother Marion Cannon, Sister Margaret Johnson and Mother Alpaine Wilson.

Other recognized honorees included Rev. Carl Hare, Beverly Sage, Eileen Edwards, Janet Steward, Lorraine Smith, Rev. Joan Sudler, Percell Parker, Henrietta Wilson, Annie Washington, Dorothy Harmon and Rose Poole.

Delaware Conference Lay Organization Nonagenarian Honorees



Mother Marion Cannon,
Dickerson Chapel – Millsboro



Brother Maurice Gray, Sr.,
Bethel, Wilmington



Mother Bertha Cole Freeman
Emmanuel, Hartly



Mother Margaret Johnson,
Mt. Hebron Hook, PA



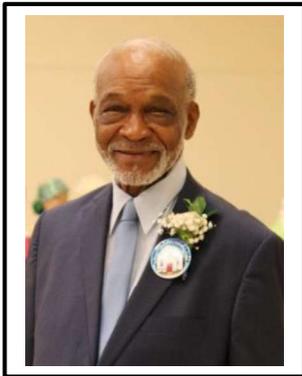
Mother Alpaine Wilson,
Mt. Friendship, Smyrna

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Delaware Conference Lay Organization

(continued)

Delaware Conference Lay Organization Honorees



Rev. Carl Hare -
Bethel, Smyrna



Mother Beverly Sage -
Bethel, Milton



Sister Eileen Edwards -
New Zion AMEC



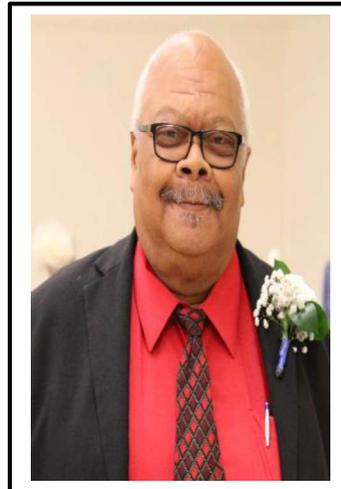
Sister Janet Steward -
St. Paul AMEC



Sister Lorraine
Emalene Smith -
St. George AMEC



Rev. Joan Sudler –
Mt. Zion, Dover



Brother Purcell Parker –
Prospect AMEC



Sister Henrietta Wilson –
Trinity, Middletown



Sister Annie Washington –
New Elizabeth, Newark



Sister Dorothy Harmon -
Mt Zion, Ellendale



Sister Rose Poole -
Macedonia, Seaford

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Celebrating Sister Sharon D. Drew



The Legacy and Laity Service of the Immediate-Past President of the Delaware Conference Lay, Sister Sharon D. Drew, was held on Saturday, January 31, 2026 at Bethel AME Church in Wilmington, Delaware. The worship experience celebrated the dedication and spirit of Sister Drew's team building leadership, her wisdom and humility, 6 years of service as President of the Delaware Conference Lay Organization, and 6 years of service as the local President of the Katherine B. Ross Lay Organization.

Sister Drew also served as the Recording Secretary of the First Episcopal District Lay Organization under the leadership of Past President Dr.

Cheryl Hammond-Hopewell, and the local Recording Secretary of the Katherine B. Ross Lay Organization under the leadership of the Past President, the late Dr. Martin Drew.

On Saturday, November 1st and November 31st, 2025 the Delaware Conference Lay Organization elected the following new officers:

- **President** - Dr. Eyerce Armstrong-Poston, Ph.D.
- **First Vice President** - Sister Jolisa Baker
- **Second Vice President** - Sister Sandra Griffin
- **Third Vice President** - Sister Cecelia Sanders
- **Recording Secretary** - Sister Karen Thomas
- **Corresponding Secretary** - Sister Louise Hudson
- **Chaplain** - Sister LaVerne Blanks
- **Treasurer** - Sister Ronell Brown
- **Financial Secretary** - Sister Katrina Smith
- **Parliamentarian** - Brother Jeffery Terry



Dr. Eyerce Armstrong-Poston, President
Delaware Conference Lay Organization



New Jersey Conference Lay Organization (NJCLO)

*Submitted by Sister Francine Davis, DOLA
Sister Elizabeth Clark, President*

New Jersey Conference Lay Organization Unsung Hero Jazz Luncheon

Congratulations to the New Jersey Conference Lay Organization for successfully hosting their Unsung Hero Jazz Luncheon on Saturday, September 20, 2025, at Pine Manor in Edison, NJ.

