

“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

In This Issue ...

February 2025

Mid-Year Convention Edition

President’s Greeting	1
First District Lay 2024 Annual Meeting Highlights	4
First District Lay 2024–2028 Officers	6
Spotlight on Our Conferences	7
▪ Delaware Conference Annual Lay Recognition	8
▪ New England Conference Lay – Making Our Voices Heard	10
▪ New Jersey Conference Lay Update	12
▪ New York Conference Lay Celebrations	13
Spotlight on Our Young Adults	15
▪ YA of the Year	15
▪ Historical Journey Crossword Puzzle	17
Social Action Committee	20
▪ Dr. MLK Jr’s “Fierce Urgency of Now”	20
Words from the DOPR	21
Save the Date	22
About Us	23

Greetings from the First Episcopal District Lay President

Linda C. Gant



Greetings to the Laity of the First Episcopal District,

Thank you for placing your trust in me as the next president of the First Episcopal District Lay Organization. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to serve and lead this exceptional organization. As we embark on this new journey together, I can feel a palpable sense of excitement and purpose.

I acknowledge that our organization has strengthened significantly over the past years, due in large part to the dedicated efforts of previous leaders and committed members like you. As we look ahead, our focus will be on building upon this legacy through collaboration of the gifts and talents of our members, as we explore new opportunities that will elevate us to the next level.

Therefore, *“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.

Continued on Page 2

*Greetings from the First Episcopal District
Lay President*

(continued)

As I have begun the journey throughout the district, just wanted to highlight the activities that have occurred thus far:

July – I attended the Christian Education Congress in Dover, DE, as well as attending Bethel Wilmington’s Sunday Worship Service.

August – I attended the celebration of Life Service for Bishop Henry A. Belin, Jr. in Atlanta, GA.

September – Attended Sis. Sharon Drew’s 80th Birthday Party in Philadelphia, the Welcome and Thanksgiving Service for Bishop Samuel L. Green, Sr., and Dr. Phyllis Green in New Jersey; and attended the WMS Fall Luncheon in Philadelphia.

October – A guest of the Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization Luncheon; Traveled with the First District YPD to Niagara Falls, NY for their district meeting; Conducted the elections of the New Jersey Conference Lay Organization. Congratulations President Elizabeth Clark and elected officers; attended the First District Church School Seminar at Mount Tabor in Philadelphia.

November – Attended Fall Convocation in Philadelphia; Lay Speaker for the Mae L. Felder Lay Organization of Bethel Freeport in New York; Attended the Priscilla Green Lay Organization of Bethel Bloomfield, CT Annual Day

December – Attended the Retirement Celebration of Presiding Elder Vernard Leak in New Jersey; Attended the General Board in Atlanta, GA; Attended the Connectional Lay Organization Executive Board Meeting (Virtually); Attended the Advent Services for New Jersey, New York, Delaware, New England, and Philadelphia.

January – Attended the Celebration of Life Service for Sis. Pearline Harris in New York; attended the WMS Learning Experience in Philadelphia; Participated in the St. Mark A.M.E. Church renaming of the Lay Organization to the Dianne V. Mitchell Lay Organization.

The work continues as I will attend the Bermuda Conference Lay Annual Meeting to conduct their election and a workshop at the end of January.

I will carry this inspiring scripture with me always: *“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

Sister Linda C. Gant - President

Continued on Page 3



President Linda Gant (Middle row, center) at 1st District Christian Education Congress with 1st Episcopal District Lay members.



President Linda Gant reading scripture at 1st District Welcome service for Bishop Samuel Green and Supervisor Green.

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



President Linda Gant with Brother Keith Costen (NJ Conference) at 1st District Fall Convocation



President Linda Gant serving in worship service at 1st District Fall Convocation



President Linda Gant with 1st District Lay DOPR Sharon Carmichael at New Jersey Conference Advent Service.



President Linda Gant attending the WMS Learning Experience.



President Linda Gant with Dr. Cheryl Hammond Hopewell at New Jersey Conference Advent Service. (Photo is courtesy of Dr. Hopewell.)



President Linda Gant with Dr. Cheryl Hammond Hopewell at New England Conference Advent Service. (Photo is courtesy of Dr. Hopewell.)



Newly elected President Linda Gant presiding over Dr. Hopewell's retirement celebration and reception at the 1st District Lay Annual Meeting.



President Linda Gant at St. Mark AMEC celebrating Dianne V. Mitchell Lay Organization. (Photo is courtesy of Dr. Hopewell.)

