

2018 State & Herstory of Women In Ministry In The AME Church

Presented To:

Dover District of The Delaware Annual Conference



Standing United. Moving Forward. Stronger Together



And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: The daughters of Zelophehad are right in what they are saying; you shall indeed let them possess an inheritance among their father's brothers and pass the inheritance of their father on to them.

Numbers 27:6-7 (NRSV)

Presented By:

Rev. Dr. Erika D. Crawford, President of Connectional AME Women in Ministry

Presented:

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Rev. Elder Ellis B. Loudon, Presiding Elder
Bishop Gregory G. M. Ingram, Presiding Prelate

ABOUT AME/ WIM

African Methodist Episcopal Women In Ministry (AME/WIM) is the official professional organization for women pursuing excellence in ministry in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church.

AME/WIM is an international organization serving the 20 Episcopal Districts of the AME Church in the United States, Canada, the Caribbean and the continents of Africa, India, and Europe.

AME/WIM is led by an Executive Board elected by the active membership - women preachers from across the Connectional AME Church.

AME/WIM currently serves, supports and provides encouragement to more than four thousand women serving in ministerial capacities at every level throughout the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

2016-2020 AME Church Quadrennial Theme

“The African Methodist Episcopal Church: A Social Justice and Liberating Faith”

Political Justice (2016); Criminal Justice (2017); Environmental Justice (2018); Economic Justice (2019)

“And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

Micah 6:8 (NASB)

2016-2020 AME/WIM Quadrennial Theme

In September of 2016 the Executive Board of AME/WIM intentionally assessed the state of Women In Ministry in the AME Church by reviewing the commissioning mission, purpose and objectives of AME/WIM. In doing so, the board gave prayerful thought and consideration to the denominations Quadrennial Theme - “The African Methodist Episcopal Church: A Social Justice and Liberating Faith.”

Trusting in the stated and inferred commitment of the AME Church to justice and believing that the pursuit of justice includes Gender Justice, Connectional AME/WIM established the **2016-2020 Quadrennial theme: “Standing United, Moving Forward, Stronger Together” based on Numbers 27:6-7 (NRSV)**

6 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 7 The daughters of Zelophehad [the women] are right in what they are saying; you shall indeed let them possess an inheritance among their father's brothers and pass the inheritance of their father on to them.

About Our Theme

#Standing United

AME/WIM is unified and focused on empowering and encouraging WIM across the connection.

#Moving Forward

AME/WIM is intentional about focusing on the future of our church, we are faith forward. We belong to a new generation and we are focused on exercising our gifts, fulfilling our purpose, individually and collectively, on possessing the promises of God.

#Stronger Together

AME/WIM pursues justice for all. All WIM are equally valued, and we seek to have everyone share equitably in the distribution of power, knowledge, resources and access.

About the Text:

The story of Zelophehad's daughters is one of encouragement, empowerment, and engagement.

The Bible mentions Zelophehad's daughters by name five times and gives legitimacy to their pursuit of justice – Gender Justice.

- Numbers 26:33; 27:1-7; 36:1-12;
- Joshua 17:1-6; and
- 1 Chronicles 7:15

2016-2020 AME/WIM Quadrennial Goals

Realizing that there are times when we must go back before we can go forward, the 2016-2020 Quadrennial Goals of Connectional AME/WIM take us back to the original mission, purpose and bylaws of AME/WIM as adopted by the 44th Session of The General Conference (1992) which emboldened and empowered AME/WIM to:

- Recognize and support women in ministry as an integral part of the AME Church.
- Raise the consciousness of the A.M.E. Church on women's issues.
- Address the issue of sexism in the A.M.E. Church.
- Address issues of opportunities for women in ministry in the A.M.E. Church.
- Support women in the pastoral ministry.
- Encourage academic training for ministry.
- Support and provide assistance and outreach to women in ministry in the “Global Districts.”
- Compile a complete and accurate record of all women in ministry in the A.M.E Church.

Thus, this quadrennial our focus is:

- Unity
- Preparation
- Relationships
- Gender Justice

And we have established the following as our fivefold **Quadrennial Goals**, to:

1. Encourage women to know the church down to the local level.
2. Be intentional in acknowledging, validating, and affirming the diverse call and purpose of women in ministry.
3. Increase visibility of AME/WIM within the AME Church and the larger inter-faith and ecumenical community.
4. Develop relationships with seminaries and theological institutions.
5. Invest in the development and empowerment of the Episcopal District Executive Boards.

HERSTORY OF AME/WIM

AME Women have proclaimed the gospel since the inception of the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church in 1787. Jarena Lee (1783-18??), the first preaching woman, was allowed by Richard Allen to preach and was licensed but was refused ordination. Both women and men sought to persuade the church to recognize the call of women to the preaching ministry. In 1844, 1848 and 1852, petitions to the General Conference to license women were rejected, and in 1864 the General Conference let a resolution to license women die. In 1888, Bishop Henry McNeal Turner's 1885 ordination of Sarah A. Hughes as a Deacon in the North Carolina Conference was overturned by the General Conference, but the licensing of women as local preachers was approved though it prohibited them being assigned and defined their role as evangelists. The Church began ordaining women as Local Deacon in 1948 and Local Elder in 1956 but not until 1960 were women ordained to Itinerant orders.