This event was a tremendous success, recognizing twenty-five individuals who have made significant contributions within their churches by sharing their gifts and talents with fellow parishioners and faithfully serving in various church roles. Attendees enjoyed a delightful afternoon featuring exquisite cuisine and soulful jazz music performed by “Rev. R2 & Da’ Crew.”

A notable highlight of the luncheon included an explanation of how and why the Unsung Hero award was established under Sister Brenda Lazier's leadership. President Elizabeth Clark expressed her desire to honor five exceptional individuals who dedicated years of service under Sister Lazier's guidance. In recognition of this commitment, the Brenda Lazier Legacy Award was created to pay tribute to these outstanding members of the New Jersey Lay Organization.

This year's Brenda Lazier Legacy Award honorees were Sister Joan Beauchamp (Ebenezer AME Church, Rahway), Sister Alma A. Walker (St. James AME Church, Atlantic City), Sister Marie Merritt (St. Paul AME Church, Pleasantville), Carolyn Stanley (St. Thomas AME Church, Newark), and Mother Melvin S. Wynn (Ebenezer AME Church, Rahway). Their dedication was celebrated during this sold-out occasion, which brought together representatives from twenty-five churches across the New Jersey Conference for an afternoon of fellowship and appreciation.



Sister Joan Beauchamp
Ebenezer AME, Rahway



Sister Alma Walker
St. James AME, Atlantic City



Sister Marie Merritt
St. Paul AME, Pleasantville

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In Loving Memory: Honoring Faithful Servants of the New Jersey Conference

"Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" — Matthew 25:23 (NIV)

The New Jersey Conference Lay Organization mourns the loss of five dedicated servants whose faithful commitment to God's work has left an indelible mark on our conference and local churches. During 2024-2025, we said goodbye to pillars of faith whose legacy of service continues to inspire us.

Wanda L. Duckett

Sister Wanda L. Duckett served the New Jersey Conference with exceptional dedication and administrative excellence. As Conference Registrar and Treasurer, she ensured the smooth operation of our conference activities with meticulous care and integrity. Her commitment to the broader church was evident in her service as a delegate to General Conference, where she represented our voices at the highest level of church governance. Sister Duckett's organizational gifts and faithful stewardship were a blessing to all who worked alongside her.

Tracee Baker

Sister Tracee Baker embodied the energy and vision of emerging leadership in our conference. As Young Adult Representative, she championed the engagement of younger generations in lay ministry, building bridges between tradition and innovation. Her service as local church president demonstrated her passion for community and her commitment to nurturing faith at the grassroots level. Sister Baker's enthusiasm for the Lord's work and her dedication to empowering others leaves a lasting legacy for future generations.

Blanche Hunter

Sister Blanche Hunter's faithful service as local lay president exemplified servant leadership at its finest. Her dedication to her congregation and her tireless work in mobilizing lay members for ministry made a profound impact on her church community. Sister Hunter understood that the work of the laity is essential to the mission of the church, and she led by example with grace and determination.

Anthony Bracy

Brother Anthony Bracy served with distinction as local lay president, bringing his gifts of leadership and pastoral care to his congregation. His commitment to equipping the saints for ministry and his heart for service strengthened the lay organization at the local level. Brother Bracy's faithful witness and dedication to building up the body of Christ will long be remembered by those whose lives he touched.