First Episcopal District Lay Annual Meeting Highlights - July 26 - 27, 2024

Submitted by Sister Sharon Carmichael – DOPR

On July 26 – 27, 2024, the First Episcopal District Lay Organization Annual Meeting was hosted by Bethel AME Church, 604 North Walnut Street, in Wilmington, Delaware. This



was not the ordinary Annual Meeting, because it was Dr. Cheryl Hammond Hopewell's 8th and final year as President of the Lay Organization.

Dr. Hopewell's "Girl Squad," as she referred to her First, Second, and Third VP's (Donna-Lee Chandler-Smith, Wanda Duckett, and Robin Batson, and YAR Jyzelle Steplight) planned an afternoon celebration of her tenure as President on July 27. But first thing's first, and following in her true nature, Dr. Hopewell made sure the traditions of business and training took place.



Kicked off by Director of Lay Activities (DOLA) Thomas Davis and Dr. Hopewell, the meeting began with spiritual uplifting meditation, Bible

Study, and praise led by Evangelist Catherine Combs-Smith (NJ Conference) and Brother Earl Knight (First Episcopal District Director of Music). Stressing the importance of accountability, with the theme "Reporting and Accountability With a Commitment to Results", empowering "Accountability" workshops were presented by Reverend Dr. Stanley Hearst II (Delaware Conference) and CLO First Vice President, Dr. Dorothy Henderson.

Topping off the day of business and training, we were blessed by the evening worship experience

and a powerful preached word from Reverend Jay B. Broadnax, Pastor of Mt. Pisgah AMEC, Philadelphia Conference. Using Matthew 11:5, Reverend Broadnax taught us that our AME structure was built on reporting for accountability. God intends to use our reports to share what he has done in our lives. "Somebody needs your report!"



On Day 2, Dr. Hopewell gave her final President's report, and reflected on her time over the last eight years. With emotion, she stated that she hopes that all she has done is enough, and that her work speaks for itself. Dr. Hopewell acknowledged the guests who came on her last day as President, i.e., Reverend Dr. Leonard Santucci (Bermuda), Reverend Sean Lewis (New England), her husband, Irv Hopewell, son (Kyle) and daughter-in-law (Robyn), CLO President Matikane Abednego Makiti, CLO First VP Dr. Dorothy Henderson, and those who came out at 6 a.m. to exercise with her for the last time.



Dr. Hopewell also gave tribute and awards to her young adults who "hold a special place in her heart" and Young Adults of the Year from 2018 to 2024: Jyzelle Steplight, Nickolas Durham, Tracee Baker, Starsha Frierson, Anthony Williams, Earl Knight, Shawn Lee, Daysha Smith, Kezia Moore, Enoch Davis, and Jolisa Baker.

Continued on Page 5

**First Episcopal District Lay Annual Meeting
(continued)**

Dr. Hopewell continued with the presentation of awards to her elected officers, Conference presidents, and committee chairs.



Following Dr. Hopewell’s presentations, CLO President Matikane Abednego Makiti joined us for the election of officers. He gave greetings and then introduced CLO First VP Dr. Dorothy Henderson, who presided over the election of the 2024 – 2028 officers.



CLO President Makiti and Bishop Julius Harrison McAllister, Sr. (Immediate Past Presiding Prelate, First Episcopal District) joined Dr. Henderson for the installation of the new officers:

President – Linda C. Gant	Treasurer - Sandra Mosby
1st VP - Wanda Duckett	Financial Secretary - Cheryl L. Ford
2nd VP - Robin Batson	Chaplain – Catherine Combs-Smith

3rd VP - Shawn J. Lee	Historiographer – Carolyn Hoffman-Veasey
Recording Secretary- Dorothy Chandler	DOLA – Dr. Eyerce L. Armstrong-Poston
Asst Recording Secretary- Cynthia King	DOPR - Sharon Carmichael
Corresponding Secretary – Keith Arrington	YAR – Jyzelle Steplight



New Conference Presidents are Nickolas Clark Durham (New England), Dr. Alicia Collins-Dennis (New York), and Kevin Lamb (Philadelphia).

Outgoing officers were Brother Thomas Davis (DOLA), First VP - Donna-Lee Chandler-Smith, Recording Secretary- Sharon Drew, Corresponding Secretary - L. Lanan Bascome, and Chaplain - Terri Lynn Fisher. Outgoing Conference Presidents were Linda C. Gant (New England), Bonita O’Neal (New York), and Andree’ Turner (Philadelphia).

