

**AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
**SECOND EPISCOPAL LAY ORGANIZATION (SED)**  
17<sup>th</sup> Lay Organization Convention  
Comprehensive Delegates' Report  
Washington Conference Lay Organization (WCLO)  
27 – 29 September 2018, *Marriott at Center City, Newport News, Virginia*

To:

Mrs. Glen White, WCLO President  
Officers and Members of the Washington Conference Lay Organization

Thank you greatly for the opportunity to represent the WCLO as delegates to the Second Episcopal District's 17<sup>th</sup> Lay Organization Convention. Outlined below is a comprehensive delegates' report from the convention.

The convention was themed, "Social Justice: Empowering the People" with a scriptural basis in Micah 6:8, and John 14: 12.

**Wednesday 26 September:** On 26 September, preliminary activities for the conference commenced, including registration for those who had arrived prior to the official start of the convention, and individual meetings with committees which presented before the general body during the business sessions. Officers and delegates were obligated to serve on a committee. The assignees to each committee included:

- **Legislation:** Darwin Curry
- **Rules:** Clara Neal
- **Constitution and Bylaws:** Janice Murray
- **Memorials:** Cheryl Parker
- **Budget and Finance:** Arnold Fortune
- **Credentials:** Joan Collins
- **Candidates' Forum:** Kennetta Douglas
- **Young Adults:** Chenay Saunders
- **Evaluations:** William Ayers
- **Social Action:** Duane' Josey
- **Hospitality:** Maria Wallace
- **Registration:** Cheryl Vaughn
- **Vendors:** *Vacant*
- **Lay Banquet:** Barbara Murdock
- **Marshall:** Juan Curtis II
- **Nominations:** William Caison

**Thursday 27 September:** On 27 September, convention activities commenced with registration and kit distribution. Additionally, campaign materials were handed out in the foyer prior to entering the business room.

**WELCOME AND GENERAL SESSION:** Subsequently, the convention assembled with Florence Warren, SED 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President presiding. Following, the convention opened with a "Welcome and General Session", with greetings from outgoing SED Lay President Dwight Patterson, SED Director of Lay

Activities (DoLA) Adrienne Warren, and SED Young Adult Representative Dontae Foote. Additionally, Young Adults attending the convention were individually greeted by SED officers, as to emphasize their importance in bearing the torch for the next generation of Lay leadership.

**MORNING MEDITATION:** The morning mediation speaker was Reverend William Lamar, Pastor of Metropolitan AME Church in Washington, DC. His message was entitled, “The Church that God Can’t Stand” scripturally rooted in Amos 5: 21-24. The message addressed the Lord speaking to his prophet Amos, informing him that outward demonstrations of faith are useless unless they are centered in justice and righteousness. Rev. Lamar emphasized that Amos was not a professional prophet and had no pedigree. He was a herdsman, yet God still found him and authorized him to do his work. The Pastor challenged the conference attendees to do what God desires of them, stressing that God wants people who are small, and smell like sheep – because sheep do the work. In summation, he stated that God desires radical Lay people who say and do what needs to be said and done. Moreover, **without the laity, there is no church.**

**AWARDS LUNCHEON:** The morning meditation was followed by the Awards Luncheon, which was purposed to honor outstanding Laypersons from each of the five SED conferences, as well as recognize outgoing Executive Board Officers for the service rendered over the duration of their appointments. Outstanding Laypersons included:

- LeOtha Hull – Baltimore Conference
- Adrienne Warren and Duane’ Josey (YAR) – Washington Conference
- Pamela B. Jones-Watford – Virginia Conference
- Gwen Smith – North Carolina Conference
- Penny Oliver and Adam Johnston (YAR) – Western North Carolina Conference

Additionally, Adrienne Warren and Duane’ Josey were named SEDLO Outstanding Layperson and YAR of the Year respectively. Retiring Executive Board Officer honorees included: Louse Murrill-Graves (Recording Secretary); Rose Brabble (Corresponding Secretary); Dr. Delaphine Green (Treasurer), Clara B. Neal (Historiographer); Janie Reeder (Public Relations Director); and Pamela B. Jones-Watford (Chaplain).

