

# THE 1ST EPISCOPAL DISTRICT LAY NEWSLETTER

## JULY 2019- ANNUAL MEETING 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.

---

**Bishop Gregory G.M. Ingram**

Presiding Prelate  
First Episcopal District

**Rev. Dr. Jessica Kendall Ingram**

Episcopal  
Supervisor First  
Episcopal District

**Mrs. Cheryl Hammond-Hopewell**

President First  
Episcopal District  
Lay Organization

**Ms. LaSean R Shelton** Director of  
Public Relations  
Editor in Chief First  
Episcopal District  
Lay Organization

Dear Episcopal District Lay President  
Cheryl Hammond Hopewell

Dear Loyal Laity,

I am thankful to Almighty God for His many, many blessings and I am grateful to each and every one of you for all you do for African Methodism and the Lay Organization. Our Mid-

Year Meeting in February in Philadelphia, PA was a huge success. We had wonderful workshops under the leadership of our DOLA, Sister Josephine Fulcher-Anderson.

We continued to have wonderful and inspirational Bible Study and we thank Sister Kitty Combs-Smith for leading in the absence of our chaplain, Terri Fisher who we continue to keep in our prayers. We also continued to take care of our bodies by rising early for 30 minutes of morning fitness. Our Friday night service was a blessing with special thanks to my pastor, the Rev. Jay B. Broadnax, First District Director of Christian Education and President of Black Clergy of Philadelphia and Vicinity.

At each meeting we continue to provide an excellent newsletter featuring the First District Lay and our seven Conferences. Our workshops are always streamed live so others can see the wonderful work we are doing and maybe it will encourage others to want to join us and if not, at least to get some of the knowledge we received. We also received our lapel pins and they have really been a big hit. With these pins, we won't have to get badges each year. These pins are good from year to year and all the conferences are listed on there. While we are seven conferences, we are one dynamite District. Some of us will be traveling to the Connectional Lay Biennial in Bellevue, WA. Looking forward to working and seeing you there.

Soon after that we will have our Annual Meeting where we will come together to give an account of our stewardship for the year. We will have at least two workshops at our Annual Meeting. We are also excited about honoring our 2 nd Young Adult of the Year. They are all wonderful and we are so proud of our young adults. As your president I have continued to travel to all seven conferences to be of support in any way I possibly can by attending your luncheons, lay services, training sessions, funerals, election of officers, conducting workshops and speaking at lay days.

I do my best to encourage and support you because I love what I do and I love each of you. THE WORK IS ALL DIVINE! Looking forward to even greater things. "We can do all things through Christ who gives us strength".

Philippians 4:13





## *First Episcopal District*

Lay Mid-Year Meeting African Methodist Episcopal Church

Submitted by: Sister Cynthia King First Episcopal District



The First Episcopal District Lay Organization 2019 Mid-Year meeting under the leadership of our First District Lay President, Cheryl Hammond Hopewell, was held at the Embassy Suites by Hilton, Philadelphia, PA from February 21-23, 2019. The host conference was the Philadelphia Conference under the leadership of Brother Andree Turner, Conference President. We thank Brother Andree and the Philadelphia Conference for a great job well done.

Thursday evening, February 20, 2019 everyone was invited to attend dinner at the host church, St. Paul AME Church, Philadelphia. We received hugs, smiles, great hospitality and good food. As members returned to the hotel, they began assisting with preparing the registration kits. President Cheryl met with the Executive board and the Frank C. Cummings Scholarship Committee also met. As the sun rose on Friday morning, February 21, 2019 President Hopewell and some of the lay members began the day with morning exercise and a walk.

This a daily ritual to run, walk and exercise with the president, so make sure you bring your workout gear with you at each District Meeting. The Connectional Lay Theme is "Laity Walking Humbly with God to do Justice and To Love Kindness", Micah 6:8. Morning devotion begins with presenter Sister Kitty Combs-Smith and the theme for the weekend devotions was "The Year of Restoration". Sister Kitty used the scripture from Matthew 11:28. She informed us that God said we are to: "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest". In order for restoration to begin, that which has been broken, damaged, burned out, stressed out or diseased, must first rest.

