

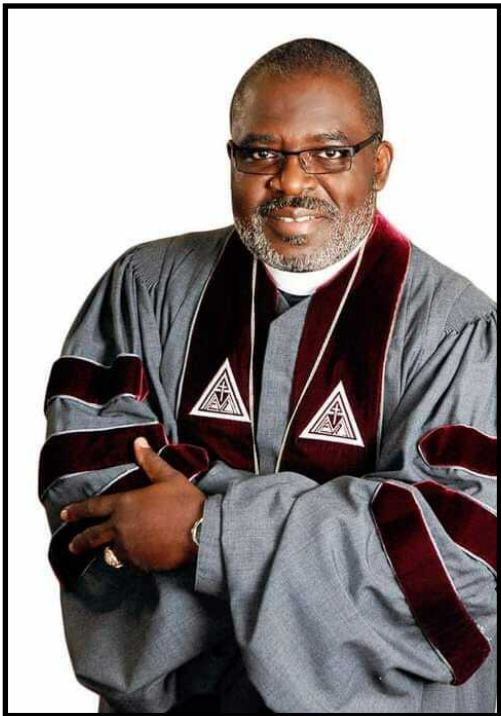


LITTLE ROCK A.M.E. Zion Church

EXCELLENCE IN MINISTRY

NEWSLETTER VOL. 14, NO. 1 AUGUST-OCTOBER 2023

401 NORTH MCDOWELL STREET CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA 704-334-3782 LITTLEROCK.AMEZION.ORG



FROM THE PASTOR

REV. DR. DWAYNE A. WALKER

To: Presiding Elder Wardell Henderson, Ministers, Officers, and Members of the 2nd Quarterly Conference of Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church

Grace, Mercy, and Peace from God the Father through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I am pleased to report on my Pastoral labors this past quarter.

We praise God for all God continues to do in and through this ministry. Sometimes, my heart becomes so full when I think of the way many of our members pour themselves and their resources into this church. I am so blessed to serve this church and am grateful for the privilege to do so.

I have seen our theme, "Together, We Can..." manifested in a mighty way. We came together as we celebrated our 140th Church Anniversary led by Mr. Gilbert McRae, Leader of Leaders, and our Class Leaders. Once again, we were honored to have Bishop W. Darin Moore serve as our Revivalist. My father, Bishop George W.C. Walker, Sr. was our guest preacher as we culminated our celebration the second Sunday in September.

I am pleased to say that our Minister of Music, Mr. Sid Oliver has taken the initiative to reorganize our Youth and Young Adult Choir which sings each third Sunday, our Mass Choir which sings on the first Sunday, and The Little Rock AMEN Choir, led by Dr. Frances McClain, which sings each fifth Sunday. We are blessed with wonderful music each Sunday.

We are still in the process of solidifying our relationship with G.O. B.I.G. Academy, the first all-girl S.T.E.M. Charter School in North Carolina. They are doing their due diligence before we negotiate a fair and appropriate lease agreement. We look forward to this opportunity to collaborate with this organization. I know this school will prove to be a blessing to our church and community.

We are also working to make some needed repairs to The Little Rock Cultural Center. The elevator is currently down and there are some major repairs needed on the exterior windows and the wall in the basement. Hopefully, these repairs will begin soon. We are awaiting parts and seeking bids to correct some issues pertaining to the foundation.

This quarter we thank God for ten new members. While we praise God for the growth we have experienced, we have been hit with a major blow. In a matter of one week, we have had three men to pass away, Mr. Richard Moore, Mr. Robert Keith Johnson, and Mr. Chris Caldwell. Within the month of September another member, Mr. S. M. Jordan, also passed. Our hearts go out to the families of these men who actively served our church for many years.

As always, I am thankful to my Ministerial staff, administrative staff, and the Officers of Little Rock for their constant support of our efforts. I could not do what I do without them being who they are. I am a blessed pastor!

Please continue to pray for us as we strive for Excellence in Ministry!

Peace and Blessing

Dr. Dwayne A. Walker, Pastor

FRIENDS AND FAMILY WEEKEND

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By Reverend Belinda Austin

Little Rock A.M.E Zion Church, under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Dwayne A. Walker, partnered with the Piedmont Black Nurses Association and a consortium of medical and educational organizations on Saturday, August 26, 2023, to sponsor the Family and Friends Weekend/Back to School Bash.