Mother Melvin S. Wynn

Mother Melvin S. Wynn was a towering figure of faith whose lifetime of service blessed the New Jersey Conference in countless ways. As local lay president, she provided wise counsel and steadfast leadership to

New Jersey Conference Lay Organization

(continued)

her congregation. Her participation as a delegate to General Conference reflected the high esteem in which she was held throughout our connection. As a lifetime member of the Women's Missionary Society of the New Jersey Conference, Mother Wynn demonstrated unwavering commitment to missions and the advancement of God's kingdom. Her life was a testament to faithful service, and her legacy lives on in the many lives she touched and transformed.

Though we grieve the loss of these faithful servants, we take comfort in knowing they have heard the Master's words: "Well done, good and faithful servant." Their work on earth is complete, but the fruit of their labor continues in the lives they influenced, the ministries they built, and the example they set for all who follow.

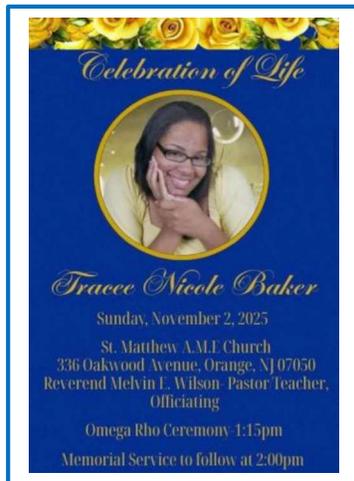
"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them." — Revelation 14:13 (NIV)

May their memory be a blessing, and may we honor their legacy by continuing the faithful work they began.

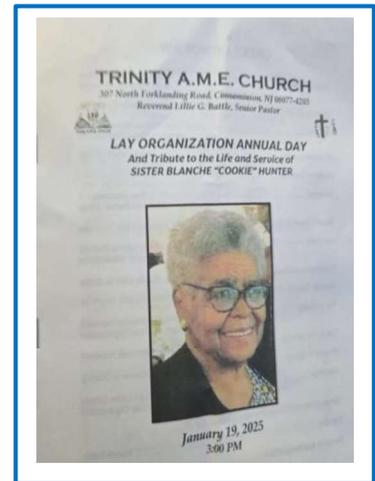
The New Jersey Conference Lay Organization
Elizabeth L. Clark



Sister Wanda Duckett



Sister Tracee Baker



Sister Blanche Hunter



Brother Anthony Bracey



Mother Melvin S. Wynn



New York Conference Lay Organization (NYCLO)

*Submitted by D'Yonce S. Williamson, New York Conference Lay YAR
Dr. Alicia Collins-Dennis, President*

The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church

The New York Conference Lay Organization spends every second Saturday of the month handling business and learning how to strengthen the conference organization. As the NY Conference Young Adult Representative, it is an honor to assist the Director of Lay Activities, Sis. Idamae Campbell. During meetings, I have given workshops with the intent of training and learning. Below I have an example of a typical workshop that can be given at any level.



D'Yonce S. Williamson
NYCLO YAR

In our Constitution and Bylaws, we have objectives that let us know how to sustain our mission and move it forward. Objective E states, "To foster a systematic and regular study of *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* and parliamentary procedure, to the end that greater knowledge and information may be disseminated among the laity, and with the further purpose of encouraging lay members to participate more largely in the general functioning and supervision of the *African Methodist Episcopal Church*."

1. What is the *Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*?

From the University of North Carolina Press:

"Originally published in 1817, *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* was the first definitive guide to the history, beliefs, teachings, and practices of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

It begins with a brief history and then moves into a presentation of the "Articles of Religion." Immediately following the articles is an extended four-part catechism that more fully explicates the meanings and implications of the doctrinal statements."

After a thorough explanation of our Doctrine, the rest of the book outlines our Discipline. It serves as the official law book of our denomination. It outlines everything from becoming clergy to the constitution and bylaws of the many components.