Starr Battle, Connectional Lay Organization (CLO) 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President delivered challenging Words of Wisdom during the affair, raising the question, “Have You Accepted Your Calling?” Scripturally rooted in Luke 19, she advised that we all have a calling to bring persons to Christ, insisting that **everyone has a role to play**. Additionally, she stated that God gives each individual a vision and implored the conference attendees to “return to their homes and work and grow their respective Lay Organizations.” Lastly, she posited, **“your comfort zone and the great commission do not coincide.”**

**BUSINESS SESSION I:** President Dwight Patterson presided over the first Business Session, which began with the seating of the delegation by conference. The Call to Order, and Presentation of the Proposed Agenda followed. The agenda was accepted with one addition – the reading of the minutes. Subsequently, Louse Murrill-Graves, Recording Secretary, called the roll and read the minutes. The report of the Rules Committee followed and was accepted with one recommendation – that a copy of all convention reports be filed with the recording secretary. The following preliminary reports ensued: The Registration Committee reported a temporary registration of 184+1 (the addition being a one-day pass). The Credentials Committee reiterated the compilation of the voting delegation per the Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church, and preliminarily reported 106 certified delegates.

The Business session proceeded with a brief address from President Dwight Patterson, outlining his tenure after assuming office in September of 2017. President Patterson overviewed his accomplishments

in terms of Stewardship, upholding the “I Dare You” campaign, social justice, and the “Mirroring Project”, intended to identify strengths, needs and opportunities of the SED’s congregations. Following the President’s address, SED DoLA Adrienne Warren delivered a report, recognizing each individual that worked tirelessly to make the 17<sup>th</sup> Lay Convention a success. Subsequently, SED YAR Dontae Foote delivered a report outlining his work on the “No Church Left Behind” initiative, and his desire to solicit increased Young Adult participation at all three levels of the Lay Organization. The Business Session was concluded after the reading of financial reports.

**RECEPTION HONORING CLO PRESIDENT VALERIE GARY BELL:** The first day of the convention culminated into a reception honoring CLO President Valerie Gary Bell. The reception was entertained by heartfelt addresses, including one from Valerie Bell herself, Bishop James Levert Davis, and Presiding Elder Louis Charles Harvey. Additionally, a saxophonist rendered musical selections in honor of the CLO President.

**Friday 28 September:** The second, and final full day of the convention began with devotions led by SED Chaplain Pamela Jones-Watford.

**BUSINESS SESSION II:** The second Business Session was called to order by Woodrow Winchester (who had apparently driven all night), the SED 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President. The session opened with the Candidates’ Forum, moderated by Glen White, Chairperson and President of the WCLO. Prior to the questioning of the opposed candidates (President and Vice President), unopposed candidates Florence Ward, Yvonne M. Davis, Valerie Terry, Kenneth Woods, Darwin Curry, Larry Rhodes Sr., and Adrienne Warren were each given the opportunity to deliver a brief pitch to the general body. After each unopposed candidate addressed the general body, the opposed candidates for the office of SED President, and SED Vice President were given the opportunity to deliver a brief pitch before being questioned. The questions faced by all opposed candidates included:

- What is your leadership style? Provide strengths and weaknesses.
- Name two challenges that you have faced in the Lay Organization. How did you resolve these challenges?
- Why has the Lord called you to run for this position at this time?

The questions faced by the opposed *Presidential* candidates included:

- Please provide three accomplishments that have prepared you to lead the SEDLO.
- What are your plans to get more Young Adults into the Lay Organization? How do you plan to retain them?
- There is a district-wide concern over the number of vacant positions. Discuss how you will use an unbiased approach to fill these positions.
- As President, what steps will you take to make sure that all money is accounted for in a timely manner?
- What are your recommendations to increase membership? Why do you think it’s so hard for the Lay Organization to increase membership?
- How will you bring the Second District into the next decade with technology usage, meeting and financial reductions?
- What will you do to ensure that the Social Justice theme is included in meetings and local activities?
- In the face of the #MeToo movement and sexual harassment, what do you think the Lay Organization should do to ensure the safety of our Lay members?

The questions faced by the opposed 2<sup>nd</sup> *Vice-Presidential* candidates included:

- In your experience, what has prepared you for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President of the SEDLO?
- Share two or three of the outcomes of your leadership which have prepared you to take over for the President or the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President in their absence.