After the 1960 General Conference permitted the ordination of women as Itinerant Elders, Rev. Carrie Thomas Hooper (1894-1996) announced her run for the Episcopacy, becoming the first woman to run for the Episcopacy at the 1964, General Conference in Cincinnati, OH. Rev. Hooper offered herself for Episcopal Service five times: 1964 General Conference- 11 votes; 1968 General Conference-12 votes; 1972 General Conference-29 votes; 1976 General Conference-54 votes; and 1980 General Conference- 4 votes

Efforts over recent decades to affirm the role and equality of women in the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church and to address the need for eliminating discrimination and injustices based on gender were initiated at the 1976 General Conference held in Atlanta, Georgia when a position paper written by Rev. Dr. Jacquelyn Grant was presented on the status of women, and the female ministers of the A.M.E. Church met to voice their concerns about the lack both of representative participation in the governing process of the Church and of incentives for females to enter A.M.E. ministry.

When a delegation of women (including Reverends Grant, Nurjhan Govan, Alyson Browne Johnson, Mary Ann Bellinger, Alice McNair, and Jeane B. Williams) took these issues before the 1977 session of the Council of Bishops, held in Atlantic City, New Jersey, the Council reaffirmed its interest in women's concerns and appointed Bishops John Hurst Adams, and Frank Madison Reid, Jr. to work with the Ad Hoc Committee on Women in Ministry as advisors. Between 1977 and 1980 the Committee, chaired by Rev. Dr. Jacquelyn Grant with Rev. Jeane B. Williams as Acting Chairperson, conducted research on the herstory of women in ministry in the A.M.E. Church and compiled information on the location of women across the Connection.

In 1980, women in ministry representing eight episcopal districts met at the site of the 41st Quadrennial Session of the General Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana. Rev. Jeane B. Williams of the First Episcopal District was elected President. During the quadrennium Rev. Ida V. James (4th District) served as Vice-Chairperson; and the office of Secretary/Treasurer was held successively by the Reverends Gwendolyn McCoy, Gertrude Foster and Caria Sneed. A restructured Committee on Women in Ministry began working with the Bishops to have coordinators appointed to represent the female clergy in their episcopal districts as well as compiling a directory of women in ministry and planning a conference of clergywomen in the AME Church which was held in Atlanta, Georgia in January 1983. Rev. Williams provided leadership until 1984 with oversight assigned to Bishop Vinton R. Anderson, Chairperson of the Commission on Liturgy and Worship.

In 1984 Rev. Carolyn Tyler (now Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry) of the Fifth Episcopal District was elected President in Kansas City, Missouri at the seat of the 42nd Quadrennial Session of the General Conference. She served until 1988 under the leadership of Bishop Frederick H. Talbot, Chairperson of the Commission on Ministry and Recruitment. During her term of office a connectional conference was held in Atlanta, Georgia in January 1986, the directory was updated, and drafting of the bylaws and policy for AME/WIM was initiated.

In 1988, at the seat of the 43rd Quadrennial Session of the General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas Rev. Lillian Frier Webb of the First Episcopal District was elected President of the Connectional AME/WIM organization and served until 1996. The Executive Board during her first term of office was: The Reverends Alyson Brown Johnson, (1st District), General Secretary; Gloria Barrett (3rd District), Corresponding Secretary; Lillian Benjamin Rainey (2nd District) and Sherryl A. Matlock (10th District), Regional Assistant Secretaries; E. Anne Henning Byfield (4th District), Treasurer; Rolyn Dix, (13th District), Financial Secretary; Pearline Chase (16th District); Historiographer; Esmay Walsh, Worship Leader; Deborah K. Blanks, (1st District), Parliamentarian. Consultants were: Rev. Dr. Jacquelyn Grant (6th District), Rev. Elizabeth Scott (3rd District), Presiding Elder Cornelia Wright (3rd District), and Presiding Elder Ernestine M. Ward (1st District).

During Rev. Webb's second term of office the Executive Board officers were: The Reverends Carolyn Tyler Guidry (appointed Presiding Elder in the 5th District in 1994), First Vice President; Gloria Barrett (3rd District), Second Vice President; Sherryl A. Matlock (10th), Third Vice President; Alyson Brown Johnson (1st District), General Secretary; Sarah Frances Davis (10th District), Financial Secretary; Rev. E. Anne Henning Byfield (4th District), Treasurer; Gertrude Trescott (7th District), Worship Director; Rev. Elizabeth Scott (3rd District), Historiographer.

The General Board at its 1989 meeting in Houston, Texas voted to establish a 19-member Commission on Women in Ministry and appointed as Chairperson, Bishop Robert Thomas, Jr. Presiding Prelate of the Nineteenth Episcopal District. In 1992 at Orlando, Florida, the 44th Session of the General Conference took the historic step, during the business session at which Bishop H. Harford Brookins presided, of accepting the resolution to admit the Commission on Women in Ministry. Bishop McKinley Young, Presiding Prelate of the Fifteenth Episcopal District, was assigned as Chairperson for the 1992-1996 Quadrennium.

