

## **KNOW YOUR CHURCH**

Within sight of the Nations Capital at the corner of 11<sup>th</sup> and M Streets, N.W., in Washington, DC. stands the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church Financial Department. This impressive building is named in honor of Dr. Joseph Columbus McKinney, an outstanding layperson. "Joe", as he preferred to be called, was elected Treasurer of the AME Church in 1972 and served with distinction. From humble beginnings in Magnolia, North Carolina, he excelled in all that he did as a churchman and in his career with the Federal Government as an electrical engineer.

After moving to Washington, DC, he and his family joined Ward Memorial AME Church and became intricately involved in Church activities. Joe served 20 years as President of the Second Episcopal District Lay Organization and was a consultant to the Connectional Lay Organization (CLO) among his many church-wide leadership roles and significant accomplishments for the Worldwide AME Church.

Following is the chronology of the significant events in the history of the AME Church Financial Department including those related to the work of Dr. McKinney.

### **SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE AME CHURCH FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT**

1844 - Collected two cents a month from each member to support a general fund and the Book Concern.

1868 - Collected one dollar annually from each member to support the Book Steward, Wilberforce University and the work of each annual conference.

1872 - Financial Department established as the general church treasury. Rev. J. H. W. Burley elected first Financial Secretary and office located in Washington, D.C. Eight other ministers became Fin. Secretaries.

1882 - Financial Department of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC) incorporated in Tennessee.

1884 - Financial Department of the AMEC located in Wilberforce, Ohio.

1888 - Financial Department of the AMEC relocated to Washington, D.C. and property purchased at 1535 Fourteenth Street, N.W.

1892 - Washington, D. C. designated as the official headquarters of the AME Church Financial Department.

1901 - Purchased larger building at 1541 Fourteenth Street, N.W. as new home of the Financial Department.

1912 - First layperson, Professor John R. Hawkins, elected Financial Secretary of the AME Church. The following laypersons were elected after Professor Hawkins with title changes as noted. Professor. A. S. Jackson, Financial Secretary, 1939; Dr. Robert W. Mance, Financial Secretary, 1954; Dr. Arthur George Gaston, Treasurer, 1968; Dr. Joseph Columbus McKinney, Treasurer, 1972; and currently Dr. Richard Allen Lewis Sr., Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer (CFO), 1996.

1925 - Financial Department incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia.

1956 - General Board created to administer the Connectional budget with Treasurer (formerly Financial Secretary) as Executive Director. Four dollars per member was the annual Connectional assessment.

1957 - Purchased a residence for the Treasurer at 4633 Blagden Avenue, N.W. Washington, DC.

1968 - Connectional Assessment changed from \$4.00 per capita to a quota system based on median income.

1972 - Dr. Joseph C. McKinney is the fifth layperson to be elected Treasurer of the AME Church Financial Department. Instituted "Operation Outreach of Love" to lower Connectional Church debt.

1975 - Purchased a modern building of 8,000 square feet in the heart of downtown Washington, DC for relocation of the Financial Department to 2311 M Street, N.W.

1988 - Purchased 32,000 square feet building in downtown Washington, DC for relocation of the Financial Department to 1134 -11<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W. Bishop John Hurst Adams presided at the dedicatory service.

1996 - Dr. Richard Allen Lewis Sr. elected Treasurer and the AME Church's first Chief Financial Officer (CFO).

Updated technology is installed and financial systems automation is integrated Church-wide.

2010 - AME Church Financial Building was rededicated and renamed the **Joseph Columbus McKinney Office Building** in honor of Dr. McKinney's outstanding work, significant contributions and "Because of his Vision" for the AME Church. Bishop Adam Jefferson Richardson Jr., presided at the dedicatory service.

2016 - Legislation passed mandating that a layperson serve as Treasurer/CFO (Executive Director), in the AME Church Financial Department.

The Washington Conference Lay Organization (WCLO) "**Know Your Church Series**" - 9/17/19

Sister Glen White, WCLO President

Researched & Compiled by Brother William "Bill" Ayers, WCLO Director of Public Relations (*WCLO.org*)

Source - The 1988 Second District Newsletter "The Lay Connection" - Dr. Paulette Coleman, President

# AME FACTS EVERY CHURCH MEMBER SHOULD KNOW

*Information to inform, educate and introduce little known facts about the African Methodist Episcopal Church.*

## **MORE INFORMATION ON THE FREE AFRICAN SOCIETY**

The Free African Society, (FAS) founded in 1787, was a benevolent organization that held religious services and provided mutual aid for "**free Africans** and their descendants" in Philadelphia. Richard Allen and Absalom Jones and others founded the Society. The mission of the group was to provide fellowship, a place of worship and monetary support for members and their families in case of sickness or death. Working with the city, the Society acquired land at Potter's Field for a burial ground. The FAS also played a role in educating blacks starting with a class in reading in 1795 at a Sunday school at Bethel AME Church (still in the black smith shop located on the current property - called Bethel in 1794). This Organization was a precursor to the African Methodist Episcopal Church where Richard Allen was consecrated the Church's first bishop.