Resting entails stopping completely and interrupting our weekly routines to take a Sabbath rest. The Sabbath rest allows us to practice self-care.

Episcopal District Lay Director, Sister Josephine Fulcher-Anderson with a large smile gave us instructions about the day's activities. Our First Timers Workshop is a very big hit. If you have never attended a Mid-year or Annual Meetings, then you are a First Timer. Sister Robin Batson, First District 3rd Vice President was the presenter for this workshop. Sister Robin presented the first timers with an awesome overview of the AME Church and the Lay Organization.

She explained the facts that we should know as members of the Lay Organization, the AME Church, the history of the Lay Organization and the church, the functions of the church, the church organizations and the levels of the AME Church. She spoke about the 2016 Bicentennial Doctrine and Discipline and the upcoming 2019 Biennial which will be held in Seattle, WA from June 30 – July 4, 2019.

The session was another great hit with 10 in attendance. President Hopewell always stops by and gives them a special welcome and takes a picture with them.

We always receive greetings from our First Episcopal District Lay President Sister Cheryl Hammond Hopewell. She thanked everyone for their dedication to the lay organization. She welcomed and thanked all of the clergy who attended and for their support of the Lay Organization. The first workshop of the day was "Restoring Church Finances: The Partnership in Ministry,

Ministerial/Pastoral Support presented by the Rev. Stephen Michael Lewis, Pastor of Bethel AME Church, Freeport, New York. He explained the partnership in Ministry where the Ministerial/Pastoral Support is negotiated between the Pastor and the Stewards (Laity). Rev. Lewis broke down the different areas as salary, pension, Ministers Bill of Rights, housing, retirement and insurance guidelines.

At the end of this workshop, you were well equipped to go back and work correctly as a Steward, Trustee or a well-informed member of the church. The next workshop was "Let's Teach with Love: Parliamentary Procedures". The presenter was Sister Jacqueline Sibbles, NJ Conference Lay President. Her scripture was taken from 1Thessalonian 4:9. She explained the outline of Parliamentary Procedures: What are they? What is a Deliberative Assembly?

Parliamentary Procedures Authority/Source, Parliamentary Procedures vs Constitution and Bylaws, Conducting Business in a Deliberative Assembly, Bringing Business Before the Assembly, Type of Motions, Meeting vs Session and Adjournments. She spoke about the rules and guidelines on how you conduct business in a deliberative assembly and how it works. Source is your latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly revised and the 2016 Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church.

We learned how to conduct a meeting properly and the duties of the President and the Recording Secretary in conducting the meeting. The presiding officer is referred to as the Madam/Mr. Chair or Madam/Mr. President. Member should only address the chair or address concerns through the chair and not to each other.

After lunch our dessert was "What We Pay and Why, Understanding Denominational Obligations". The facilitator was the Rev. Melvin E. Wilson, Pastor/Teacher of St. Matthew AME Church, Orange, New Jersey. Rev. Wilson explained the Connectional Budget of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 2016-2020, Bicentennial Edition.

He explained how the General Budget amount is broken down. The Connectional payments on the General Budget are made 5 times per year from the First District. There are other payments that the local church must make at various time and for various reasons. The Connectional budget payment does not include assessments.

Rev. Wilson said that there was much more to cover that was not put in his presentation. All the workshops were awesome.

## *First District News continued*

As the day drew to an end, we prepared for our evening worship service. The Lay speaker was the Rev. Jay Broadnax, M. Div., Pastor of Mt. Pisgah AME Church, Philadelphia, PA. His scripture was taken from Micah 6:6-8 and Ephesians 3:7-12. His topic was "Restoring Justice through Every Member Ministry". Rev. Broadnax spoke about Black History Month and how we as a people are all so very grateful that Carter C. Woodson began Black History Month.

Woodson placed us on the national calendar and agenda. He spoke about how it is a time for us to remember and know our history from the tears from which it came. Not because we were slaves but we came from a long list of people who were Engineers, professionals in Algebra, Geometry and Construction. The system excluded us from what we created to be. We come from a people who produced great people like Queen of Sheba, who was on par with King Solomon.