The by-laws governing the Connectional AME/WIM were also adopted by the General Conference at that time, thereby empowering the organization to pursue its objectives which as listed below reflect more recent revisions approved by the subsequent General Conferences:

- To recognize and support women in ministry as an integral part of the AME Church.
- To raise the consciousness of the A.M.E. Church on women's issues.
- To address the issue of sexism in the A.M.E. Church.
- To address issue of opportunities for women in ministry in the A.M.E. Church.
- To support women in the pastoral ministry.
- To affirm specialized ministries, for example: chaplaincy, writing, teaching, counseling, research, prison, youth, geriatric, singles, street, health care, family/life relations, music, homeless, HIV/AIDS and religious education ministries.
- To encourage academic training for ministry.
- To sponsor a connectional conference at least once during each quadrennium.
- To support and provide assistance and outreach to women in ministry in the Fourteenth through Twentieth Episcopal Districts.
- To compile a complete and accurate record of all women in ministry in the A.M.E Church.

Subsequently, efforts were focused on strengthening the organization of AME/WIM in the Episcopal Districts, gathering data on women across the Connection for the updated publication of a directory of women in ministry, and sponsoring two conferences in Atlanta in January 1991 and January 1994. An official AME/WIM Hymn was commissioned, written by Rev. Deborah Burney of the Fifth Episcopal District. In addition, several publications were prepared for sale, including a reprint of the journal of Mrs. Jarena Lee, the first preaching women of the AME Church, as well as a documentary history of AME/WIM from 1976-1992. Publication of a newsletter, *Bricks Without Straw*, began, and work was initiated on documenting the stories of pioneer women in ministry in a video production.

On June 30, 1996 in Louisville, Kentucky at the seat of the 45th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference, Rev. Sandra E.H. Smith Blair of the Fifth Episcopal District was elected as Connectional President. Officers elected to serve during the 1996-2000 Quadrennium were: the Reverends Alyson Browne Johnson (1st District), First Vice President; E. Anne Henning Byfield (4th District), Second Vice President; Sherryl Matlock (10th District), Third Vice President; Cynthia Verdell Brown (7th District), General Secretary; Eunice Paddio-Johnson (8th District), Corresponding Secretary; Lois M. Woodard (5th District), Financial Secretary; Earnestine Barkley Drayton Sellers (11th District), Treasurer; and Elizabeth Scott (3rd District), Herstorlographer. Rev. Rolyn Dix (13th District) who had been elected Worship Leader passed away in August 1996 and Rev. Deborah T. Dennie (13th District) was appointed by the Executive Board to serve out the term of office. Consultants to the Executive Board were Rev. Dr. Jacquelyn Grant Callaway Professor of Systematic Theology at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta and Rev. Dr. Teresa Fry Brown, Professor of Homiletics at Emory University, Chandler School of Theology in Atlanta, both of the 6th District. Bishop C. Garnett Henning, Sr., Presiding Prelate of the Nineteenth Episcopal District was assigned as Chairperson of the Commission on Women in Ministry for the 1996-2000 Quadrennium.

On July 9, 2000 in Cincinnati, Ohio at the seat of the 46th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference, Rev. Blair was reelected President. At that herstoric General Conference, Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie of the Second District was elected the first female Bishop of the A.M.E. Church and assigned to the Eighteenth Episcopal District and to serve as Chairperson of the Commission on Women In Ministry for the 2000-2004 Quadrennium. Officers elected to serve during the 2000-2004 Quadrennium were: Rev. Dr. Lois Poag-Ray (2nd District), First Vice President; Rev. Kimberly L. Detherage, Esq. (1st District), Second Vice President; Rev. Izora Johnson Adamson (7th District), Third Vice President; Rev. Tabitha Lucas Miller (7th District), General Secretary; Rev. Joni Dent Clark (4th District), Corresponding Secretary; Rev. Pamela Mason (5th District), Financial Secretary; Rev. Deloris Prioleau (2nd District), Treasurer; Rev. Faith Maycock (11th District), Worship Director; and Rev. Elizabeth Scott (3rd District), Herstorlographer. Rev. Pretty Masuku (19th District) was elected as Overseas Coordinator providing liaison with the four Episcopal District Presidents in Central and Southern Africa. The Reverends Drs. Jacquelyn Grant and Teresa Fry Brown continued as Consultants.