The meeting concluded with remarks from visiting clergy, Presiding Elder Jocelyn Hart-Lovelace (Boston-Hartford District), Reverend Sean Lewis (New England), Reverend Leonard Santucci (Bermuda), and the Lay benediction, followed immediately by the “First District Lay Organization Appreciation Program and Reception for Sister Cheryl Hammond Hopewell”. Newly elected First Episcopal District Lay President Linda C. Gant presided over the celebration. It was a blessed time of special presentations, fellowship, and food. To God be the Glory!

First Episcopal District Lay Organization

2024 – 2028

Elected Officers



President -
Linda Gant,
New England



1st VP –
Wanda Duckett,
New Jersey



2nd VP –
Robin Batson,
New York



3rd VP -
Shawn Lee,
Philadelphia



Recording Secretary -
Dorothy Chandler,
New Jersey



Assist. Recording
Secretary -
Cynthia King,
New England



Corresponding
Secretary –
Keith Arrington,
Philadelphia



Financial Secretary –
Cheryl L. Ford,
Philadelphia



Treasurer -
Sandra Mosby,
New England



Chaplain –
Catherine Combs-
Smith,
New Jersey



Historiographer –
Caroline Hoffman-
Veasey,
New England



Director of Lay
Activities (DOLA) –
Eyerce Armstrong-
Poston, PhD,
Delaware



Director of Public
Relations (DOPR) –
Sharon Carmichael,
New Jersey



Young Adult
Representative
(YAR) Jyzelle
Steplight
New York





“FIRST IN TOUCH”



Spotlight on our Conferences





*2024 Delaware Conference Annual Lay Recognition Banquet
Honoring Youth and Young Adults
And The Young in Heart*

*Lisa Powell, Director of Public Relations
Dr. Eyerce Armstrong-Poston, 2nd Vice-President--Photos
Submitted by Sharon Drew, Delaware Conference Lay Organization (DCLO) President*



Sister Sharon Drew - Delaware Conference Lay

It was a beautiful Fall Afternoon in October when the Delaware Conference Lay Organization held their Annual Recognition Banquet. The 2024 banquet honored Youth and Young Adults and the Young in Heart. Over four hundred family and friends attended the Annual Recognition Banquet. The event was held in Dover, Delaware at the Modern Maturity Center on Saturday, October 5, 2024. The luncheon was a tremendous success. Another rousing thank-you to the Ways and Means Committee for a great afternoon.

The entertainment for the day was provided by three of our Young Adults. Brother Tyrin Williams of Byrd's AME Church in Clayton, Delaware shared his talents and provided music throughout the luncheon.

Brother Calvin Suggs of Trinity AME Church in Middletown, Delaware closed the luncheon with his outstanding and spirit filled solo. Kudos to these young Brothers who are always willing to share their talents.

Sister Rog Jenae` Fisher of Mt. Pisgah AME Church in Seaford, Delaware provided us with an outstanding Liturgical Dance that left people on their feet to acknowledge her talents. Sister Fisher was one of our Honorees and served as our Young Adult Representative for many years.

All our Honorees were individuals to be recognized and celebrated for all their hard work and years of service to their many churches.

Thank you to each of them for their service in our Zion.



Rog Jenae` Fisher of Mt. Pisgah AME Church, Seaford, DE

Continued on Page 9

DCLO Recognition Banquet

(continued)

SCHOLARSHIP HIGHLIGHTS: We salute our Frank C. Cummings Awardee, our Young Adult, Sister Dionne Sinclair, who is a student at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. Sister Dionne is a member of Bethel AME Church, Smyrna, Delaware.

Hats off to Kevin Mitchell who will receive the Delaware Conference Book Award. Brother Kevin is a student at Delaware State University in Dover, Delaware, and is a member of Bethel AME Church in Wilmington, Delaware.



Brother Calvin Suggs with Honoree Andre Reed



Mt. Zion Dover Zolah Madison Frazier and Family



DCLO President Sharon Drew (Center), Honoree Rog Jenaë Fisher (Right)



Honoree Jelisa Dixon (Center)



Recognition Banquet Attendees



New England Conference Lay Organization (NECLO)

Submitted by Sister Nicol Ayers, DOLA

Making Our Voices Heard with Participation

As the nation gears up for the pivotal 2024 elections, the New England Conference Lay Organization (NECLO) is more committed than ever to ensuring that every voice is heard and every vote counted. This year, the campaign theme, “Souls to the Polls,” extends beyond merely getting voters to the polls; it emphasizes the importance of civic engagement through various meaningful activities. From poll working to driving eligible voters, the NECL encourages everyone to take an active role in the democratic process, highlighting that local elections are critical to our communities.