He spoke about how we came from Methodist in England and practice lifting up Jesus. The roll of clergy is to prepare the people in the church. When you come before Christ, we are all the same. We are all servants of Christ. Are you willing to be a servant for Christ and stand up for justice?



On Saturday morning February 23, 2019, the day began with a sunrise workout with President Hopewell. Devotion and Bible Study continued with Sister Kitty from Matthew 11:28, "The Year of Restoration". She informed us that it takes Jesus living in and through us to help restore us to better circumstances,

She gave us choices to help us actively work on and improve ourselves. We need Physical Self Care, Psychological Self Care, Emotion Self Care, Spiritual Self Care, Workplace/Professional Self Care and Balance. The morning presenters were Sister Ethel Marie Wallace-Jenkins, Chairperson for Connectional Lay Constitution & Bylaws Committee and Sister Josephine Fulcher-Anderson, First District Lay Director. Part I of "Restoring the Mission & Purpose of the Lay Organization: PAST-PRESENT-FUTURE". They spoke about how the purpose of the Lay Organization is to organize and train the lay members of the AME Church.



## First Episcopal District Lay Organizational Mid-Year Meeting 2019



# *Philadelphia Conference*

## **Spirit Filled PCLO Education Service Launches Start of Scholarship Drive**

By Connie Williams, PCLO Director of Public Relations

The Word instructs all believers to “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all else will be added to you”. With that in mind, the officers and members of the PCLO held their annual **Education Service to launch the 2019 giving drive for the Cheryl Hammond Hopewell Lay Scholarship Fund**. The fund expects to give **four \$500 Scholarships and three book awards selected from Philadelphia Conference applicants who submit their applications by the deadline on July 31, 2019**. Being in praise and worship allows God to add spiritual power and blessed equipping to the efforts of those who are committed to a successful funding drive.

At 3 PM on Saturday, March 16, 2019, members of the Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization gathered at Mt. Tabor AME Church in Philadelphia, site of the 2019 Education Service. Sister Juanita Bryant, The Local Lay President at Mt. Tabor and Chaplain of the PCLO served as Worship Leader. The opening hymn was “The Layman’s Song” sung with full participation and energy.

Sister Daysha Smith, Local Lay President at Bethel Downingtown AME Church, prayed in humble thankfulness for God’s Grace and Mercy and invoked the Holy Spirit to be present during the worship experience. The scripture, Micah 6:1-8, was read by PCLO Third Vice President, Cynthia Douse. Following the scripture, the Mt. Tabor Male Chorus offered a musical selection. The Lay Litany was led by Sister Kezia Moore, PCLO Young Adult Representative. After introduction of the speaker by Sister Lisa Waddell, Pro-Tem of the Steward Board at Mt. Tabor and a beautiful and harmonious rendition of “Amazing Grace” by the Male Chorus, Pastor Albert Johnson took his place behind the sacred podium to deliver the sermon for the Education Service.

Pastor Johnson started by reading an additional scripture, 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 9:1-13 and declaring that many of us must learn to change if we can ever hope to avoid “A Crippled Religion”. Change is difficult but critical if such crippling things as spiritual neglect, infighting, jealousy and spiritual near sightedness are to fall away and make way for love, peace and unity. This passage recalls King David’s decision to restore all of Saul’s land



to his grandson, Mephibosheth (son of Jonathan) who was “lame in both feet”. What makes our religion weak and lame? Each of us and our churches can become lame if we succumb to the ease of remaining in our comfort zones. Many times, our faith is weak, and we have anxiety and fear which inflicts us with a paralysis impeding our mission as Christians. Instead we should be praising and believing God which lets us know that if we are in Christ, we do not need to fear and worry about anything.

We can be like David who provided the life line of restoration to Saul’s “lame” grandson, removing him from the perilous existence he experienced in Lo Debar to the comfort and supportive life in Jerusalem where he ate from the king’s table. As disciples, we must go out to reach “all” even those who inhabit “modern-day Lo Debars”, not just those we see as desirable. That includes those that do not know Christ, are less fortunate, homeless, sick, drug addicted, morally bankrupt or mentally ill. This message for change and purposeful action touched hearts and spirits and was well received and inspiring.

