

First Episcopal District Lay Organization African Methodist Episcopal Church



Mid-Year Lay Convention 3-4 March 2023

Holiday Inn Downtown
Rochester, New York

First Timers Session
Robin Batson, Presenter

Bishop Julius H. McAllister, Sr.....Presiding Prelate
Mrs. Joan Maria McAllister.....Episcopal Supervisor
Bishop Stafford J.N. Wicker.....Chairperson of the Lay Commission
Rev. Paul J. Thomas.....Host Presiding Elder
Mr. Matikane Abednego Makiti.....Connectional Lay President
Mrs. Patricia Wright.....Connectional Lay Director of Activities
Ms. Jamesha Williams.....Connectional YAR
Mrs. Cheryl Hammond Hopewell.....Episcopal District Lay President
Mr. Thomas Davis.....Episcopal District Director of Activities
Ms. Jyzelle Steplight.....Episcopal District YAR

First Episcopal District Theme: “Rethinking Church in a Changing World”

I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. **I Corinthians 9:22b**

Lay Organization Theme: “Living A Global Witness Ministry That Transforms, Transcends and Liberates.”

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor. **Luke 4:18-19**

First Episcopal District Lay Organization Officers

Cheryl Hammond Hopewell.....	President
Donna Lee Chandler-Smith.....	1 st Vice President
Wanda Duckett.....	2 nd Vice President
Robin Batson.....	3 rd Vice President
Sharon Drew.....	Recording Secretary
Dorothy Chandler.....	Assistant Recording Secretary
Lanan Bascome.....	Corresponding Secretary
Cheryl Ford.....	Treasurer
Sandra Mosby.....	Financial Secretary
Terri L. Fisher.....	Chaplain
Shawn James Lee.....	Historiographer
Thomas Davis.....	Director of Lay Activities
Jyzelle Steplight.....	Young Adult Representative

Conference Presidents

Bermuda	W. Antoni Lightbourne
Delaware	Sharon Drew
New England	Linda Gant
New Jersey	Elizabeth Clark
New York	Bonita O’Neal
Philadelphia	Andree Turner, Sr.
Western New York	Thomas Whitt

Conference Directors of Lay Activities

Bermuda	
Delaware	Terri Lynn Fisher
New England	Nicol Ayers
New Jersey	Francine Davis
New York	Dr. Alicia Collins-Dennis
Philadelphia	Margaret Miller
Western New York	Thomas Davis

Advisory Board

Mary Mootoo
Marcel Ringold
Edna Sharp
Ethel Marie Wallace-Jenkins

I. Mission Statement

- A. 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.

II. Purpose

- A. The purpose of this organization shall be to organize and train the laity of the African Methodist Episcopal Church so that lay persons may maximally utilize their God given abilities and skills to improve and extend the kingdom, to create happiness, peace, and harmony among its members.

III. Objectives

- A. To accomplish this purpose, the following objectives are adopted;
 - 1. To instill in the membership of the church a love for, and an appreciation of the history, traditions, principles and development of African Methodism by encouraging, motivating, and educating all lay persons
 - 2. To keep forever alive the sacred memory of Richard Allen, the illustrious founder of AMEC
 - 3. To advocate respect and loyalty at all times to constituted authority and leadership
 - 4. To encourage the laity to support the total program of the church in the local congregation, in the community, and throughout the Connection.
 - 5. To foster a systematic and regular study of the Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 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.
 - 6. To foster, influence, and support all constructive and progressive legislation for the church that promotes the teachings of Jesus Christ.
 - 7. To encourage development, recognition, and utilization of the most appropriate operational practices and modern technology in conducting the activities of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.
 - 8. To promote the spread of personal evangelism through activities designed to prepare lay members for appropriately conveying God's Word.
 - 9. To provide training in Christian stewardship, which causes lay members to recognize that the connotation of stewardship addresses more than giving money.
 - 10. To increase the circulation of church periodicals.
 - 11. To provide for the orderly and systematic training of lay persons, especially officers, in order that they might more effectively perform their service responsibilities.
 - 12. To promote activities which will result in harmonious fellowship for lay persons throughout the Connection.
 - 13. To help in the support of the AME educational institutions.
 - 14. To give financial assistance to the Connectional Lay Economic Development Corporation (CLEDC) in support of Connectional programs.