In New England, several dedicated members of the NECL rolled up their sleeves to serve as poll workers, helping to facilitate a smooth voting experience. Sis. Cynthia King from Bethel AME Church-Stamford was one of those members who dedicated herself to serving the community for the full 14 days of early voting and on Election Day. Her firsthand account of the steady flow of voters during early voting days underscores the enthusiasm and commitment of the electorate this year. “It was heartening to see so many people engaged and ready to make their voices heard,” she shared.

The spirit of engagement was further echoed by Sis. Jackie Spaulding from Bethel AME Church-Norwalk, who served as an Election Day

supervisor at a local school. With a passion for her role, she expressed her eagerness each election cycle to be part of the democratic process. “Working at the polls is more than just a job; it’s a way to give back to my community and ensure that everyone have a chance to participate in shaping our future,” Jackie stated.

Youth involvement has also been a significant aspect of this year’s campaign. Sis. Madison Thomas Ferguson, President of the New England Conference Young People’s Division (NECYPD), shared her inspiring journey as a young poll worker. “When I was asked to work at the elections during my sophomore year of high school, I jumped at the opportunity. Now, in my sixth experience as an Election Day Poll Worker, I’ve seen firsthand how the political climate has shifted,” she explained. Madison noted the palpable urgency among voters this election cycle, particularly as Connecticut introduced early voting, making the process more accessible and efficient.

Adding to the momentum, the Honorable Nicol Ayers, Norwalk CT Common Council (NECLO Director of Lay Activities) took it upon herself to engage with voters throughout the election process. Although she was not running for reelection, she dedicated her time to educating individuals on local issues that affect them directly.

Continued on Page 11

NECLO Making Our Voices Heard ...

(continued)

Her grassroots efforts began in the summer and continued until November 5, as she worked tirelessly to ensure that other African American candidates garnered the necessary support to appear on the ballot.

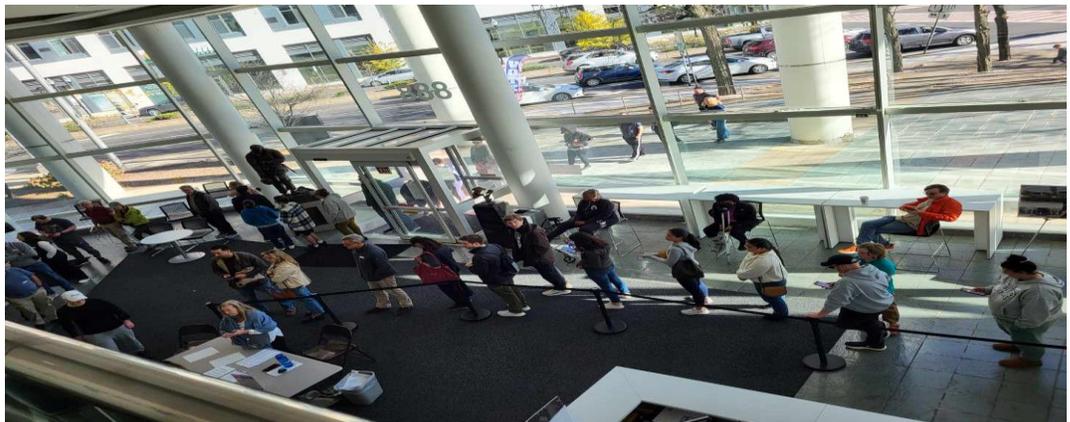
The NECLO's "Souls to the Polls" campaign is not just about voting; it's about fostering a culture of civic responsibility and community involvement. As we reflect on the experiences of our members and the enthusiastic participation of voters, we encourage everyone to find their own

way to engage civically. Whether it's volunteering at the polls, educating others about the voting process, or simply making sure that your voice is heard, every action counts.

This election season, let us remember that it's not just about the national stage; local elections shape our communities and impact our daily lives. Together, we can ensure that our collective voices resonate in every election. Let's continue to encourage one another to get civically engaged—because every vote matters, and every soul counts!



Sister Cynthia King,
Bethel AMEC - Stamford



"Souls to the Polls" Campaign Participants

The NECLO's "Souls to the Polls" campaign is not just about voting; it's about fostering a culture of civic responsibility and community involvement.