The entire Charlotte community was invited to fellowship and participate in food, fun, and games for all ages. Participants were able to have their blood pressure and A1C levels checked; and receive information regarding other health issues such as diabetes, cancer, heart disease, etc. A numerous amount of book bags and school supplies were given to students for the upcoming school year. Representatives from Central Piedmont Community College also presented information regarding scholarships.

The event proved to be a blessing to both the community and to us as sponsors. It culminated on Sunday, August 27, 2023, during the 10:00 a.m. worship service. Family and friends joined us in praising the Lord

through singing and the preached Word of God. We were especially delighted to have staff and students from the First Ward Creative Arts Academy join us on both Saturday and Sunday. In addition, the Friends and Family Weekend concluded with a special afternoon concert which started with a beautiful tribute to Dr. Francis McClain followed by the Youth, Men, and Sanctuary Choirs.

We look forward to a continued relationship/partnership with the Piedmont Black Nurses Association, Levine Cancer Institute, Duke Medical Center, First Ward Creative Arts Academy, and Central Piedmont Community College. There were also a host of organizations that served as co-host.



The weekend concluded with a special afternoon concert. The concert opened with a beautiful tribute to Dr. Francis McClain followed by the Youth, Men's and Sanctuary Choir.



Photos by Anika Robinson

140TH CHURCH ANNIVERSARY

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LITTLE ROCK
A.M.E. Zion Church

Celebrating 140 years

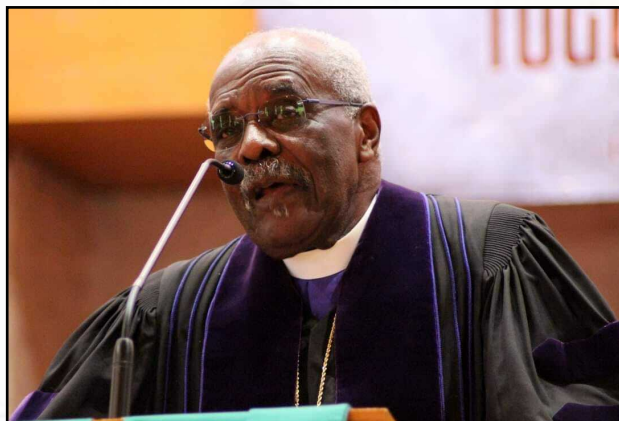
2023-2024
Theme:

Excellence In Ministry:
TOGETHER, WE CAN...!
Ephesians 4:11-16

EXCELLENCE IN MINISTRY
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140TH CHURCH ANNIVERSARY

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Bishop George W.C. Walker, Sr. Retired AME Zion Church Senior Bishop

Guest Preacher

By Reverend Diane Commander

Little Rock's 140th Anniversary Celebration began with a very powerful, electrifying and spirit-filled three-night Fall Revival, September 5-7, 2023. We were blessed to have Bishop W. Darin Moore, Presiding Prelate of the Mid-Atlantic Episcopal District and the 99th Bishop in the Line of Success return to Little Rock for his 19th year as our Guest Revivalist. Accompanying Bishop Moore during the three-day Revival were his loving mother, Mrs. Connie Farrow and his son, Dion.

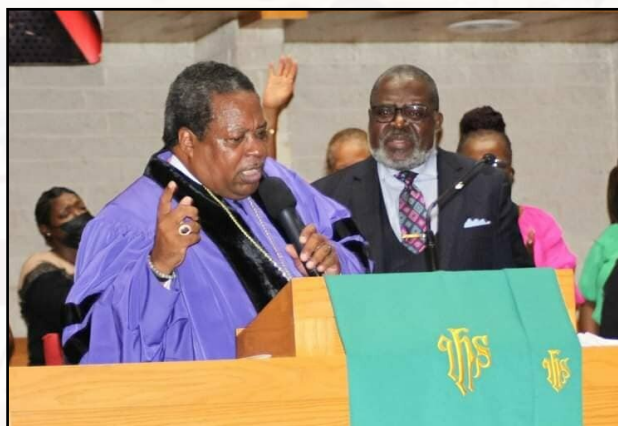
Through Bishop Moore's inspirational, and transformational sermons, members and visitors can testify: "we were truly revived again." We were blessed with the attendance of Rev. Dr. Wardell Henderson, Presiding Elder of the North Charlotte District, and his lovely wife and first lady of the district, Mrs. Myrtle Henderson.