IV. Brief History of the Lay Organization

A. The "Organized Lay Movement" started at the General Conference in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1912, with Professor Charles H. Johnson of Wilberforce as the first president. It was known as the "Laymen's Missionary Movement." Professor Johnson traveled extensively through Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, etc. He wrote pamphlets, *Men at Work* and *Laymen's Missionary Movement*. This organization was short lived and at the 1916 General Conference, not being satisfied with the progress of the Laymen's Missionary Movement, the Connectional Lay **College** was organized with Professor Carl V. Roman, a noted Greek Scholar at Fisk University, as president. This organization met only once in four years at the seat of the General Conference and only delegates to that Conference were members. With this ever changing membership and not funds, etc., the Organization did not reach the local lay members that it needed to do so very much. Since Dr. Roman was not elected to the General Conference in 1920, the Lay College proceeded to elect a new president, Mr. Malone, the Poro College (aimed at educating the **Black community** of St. Louis, the college trained women as agents for Poro products and by 1926 claimed to have graduated some 75,000 agents located throughout the world, including the Caribbean. Mr. Malone was the husband of the famous Annie Turnbo Malone, the first black female millionaire of St. Louis, Mo., who served until 1924, when Dr. R.R. Williams of Tampa, Florida, was elected. Dr. Williams served as president until the General Conference in 1936, when Attorney Herbert L. Dudley was elected. Attorney Dudley remained president until he retired in 1959 and Mr. J.D. Williams of Kansas City, Missouri was elected. Because the eight- year term law had not been instated, Mr. J.D. Williams served until the 19th Biennial Session in 1985 which was held in Nashville, Tennessee. Subsequently, at that time, Dr. Katheryn Brown became the first female president of the Connectional Lay Organization. In 1993, at the 23rd Biennial Session in Columbus, Ohio, Mr. James L. Williams became the eighth president of the Connectional Lay Organization. At the 27th Biennial Session, Mr. Arthur D. Brown of Columbus, Ohio was elected and in 2003 at the 28th Biennial Session Mr. Jesse L. Burns, Jr., of Gainesville, Florida was appointed President due to the untimely death of President Brown. In 2005 at the 29th Biennial Session in Houston, Texas, Jesse L. Burns, Jr., Gainesville, Florida, was elevated as the 10th elected President and in 2009 at the 31st Biennial Session in Little Rock Arkansas, Dr. Willie C. Glover, Columbus, Ohio, was elected as the 11th President of the Connectional Lay Organization. Some of the outstanding laymen who did much to pave the way for the present organization were: Dr. C.V. Roman; Ira T. Bryant, Publisher of *Church Literature*; William H. Shackelfort; Professor Henry Davidson; The Honorable George W. Malone; Professor Monroe Works; John Merrit; John R. Hawkins, and many others. It was discovered early in the history of the Lay College that an organization that met only every four years, and composed of a constantly changing membership or personnel, could not do a good job of mobilizing the laity for effective service in the church, and so the laymen in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1946, abolished the old Lay College which met every four years at the seat of the General Conference with a constantly changing membership, and organized the Connectional Lay Organization on Episcopal District levels down through the Conferences to the local units and churches.

It meets biennially and has a permanent membership that reaches down to the grass root level of the laity. It has held biennial meetings in 1949 in Chicago; 1951 in St. Louis; 1953 in Tulsa; 1955 in Philadelphia; 1957 in Oakland California (UPDATE) There are those who think that the organized lay movement just recently came into existence when the General Conference of 1948 passed a law giving laymen the right to organize in the local church and make the lay organization a part of the organic law of African Methodism.

This, you will see, is merely the culmination of a long and gigantic struggle which had been waged by a large number of courageous laymen over the years. It is noteworthy to observe that some of the most significant, progressive and constructive legislation enacted by the various General Conferences of our church has taken place since the laymen have acquired equal

representation. This has not been just by accident or mere coincidence. It has been true because the influence, prestige and voting strength of the laity have been thrown behind very constructive and worthwhile movements in the church.