Honorable Nicol Ayers,
Norwalk CT Common
Council (NECLO DOLA)



New Jersey Conference Lay Organization (NJCLO)

Submitted by Sister Elizabeth Clark, President

On Tuesday, October 15, 2024, history was made as the New Jersey Conference Lay Organization (NJCLO) gathered to elect new officers for the 2024-2025 term. Presiding over the election was the esteemed Episcopal President, Sister Linda Gant, whose leadership set a powerful tone for the day.

The following dynamic leaders were elected to serve the New Jersey Conference Lay Organization for the 2024-2026 term:

- **President:** Sister Elizabeth Clark
- **Vice President:** Sister Jannie Foxworth
- **Recording Secretary:** Sister Carolyn Massey
- **Corresponding Secretary:** Sister Brenda Skinner
- **Young Adult Representative:** **Sister Tracee N. Baker**
- **Treasurer:** Sister Michelle Anderson Robinson
- **Director of Lay Activities:** Siter Francine J. Davis

These new leaders are poised to drive the vision and mission of the NJCLO forward in the coming years, united in their commitment to serving the needs of the community.

Just a week later, on Saturday, October 26, 2024, the NJCL came together once again for its Annual Meeting at Bethel-Hosanna AME Church in Pennsauken, NJ. This gathering was highlighted by an inspiring message from Rev. Richard Norris II, who captivated the audience with his powerful words. In addition, the newly appointed Presiding Elder, Rev. Dr. James Coaxum III, brought warm greetings and expressed his enthusiasm for the opportunities ahead. He shared his excitement about collaborating closely with the Laity to strengthen the spiritual foundation and impact of the organization.

The energy and dedication displayed at both events reflect a bright future for the New Jersey Conference Lay Organization as they continue their mission of service and community empowerment.





New York Conference Lay Organization (NYCLO)

Submitted by Dr. Alicia Collins-Dennis, President

Greetings from the New York Conference Lay!

It has indeed been my honor and privilege to gather with laity in the New York Conference. I have had the opportunity to celebrate Lay activities such as luncheons and annual Lay Day services throughout the New York Conference. It has been an honor to witness these celebrations of all the great work taking place in our local churches.

On October 19, 2024, I attended the First Bethel Harlem AME Church award luncheon at the Alhambra Ballroom in New York City. Mrs. Edith Cartledge serves as the Lay President of First Bethel Harlem, and the now newly elected and consecrated Right Reverend Dr. Henry A. Belin III, is the Pastor.

At the awards luncheon, First Bethel honored Mrs. Doris Elizabeth Parker, who is an active member. She is hard working, and dedicated to her church and her community. It was wonderful to see all the love bestowed on Mrs. Parker and celebrating her.

The next day, I attended First Bethel's Annual Lay Day service, where the speaker was Rev. Dr. Joseph Postell, Presiding Elder of the Florence-Dillion District in the Northeast Conference in South Carolina. Rev. Dr. Postell's sermon was entitled "Divine Guidelines", based on the scripture reference, John 21:1-7. The sermon was empowering, which contributed to the two-day weekend festivities that I had the pleasure of experiencing.

My next experience was on Sunday, November 3. Bishop Henry A. Belin and the members of First Bethel surprised Mrs. Cartledge at the Sunday morning service. The Lay Organization at First Bethel AME Church was named the Edith Cartledge Lay Organization, which was a delightful honor presented to Mrs. Cartledge for all the tireless work she has done at First Bethel AME Church, New York City and the Connectional AME Church.

Mrs. Edith Cartledge, a native of Moncks Corner, South Carolina, and a devoted alumni of Allen University in Columbia, South Carolina, has served as the Director of Lay Activities for First Bethel AME Church, the New York Conference, the First Episcopal District and the Connectional AME Church. Mrs. Cartledge is one of the few people that has served as Director of Lay Activities on every level of the AME Church. She was also the advisor to the late Connectional Lay President Mrs. Valerie Gary Bell.

I am so happy that her church family at First Bethel AME Church New York City granted this honor to Mrs. Cartledge, who loves the AME Church, has worked hard advocating for her church, and the Lay organization where she has touched many lives.

We, the New York Conference Lay Organization, salute Mrs. Edith Bartley Cartledge! Thank you for everything you have done and continue to do in the lives of the members of the AME Church.

Continued on Page 14

**NYCLO Celebrations
(continued)**



First Bethel Harlem AME Church Award Luncheon. Standing: Bishop Henry A. Belin, III; Far right: Mrs. Edith Bartley Cartledge



First Bethel Harlem AME Church Sunday worship attendees honoring Mrs. Edith Bartley Cartledge.