During Rev. Blair's term of office, a number of initiatives were taken to strengthen and expand the organization. The bylaws were revised; the offices of Herstorlographer and Overseas Coordination for Southern Africa were established; the establishment of seminary campus chapters was approved; a new dues system was established for the global districts; activities and reporting were structured programmatically and by committees; reporting forms were restructured; legislation was approved to include the Connectional President in the *Book of Doctrine and Discipline* as a voting member of the General Conference; the Jacquelyn Grant Sister to Sister Fund was established to assist women in ministry from the global districts; the Jarena Lee Appreciation Awards Breakfast was launched to pay tribute to individuals for their support of AME/WIM; the service of installation of connectional officers elected for the quadrennium was scheduled at the site of the annual meeting of the General Board/Bishops' Council; in each quadrennium a connectional conference was held (January 1999 in St. Louis, Missouri, with the theme "*Living On Holy Ground*"; and June 2002 in Tampa, Florida with the theme, "*God's Women Growing With Grace: Tools For a New Day*") with a closing Ecumenical Heritage Breakfast to honor trailblazing women in ministry in the AME Church and other denominations; a commemorative service was held at Mt. Pisgah AME Church in Lawnside, New Jersey, the burial place of Mrs. Jarena Lee, the spiritual foremother of AME women in ministry, and a framed sketch of her was presented to the church as a permanent memorial; a second official AME/WIM hymn was commissioned and written by Deborah Burney of the Fifth Episcopal District; an AME/WIM kente stole was created; and membership was established with the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA/Women In Ministry. In addition, AME/WIM took leadership in developing legislation revising the AME Church Clergy Misconduct Policy and including it in the *Book of Doctrine and Discipline*.

On July 4, 2004 in Indianapolis, Indiana at the seat of the 47th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference, Rev. Dr. Lois A. Poag-Ray of the Second Episcopal District was elected Connectional President of AME/WIM. This General Conference was also a herstoric Conference that elected not one but two women to the Bench of Bishops – Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry of the Fifth Episcopal District and Bishop Sarah Frances Taylor Davis of the Tenth Episcopal District. Bishop Davis was assigned to the Eighteenth Episcopal District and to serve as Chairperson of the Commission on Women in Ministry for the 2004-2008 Quadrennium. The other officers elected to the Executive Board were: First Vice-President, Rev. Delphine L. Vasser (10th District); Second Vice-President, Rev. Kimberly L. Dethrage, Esq. (1st District); Third Vice-President, Rev. Diane Burl (12th District); General Secretary, Rev. Aleta Pearson (12th District); Corresponding Secretary, Rev. Carolyn Davis (7th District); Financial Secretary, Rev. Pamela Mason (5th District); Treasurer, Rev. Deloris Prioleau (2nd District); Worship Director, Rev. Faith Maycock (11th District); Herstorlographer, Rev. Barbara J. Barbour (2nd District); and Rev. Pretty Masuku Harrison (19th District), Coordinator for Central and Southern Africa. Three consultants to the Executive Board also assisted with the work of AME/WIM: Rev. Dr. Jacquelyn Grant, and Rev. Dr. Teresa L. Fry Brown, and Rev. Sandra Smith Blair, Immediate Past President.

The theme selected for the 2004-2008 Quadrennium was, "*God's Women Launching Out Into the Deep*". The tradition was continued of worship services being held on the Sunday evening before the opening of the annual General Board meetings. In June 2005, along with the installation of officers at the seat of the General Board meeting in Dallas, Texas (10th District), the Fifth Annual Jarena Lee Appreciation Award Breakfast was held, and in June 2006 the Sixth Annual Jarena Lee Appreciation Award Breakfast was held in North Charleston, South Carolina (7th District). Following the close of the June 2006 General Board meeting, the 7th Quadrennial Conference with the theme, "*Celebrating Herstories: A Legacy of First Fruits*" featured plenary sessions, worship services,

workshops, and the closing Ecumenical Heritage Prayer Breakfast. The Executive Board adopted a 'shared governance' model of leadership involving the Presidents and Vice Presidents, and committed to consensus decision making. An AME/WIM website was initiated to expedite dissemination of news and information. The vision for AME/WIM campus chapters that was formalized in the revised Bylaws approved by the General Conference in 2004 was realized with the establishment of a chapter at Payne Theological Seminary, announced at the installation of Rev. Dr. Leah Gaskin Fitchue as the first female President of the seminary in November 2004. President Lois Poag-Ray was nominated by Ecumenical Officer, Bishop E. Earl McCloud, Jr, to serve as the Pan-Methodist member on the United Methodist Church Commission on the Status and Role of Women. Collaboration was initiated with Rev. Dr. Paula Matabane, film producer and Professor of Radio, T.V., and Film at Howard University in Washington, D.C. on a film documentary on AME/WIM; and the publication, *Herstory: Traveling Down Memory Lane-Remembering the Past; Living the Present* was compiled by Connectional Herstoryographer Barbara Barbour for distribution at the 2008 General Conference. The Executive Board's Legislative Committee with the leadership of Connectional Second Vice President, Kimberly Detherage, Esq. prepared bills for submission to the General Conference proposing revisions and clarification of the clergy sexual misconduct policy as well as to the AME/WIM Bylaws, and including AME/WIM in the listing of General Conference Committees.

On July 6, 2008 in St. Louis, Missouri at the seat of the 48th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference, Rev. Kimberly L. Detherage, Esq. of the First Episcopal District was elected Connectional President of AME/WIM. Bishop Jeffrey Nathaniel Leath was assigned as Chairperson of the Commission on Women in Ministry for the 2008-2012 Quadrennium.