## **AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL AFRICAN**

The AME Church was created and organized by people of African descent (most descended from enslaved Africans taken to the Americas) as a response to being officially discriminated against by white congregants in the Methodist church. The church was not founded in Africa, nor is it exclusively for people of African descent. It is open and welcoming to people of all ethnic groups, origins, nationalities and colors, although its congregations are predominantly made up of Black Americans.

## **METHODIST**

The church's roots are in the Methodist church. Members of St. George's Methodist Church left the congregation when faced with racial discrimination, but continued with the Methodist doctrine and the order of worship.

## **EPISCOPAL**

The AME Church operates under an episcopal form of church government. The denomination leaders are bishops of the church.

## **MINISTERIAL AND LAY DELEGATES - RESPONSIBILITY AND OPPORTUNITY**

Ministerial and Lay delegates to the upcoming 2020 General Conference in Orlando, Florida will elect four General Officers. The four retiring General Officers who will become seventy-five (75) years of age, either prior to or within two (2) years following the adjournment of a General Conference are - **Dr. Richard Allen Lewis**, Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer, **Dr. George F. Flowers**, Secretary/Treasurer Global Witness and Missions, **Dr. Jerome V. Harris**, Executive Director, Department of Retirement Services, and **Dr. James C. Wade**, Executive Director of Church Growth and Development. Please refer to the April edition of *Know Your Church* to see the names of the 3 Bishops who are retiring (one deceased) in 2020.

## **THREE UPCOMING MAJOR EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF THE AME CHURCH**

Council of Bishops and General Board meeting - June 24-26, 2019 - Birmingham, AL

Investiture Celebration of Bishop Harry L. Seawright - June 25, 2019 - Birmingham, AL

**Connectional Lay Organization (CLO) Biennial Convention - June 30 - July 4, 2019**

The Washington Conference Lay Organization (WCLO) "**Know Your Church Series**" - 5/21/19

Sister Glen White, WCLO President

Researched and Compiled by Brother William E. "Bill" Ayers, WCLO Director of Public Relations. [WCLO.ORG](http://WCLO.ORG)

Source - 2016 edition of the Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church and other Church references

## **“Know Your Church”**

### **A Political and Social Activist Moment for the AME Church**

Bishop James Lavert Davis had a number of electrifying and enlightening workshops, panel discussions and presentations at our recent Second District Founders Day - Mid-Year Meeting held in Greensboro, NC. One such panel discussion, presented by the Political and Social Action Committee, was led by the Rev. Kendal McBroom, the young and newly appointed pastor of Turner Chapel AME Church in High Point, North Carolina. Rev. McBroom's opening remarks were so profound that as Director of Public Relations for the Washington Conference Lay Organization, I felt compelled to share this important information with you. I hope that you will find the information so on point that you will share it with others to support the Get Out the **Vote** campaign and participate in the **2020 Census**.

The Rev. McBroom shared the following remarks before introducing the two panelists for the Political and Social Action discussion:

*The 2016 election opened many of our eyes and minds to the deep division and danger in the midst of our communities and country. The election of Donald John Trump revealed that although we had come a significant way in the election of Barack Hussein Obama, the first self-identifying African-American President, those achievements were now under threat. Gerrymandering, the roll back of civil rights legislation, and other actions by this administration over the past four years have revealed that these fears were and are legitimate. And, lest we place emphasis on the symptom of a deeper issue, many state legislatures throughout this country have people in political leadership whose ideologies and policies are contrary to the uplift of our congregants and congregations. According to a study carried out by the National Conference on State Legislatures in 2015, while African-Americans comprise 13% of the national population, they only represent 9% within state legislatures, nationally.*

*Statistically and otherwise, the vote of our communities and congregations matter. When we vote, we upend decades and sometimes century long ways of doing business as usual. When we vote, we change the tone of the political conversation. When we vote, our neighborhoods see the changes and investments necessary. When we vote, the overall health of our communities becomes better. When we vote, our congregants are closer to living that life, and life more abundantly that Jesus discusses in the gospel of Matthew. Likewise, when we participate in the Census, resources—funding, housing, initiatives—are invested into our communities. When we participate in the Census, our concerns as well as our strengths are documented. When we participate in the Census, we are accounted for in the national conversation and registry.*

*This is why it is vital in the year 2020 for us to do two things that will have an impact beyond Donald Trump's presidency and our very own lifetimes: **we must vote and participate in the census**. Census records have historically been used to allocate funding for citizens, document population trends, and help in ancestry research. You and I want it to be known for future generations to come that there were some AME's in 2020 that stood up to the demonic structures of their time and fought back to ensure a better life for them.*

Please note, in mid-March, homes across the country will begin receiving invitations to complete the 2020 Census. Once the invitation arrives, you should respond for your home in one of three ways: online, by phone, or by mail.

Sources - Rev. Kendal McBroom, Pastor - Turner Chapel AME Church - High Point, NC - 2<sup>nd</sup> District Political and Social Action Chair.  
United States Census Bureau.

## KNOW YOUR CHURCH

As we begin preparation for the 51<sup>st</sup> African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church General Conference in Orlando Florida in 2020, we thank God for our forefathers and foremothers, who met every four years to deliberate, organize and plan for the future of our Church.

Outlined below is a listing of the African Methodist Episcopal General Conference dates and locations. In 2016, the AME denomination celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> General Conference in the city where it all began-in a blacksmiths shop. This was also where Richard Allen, the founder of our denomination, was elected and consecrated the first AME Bishop. To God Be The Glory!!!