After the invitation to Christian discipleship and the offering, remarks were given by Sister Bryant, Worship Leader; Sister Tameko Patten, PCLO Education Committee Chair; Brother Andree A. Turner, Sr., PCLO President; and Pastor Albert Johnson. Sister Patten thanked all for their participation in giving and encouraged spreading the word to those who were not available at the service to give, so that that they too can bless the scholarship drive by giving. Sister Cheryl Hammond Hopewell, First District Lay President and scholarship founder was acknowledged for her vision in creating this opportunity for young people moving on to further their education after high school.

This year Local Lay Organizations at PCLO churches were honored to give a donation adding to the usual monetary donations given by individual laypersons. The service concluded with the singing of the Lay Benediction. The Service was a spiritual and a financial blessing.





# *Delaware Conference Lay Organization*

*Submitted by Sharon D. Drew Director of Public Relations*

## *Third Annual Gospel Explosion*

The Delaware Conference Lay Organization celebrated its Annual Gospel Explosion on Saturday, May 18, 2019. The program was held at Mt. Zion AME Church in Dover, Delaware. The Gospel Explosion featured choirs and soloist from the various churches in Delaware. Despite some unexpected last-minute cancellations, the Gospel Explosion went off without a hitch and we had a wonderful evening of music that included songs from many genres that were enjoyed by all in attendance.

Senior Chaplain, Brother DeRayfield Shipman, of the Chaplain's Corner served as our Worship Leader for the evening. As always, we were greeted by the wonderful pastor of Mt. Zion AME Church, Rev. Dr. Erika D. Crawford and we were so warmly welcomed by the local president, Sis. Dorothy Coleman.

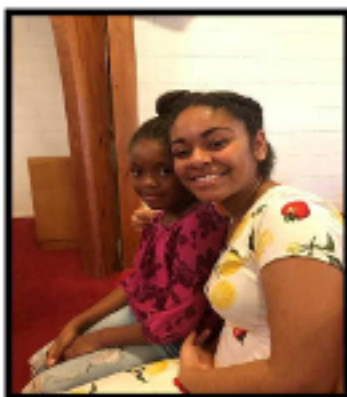
The "Waiting On Jesus Gospel Band" from Sussex County Delaware was the featured Gospel Group for the evening and rendered several selections. Our evening included two very fine soloist with renditions by Brother Gary Dawkins from the Men of Smyrna and Brother Andre Reed of Middletown, Delaware. The Gospel Choir and Pastor Luther Walker, III of Ringgold Chapel AME in Middletown, Delaware brought the audience to their feet with their musical selections.

We can't forget our children, as we were favored with two wonderful selections from The Children's Choir of Mt. Zion AME Church Dover. What a blessing that the children would give up their Saturday to help us raise funds for scholarships.

The evening ended with closing remarks from the Delaware Conference Lay President, Dr. Martin A. Drew, as he reminded everyone that the Gospel Explosion is an evening to enjoy good music and to help raise funds for students who are entering or attending college. Thanks, was given to all the participants and the First Vice President, Sister LaSean Shelton who helped with the program. Congratulations Delaware Conference Lay Organization on another outstanding event.

We look forward to Gospel Explosion 2020.





Reflections of Gospel Explosion 2019



PhotoGrid

Photos courtesy of LaSean Shelton

# *New England Conference Lay Organization*

The New England Conference Lay Organization under the leadership of our president, Sister Linda Gant, continues to be a hot bed of learning since the last First District Annual meeting in July 2018. The New England Conference has always emphasized Laity and Clergy Working Together. We continue to thrive as we move forward.

On September 29, 2018 we held our first "Day of Training" designed for all ages of laity and clergy. Two workshops were for the ages of 18 – 35 entitled "You Are A Young Adult – Now What?" and "Come As You Are" were facilitated by Brother Nickolas Clark-Durham, our First Vice President and Rev. Marcus McCullough, Pastor of Bethel Springfield; each encouraging the young people to be motivated and bloom where they are planted, as well as to form concrete relationships so that they can grow.