**LAY LEADERSHIP 101:** Following the Candidates’ forum, a Lay Leadership 101 presentation was led by SEDLO DoLA Adrienne Warren, and YAR Dontae Foote. The presentation placed heavy emphasis on increasing “servant leadership”, as exemplified by Bishop James Levert Davis. The presenters noted that servant leaders should actively be willing to train, specifying the interworking of clergy and Lay (using the example of **Clay**, or clergy and Lay combined).

**MIRRORING PROJECT:** A “Mirroring Project” presentation was given in accordance with Bishop James Levert Davis’ introspective initiative by Penny Oliver. Leaders of each respective conference in the SED pronounced their progress on the project, using the number of completed surveys for each church as a metric for progress. Mrs. Oliver reminded those churches who have not turned in their reports that the deadline had been extended.

**FINAL REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE:** The final report of the Nominating Committee found the following individuals to be eligible for the subsequent offices, as presented to the Executive Board and accepted with no opposition:

- Matthew Douglas and Edna Watson – President
- Florence Warren – 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President
- Jean Wilson-Ritchie and Maria Wallace – 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President
- Yvonne Davis – 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President
- Valerie Terry – Financial Secretary
- Kenneth Woods – Chaplain
- Darwin Curry – Historiographer
- Larry Rhodes – Parliamentarian
- Adrienne Warren – Director of Lay Activities

**FINAL REPORT OF THE REGISTRATION COMMITTEE:** The final report of the Registration Committee found a total of 233 registrants with the following breakdown:

Conference	Laity	Clergy	Onsite	One-Day Pass	Total
Baltimore	24	0	2	0	26
Washington	81	5	3	1	90
Virginia	31	5	0	0	36
North Carolina	42	3	2	0	47
Western North Carolina	33	0	1	0	34
					233

**FINAL REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE:** The final report of the Credentials Committee found a total of 198 individuals eligible to cast votes, broken down into Connectional Officers, District Officers, Conference Presidents, Conference DoLAs, Conference YARs, Conference Delegates, Conference Young Adult Delegates, Local Presidents, Local Church Delegates, and Local Church Young Adult Delegates.

**ELECTION:** Following the two aforementioned reports, two clerks and two tellers were elected for the election, and all delegates were seated according to their conferences and voted accordingly. The election was moderated by CLO President Valerie Gary Bell. The count had to be done twice because the numbers did not agree. The voting strength was 196, and the number needed to be elected was 98. Matthew Douglas claimed a Presidential victory with 116 votes; Edna Watson finished with 80 total votes. Jean Wilson-Ritchie claimed a 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Presidential victory with a total of 124 votes; Maria Wallace finished with 72 total votes.

**BUSINESS SESSION IV:** Following the election, the fourth Business Session commenced with Executive Officers' reports, a Proposed Budget Committee report for 2019-2020 led by Valerie Terry who explained that due to expenses related to the 2019 CLO Biennial Convention, the 2020 budget is less. Selerya Moore delivered a Proposed Legislation Committee Report that explained the vetting process for SEDLO proposed legislation. Further, a Constitution & Bylaws Committee Report (available electronically) was led by Chairwoman Starr Battle which presented a proposed amendment for the CLO regarding permitting absentee voting for members who are affected by emergency situations, i.e. natural disasters and terrorist attacks. Lastly, Darwin Curry, Chairman of the Social Action Committee presented his last report to the members of the SEDLO. Due to time constraints, the YAR panel was cancelled in hopes that it would be presented at the next SEDLO meeting in a prominent time slot. Florence Warren of the Evaluations Committee reminded SEDLO members to complete their evaluations to plan for the next convention. President Dwight Patterson notified the SEDLO that there was no unfinished business, concluding the fourth business session.

SEDLO members initiated the Memorial Service led by SED Chaplain Pamela Jones-Watford. Following the service, a Circle of Love was called by newly-elected President Matthew Douglas, who informed participants in the circle to count off. A closing prayer was given, followed by the Lay Benediction. An SEDLO Organizational photograph was captured after the Circle of Love.

**CLOSING WORSHIP SERVICE:** A closing worship service was held, in which Bishop James Levert Davis addressed newly-elected officers and installed them to the SED. President Elder Gregory Edmond of the Northern District in the North Carolina Conference delivered a powerful message.

**Saturday 29 September:**

**TRANSITION MEETING WITH OUTGOING & INCOMING OFFICERS:** The 17<sup>th</sup> SEDLO Convention culminated into a traditional transition meeting with outgoing and incoming officers.

-- Respectfully submitted