YEAR	LOCATION	YEAR	LOCATION
1816	Philadelphia	1924	Louisville
1820	Philadelphia	1928	Chicago
1824	Philadelphia	1932	Cleveland
1828	Philadelphia	1936	New York
1836	Philadelphia	1940	Detroit
1840	Baltimore	1944	Philadelphia
1844	Pittsburgh	1946 Special Session	Little Rock
1848	Philadelphia	1948	Kansas City, Kansas
1852	New York	1952	Chicago
1856	Cincinnati	1956	Miami
1860	Pittsburgh	1960	Los Angeles
1864	Philadelphia	1964	Cincinnati
1868	Washington, DC	1968	Philadelphia
1872	Nashville, TN	1972	Dallas
1876	Atlanta	1976	Atlanta
1880	St. Louis	1980	New Orleans
1884	Baltimore	1984	Kansas City, Missouri
1888	Indianapolis	1988	Forth Worth
1892	Philadelphia	1992	Orlando, FL
1896	Wilmington, NC	1996	Louisville
1900	Columbus, OH	2000	Cincinnati
1904	Chicago	2004	Indianapolis
1908	Norfolk, VA	2008	St. Louis
1912	Kansas City, Missouri	2012	Nashville
1916	Philadelphia	2016	Philadelphia
1920	St. Louis	2020	Orlando, FL

The Washington Conference Lay Organization (WCLO) "**Know Your Church Series**" - 10/15/19

Sister Glen White, WCLO President

Researched & Compiled by Brother William "Bill" Ayers, WCLO Director of Public Relations ([WCLO.org](http://WCLO.org))

Source - The AME Review - Dr. Teresa L. Fry Brown, Historiographer & Ex. Director Dept. of Research and Scholarship

# **A TEACHING MOMENT — KNOW YOUR CHURCH**

## **The Annual Conference - (*Part One*)**

### **COMPOSITION**

The Annual Conference shall be composed of all traveling elders and deacons, all local elders and deacons and all licentiates; the presidents of the Conference Lay Organizations and Missionary society, and the Conference directors of Christian Education; Music and YPD, together with one (1) elected lay member and at least one (1) elected layperson between the ages of eighteen to thirty-five (18-35), when possible, from each charge within its bounds.

### **TRAVEL AND EXPENSES**

The local church shall pay travel and expenses.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES AND REQUIREMENTS**

1. Every Annual Conference of the AME Church shall be incorporated. In those instances in the United States where the conferences cover more than one (1) state, the incorporation will be in the state with the larger membership.
2. The Annual Conference trustee shall review the recommended new work and give leadership in the establishment of priorities for resources allocation.
3. Every Annual Conference, so incorporated, shall be a legal and sovereign body.
4. The presiding bishop of the episcopal district in which an annual conference is located shall be the president of the Annual Conference.
5. Although each annual conference may vote to open or close an annual conference on any day within a seven (7) consecutive day period, the bishop shall choose the number of days for each session, but not to exceed five (5) consecutive days.
6. Each episcopal district shall, at its first (1<sup>st</sup>) Planning Session, by majority vote, set the opening and closing days of the Annual Conference within the boundaries of the district. The bishop shall set the number of days for each session, which shall be binding for the entire quadrennium.
7. No special mid-year or extra session of any annual conference shall be called or held except for the purpose of 1) deciding some question affecting the property rights of the Annual Conference or the Connection, which in the judgment of the bishop, warrants immediate consideration and action, or 2) voting on the question of an Extra Session of the General Conference, as provided under law governing Extra Sessions of the General Conference.
8. An active duty military and V.A. chaplain must report annually to his or her annual conference and to the Endorsing Agent. One of the annual reports during the quadrennium must be made in person, or the chaplain must have his or her absence certified by the Endorsing Agent.

### **COMMITTEES - THE RIGHTS OF LAY MEMBERS**

1. Lay members of the Annual Conference shall participate in all deliberations and vote upon all measures.
2. Lay members of the Annual Conference must serve on all committees, except those on ministerial relations and for the trials of ministers.

# AME FACTS EVERY CHURCH MEMBER SHOULD KNOW

## CONNECTIONAL DEPARTMENTS AND COMMISSIONS

The African Methodist Episcopal Church has seven Connectional Departments, nine Connectional Commissions and fourteen General Board Commissions to address the needs of the life of the Church as we answer the call to make a difference. They are:

**CONNECTIONAL DEPARTMENTS** - Publications, Global Witness and Ministry, Church Growth and Development, Retirement Services, Research and Scholarship, Christian Education, and Finance and Statistics.

**CONNECTIONAL COMMISSIONS** - Health, Women in Ministry, Social Action, Christian Debutante-Master (CDMC), Chaplains, Ministry and Recruitment, Financial Management Program, Global Development, and Seminaries, Universities, Colleges and Schools (Higher Learning).

**GENERAL BOARD COMMISSIONS** - Statistics and Finance, Retirement Services, Publications, Social Action, Church Growth and Development, Global Witness and Ministry, Lay Organization, Seminaries, Universities, Colleges and Schools, Christian Education, Women in Ministry, Health, Ministry and Recruitment, Global Development and Economic Development.