Mrs. Edith Bartley Cartledge



"FIRST IN TOUCH"



Spotlight on our Young Adults

First Episcopal District Lay Young Adult of the Year

***Congratulations Daysha Smith!!
Philadelphia Conference***



Continued on Page 16

Daysha Smith
First Episcopal District Lay Young Adult of the Year
(continued)

Good day Fellow Laity,

I had the pleasure of being one of the two last Young Adults of the year awarded by past president, Dr. Cheryl Hammond Hopewell. This was a tremendous honor that at the time rendered me speechless. I would like to encourage all who love the AME church to join your local Lay.

If you're reading this and you are already a member of the Lay, that is AWESOME. I would encourage you to get involved on a deeper level, whatever that may mean for you. My first involvement began when I was not a member at all. My grandfather was the president at our church. I drove him to all of the monthly conference meetings. This was prior to Covid, so we did not meet online at all. When my grandmother fell ill, he asked me to attend in his place. During my first couple months of meetings, I asked anyone I sat next to about anything I did not understand. All of the seasoned saints were so nice and helpful. It made me love the organization and people from day one.

I have been AME my entire life. When I became an active member of the Lay organization, my love and pride grew tremendously. At the time of my life when I needed a village, God provided the Laity for me. My friends had been dying due to drugs frequently. I desired a closer walk with God. I had no tolerance for worldly compromising and I hadn't found anyone quite in my lane to become friends with. The more that I worked for God through the Lay, the more Christian friends I developed. The guidance that I have received from seasoned Laity has helped my life in too many ways to list in this letter. I am grateful to God for this blessing. I aspire to be a real part of change and growth in our Zion via being a Lay member. To God be the glory, great things He has done.

Daysha Smith



L to R: Dr. Cheryl Hopewell, Daysha Smith, CLO
2nd VP Dr. Dorothy Henderson, CLO President
Makiti



Daysha Smith

“Connecting a Global Church”
Historical Journey Crossword Puzzle

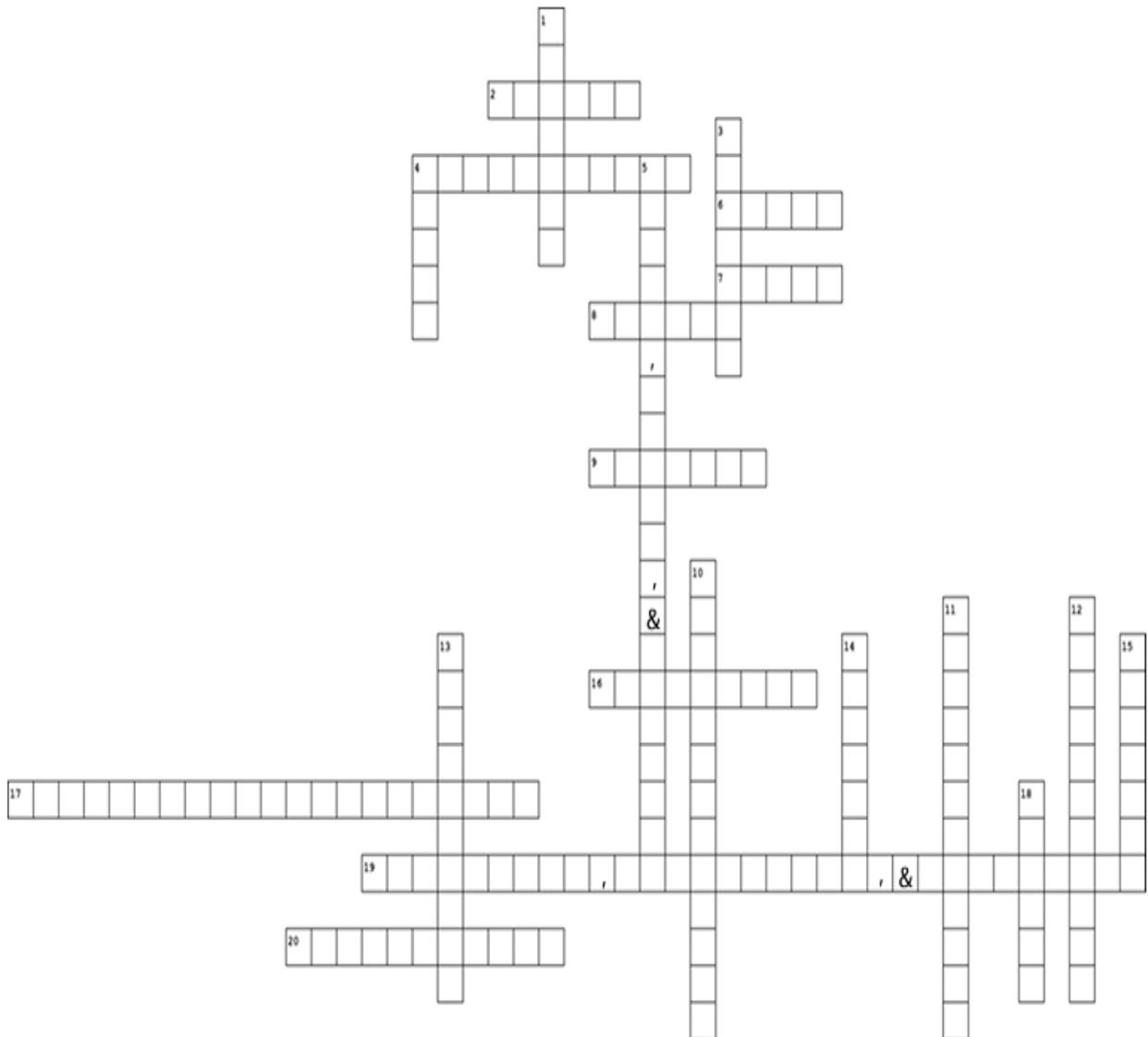
*Created by Sister Jyzelle Steplight – Honorary Historiographer, First District YAR
Mr. William E. Ayers – CLO Historiographer
Mr. Matikane A. Makiti, CLO President*