The other elected officers were: First Vice-President, Rev. Carolyn Habersham (5th District); Second Vice-President, Rev. Francine A. Brookins, Esq. (5th District); Third Vice-President, Rev. Katurah York Cooper (14th District); General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Betty Deas Clark (7th District); Corresponding Secretary, Rev. Dr. Monica Spencer (2nd District); Financial Secretary, Rev. Karla J. Cooper (5th District); Treasurer, Rev. Cynthia Harvin (2nd District); and Worship Director, Rev. Shirley Inkton Bowers (12th District). During the Quadrennium the Executive Board voted to accept Rev. Lola S. Gresham Russell (6th District) to fill the office of Herstoryographer.

In addition to the elected officers, three consultants to the Executive Board continued to assist with the work of AME/WIM: Rev. Dr. Jacquelyn Grant, Rev. Dr. Teresa L. Fry Brown, and Rev. Sandra Smith Blair, Past President.

During the General Conference in 2008, the women of Districts 14-20 met and elected Presiding Elder Mapeete Mokhosi (18th District) to serve as Coordinator for Central and Southern Africa and provide, with the establishment of the 20th Episcopal District, liaison with the five Episcopal District Presidents in the region. The quadrennial theme for 2004-2008 was "Navigating the Space Between Call and Response: Stewardship of our Finances, Interpersonal Relationships, Self-Care & Institutional Relationships.

In July 2012, at the 49th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference held in Nashville Tennessee, Rev. Kimberly L. Detherage, Esq. was elected to serve a second term as Connectional President of AME/WIM. Bishop Clement W. Fugh was assigned to the Fourteenth Episcopal District and to serve as the Chairperson of the Commission on Women in Ministry. The other officers elected were First Vice President, Rev. Carolyn Habersham (8th District); Second Vice President, Rev. Francine A. Brookins, Esq. (5th District) ; Third Vice President, Rev. Dr. Erika D. Crawford, (1st District); General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Betty Deas Clark, (7th District); Corresponding Secretary, Rev. Dr. Monica Spencer, (16th District); Financial Secretary, Rev. Tyronda Howse Burgess, (13th District); Treasurer, Rev. Cynthia L. Harvin, (2nd District); and Worship Director, Rev. Pamela Rivera, (10th District). Rev. Dr. Jacquelyn Grant, Rev. Dr. Teresa L. Fry Brown, and Rev. Sandra Smith Blair, Past President, continue to serve as Consultants to the Executive Board.

During Rev. Detherage's tenure several initiatives and goals have been initiated and implemented. The main goal has been to strengthen the internal structure of AME/WIM and increase the means of communication, dialogue and interaction among women in ministry throughout the 20 Episcopal Districts. Bimonthly teleconference meetings with the Episcopal District Presidents have been instituted. AME/WIM was one of the organizations that submitted legislation to increase the age of the persons entering the itinerancy. One major change to the AME/WIM bylaws was the implementation of the election of all officers on all levels of AME/WIM. No longer are the Episcopal District Presidents appointed by the Bishop or the Coordinators appointed by the Presiding Elders. A new interactive website has been established; a data base was created on the *amewim.com* website to gather statistical information about women in ministry; the organization has actively engaged in social media as a means of communication; and fiscal accountability has been maintained. In 2008, the AME/WIM logo was created by Obverse. AME/WIM also initiated the Jarena Lee Foundation, contributed \$5,747 to the 16th Episcopal District Haiti Relief; and contributed AMEC publications to the 16th Episcopal District Ministry Empowerment Institute.

The April-June 2010 edition of the the *A.M.E. Church Review* was dedicated to A.M.E. Women in Ministry and Leadership. Women in Ministry from across the Connection contributed articles, sermons, theological papers, letters, historical data and biblical studies on women in ministry.

In 2010, AME/WIM organized and successfully held the 8th Quadrennial AME/WIM Conference in Philadelphia, the First Episcopal District: “*Celebrating 50 years of women’s ordination as Itinerant Elders in the AMEC, 1960-2010.*” More than 249 women from 16 Episcopal Districts were in attendance at this 3-day event that included: sermonic witness from all three women Bishops in the AMEC; engaging learning sessions; a pilgrimage to Mt. Pisgah AME Church in Lawnside, New Jersey, the gravesite of Mrs. Jarena Lee, the first woman to be licensed to preach in the A.M.E. Church; and provided women clergy within this church an opportunity to celebrate, dialogue and worship together from the context of the Christian ministry that we share.

At the 49th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference held in Nashville, Tennessee, in July 2012, AME/WIM presented its preliminary statistical data on AME/WIM. In addition, AME/WIM submitted a resolution commemorating the July 21st, 2012 centenary of the Rev. Dorothy Millicent Stephens Morris, whom Bishop Frederick H. Talbot appointed as the first female Presiding Elder in the A.M.E. Church and the 16th Episcopal District. The resolution was adopted by the General Conference and in August 2012 was presented to Rev. Morris by President Kimberly L. Detherage who travelled to Guyana, South America to join Bishop Sarah F. Davis and the 16th Episcopal District in celebrating Rev. Morris’ 100th birthday with her. Also, at the General Conference, a book of articles published by AME/WIM about Women in Ministry using the Quadrennial Theme “*Navigating the Space Between Call & Response: Stewardship of Finances, Physical and Spiritual Self Care, Interpersonal Relationships and Institutional Relationships*” was sold out and is currently being updated for a second edition.