The remainder of the workshops: One being "Laity and Clergy Working Together Works" facilitated by the husband and wife duo of Rev. Donna & Bro. Isiah George spoke on the need to work together and meet people where they are.

The other was "Finances in the Black Church" by Rev. Kayden Nurse focused on teaching people how to get out of debt. "The Order of Service" was presented by Retired Presiding Elder of the Boston Hartford District Rev. Herbert L. Eddy as he gave an in depth workshop on the order of service sharing what had to be included in the service for it to be and A.M.E. worship service, explaining the appropriate time to walk in and out of the church.

The last workshop was "A Roadmap to Leadership" facilitated by our Director of Lay Activities, Sis. Nicol Ayers regarding the qualifications needed to be a leader whether in or outside of the church. These workshops were only the beginning with more to come.

On December 8, 2018 Sis. Ethel Marie Wallace Jenkins facilitated a workshop on the Lay Electoral College explaining the process, as well as having the body participate in a mock election. This workshop was very informative and the body learned information that they did not know prior to the workshop.

We held our 32nd Annual Awards Luncheon on March 23, 2019 at the Port N Starboard in New London, Connecticut with the theme "Laity and Clergy Working Together." Here we honored 19 people (laity and ministers) who provide support to Pastors in their ministries. Rev. Mary Spell, Bethel – Stamford spoke on behalf of the honorees. Her message was from Psalm 127.

She asked "Are you equipped for work?" We were told that God has given all of us talents and if we use those talents and work together we can build for the future. Following the message, we were blessed with a solo from Presiding Elder Jocelyn Hart Lovelace.

What a wonderful time was had during our Annual Lay Night Witness Service held on April 4, 2019 at the Historic Charles Street A.M.E. Church in Massachusetts. The choir sung our souls happy and we were blessed with a mighty Word from our First District



# *New England Continued*

Lay Organization President, Sis. Cheryl Hammond-Hopewell, "Restoring Faith Over Fear" taken from the Hebrews 11:1 reminding us to spend time with God; stand firm on God's promises; Study the scriptures and stay in His Word to build our faith and to trust God to reduce our fears. We will Trust Him!!!

And the teaching and learning continues with the next workshop held on April 27, 2019 entitled "Nominating Committee Recruiting and Training Leaders for Leadership," facilitated by Sister Jacqueline Sibblies, New Jersey Conference Lay President. This workshop explained the Nominating Committee, the nominating process, key leadership traits and developing leaders from within.

Just as we began our year with workshops, we will end with one scheduled for June 22, 2019 entitled, "AMEers, A Singing People: A History Lesson Put to Music," by Bro. Marcus Burnett and Bro. Earl Knight.

Throughout the year at our conference meetings, we also had teaching moments. During this time, we were asked questions about the AME Church history. These moments helped us to see where we need to concentrate on as we prepare for future training.

Thank you Sister Nicol Ayers, New England Conference Director of Lay Activities for planning our workshops keeping within our mission and Thank you Sister Linda Gant, New England Conference Lay Organization President, for allowing this organization to continue to grow under your watch.

Submitted,

Sis. Linda Meadows,

Recording Secretary, New England Conference Lay Organization



# *Western New York Conference*

The Western New York Lay Organization was in session in Syracuse, New York which is considered the middle point of our conference which covers 350 miles from Niagara Falls, NY to Kingston, NY. The weekend of March 15-16, 2019 is one of our teaching and training weekends and also our Annual Lay Luncheon.

All roads lead to Fellowship AME Church in Syracuse, NY. Friday evening an Executive Board Meeting was held and we were honored to have our Episcopal District President, Mrs Cheryl Hammond Hopewell, with us for the weekend.

Saturday morning start with continental breakfast, after feeding our body we fed our soul with devotion. The teaching and training was under the direction of our Director of Lay Activities, Bro. Thomas Davis. Binders were distributed fully packed with information. Awesome workshops were given with group participation in a question and answers period.