This crossword was a part of the Connectional Historiographers "Get To Know Your Church" series.

Submitted July 2024 | Published in The Christian Recorder, August 2024



“Connecting a Global Church”
Historical Journey Crossword Puzzle





“Connecting a Global Church”
Historical Journey Crossword Puzzle : Clues



Across

2. Hailing from the Philadelphia Conference (First District) where she is an active lay member, she is currently serving as the president of the Judicial Council. Who is Judge Tania E. _____.
4. Bro. Caesar Kalenga is the President of what Episcopal District's Lay Organization?
6. What elected office is responsible for the coordination of events relating to Evangelism?
7. He was the second Young Adult Representative for the Connectional Lay Organization. He later went on to become ordained and a public-school teacher. He is YAR James _____.
8. He is currently serving as president of the Eighteenth Episcopal District. Who is Bro. Phillip _____.
9. Who was the first Lay Commission Chairman? Bishop Herald L. _____.
16. She served as the Assistant Recording Secretary of the Connectional Lay Organization and has played for several churches throughout the Eighth Episcopal District. Who is this gifted musician? Sis. Laurene _____.
17. In what year was the Lay Organization given equal representation at General Conferences and other areas of the church?
19. Taken from the scripture Luke 4:18-19 the Lay theme is "Living a Global Witness Ministry that... _____, _____, & _____.
20. Students going to college and in need of financial assistance can apply for these three what? named after Lay trailblazers Dr. Jayme C. Colman, Dr. J.C. McKinney, and Dr. J. D. Williams.

Down

1. He is the Chairman of the AME Church Lay Organization Organizational and Officer Effectiveness Committee and is a member of the General Board for the Connectional Church. In 2019 he was elected President of the Seventh Episcopal District Lay Organization. Throughout his time in office, he has led his district to higher heights, leading them to win District of the Year at the Thirty-Eighth Biennial. Who is this effective leader? Bro. Keith E. _____.
3. The Connectional Lay Witness Sunday is observed on the Second Sunday is which month?
4. In 1952 the First Episcopal District Lay Organization was organized under his leadership. Who is Bro. John _____.
5. According to the mission statement of the Connectional Lay Organization the Lay Organization is commissioned to do what three things? _____, _____, & _____.
10. Along with the Discipline of A.M.E Church, Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised is used to help in what official capacity? _____ Procedure.
11. The Fourth Episcopal district comprises six conferences, two of which are outside of the United States. Name these conferences. _____ & _____.
12. Chaired by Bro. Marc Johnson, this committee is responsible for presenting proposed bills during the General Conference. _____ Committee.
13. Organized by Professor Charles H. Johnson in 1912 the organization was known as the Laymen's _____ League.
14. At the 1912 General Conference he was elected to the office of Financial Secretary making him the first layman to hold the position. John R. _____.
15. Hailing from the great state of Texas (Tenth District) she was crowned the Outstanding Lay Person of the Year at the Thirty-Eighth Biennial. Who is this extraordinary laywoman? Dr. Ethel Bayley-_____.
18. He served as a President of the Washington Conference. Who is Bro. James _____.