Before planning and implementing systematic and regular study of the Doctrine and Discipline, it is important to understand **why we have it**.

According to the Greater St. Mark AME Church in Adam's Run, South Carolina, The AME Church is governed by *The Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church*, a foundational text that outlines church law, theology, structure, and policy.

- Ensures connectional consistency and emphasizes accountability, holiness, and service
- The Discipline governs everything from pastoral appointments and worship practices to financial stewardship and social justice advocacy, reflecting the AME Church's commitment to order, equality, and spiritual growth.

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In recall of our history, the church was founded because of the white clergymen's disorderly nature that was fueled by racism. In seeking autonomy for their religious beliefs and practices, our founders understood the need to establish order. To be recognized as an independent body of believers, they found it necessary to create a church governance system.

2. Why do we still use it today?

The AME Church still uses the Doctrine and Discipline more than 200 years later because it provides a stable framework that protects faith, governance, and property across generations.

- It addresses enduring human realities like power struggles, theological drift, and the need for accountability, which have not changed over time.
- As a connectional church, the AME requires a shared governing document to maintain unity and consistency across congregations worldwide.
- The Discipline also allows controlled change through amendments.
- It ensures the Church outlives individual leaders by prioritizing collective authority, due process, and institutional memory.

3. Why must laity and the Lay Organization commit ourselves to teaching and training each other on this book?

It is important for laity to have a thorough understanding of the Discipline because it is the primary instrument that protects their voice, rights, responsibilities, and stewardship within the connectional church.

- It safeguards lay authority and participation by clearly defining where we have decision-making power, voting rights, and representation, ensuring the Church is not governed solely by clergy.
- It equips laity to hold leaders accountable by providing due process, financial oversight standards, and clear procedures for addressing misuse of authority.
- It protects church property and finances, helping laity understand who truly owns assets, how decisions must be approved, and how to prevent unlawful actions.
- It preserves unity while allowing disagreement, giving laity lawful ways to question, appeal, and deliberate without causing division or disorder.
- It develops informed leaders, enabling laity to serve effectively on boards, committees, conferences, and in civic life beyond the Church.

Knowing the Doctrine and Discipline empowers the laity to actively protect the Church's mission, governance, and legacy rather than passively relying on clergy leadership alone. An informed laity ensures the AME Church remains a just, accountable, and enduring institution where faith and order work together for generations to come.

Respectfully Submitted,

D'Yonce S. Williamson



Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization (PCLO)

Submitted by Brother Kevin Lamb, President

President:

Brother Kevin D. Lamb

1st Vice President:

Sister Yvette L. Bayne

2nd Vice President:

Sister Cynthia M. Douse

3rd Vice President:

Sister Adrianna M. Gray

Recording Secretary:

Sister Joanne A. Turner

Assistant Recording Secretary:

Sister Tameko Patten

Corresponding Secretary:

Sister Jacquelyn Carlton

Treasurer:

Sister Ruth Nelson

Financial Secretary:

Sister Deborah F. Stancil

Chaplain:

Sister Linda Frazier

Historiographer:

Sister Elizabeth J. Fisher

Parliamentarian: OPEN

Director of Lay Activities:

Brother Keith Arrington, Sr.

Director of Public Relations

Alexandria Turner Jardin

Young Adult Representative:

Sister Starsha Frierson

LAY MINISTRY BEYOND THE WALLS

The Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization has been extremely active since the beginning of this 2025-26 Conference Year!

PCLO hosted its **Bi-Annual Voter Education & Awareness Forum** that provided members and other invited persons across the Conference to hear from judicial candidates and importance of our State Supreme Court Judicial Retention race.



Thanks to Sister Cheryl L. Ford and Bro. Terrill Carney for their coordination, also led by our Director of Lay Activities, Bro. Keith Arrington, Sr.