## THE AME CHURCH MOTTO

At the 2008 General Conference in St. Louis, Missouri, an inclusive motto was adopted and now declares: ***"GOD OUR FATHER, CHRIST OUR REDEEMER, THE HOLY SPIRIT OUR COMFORTER, HUMANKIND OUR FAMILY"***. The evolution of our motto demonstrates that African Methodists engage in ongoing assessments of our theology and how God speaks to us in changing circumstances. This updated motto was derived from Bishop Daniel Alexander Payne's original motto *"God our Father, Christ our Redeemer, Man our Brother"* which served as the AME Church motto until the 2008 General Conference. Payne, who was consecrated in 1852, served the AME Church as its 6<sup>th</sup> bishop.

## THE AME HYMNAL

The African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church led the way in the publication of the first hymnal specifically designed for use by African American congregations. In 1801, Richard Allen, founder and first consecrated bishop of the AME Church, compiled a hymnal entitled A Collection of Spiritual Songs and Hymns, selected from various authors that contained 54 hymns. Typical of hymnals of the era, Allen's collection was pocket sized and it printed only the text of the hymns.

Allen featured hymns that were widely sung by African American Christians of the day, about a third of which were written by well-known white hymn writers such as Charles Wesley and Isaac Watts. This was in contrast to the tradition of improvised Negro spiritual music that had mostly been passed down orally and anonymously. The AME Hymnal underwent revisions. Notably in 1816, the hymnal was expanded to include 314 hymns and was organized according to the various stages of the Christian experience. The 1898 hymnal included scored notes/music as well as text. The current edition has evolved and includes a liturgy.

The Washington Conference Lay Organization (WCLO) **"Know Your Church Series"** -3/19/19

Sister Glen White, WCLO President

Researched and Compiled by Brother William E. "Bill" Ayers, WCLO Director of Public Relations. [WCLO.ORG](http://WCLO.ORG)

Source - 2016 edition of the Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church and a publications overview presentation by William Ayers Jr in 2009.



# AME FACTS EVERY CHURCH MEMBER SHOULD KNOW

*This is the second in a series of factual information regarding our denomination and is presented as a helpful tool designed to inform and educate the laity about the **AME** Church.*

- The **AME Church** grew out of the Free African Society (FAS), which Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and other people of African descent established in Philadelphia in 1787 after they walked out of St. George's Methodist Episcopal **Church** because of racial discrimination.
- Richard Allen, born into slavery in 1760, later bought his freedom and went on to found the first national black church in the United States, the **African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church**, in 1816. This is also the year of the first General Conference.
- In 1816 Bishop Francis Asbury of the Methodist Episcopal Church consecrated Richard Allen Bishop of the newly organized **AME Church**, which accepted Methodist doctrine and discipline. The **Church** speaks of Richard Allen, first Bishop; William Paul Quinn, fourth Bishop; Daniel A. Payne sixth Bishop; and Henry M. Turner, twelfth Bishop; as the "**Four Horsemen**" who were instrumental in establishing the foundation of the church.
- The Mission of the AME Church is to minister to the social, spiritual and physical development of all people.
- The African Methodist Episcopal Church, a global Christian body, is presently on five continents and in over three dozen countries.
- The 1928 General Conference gave equal laity representation in the General Conferences and in all other areas of the Church.
- Bishops are the Chief Officers of the Connectional Organization. They are elected for life by a majority vote of the General Conference, which meets every four years. Bishops are bound by the laws of the church to retire upon the General Conference nearest their 75<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- Ministerial and Lay delegates to the upcoming 2020 General Conference in Orlando, Florida will elect three bishops. The three retiring bishops are - **Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie** -10<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District, who also holds the distinction of being the first female elected a bishop in the AME Church denomination, - the late **Senior Bishop McKinley Young** - 3<sup>rd</sup> Episcopal District and **Bishop Gregory G. M. Ingram** - 1<sup>st</sup> Episcopal District.
- Active General Officers of the AME Church include - **Dr. Richard Allen Lewis**, Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer; **Dr. George F. Flowers**, Executive Director, Global Witness and Ministry; **Dr. Jerome V. Harris**, Executive Director, Department of Retirement Services; **Dr. James C. Wade**, Executive Director, Department of Church Growth and Development; **Dr. Jeffery B. Cooper**, General Secretary/Chief Information Officer; **Dr. Teresa L. Fry Brown**, Historiographer/ Executive Director, Department of Research and Scholarship; **the Rev. Roderick D. Belin**, President/Publisher, AME Sunday School Union; **Mr. John Thomas, III**, Editor, *The*

*Christian Recorder; and the Rev. Garland F. Pierce, Executive Director, Department of Christian Education.*

The Washington Conference Lay Organization (WCLO) "**Know Your Church Series**" - 4/16/19

Sister Glen White, WCLO President

Researched and Compiled by Brother William E. "Bill" Ayers, WCLO Director of Public Relations. *WCLO.ORG*

Source - 2016 edition of the Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church and other Church references

## AME FACTS EVERY CHURCH MEMBER SHOULD KNOW

*More interesting facts about our beloved AME church from its humbly beginning to this present age.*

The **African Methodist Episcopal Church**, usually called the **A.M.E. Church** or **AME**, is a predominantly African-American Methodist denomination. It is the first independent Protestant denomination to be founded by black people. It was founded by the Rt. Rev. Richard Allen in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1816 from several black Methodist congregations in the mid-Atlantic area that wanted independence from white Methodists.