In September 2012, the Executive Board met and set its goals and objectives for the 2012-2016 Quadrennium, the theme for which is “Positioned to Lead: Take Thou Authority” (1 Corinthians 9:1-2, Message Bible). In December 2012 at its meeting in Little Rock, Arkansas, the General Board adopted the following recommendations made by AME/WIM and presented by the Commission on Women in Mission which stated:

That the AME Church, through its Bishops and Presiding Elders, be intentional in considering the educational background and experience of all clergy, in particular women, as they make Pastoral assignments and recommendations for persons to serve in areas of leadership in which women clergy are underrepresented: in the delegation to the General Conference; on the General Board; and on Episcopal District and Annual Conference Committees such as the Board of Examiners, Board of Trustees, Ministerial Efficiency, Judiciary and Finance.

That the AME Church, through its Bishops and Presiding Elders, be intentional about including women in ministry as worship participants, workshop presenters, teachers and trainers at Episcopal District, Annual Conference, and Presiding Elder District conferences and events.

In June 2013 at its meeting in Kingston, Jamaica, the General Board adopted a recommendation made by AME/WIM and presented by the Commission on Women in Ministry that a report card be developed to measure the recommendations of inclusivity of women in ministry on all levels of the church as stated in the above two points. At the June 2014 General Board meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, AME/WIM presented to the Commission on Women in Ministry preliminary data on the report card it created to measure inclusivity.

On August 6-9, 2014, the 9th quadrennial conference of women in ministry will be held in Charleston, South Carolina. The conference theme is “*Mission Possible: Positioned to Lead: Take Thou Authority*”. The conference is dedicated to the memory of Bishop Sarah Frances Taylor Davis, Presiding Prelate of the Sixteenth Episcopal District, who passed away on November 9, 2013. The theme, “Mission Possible”, which was selected for her investiture as President of the Council of Bishops of the A.M.E. Church in Kingston, Jamaica on June 24, is the guiding principal of our Quadrennial Conference theme. As we position ourselves as leaders and emerging leaders in the A.M.E. Church and take our authority as women of God, we recognize that her life bears witness for us that the Mission is Possible. At the Friday, August 9 Service of Commitment and Surrender, the inaugural “Bishop Sarah Frances Davis Mission Possible Award: Influencing the World for Christ, Fulfilling the Great Commission” will be presented to a recipient who demonstrates a lifetime commitment to the ideology of Bishop Sarah Frances Davis and a dedication to the advancement of women in ministry.

We received notice on April 8, 2016, that the Council of Bishops gave serious consideration to and accepted the recommendation of the Commission on Women in Ministry to posthumously ordain Jarena Lee, the first woman preacher of the AME Church, at the 50th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference in Philadelphia, PA.

The Posthumous Conferral of Honoris Causa Ministerial Title for Jarena Lee, “act of ordination,” took place on July 13, 2016, two hundred twelve years after this phenomenal and fearless woman yielded the call. Dr. Teresa Fry Brown, Ph. D. composed and read a resolution to the General Assembly affirming that the Council of Bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church had “reviewed the life and legacy of Jarena Lee, examined her unquestionable devotion to God, read of her adherence to the duties and responsibilities of a minister in this Zion, and have seen and understood the evidence of her deep legacy now posthumously affirm the life and ministry by conferring the ministerial title Itinerant Elder to Reverend Jarena Lee (Honoris Causa).”

When the elections for General Office and the Episcopacy took place on Monday July 11, 2016, Dr. Teresa Fry Brown, Ph. D was re-elected as the Historiographer / Executive Director for The Department Of Research And Scholarship. Dr. Brown was seated as the only woman General Officer, notwithstanding the candidacy of seven women. Later that day, Bishop E. Anne Henning Byfield was made the 135th elected and consecrated Bishop of the church. Bishop Henning Byfield was one of five women candidates for the episcopacy and her election now means there are two active women Bishops on the Bench, the other being Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie, the 117th elected and consecrated Bishop; and one retired woman, Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry, the 122nd elected and consecrated Bishop.

On Sunday July 10, 2016 at 2:30 PM at the Pennsylvania Convention Center, Women in Ministry convened their quadrennial elections. Candidates were asked to submit Statements of Interest, photos and videos to the nominating committee chaired by Rev. Sandra Smith Blair (5th District) by February 11, 2016, the birthday of Rev. Jarena Lee. This information was shared with the constituents via the AME/WIM website and sent directly to members with email addresses on file.