The Annual Lay Luncheon started our Saturday afternoon off. Our honorees Sis. Lucretia Bouie (Bethel/Coxsackie) Sis. Etta Cohen (Baber/Rochester). The lunch was prepared and served by the laity of Fellowship AME. We thank the pastors who traveled to spend time with us.

The 23rd. Session of the Western New York Conference has come and gone we give God all the praise and glory for our Lay Witness Night. Licentiate LaMone Gibson was the Lay Night speaker. He delivered the message from Psalm 118:22 "Something good is going to come out of this." The night was a powerful worship experience. God blessed the work of our hands, the ideas of our minds and the passion of heart.

The history of the Lay Organization: 1- youngest auxiliary of the church, compared to the total years of existence of the AME Church. 2-To provide greater leadership opportunities for the lay members of the AME Church. Its membership should include: Trustees, Stewards, Deaconesses, Stewardess, Class Leaders, Choir Members, Missionary Workers, Ushers, Sunday School Workers and Students, Young People Department members and all members of all Commissions, and so forth.

The goals of the local organization include study, worship, fellowship and service at the local, conference, district and Connectional levels. Our aim is to be Christ-centered and to strengthen the church. Our concern is for the total church and to maintain a happy working relationship between the pastor and laity





Everyone was encouraged to purchase and study the AME Discipline, which outlines the workings of the church. Every member of the church that is not a Minister is a Laymen. Sister Jenkins spoke about how important it is to read and study the discipline and to become more knowledgeable about the AME Church. The final workshop of the weekend was "The African Methodist Episcopal Church General Board". The presenter was Brother Keith Coston, Jr., a General Board member. He asked the question "Do You Know Your Church"? (1) What is the General Board?

The Administrative arm of the AME Church working with and on behalf of the Board of Incorporators and the Council of Bishops. (2) Organizational Structure of the General Board & Connectional Divisions: General Conference, General Conference Commission, Council of Bishops, Annual Conference, District Conference, Quarterly Conference, Church Conference (Local). He also spoke about the Judicial Council, Board of Incorporators, General Officers and Commissions of the Board.

The Genesis of the General Board started largely because of the AME Church Dollar Money Receipt. Bishop Ingram and Rev. Jessica spoke about the joy they receive each time they attend the lay meetings. Bishop Ingram spoke about his Historical Encyclopedia which will debut at the June 13-15, 2019 Planning Meeting. He spoke about how we need to preserve our history by equipping the young people with the knowledge and training.

We need to be sure when we attend meetings and trainings that we are equipped with the right equipment and knowledge and be sure to come to learn and not be entertained by what is going on. We are to take the information back to our Districts, Conferences and Local Churches. Let us teach each other so we will help to equip future lay leaders. Our total count for mid-year 2019 registration was 285; with 248 in attendance and 176 in our closing circle.



# *THE MISSION STATEMENT OF THE LAY ORGANIZATION*

The objectives and purpose of the Lay Organization are outlined in its Constitution. The main objectives are stated in brief as follows:

1. To create a love and appreciation of the History and Principles of African Methodism.
2. Keep the memory of Richard Allen alive.
3. Respect Constituted Authority.
4. Stimulate and Educate the Laity in the Total Program of the Church.
5. Study the Discipline and learn the laws of the Church.
6. Encourage Financial Support of the Church's Program.
7. Teach and Practice Stewardship and work with the Youth to teach them Methodism.
8. These objectives can best be met when one works to understand the program of the church and relate the church to the World around us. Become involved in Social Action such that the church is then our Community - our Job - Our School, and everywhere that many assembles he carries the church with him.

## *PURPOSE*

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.

## *LAY BENCHMARK:*

May God bless us with the true spirit of Christianity, that we may live together, not as man over man, but as Lay persons working with God! Amen.



HERE ARE A FEW PICTURES FROM THE CONNECTIONAL LAY BIENNIAL, JUNE 30  
TO JULY 4, 2019 IN SEATTLE WASHINGTON.

MORE INFORMATION AND PICTURES TO FOLLOW IN THE NEXT ISSUE.