The official logo of the **AME Church** depicts a cross and anvil. The cross represents **Christ** and his sacrifice, and the anvil represents the strength and the **church**, as well as its beginning in a blacksmith shop.

The **AME Church** motto is "God our Father, Christ our Redeemer, The Holy Spirit our Comforter, Humankind our Family". This motto is derived from Bishop Daniel Alexander Payne's original motto "God our Father, Christ our Redeemer, Man our Brother", which served as the **AME Church** motto until the 2008 General Conference, when the current motto was officially adopted.

The **AME Church** currently has 20 districts, each with its own bishop: 13 are based in the United States, mostly in the South, while seven are based in Africa. The global membership of the **AME Church** is around 2.5 million and it remains one of the largest Methodist denominations in the world.

The Bishops are the Chief Officers of the Connectional Church. They are elected for life by a majority vote of the General Conference, which meets every four years. Bishops shall be retired at that General Conference when the Bishop's seventy-third (73<sup>rd</sup>) birthday is on or before July 15<sup>th</sup> of the General Conference year.

The **AME Church** has membership in twenty Episcopal Districts in thirty-nine countries on five continents. The work of the Church is administered by twenty-one active bishops, and nine General Officers who manage the various Church departments.

The mission of the Church now is to "minister to the spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional, and environmental needs of all people by spreading Christ's liberating gospel through word and deed".

The Washington Conference Lay Organization (WCLO) "**Know Your Church Series**" - 6/17/19  
Sister Glen White, WCLO President  
Researched and Compiled by Brother William E. "Bill" Ayers, WCLO Director of Public Relations. [WCLO.ORG](http://WCLO.ORG)  
Source - 2016 edition of the Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church and other Church references

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE 14<sup>TH</sup> EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

The African Methodist Episcopal Church has six (6) Episcopal Districts in Africa. They include the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. Attached is a snapshot of the 14<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District. This District is comprised of six (6) countries in West Africa. There are a total of seventeen (17) Presiding Elder Districts, one hundred thirty-four (134) churches, one hundred thirty-four pastors (male and female) and more than thirteen thousand (13,000) members spanning various geographical, ethnic and cultural backgrounds across these six (6) countries. The 2016 Bicentennial Edition of the Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church list seven (7) annual conferences within those six (6) countries. The seven conferences are: Sierra Leone, Liberia, (includes Northern Liberia, including Monrovia), Central Liberia (includes Central Liberia and the suburbs of Monrovia, including Paynesville and Browerville), Ghana, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire and Togo-Benin. The current presiding Prelate of the 14<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District is the Right Reverend E. Earl McCloud Jr. The Episcopal Supervisor is Patricia Russell-McCloud, Esq.

In addition to the numerous local African languages spoken in the six (6) countries, the two major European languages in the 14<sup>th</sup> District are English and French. The two (2)-francophone countries (where French is the primary language) use a mix of English and French spoken among its citizenry. The teaching of the Holy Bible remains foremost from the pulpits of all the AME churches in the episcopal districts with three main Christian experiences being stressed: salvation from sin, sanctification of heart and Baptism in the Holy Ghost's Power thus ministering to the wholeness of a persons total being.

### A HUMBLE BEGINNING

***"God has spread the work, through our instrumentality, upon the barren shores of Africa."*** - Richard Allen. In 1820, the S.S. Elizabeth set sail from America with 86 emigrants aboard. They were headed to what is now known as Liberia in West Africa to expand the AME Church to Africa in conjunction with the American Colonization Society (ACS). Aboard the ship was Daniel Coker. He was a writer, activist and one of the original sixteen founding fathers of the AME Church. Daniel Coker made his home in Sierra Leone as a missionary and colonist. He planted a church and raised a family in that area. The Church, New Zion AME, where his congregation worshipped, still stands and is one of the largest downtown churches in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Unfortunately, the original Church was gutted by fire. However, it has now been expanded, modernized (but retains the original facade) and has its first female pastor, the Reverend Agnes Peterson.



**New Zion AME Church, Sierra Leone**  
**The Oldest AME Church on the Continent of Africa**

The Washington Conference Lay Organization (WCLO) **"Know Your Church Series" - 1/14/20**

Sister Glen White, WCLO President

Researched & Compiled by Brother William "Bill" Ayers, WCLO Director of Public Relations - [WCLO.ORG](http://WCLO.ORG) - Public Relations Corner

Sources - *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (2016)

*Presiding Elder Isaac Showers, Freetown District, Sierra Leone Annual Conference*

# AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL (AME) CHURCH FACTS

The African Methodist Episcopal Church is the most remarkable demonstration of the capabilities and possibilities of Black people that the world has ever known. It gave Blacks the first mutual aid society for the care of the sick and distressed; it established the first institution of higher learning for Blacks, Wilberforce University; it established the first publishing house for Blacks; it published the first newspaper and magazine for Blacks, the Christian Recorder and the A.M.E. Review; respectively; it furnished the United States Army with its first Black chaplain, Henry McNeil Turner; and Richard Allen was the first Black ordained deacon and elder and consecrated bishop in protestant Methodism.