Mr. Gilbert McRae, Leader of Leaders, and the Council of Leaders serve as Chairpersons for our Church Anniversary.

Our 140th Anniversary Celebration culminated on Sunday, September 10, 2023. We were honored to have Bishop George W.C. Walker, Sr. Retired Senior Bishop of the A.M.E. Zion Church, and Dr. Walker's father as our Guest Preacher. Bishop Walker's powerful, thought-provoking sermon blessed all in attendance.

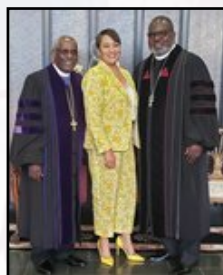
Our Ministerial staff members participated in the Litany. We were wonderfully blessed by the Sanctuary Choir led by our capable Minister of Music, Mr. Sid Oliver, our Band Koinonia, and our Audio-Visual Ministry team.

Oh God, we love You, we adore You, we praise You, we Bless Your Name for leading and guiding us through these 140 years. God Gets the Glory!



Bishop W. Darin Moore, Presiding Prelate of the Mid-Atlantic Episcopal District

Guest Revivalist



The original church property was purchased for a sum of four hundred and twenty-five dollars on May 31, 1884 (corrected deed filed June 10, 1893).

In 1906 under the Pastorate of Rev. W. R. Douglas, the frame structure was moved across Seventh Street. The brick edifice, which is now the Little Rock Cultural Center, was completed in 1911. The edifice was a blended manifestation of the turn of the century Greek and Romanesque architectural style. The old Little Rock Church building is a remarkable reminder of an exuberant expression of faith and commitment of God's people to God's Glory.



The new Sanctuary and Education wing were completed in October 1981. Rev. William White, who pastored Little Rock for 16 years, led members and friends in a reverent and stately procession from the Old Little Rock Church into the new edifice on Sunday, December 6, 1981. Rev. Dr. James R. Samuel followed Rev. William White and pastored Little Rock for 16 years, making improvements to the Church and Education Wing. Dr. Dwayne A. Walker was appointed Pastor and regained possession of the old church building in 2005. In 2006, he became the Founder of the Community Development Corporation, and through his excellent leadership, a partnership between the Little Rock Community Development Corporation and the Charlotte City Council was facilitated to build a 105 unit, five-story apartment building, "Varick on 7th" (where 52 of the units will be affordable housing).



Photos by Anika Robinson

140 CHURCH ANNIVERSARY (CONT'D)

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By Reverend Diane Commander

The groundbreaking ceremony for Varick on 7th was held on April 28, 2021. At the ceremony, Councilman Malcolm Graham remarked on the significance of this project in which the community, the city and the Church will all benefit. He further stated that the city will also support the project by completely furnishing three of the affordable apartments. May God be glorified for His manifold blessings.

Progress is continuing at the construction site for the Varick on 7th Apartments. Through Dr. Walker's vision and effective leadership to reduce homelessness in Charlotte, affordable Housing is rising in uptown Charlotte.

We thank God for our Pastor, Reverend Dr. Dwayne A. Walker who guides his flock with love, inspirational and effectual leadership.

We praise God for Bishop Darryl B. Starnes, Sr. Presiding Prelate of the Piedmont Episcopal District for returning Dr. Walker to us in June 2023 for his 19th Pastoral Appointment.

Under Dr. Walker's leadership Little Rock has 51+ ministries that serve the needs of its members (in-reach), and the community at large (outreach), to win souls for Christ. Little Rock's 2023-2024 theme is Excellence in Ministry: TOGETHER WE CAN! Ephesians 4:11-16, whereas God is Glorified • Jesus is Magnified • The People are Edified • Faith is Fortified • and Ministry is Multiplied. The Little Rock church family continually worship God physically, mentally, spiritually, and virtually. Through the assistance of technology, we are fulfilling the spiritual needs of our church family.

Through Zoom we continue to hold Bible Study sessions for our youth and children, as well as board and ministry meetings.

Ministries collaborate to consistently provide boxes of food to the community and other churches, as well as hot meals, toiletries, and clothes to the homeless. Toiletry items, Blessing Bags containing food and clothing are given to the homeless.