All eligible voters were asked to present a picture I.D. upon arrival and sign in. Plans to vote via electronic ballot had to be abandoned due to technological challenges and as a result, voting took place via the traditional casting of ballots. Dr. Teresa Fry Brown, served as the chair of the election committee where Rev. Dr. Erika D. Crawford, (1st District) was elected President. The other officers elected were Rev. Ammie Davis, 1st Vice President (8th District); Rev. Dr. Monica Spencer, 3rd Vice President (16th District); Rev. Dr. Louise Jacksons, General Secretary (3rd District); Rev. Tyronda Howse Burgess, Financial Secretary (10th District); Rev. Angelique Mason, Treasurer (2nd District), Rev. Dr. Janie Dowdy-Dandridge (13th District), Herstorlographer; Rev. Pamela Rivera, Worship & Liturgy Director; Rev. Nomalunmgelo Pamella Vena (18th District), Central/Southern Africa Coordinator. At a later date the board appointed Rev. Joelynn Stokes, Esq., (4th District) as 2nd Vice President and Rev. Garland Higgins (6th District) as Communications Secretary to fill the vacancies of those office.

At the close of the General Conference Bishop E. Anne Henning Byfield, a former connectional AME/WIM officer was appointed Chair of the Commission on Women In Ministry.

Rev. Dr. Jacquelyn Grant, Rev. Dr. Teresa L. Fry Brown, and Rev. Sandra Smith Blair, Past President, continued to serve as Consultants to the Executive Board; and the board saw fit to diversify the consultants to reflect the various offices that clergy women in the AME Church hold, adding Presiding Elder Brenda Payne (10th District) and Chaplain Benita Livingston (13th District).

AME/WIM continues to celebrate the increasing number of women in ministry in the AMEC; the diversities of ministries which they are performing; the appointment of women to the pastorate, and to major charges; the number of women clergy holding Annual Conference offices such as Dean of the Board of Examiners and serving on the Board; membership on committees such as the Finance Committee; the inclusion of women as worship leaders, preachers and teachers at Conferences and Connectional meetings; the growing number of female Presiding Elders; the seating of women in the General Board; and the greater presence of women in the Episcopal District delegations to the General Conference.

Yet, we recognize that our mission also continuously calls us to keep pressing to eliminate sexist and discriminatory practices and that we must continue to raise our voices until there is full equity and inclusion of women in ministry in the life, ministry, and leadership of the A.M.E. Church.

Herstorical Timeline of Women In Ministry in the African Methodist Episcopal Church

- 1787** Founding of the AME Church
- 1809** Jarena Lee denied licensed to preach
- 1817 / 1819** Jarena Lee licensed to preach
- 18??** Death of Jarena Lee
- 1848** Ordination of women comes before the General Conference for consideration in the form of a petition by the Daughters of Zion. The General Conference granted permission for women to preach in churches and receive licenses, but not ordination.
- 1852** Ordination of women comes before the General Conference for a second time, it is again rejected.
- 1856** Ordination of women comes before the General Conference for a third time, it is again rejected.
- 1868** Ordination of women comes before the General Conference for a fourth time, this leads to the creation of the office of Stewardess, female evangelist, and deaconess.
- 1884** Women were licensed to preach in the AME Church.
- 1885** Bishop Henry McNeal Turner ordained Sarah Hughes an itinerant deacon
- 1887** Ordination of women rescinded by Bishop Jabez P. Campbell
- 1888** The General Conference affirms Bishop Campbell's order to rescind the ordination of Sarah Hughes. Women are confirmed as Evangelist.
- 1936** Martha Jane Keys, a pastor and evangelist from Kentucky, initiated the legal challenge to women's exclusion from ordination introducing a bill at the General Conference calling for the ordination of women. The bill failed.
- 1948** The General Conference authorized the ordination of women as Local Deacons
- 1956** The General Conference authorized the ordination of women as Local Deacons
- 1960** The General Conference authorized the ordination of women as Itinerants
- 1964** Rev. Carrie Thomas Hooper of the New York Annual conference becomes first female candidate for the Episcopacy
- 1968** Rev. Carrie Thomas Hooper runs for the Episcopacy for a second time
- 1972** Rev. Carrie Thomas Hooper runs for the Episcopacy for a third time.
- 1973** Bishop Frederick H. Talbot broke with the tradition of nearly two centuries when he appointed Reverend Dorothy Millicent Stephens Morris Acting Presiding Elder (16th Episcopal District)
- 1976** Rev. Carrie Thomas Hooper runs for the Episcopacy for a fourth time
- 1976** Rev. Jacquelyn Grant presents a position paper on Women in Ministry
- 1977** Ad Hoc WIM Committee established with Rev. Jacquelyn Grant as chair
- 1980** Rev. Carrie Thomas Hooper runs for the Episcopacy for a fifth time
- 1983** Bishop Reverend Vinton R. Anderson appointed Rev. Cornelia Wright Presiding Elder, making her the first female Presiding Elder in the United States.
- 1988** The Commission on African Methodist Episcopal Women In Ministry established
- 1992** The Commission on African Methodist Episcopal Women In Ministry admitted by the General Conference
- 1996** Rev. Carrie Thomas Hooper dies at the age of 102
- 1996** Recommendation to the General Conference to elect a female clergy to the Episcopacy
- 1996** Bishop C Garnett Henning encouraged the General Conference to revisit the AME Church motto, noting that its language was "un-inclusive"
- 2000** Dr. Jayme Coleman Williams, the first elected female General Officer, presented a Special Resolution in compliance with rule #15 in support of elected a female to the Episcopacy.
- 2000** Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie (117th) is elected the first female Bishop in the AME Church
- 2004** Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry (122nd) and Bishop Sarah Frances Davis (126th) elected Bishops in the AME Church
- 2012** Rev. Teresa Fry Brown, PhD, elected as Historiographer making her the first clergy woman to hold a General Office.
- 2012** Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry (122nd) retires.
- 2013** Bishop Sarah Frances Davis (126th) dies on November 9, 2013
- 2016** Bishop E. Anne Henning Byfield (135th) elected a Bishop in the AME Church
- 2016** General Conference passes resolution to confer on Jarena Lee, making her The Reverend Jarena Lee
- 2017** Presiding Elder Dorothy Millicent Morrison dies at the age of 103.