## 1. What is African Methodism?

It is the name applied to a distinct group of Christians who withdrew from the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1787 that they might worship God under their own “vine and fig tree,” unmolested and unafraid.

## 2. Who was the founder and chief promoter of African Methodism?

Richard Allen.

## 3. When and where was Richard Allen born?

February 14, 1760 at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

## 4. Was Richard Allen ever a slave?

Yes, Richard Allen’s father and mother and their four children belonged to William Chew who sold them into Delaware, near Dover, to Mr. Stockley in 1767.

## 5. How did Richard Allen come into possession of his freedom?

He purchased the freedom of himself and brother for two thousand dollars. Mr. Stockley was very kind to his slaves. He allowed them to attend religious service and work at odd times for which he paid them.

## 6. When did the African Methodist Episcopal Church take on organic form?

At its first General Conference (Organic Convention), which met in Bethel Church, Philadelphia, April 9, 1816.

## 7. Who was elected and consecrated bishop at this General Conference?

Richard Allen. Daniel Coker was elected first but declined.

## 8. Who consecrated Richard Allen to the bishopric?

By five regularly ordained ministers, among whom was Rev. Absalom Jones, a priest of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

## 9. Was Richard Allen the first Black ordained deacon and elder and consecrated to the bishopric in Protestant Christianity?

Yes.

## 10. What was the duration of Allen’s episcopal services?

Fifteen years, eleven months and fifteen days.

## 11. How many children were born to Richard and Sarah Allen?

Six - Richard Jr., Peter, John, Sarah, Ann and James.

## 12. When did Richard Allen die?

March 26, 1831. Mrs. Sarah Allen, his wife, died July 16, 1849, at the age of 85.

## 13. Where does his body rest?

In Bethel A.M.E. Church in the Allen Museum, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

## 14. Where may we find some of the church furniture and supplies that were used by Richard Allen?

In the Allen Museum, Bethel Church, Philadelphia, may be found household furnishings, utensils and also the pulpit, Bible and songbook used by Richard Allen.

Source - *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* - (2016 Edition) & *Vital Facts Concerning the AMEC* by James H. Smith, D.D. A special thanks to Mrs. Mary Lee McKinney for her significant contribution to this article.

**AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL (AME) INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION**  
(SEE PAGES 728 AND 729 OF THE 2016 EDITION OF THE AME CHURCH DOCTRINE AND DISCIPLINE  
AND THE AME CHURCH REPORT - 2017-2020 INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION CONNECTIONAL REPORT)

One of our oldest Institutions of Higher Education is Wilberforce University in Wilberforce, OH. Founded in 1856, it still stands today as an *Intellectual Mecca* to students seeking knowledge and Godly wisdom. Currently, there are 18 other AME funded learning institutions. These Universities, Colleges, Seminaries, Institutes, High Schools, Academies and Schools of Religion played and continue to play an active role in the life of students who seek academic success. Each AME Institution of Higher Education is included in the AME Church Connectional budget. They each receive a yearly stipend to help support the Institutions'/students' academic goals. The AME Church believes in and continues to support excellence in scholastic achievement.

Today, 11 of the Institutions are located in the continental United States and 8 are on the continent of Africa. Listed below are the names of the Institutions, Presidents, Deans, Rector, Principals or Administrators and their respective websites for your perusal. Two of the schools, AME University and Monrovia College & Industrial Training School located in the 14<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District, are in the midst of a Capital Campaign fundraiser\* to raise money for infrastructure development of their respective campuses. To quote the late South African President Nelson Mandela, "*In Africa it is not a lack of ability, rather a lack of opportunities*". Your donation will help provide an opportunity. AME University, founded in 1995 in Monrovia, Liberia, is the largest AME Church Institution of Higher Education with an undergraduate and graduate student population of over 5,000. We praise God for these AME Church Institutions of Higher Education and for their visionary founders.

**Morris Brown College - Atlanta, GA.  
Rock, AR**

Dr. Stanley J. Pritchett, President  
[www.morrisbrown.edu](http://www.morrisbrown.edu)

**Allen University - Columbia, SC  
Wilberforce, OH**

Dr. Ernest McNeeley, President

[www.allenuniversity.edu](http://www.allenuniversity.edu)

**AME UNIVERSITY - Monrovia, Liberia, W. A.**

Dr. Joseph T. Isaac, President\*

[www.ame.edu.lr](http://www.ame.edu.lr)

**Bonner-Campbell School of Religion - Canton, MS  
Wilberforce, OH**

Rev. Michelle Goodloe, Administrator

[foursight@aol.com](mailto:foursight@aol.com)

**Richard Allen High School - Freetown, Sierra, Leone - W.A.**

Mr. Togbie/Sr. School - Mr. Brima/Jr. School, Principal's  
www.

**Anne Heath Academy - Kumassi, Ghana - W.A.  
Birmingham, AL**

Mrs. Dorcas Coleman Enu, Principal

www.