“FIRST IN TOUCH”

Social Action Committee



Reflection on Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “The Fierce Urgency of Now”

***Submitted by Kathleen Turpin Merritt
First Episcopal District Lay Social Action Committee Chair***

On August 28, 1963, at the Lincoln Memorial on the Washington DC National Mall, Dr. King delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech. In that speech, Dr. King made a clarion call for racial and social justice. The fierce urgency of now is a prophetic word that is apropos in 2025 as it was in 1963.

The Fierce Urgency of Now

“We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are comforted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there is such a thing as being too late. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigor and positive action.”

My Beloved Community, the struggle is real. The struggle continues and so must we. Much has changed ... Much has not! We’ve come this far by faith leaning on the Lord. Trusting in His holy word. He’s never failed us yet.

In the spirit of Richard Allen, the African Methodist Episcopal Church has a rich history of spiritual, intellectual, physical, and emotional support for all people by spreading Christ’s liberating gospel through word and deed. Social justice was a cornerstone of Richard Allen’s beliefs.



Kathleen Turpin Merritt

We are Richard Allen’s church and we are the Lay Organization. We teach, train, and empower our church community.

Beloved Community, this is a Clarion Call to Action. Our Freedom is at stake. Freedom is not free. Our ancestors paid a high price to obtain the rights and privileges of free men and free women.

Historically the Black Church played a pivotal role in the civil rights movement. They were a central part of the movement, providing resources, support, activities and a place to gather. In addition, the church provided spiritual, emotional, and financial support to the partnership which created a movement of Social Action and Social Activism. We are the church and we are committed to advocating for our beloved community. We are called to educate, encourage and empower our community. This is a call to action for us to actively support and participate in this most important movement. “We’ve Come Too Far To Turn Back Now.”

In Strength and Solidarity!





"FIRST IN TOUCH"



A Word from the First Episcopal District Lay Director of Public Relations (DOPR)



It's a New Season! It's a New Day!

Happy New Year First District Lay!

I'm honored and excited to serve again for another 4 more years as your re-elected DOPR. Thank you for your support and thank God for this awesome opportunity to continue working with you and our newly-elected President, Sister Linda Gant.

I look forward to working with all of our conferences in the First Episcopal District Lay Organization in the new term.

In addition, Sister Elzena Caldwell (New York Conference Lay) has agreed to work with me in the social media arena. I am excited for the gifts and talents that she brings to Public Relations. Thanks to President Gant for bringing Sister Caldwell aboard.



Public Relations (PR) and Social Media are extremely important to the church. So, you may ask, what's the difference?

PR puts the message out there to generate awareness and interest.

Social Media amplifies the message and keeps it going. What a perfect partnership!

We must witness to the world what a wonderful God we serve and the great work that we as AMEs are doing. We must also remember to share with each other all of the great happenings in our conferences.

Together we can share and promote your conference worship and training experiences, accomplishments, inspirations, work in your communities, and so much more.

But remember, no one can tell your story better than you can. So please send your articles and pictures and help us to promote the importance and work of the laity and the church.

I welcome your feedback, questions, suggestions and prayers.

Sister Sharon





"FIRST IN TOUCH"



Save – the – Date!

FIRST EPISCOPAL DISTRICT LAY ORGANIZATION

2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE LAY WITNESS NIGHTS



Linda C. Gant
President

Thursday, March 6

Bermuda Conference



W. Anthoni Lightbourne
President



Rev. Ralph D.S. Trott, II
Preacher

Thursday, April 24

New York Conference



Dr. Alicia Collins-Dennis
President



Sister Brittini Peters
Speaker

Thursday, March 13

Delaware Conference



Sharon Drew
President



Rev. Dr. Ronniere D. Robinson
Preacher

Thursday, May 1

Western NY Conference



Thomas Whitt
President



Dr. Marc Lamont Hill
Speaker

Thursday, April 3

New Jersey Conference



Elizabeth Clark
President



Rev. Justin B. Anderson
Preacher

Thursday, June 5

Philadelphia Conference



Kevin Lamb
President



Rev. Richard F. Norris, III
Preacher

Thursday, April 10

New England Conference



Nickolas Clark-Durham
President



Dr. Christina Dickerson Cousin
Speaker



Bishop Samuel L. Green, Sr.
Presiding Prelate
First Episcopal District



Dr. Phyllis N. Green
Episcopal Supervisor

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Luke 4:18-19