The Ministerial Staff, Officers, and Members of Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church praise God for sustaining, redeeming and never leaving us throughout these 140 years. The history of Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church is so grand and glorious that the essence of its greatness can never be fully captured or retold. Little Rock has been truly blessed with ardent and eloquent pastors, two of which became Bishops, Bishop J. C. Hoggard and Bishop George Junius Leake, III. "So many courageous, dedicated, and visionary men and women have made immeasurable contributions to this bright "Star of Zion that only small highlights can be shared". "Accomplishments made in the past and even now would not be possible without the blood, sweat and tears of our ancestors who laid a strong foundation with their resources, commitment, and dedication. Through spiritual will and fortitude, they bought land and built facilities that we now occupy; their prayers, determination and amazing faith in God allowed them to overcome the difficult and challenging times of their day. They have bequeathed to us a marvelous legacy that we must embrace and maintain," said Dr. Walker.

CD RIPPY SCHOLARSHIP FUND

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By Diane Commander

Members of Little Rock faithfully continue to support the young adults attending various institutions of higher learning by contributing to the CD Rippy Scholar Fund during their weekly offerings.

The fund is named in honor of Dr. C. D. Rippy who served as president of the Little Rock Lay Council, as well as past president of the Connectional Lay Council, A.M.E. Zion Church, and professor at Johnson C. Smith University.

This fund enables each scholar who applies and is an active member of Little Rock for at least a year, to receive a check to further their academic careers. Congratulations to the eleven recipients of the 2023 Fall semester. They each were presented with a \$500.00 check by the president of the Lay Council, Mrs. Gloria, Joyner Johnson and Pastor, Dr. Dwayne A. Walker. Appreciation was expressed in their ensuing, "thank you" notes to the congregation.



NEW MEMBERS

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By Dearest Price

In the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the process of welcoming new members into the congregation is a significant and meaningful event. New Members Classes play a crucial role in this process, providing spiritual guidance, education, and a sense of community to individuals seeking to become part of the A.M.E. Zion Church family. Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church, under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Dwayne A. Walker, handles this with our "Excellence In Ministry." Let us explore the importance of New Members Classes and their impact on both newcomers and the church community.

Building a Strong Foundation

New Members Classes serve as a foundation for newcomers at Little Rock, helping them understand the history, doctrine, and mission of the A.M.E. Zion Church. Led by our very own Leader of Leaders Mr. Gilbert McRae, these classes typically cover topics such as the history, the importance of Wesleyan theology, and the church's role in social justice and community outreach. By providing this knowledge, New Members Classes empower individuals to fully engage with the church's teachings and values. The six week New Members Class is taught by Reverend Belinda Austin.

Fostering Spiritual Growth

Spiritual growth is at the core of the A.M.E. Zion Church's mission. New Members Classes offer a structured environment for individuals to deepen their understanding of their faith. We are exceptional here at Little Rock offering six weeks of classes to ensure every new member is equipped with what they need. Through Bible study, prayer, and discussions on Christian ethics, participants in these classes are encouraged to grow spiritually and develop a personal relationship with God.

Creating a Supportive Community

Joining a new church can be a daunting experience, especially for those who may be new to the Christian faith or to the A.M.E. Zion tradition. New Members Classes provide a sense of belonging and community. Participants have the opportunity to connect with fellow newcomers, share their spiritual journey, and build relationships that can last a lifetime. This sense of community helps individuals feel welcomed and supported as they integrate into the church.

Empowering Church Members

New Members Classes at Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church are not just for newcomers; they also benefit existing church members. Serving as mentors and facilitators in these classes allows experienced members to strengthen their own faith and understanding of the church's teachings. They provide a platform for them to share their knowledge and wisdom, fostering a culture of mentorship and leadership within the congregation.

Preparing for Active Participation

Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church places a strong emphasis on active participation in ministry and community service. New Members Classes equip individuals with the knowledge and tools they need to contribute effectively to the church's various ministries. Whether it is volunteering in the community, participating in church committees, or becoming a lay leader, these classes prepare newcomers to play an active role in the church's mission.

New Members Classes are a vital component of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church's commitment to spiritual growth, education, and community building. They provide newcomers with the knowledge and support needed to become active and engaged members of the church. Additionally, these classes empower existing church members to share their faith and contribute to the growth of the congregation. In essence, New Members Classes are the stepping stones to a deeper connection with God and a stronger sense of belonging within Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church community. Together We Can!