**Edward Waters College - Jacksonville, FL  
- S.A.**

**Shorter College - North Little**

Mrs. Cordell Mitchell, President

[www.shortercollege.edu](http://www.shortercollege.edu)

**Wilberforce University -**

Dr. Herman J. Felton Jr., President

[www.Wilberforce.edu](http://www.Wilberforce.edu)

**Paul Quinn College - Dallas, TX**

Dr. Michael Sorrell, President

[www.pqc.edu](http://www.pqc.edu)

**Payne Theological Seminary -**

Dr. Michael Joseph Brown, President

[www.payne.edu](http://www.payne.edu)

**Kittrell College, Kittrell, NC.**

The Red Board

www.

**Daniel Payne College -**

Rev. Brian Blackwell

www.

**R.R. Wright Theological Seminary**

Dr. A. Zachary Faison Jr., - President

[www.edc.edu](http://www.edc.edu)

**Jordan Agriculture Institute - Montserrado, Liberia - W.A.  
S.A.**

Rev. James Major, Principal

www.

**Turner Theological Seminary - ITC - Atlanta, GA  
Evaton, S.A.**

Dr. John Frank Green, Dean

[www.turnerseminary.com](http://www.turnerseminary.com)

**Monrovia College & Industrial Training School-Monrovia, Liberia, W.A.**

Mr. J. Philip A. Theoway, President\*

[www.mc.com.lr](http://www.mc.com.lr)

Rev. Temba Mbambo, Acting Dean

www.

**Sizanne High School - Zimbabwe,**

Dr. E. S. Mugomoa, Dean

www.

**Wilberforce College/Institute -**

Rev. Themba Mbabo, Rector

www.

The Washington Conference Lay Organization (WCLO) **"Know Your Church Series"** -11/20/18

Sister Glen White, WCLO President

Researched & Compiled by Brother William "Bill" Ayers, WCLO Director of Public Relations

## HIGHLIGHTING OUR LAY THEME

The Lay Organization’s theme depicts the essence of prophet Micah’s words on *trusting in the Lord and loving others*. Micah was a man of God and his name means, “who is like the Lord”.

As Laypersons we model this theme and share it with others in public places, as we march, testify, teach, train, rally, educate and make our lives more reflective of the meaning of the theme. We must be dedicated, obedient and speak truth to God’s word as we seek to make the Lay theme a reality in our daily lives.

Our Lay Theme also reflects the time in which we live. A time of global in-justice, a time of uncertainty and a time of Godlessness just as it was in prophet Micah’s time. However, we like Micah must continue to be Christ-like in our ministry and diligent in our service to the Lord. Our thoughts, words and deeds must be effective to this generation and generations to come. Our actions must reflect our love, humbleness and kindness for God and be a contagious spirit for His people - in other words, to treat people like you want to be treated. Our Lay theme represents the best in us if we are serious in our deliberate efforts to obey God’s word and do God’s will.

Listed below are five (5) reflective questions that can be used to gauge our effectiveness as a Layperson for Christ and effective spokespersons for His work through us. These questions along with others that may come to mind are designed to “cause a stirring within” as we work to become disciple of Christ while using the Lay theme to reflect prophet Micah’s message to this generation of Laity.

## ARE WE AS LAYPERSONS MEASURING UP?

### REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

**Influence on others:** Whose life have you genuinely touched and changed for the better in recent years?

**Honoring God:** Can you cite three things that you have done in the last year that you believe have clearly brought glory to God? Name ways in which you have honored Him at work, in your home and in your community.

**Avoiding evil:** What one thing have you said “no” to in the past year in order to remove your foot from evil (Prov. 4:27)? What did it cost you? What did you gain?

**Your testimony:** What one characteristic would you say clearly distinguishes you from non-Christians in your workplace or neighborhood?

**Looking back:** Think about where your life was five years ago. Name three specific ways in which you have grown or changed for the better in that time. Or have you taken a step or two backward? If so, what practical changes do you need to make to turn your life around?



# **THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

## **ABOUT US - OUR STRUCTURE (IN BRIEF)**

The African Methodist Episcopal Church is a connectional organization. Each local church is a part of the larger connection.

**The Bishops** are the Chief Officers of the Connectional Organization. They are elected for life by a majority vote of the General Conference that meets every four years. Bishops are bound by the laws of the church to retire following their 75<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**Presiding Elders** are the assistants, like middle management, whom the Bishops appoint to supervise the preachers in a Presiding Elder's District. A Presiding Elder District is one portion of an Annual Conference, which in turn is one part of the Episcopal District over which a Bishop presides. In the Presiding Elder District, the appointed Presiding Elder meets with the local churches that comprise the District, at least once every three months for a Quarterly Conference. The Presiding Elder also presides over a District Conference and a Sunday School Convention in his or her District. At the end of an Annual Conference year, the Presiding Elder reports to the Bishop at the Annual Conference and makes recommendations for pastoral appointments.

**Pastors** receive a yearly appointment to a charge (church), on the recommendation of the Presiding Elder and with the approval and final appointment of the Bishop. The pastor is in full charge of the Church and is an ex-official member of all boards, organizations and clubs of that Church.

### **THE GENERAL CONFERENCE**

The General Conference is the supreme body of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. It is composed of the Bishops, as ex-officio presidents, according to the rank of election, and equal number of ministerial and lay delegates elected by each of the Annual Conferences and the lay Electoral Colleges of the Annual Conferences. Other ex-officio members are: the General Officers, College Presidents, Deans of Theological Seminaries and Chaplains in the Regular Armed Forces of the U.S.A. The General Conference meets quadrennial (every four years), but may have extra sessions in certain emergencies.