In 1928, legislation giving laymen equal representation in the General Conference was enacted by the General Conference which met at Chicago, Illinois. Up to that time, lay representation was confined to three (3) laymen from each Annual Conference. In 1932, at the General Conference held in Cleveland, Ohio, laymen were granted the right to serve on the Episcopal Committee. However, Bishop Flipper ruled at the succeeding General Conference in 1936 in New York City that the right to serve on the Episcopal Committee by the laity was an act passed by the General Conference of 1932 and applied only to that General Conference, so that in 1936 we had to renew the fight previously made in Cleveland to establish the right of laymen to serve permanently in equal numbers on the Episcopal Committee. The General Conference of 1936 definitely and permanently established the right of laymen to serve in equal numbers on the Episcopal Committee. In 1940, in Detroit, Michigan, legislation gave the laymen equal representation in the Annual Conference. In 1944, the laymen sought equal representation on all Departmental Boards. The most significant achievement at the 1944 General Conference was the weight and influence thrown by the Lay Organization behind the legislation which created a Pension Department in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. ¹

V. Facts you should know about the Lay Organization

- A. Who are members of the Lay Organization?
 1. All non-ordained members of the church.
- B. How is the Lay Organization governed?
 1. The local Lay Organization is governed by the Constitution and By-laws of the Connectional Lay Organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The local church organization shall be amenable to the Quarterly Conference of said church and president of the local church Lay Organization is a member of the Official Board by virtue of office.
- C. Resources for Lay Members
 1. The Bible
 2. Current edition of the Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church
 3. AME Church Hymnal
 4. Constitution and By-laws of the Lay Organization
 5. Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised
 6. Lay Study Guide
 7. Catechism*
- D. The Officers of the Lay Organization
 1. President
 2. First Vice President
 3. Second Vice President
 4. Third Vice President
 5. Recording Secretary
 6. Assistant Recording Secretary
 7. Corresponding Secretary
 8. Treasurer
 9. Financial Secretary
 10. Parliamentarian
 11. Chaplain

12. Historiographer
13. Director of Lay Activities
14. Director of Public Relations
15. Young Adult Representative (YAR)

E. Lay Organization meetings their frequency and function

1. Local level
 - a. Monthly meetings – unless the local Constitution and By-laws state otherwise.
 - b. Plan and present workshops/study for the local church
 - c. Host Annual Lay Day services
 - d. Send delegates to Connectional, District, and Conference meetings.
2. Conference level
 - a. Monthly meetings – unless the Constitution and By-laws state otherwise.
 - b. Plan and present workshops/study.
 - c. Hold special services and events.
3. Episcopal level
 - d. Mid-year Convention
 - e. Annual Meeting
 - f. Plan and present workshops/study.
 - g. Hold special services and events.
4. Connectional level
 - h. Biennial Convention
 - i. Plan and present workshops/study
 - j. Develop the *Lay Study Guide*
 - k. Publish the *We Speak* Magazine
 - l. Participate in the General Conference

VI. African Methodist Episcopal Church Organization

- A. Basic Table of Organization (Page 6)
- B. Episcopal Districts (Page 7)