Photos by Linda Kennedy

GLOBAL MISSIONS SUNDAY

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By Reverend Diane Commander

On Sunday, September 24, 2023 across Zion, we celebrated Global Missions Sunday 2023. Mrs. Roye Buck, President of the Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society of Little Rock, Mrs. Angela Caldwell, Secretary of the Bureau of Overseas Supply, and Mrs. Jennifer Mitchell, Life Member's Council Chairperson, participated in the Litany.

We were wonderfully blessed by the Sanctuary Choir led by our capable Minister of Music, Mr. Sid Oliver, accompanied by Organist, Dr. William Crowder, our Band Koinonia, and our Audio-Visual Ministry team.



Photos by Anika Robinson

CONNECTIONAL LAY DAY

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Dr. Mary S. Ponds, President of the Western North Carolina Lay Council

Great Speaker

By Gloria Joyner

In the observance of the annual Connectional Lay Day, Rev. Dr. Dwayne A. Walker, Pastor of Little Rock A.M.E Zion Church in Charlotte, NC allowed Ms. Gloria Joyner Johnson, President of the local Lay Council to preside over the morning worship service as he and the ministerial staff worshiped from the pews along with the members in the congregation.

The responsive reading and affirmation of faith were led by Ms. Hazeline Smith and Ms. Jennifer Mitchell who serve as the local Lay Council First Vice-President and Secretary, respectively.

Dr. Mary S. Ponds, President of the Western North Carolina Lay Council was the speaker for the morning. A graduate of Livingstone College, Dr. Ponds was an educator in the public schools of Rowan County, NC and in Virginia. In 1999, she was elected the first woman and the first African American to be elected Mayor of Granite Quarry, NC.

She has served in many leadership roles in her community, county, state, and church, the White Rock AME Zion Church where Rev. Thomas Lee is the Pastor. She is the recipient of the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, the highest award given to civilians in the state of North Carolina. In 2020, she was elected the President of the WNCC Lay Council, an office she currently holds.

Using the current Connectional Theme Quadrant, "Sharing Our Faith," Dr. Ponds spoke on "What's Your Excuse?" The scriptural reference was Philemon 1:4-6. The Lay Council has many resources that may be used to share our faith, including but not limited to the Holy Bible, the Lay Affirmation, the Lay Logo (Come with Us to Christ), the scriptural reference (Proverbs 3:6), as well as the Lay Hymn and Song. We do not share our personal testimonies or experiences which are powerful. We must be more responsible to make disciples by being optimistic and share our faith and not be in violation of God's commandment to make disciples.

Together, we can be the change we want to see. Sharing our faith with others we encounter may not be comfortable, but we really have no excuse not to share.

After the worship service, an abbreviated stole ceremony was held at the altar. Mrs. Ruby Tarver, the local Second Vice President began this ceremony and called Ms. Jackie Abraham to the altar to receive her stole given by Dr. Ponds.

Many thanks to Dr. Ponds for her thought-provoking meditation as we go forward to obey God's great command

Photos by Anika Robinson

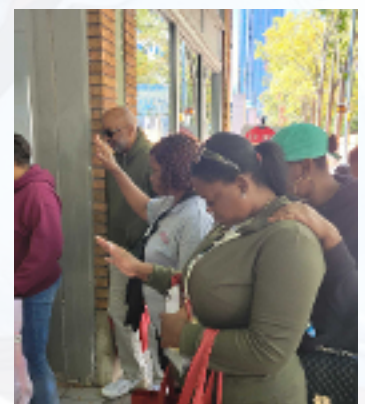
COMMUNITY PRAYER WALK

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By Linda Kennedy

The Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church Community Prayer Walk led by Pastor Rev. Dr. Dwayne A. Walker was a heartwarming event where our congregation came together to make a positive impact on our local community. During our walk, members of our church distributed blessing bags and lunches to our homeless brothers and sisters, providing essential items and nourishment to those in need. But it was not just about material assistance; the power of prayer was also at the forefront of this compassionate endeavor. We gathered to lift our voices in song and prayer, seeking hope and solace for the neighborhood and its residents. This event exemplified the church's commitment to not only provide for the physical needs of our community but also to offer spiritual support and unity in times of hardship.