The **Dr. Cheryl Hammond Hopewell Scholarship** recipients were awarded during our December Fellowship. We are very proud of **Bro. Justin Mapp** from **St. Paul Metropolitan** and **Sis. Nera Martin** from **Bethel West Chester**. We will be holding

our Annual TAP Day for Scholarships at our January meeting where we ask for every local lay and members to donate \$100.00 to the Fund.



PCLO adopted the **Life Turning Point of Philadelphia** for the 2025 Holiday season. It is a nonprofit agency providing temporary housing, life skills, and support for homeless mothers and children, focusing on empowerment and self-sufficiency with a biblical foundation. This year, we provided cleaning products and toiletries, in-kind

donations of over \$1,500.00. We are grateful to members of the Conference that always rise to the occasion of do ministry beyond the walls of our churches.



Western New York Conference Lay Organization (WNYCLO)

Submitted by Brother Keith Young, President

Western New York Lay Organization Begins 2026 with Purpose, History, and Vision

The Western New York Lay Organization (WNYLO) has entered 2026 with renewed energy, intentional leadership, and a deep commitment to equipping God’s people for faithful and effective service.

Recently, WNYLO President Keith Young had the honor of teaching and speaking with the Eastside Bike Club in Buffalo, NY, sharing the rich history of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church and the powerful legacy of Bethel AME Church of Buffalo. Bethel AME Church holds a unique and sacred place in our region as the oldest Black church in Western New York—and remarkably, it is one year older than the City of Buffalo itself. This moment of historical reflection highlighted the enduring faith, resilience, and leadership of the AME Church and its role in shaping both spiritual and civic life in our communities.

First Event of the Year: Faith, Finance, and Forward Thinking

On January 3, 2026, the Western New York Lay Organization proudly hosted its first event of the year at Bethel AME Church, Buffalo, under the leadership of Elder Paul J. Thomas. The event was intentionally designed to “start the year off right,” grounding participants in both spiritual wisdom and practical tools for everyday life.

Demario Johnson led a powerful session using scripture to explore biblical wealth-building principles, encouraging participants to pursue financial independence through stewardship, discipline, and faith.

We were also blessed to hear from Brother and Sister attorneys Heather Gresham and Miles Gresham, who spoke on the importance of estate planning, emphasizing how proper planning is an act of love, responsibility, and generational care.

Continuing to bridge faith and innovation, WNYLO Director of Lay Activities, Mrs. Regina Grice, delivered an outstanding presentation on “The Practical Uses of AI Tools for Church Work.” Her session demonstrated how technology can be responsibly and effectively used to enhance ministry, administration, communication, and outreach in today’s church.

Leadership Development in Rochester

On January 31, 2026, the Western New York Lay Organization convened again—this time at Baber AME Church in Rochester, NY, pastored by Rev. James C. Simmons. The focus was leadership growth and organizational effectiveness.

Participants engaged in a Leadership Development Workshop titled “*Understanding the DISC Model: Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, and Conscientiousness*,” facilitated by Carla Quackenbush, MBA. This interactive session helped attendees better understand personality styles, improve communication, and strengthen teamwork within church and community settings.

Once again, Mrs. Regina Grice provided valuable instruction, teaching a class on Successful Onboarding & Succession Planning, equipping churches to prepare future leaders while ensuring continuity and sustainability in ministry.

Listening to the Churches, Planning for the Future

As part of its commitment to servant leadership, the Western New York Lay Organization polled its churches by reaching out directly to pastors to better understand their current and emerging needs. Based on this feedback, WNYLO is planning to assist local churches throughout the year with teaching and training in the following areas:

Western New York Conference Lay Organization

(continued)

- Strategic Planning & SWOT Analysis
- Crucial Conversations (constructive feedback & team performance)
- Financial Planning & Budgeting for Church Ministries
- Leading Across Generations & Navigating Different Personalities
- AME Church Protocol & Functioning
- Cultivating Ministries to Meet Present-Day Needs

Moving Forward in Faith

This is only the beginning. The Western New York Lay Organization remains committed to empowering laity, strengthening churches, and honoring the rich legacy of the AME Church while boldly embracing the future. With God's grace guiding every step, the best is yet to come.