### **THE COUNCIL OF BISHOPS**

The Council of Bishops is the Executive Branch of the Connectional Church. It has the general oversight of the Church during the interim between General Conferences. The Council of Bishops shall meet annually at such time and place as the majority of the Council shall determine and also at such other times as may be deemed necessary in the discharging of its responsibility as the Executive Branch of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The Council of Bishops shall hold at least two public sessions at each annual meeting. At the first, complaints and petitions against a Bishop shall be heard, at the second, the decisions of the Council shall be made public. A decision shall be in writing.

### **THE BOARD OF INCORPORATORS**

The Board of Incorporators, also known as the General Board of Trustees, has the supervision, in trust, of all connectional property of the Church and is vested with authority to act in behalf of the Connectional Church, whenever necessary.

### **THE GENERAL BOARD**

The General Board is in many respects the administrative body and is comprised of various departmental Commissions made up of the respective Secretary-Treasurer, the General Secretary of the AME Church, the General Treasurer and the members of the various Commissions and one Bishop (Senior) as presiding officer.

### **THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL**

The Judicial Council is the highest judicatory body of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. It is an appellate court, elected by the General Conference and is amenable to it.

The Washington Conference Lay Organization (WCLO) **"Know Your Church Series"** - 9/18/18  
Sister Glen White, WCLO President  
Researched & Compiled by Brother William "Bill" Ayers, WCLO Director of Public Relations  
*Source - The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church - (2016 Edition)*

## WASHINGTON CONFERENCE LAY ORGANIZATION (WCLO) PRESIDENTS “HONORING OUR LEADERS”

The Lay Organization of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church is commissioned to teach, train and empower its members for lay ministry, global leadership and service following the tenants of Jesus Christ. The **purpose of the Lay Organization** is to organize and train **laity** of the AME Church so that each person may maximally utilize their God given abilities and skills to improve and extend the kingdom, to create happiness, peace, and harmony among its members.

From the Washington Conference Lay Organization's (WCLO) humble beginning in 1956, outstanding leadership supported the mission, purpose and goals of the Lay Organization. The Presidents, along with their elected cadre of officers, used their various gifts, talents, commitment and leadership skills, to bring us to this stage in the Lay Movement. We have Lay Organizations in Churches in the Capitol and Potomac Districts within the Washington Conference. With a goal of reaching out to teach, train, and recruit young adults in the fertile ground of both Districts, each president worked with ministers and lay alike to achieve the goal of educating the laity for more effective service to the Church and the community it serves.

Because they served faithfully as WCLO Presidents with clarity, decisiveness, passion and humility, we are an Organization that continues to move ministry forward through our mission and objectives. It is also because of their faith in God, love for humankind and the opportunities they gave to nurture others to serve in higher fields of church work that the Washington Conference Lay Organization has supported the AME Church globally and the community it serves for 73 years. ***To God Be The Glory!***

We take this opportunity during **Founders Day** to honor, thank and applaud our Presidents for their faithfulness, leadership, vision, collaboration, stick-to-it-tive-ness and love of service to the AME Church and to this Lay Organization. We also are eternally grateful for those leaders who shaped the organization, those who followed and added to the master plan and kept the organization focused on the mandate of the Lay Movement in the AME Church. Our leadership included, Educators, a Foreign Service Officer, an Attorney, Senior Executives and other career fields. Their success in the work place helped promote leadership, follow-ship and fellowship. We thank God for their ability then and our current President to design programs and other activities providing for an improved image of this great Lay Organization.

### WE SALUTE THEM!

Washington Conference Lay Organization Past and Present Presidents		
Name	Years Served	Church
Mrs. Rachel W. Valentine <sup>1</sup> *	1	Metropolitan AME Church, Washington, DC
Attorney James H. Raby*	25	Campbell AME Church, Washington, DC
Mr. Robert O. Kelly*	1	Metropolitan AME Church, Washington, DC
Mrs. Bernice T. Mungen*	8	Pilgrim AME Church, Washington, DC
Mr. James Arthur Parker*	8	Reid Temple AME Church, Glenn Dale, MD
Mrs. Anita Smith	8	Allen AME Church, Baltimore, MD
Mr. Otho Johnson	4	Mt. Olive AME Church, Annapolis, MD
Mrs. Patricia Matthews	8	Hemingway Memorial AME Church, Dist. Heights, MD
Mr. Matthew Douglas	8	Reid Temple AME Church, Glenn Dale, MD
Mrs. Glen White	2 - Too date	Mount Moriah AME Church, Annapolis, MD

The Washington Conference Lay Organization (WCLO) **“Know Your Church Series”** -2/19/19  
Sister Glen White, WCLO President

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<sup>1</sup> First appointed by Bishop Decatur Ward Nichols and then elected President in 1956 to serve this newly founded Lay Movement/Organization.

Researched and Compiled by Brother William E. "Bill" Ayers, WCLO Director of Public Relations. *WCLO.ORG*

Source - Member records and conversations with former WCLO officers.

\*Deceased