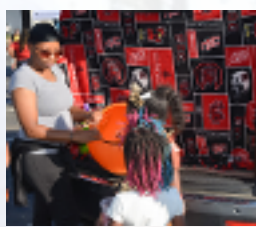
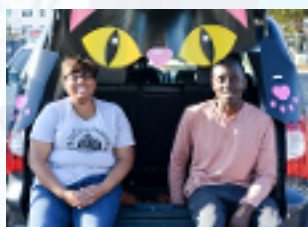
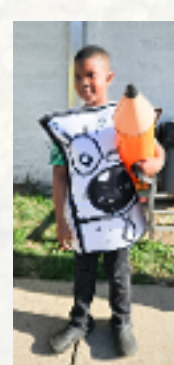
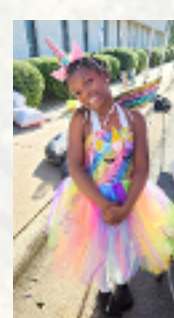
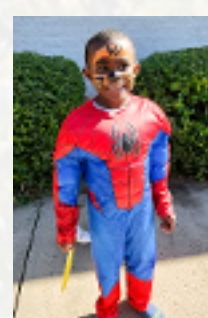
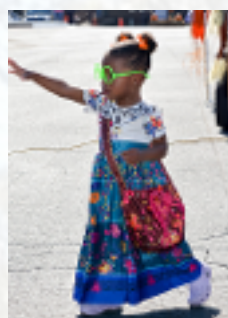
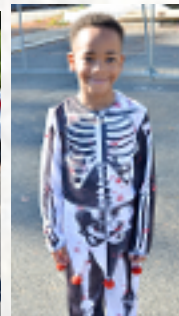
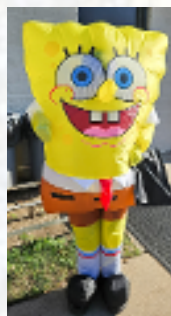
COMMUNITY FALL FESTIVAL

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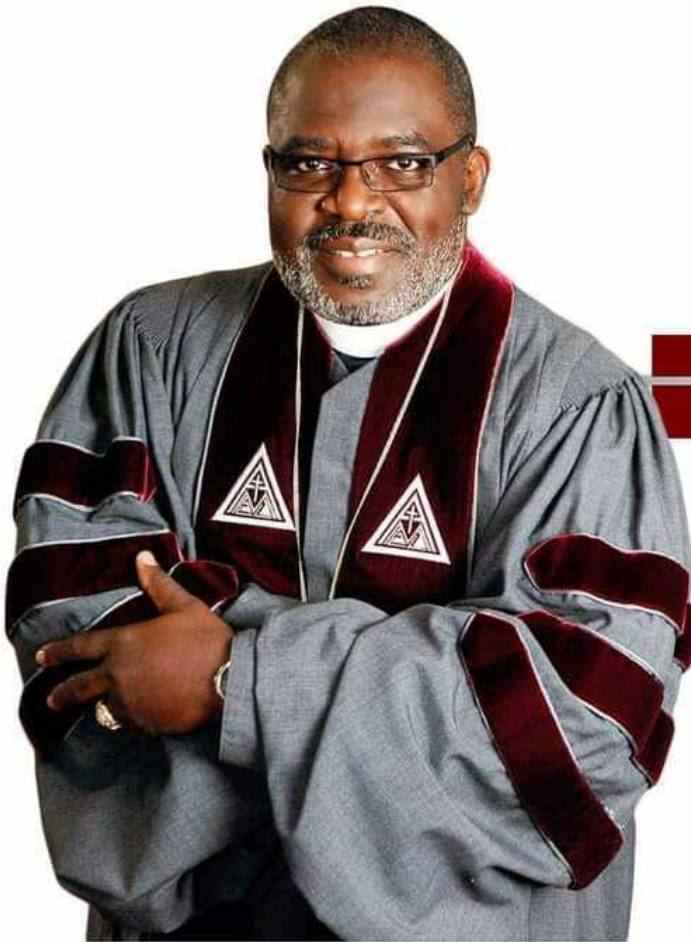
Fun! Food! Fellowship!

Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church Annual Fall Festival was held on October 28, 2023. Little Rock leaders, church family and members of the Charlotte community gathered for a marvelous Fall fellowship. Attendees enjoyed delicious food, exciting games, a children's costume parade and a Truck-a-Treat extravaganza. The festival was truly a season highlight for children and adults.



WALKER FOR BISHOP 2024

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WALKER for Bishop 2024

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CHRISTIAN INVITATION

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Photography by

Anika Robinson