First Episcopal District Lay Organization Committee on Social Action Update

Submitted by Sister Kathleen Turpin Merritt, Chairperson

Social Action Committee Report

The First Episcopal District Lay Committee on Social Action was directed by President Linda Gant to develop projects associated with voter education (short-term) and other social action teachings. With the upcoming elections in November 2025, Social Action representatives from the conferences were requested to join with the First Episcopal District Social Action Committee Chair, Sister Kathleen Turpin Merritt, to complete this task.

On September, 30, 2025. Brother Kevin Lamb (Philadelphia Conference Lay President), Brother Anthoni Lightbourne (Bermuda Conference Lay President), Sister Melanie Woods (New Jersey Conference Social Action Committee Chair), and Sister Sharon Carmichael (First Episcopal District Lay Director of Public Relations) met with Sister Merritt and created a universal Get Out the Vote statement which emphasized the importance and criticality of voting. Upon approval of the district-wide statement by First Episcopal President Linda Gant, the statement was distributed throughout the First Episcopal District conferences and requested to be read in every church across the District on Lay Witness Sunday, Oct 12, 2025. The District-Wide Statement is posted on the First Episcopal District Lay website

(www.1stdistrictlay.org) and on the Facebook Page ([First Episcopal District Lay Organization](#)).

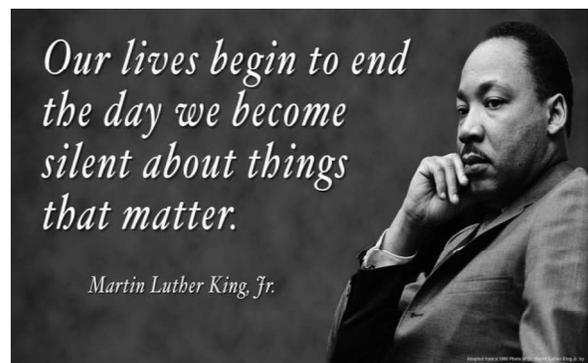
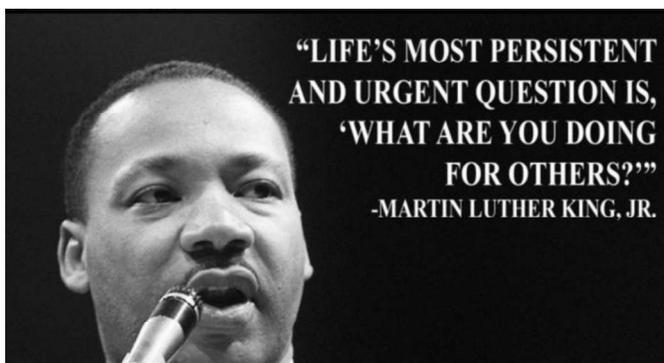
Also, in support of the Get Out the Vote effort, Sister Kathleen Turpin Merritt coordinated a virtual First Episcopal District General Election Prayer Vigil via Zoom on Saturday, November 1, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. EST. Prayer Warriors from all 7 First Episcopal District Lay Conferences led prayers. It was a glorious time!

Upcoming efforts being planned by the Chair of First Episcopal District Committee on Social Action for 2026 are workshops:

- Workshop # 1: “Gun Violence Prevention” – Presenter: Brother Hashim Garrett
- Workshop # 2: Congregation Grief Session for all

Stay tuned. More information to come.

Food for thought:





"FIRST IN TOUCH"



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Sandra Mosby
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Cheryl L. Ford
 Financial Secretary

Catherine Combs-Smith
 Chaplain

Carolyn Hoffman-Veasey
 Historiographer

Dr. Eyerce Armstrong-Poston
 Director of Lay Activities

Sharon Carmichael
 Director of Public Relations

Jyzelle Steplight
 Young Adult Representative



First Episcopal District Lay Organization

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