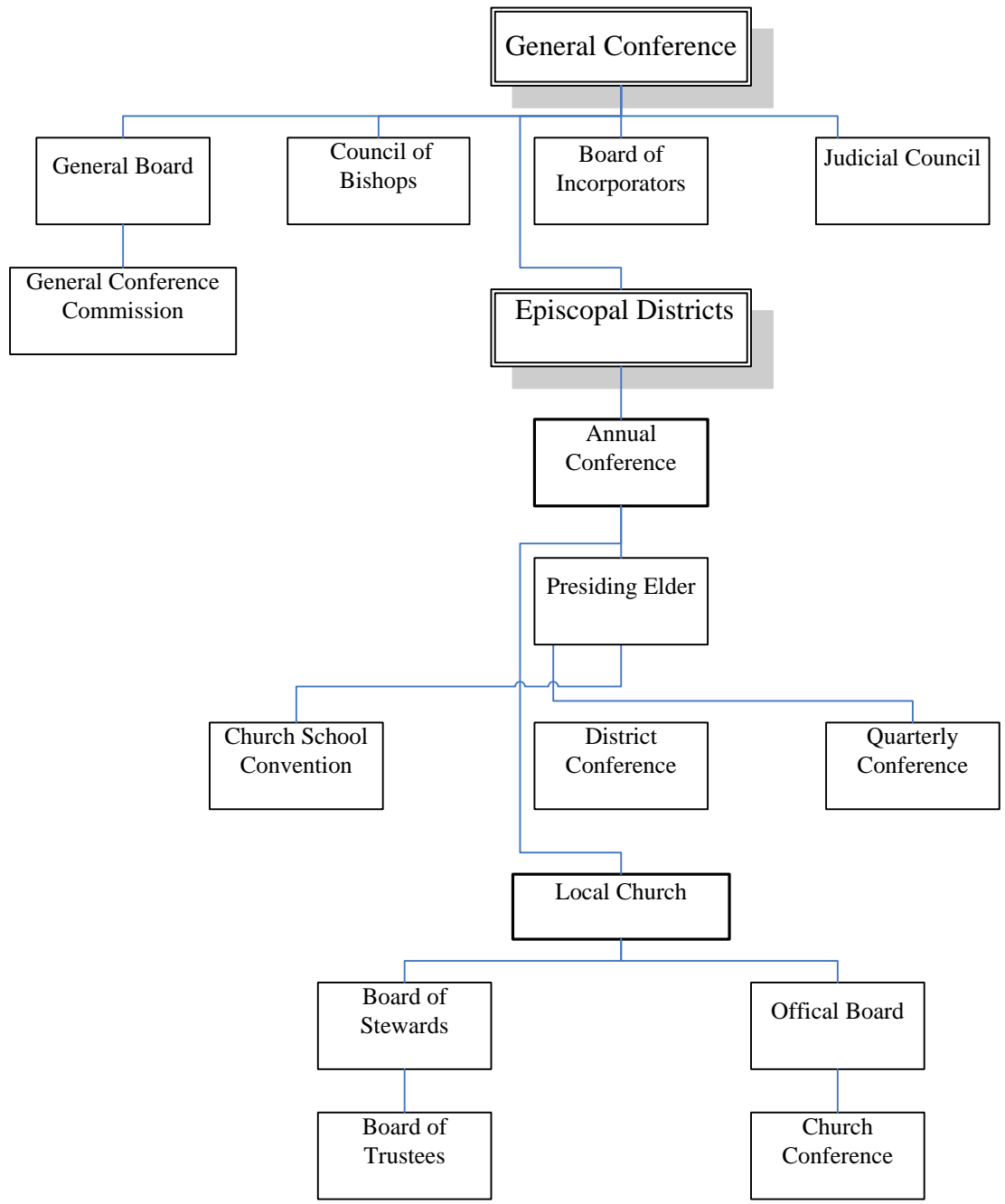
VII. In a Nutshell

- A. Why belong to the Lay Organization? Why do we wear the blue and white?
 1. Study of the history, present and the planning for the future of the church.
 2. Non clergy evangelism.
 3. Development of leadership skills for use in the church and elsewhere.

VIII. Questions/Comments/Thoughts

Official Lay Organization Logo





Episcopal Districts of the African Methodist Church

District	Number of Conferences	Conferences
1	7	Philadelphia, Bermuda, New England, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Western New York.
2	5	Baltimore, Washington, North Carolina, Western North Carolina, Virginia
3	3	Ohio-South, North Ohio, Pittsburgh-West Virginia
4	6	Indiana, Illinois, Chicago, Canadian, Michigan, India
5	6	Missouri, California, Southern California, Desert/Mountain, Pacific Northwest, Midwest
6	6	Old Georgia, Atlantic North Georgia, Macon Georgia, Southwest Georgia, South Georgia, Augusta Georgia
7	6	South Carolina, Central South Carolina, Columbia South Carolina, Northeast South Carolina, Palmetto South Carolina, Piedmont South Carolina
8	4	South Mississippi, North Mississippi, Louisiana, Central North Louisiana
9	5	The Alabama Rivera Region, The Southeast, The Northeast, The Southwest, The Northwest
10	4	Texas, Southwest Texas, North Texas, Northwest Texas
11	6	Florida, Central, South, West Coast, East, Bahamas
12	4	Oklahoma State, Arkansas, East Arkansas, West Arkansas,
13	4	Tennessee, East Tennessee, West Tennessee, Kentucky
14	7	Sierra Leone, Liberia, Central Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Togo-Benin
15	7	Cape Annual, Namibia Annual, Kalahari Annual, Eastern Cape Annual, Queenstown Annual, Angola Annual, Boland Annual
16	7	Guyana-Suriname, Windward Islands, Virgin Island, Dominican Republic, Haiti, European (London, Holland, France), Jamaica
17	12	North East Zambia, North West Zambia, South East Zambia, South West Zambia, Zambezi, Katanga, Kananga, Congo River, Mbuji-Mayi, Burundi, Great Lakes, East Africa
18	5	Swaziland Annual, Mozambique Annual, Lesotho Annual, Lesotho North East Annual, Botswana Annual
19	5	Orangia Annual, East Annual, West Annual, M.M. Mokone Memorial Annual, Natal Annual
20	7	Malawi North Annual, Malawi Central Annual, Malawi South Annual, North-East Zimbabwe Annual, South-West Zimbabwe Annual, Central Zimbabwe Annual, Uganda Annual