Connectional AME/WIM Statistical Data

Contemporary Statistics	Historical Statistics	Comparison
Out of the 138 Bishops elected and consecrated in the AME Church, 4 have been clergy women. This means 97% of Bishops elected and consecrated in the AME Church have been male clergy. (2016)	Out of the 119 Bishops elected and consecrated in the AME Church, 1 have been clergy women. This means 99.99% of Bishops elected and consecrated in the AME Church have been male clergy. (2000)	Over the course of 16 years, there has been an increase of 2.99% in clergy woman as Presiding Elders
Out of the approximately 230 Presiding Elders currently serving approximately 32 are clergy women. This means 87% of the active Presiding Elders are male clergy (2017)	Out of the approximately 157 Presiding Elders serving approximately 2 were clergy women. This means 97.5% of the active Presiding Elders were male clergy (1988)	Over the course of 29 years, there has been an increase of 10.5% clergy woman as Presiding Elders
Out of the 3817 Pastors clergy women represent an unknown number. Male clergy represent an unknown percent (2017)	Out of 1652 Pastors 70 are clergy women. This means male clergy represent an 95% of Pastors (1988)	Comparative Information Unavailable
Out of the 51/56 Clergy General Board seats 9 are held by clergy women and 42/47 are held by clergy men. Male clergy represent 83%/84% (2016)	Out of the 51/54 Clergy General Board seats, 2 were held by clergy women and 49/52 were held by clergy men. Male clergy represent a 96%/96% (2000)	Over the course of 16 years, there has been an increase of 13% clergy woman on the General Board
Out of the approximately 744 General Conference Ministerial Delegates, approximately 142 are clergy women. This means 81% of the General Conference Ministerial Delegates were male clergy. (2016)	Out of the approximately 917 General Conference Ministerial Delegates, approximately 54 were clergy women. This means 95% of the General Conference Ministerial Delegates were male clergy. (2000)	Over the course of 29 years, there has been an increase of 10.5% clergy woman as General Conference Delegates.
Out of the approximately 605 General Conference Ministerial Alternate Delegates, approximately 206 are clergy women. This means 66% of the General Conference Ministerial Alternate Delegation were male clergy. (2016)	Data Unavailable	Comparative Information Unavailable
Out of the 17 General Conference Ministerial Delegate seats, 16 clergy women were seated. This means 1% of the Women In Ministry Committee were male clergy (2016)	Out of the 19 General Conference Ministerial Delegate seats, 18 clergy women were seated. This means 1% of the Women In Ministry Committee were male clergy (2000)	Over the course of 16 years, there has been no percentage change
Out of the 20 General Conference Ministerial Delegate positions on the Revisions Committee, 5 clergy women were seated. This means 75% of the Revisions Committee are male clergy. (2016)	Out of the 19 General Conference Ministerial Delegate positions on the Revisions Committee, 0 clergy women were seated. This means 100% of the Revisions Committee were male clergy. (2000)	Over the course of 16 years, there has been an increase of 25% clergy women on the Revisions Committee.
Out of the 42 General Conference Ministerial Delegate positions on the Episcopal Committee 2 clergy women are seated. This means 95% of the Episcopal Committee were male clergy. (2016)	Out of the 38 General Conference Ministerial Delegate positions on the Episcopal Committee 0 clergy women were seated. This means 100% of the Episcopal Committee were male clergy. (2000)	Over the course of 16 years, there has been an increase of 5% clergy women on the Episcopal Committee

** Although at first glance many of the statistics represent an increase in the representation of clergy women percentage wise, it is important to note that the percentage increases do not accurately reflect or represent the increase in the number of women in ministry.

2016 - 2017 Statistics

- 65% of Episcopal District Finance Committees have no female clergy members
- 88% of Annual Conference Trustee Boards are chaired by male clergy
- 97% of Annual Conference Finance Committees are chaired by male clergy
- 71% of Annual Conference Trustee Boards have no female clergy members
- 78% of Annual Conference Ministerial Efficiency Committees are chaired by male clergy
- 87% of Annual Conference Board of Examiners are chaired by male clergy
- 69% of Annual Conference Ministerial Institute Deans are male clergy
- 69% of The Annual Conferences have all male Presiding Elders
- 76% of “#1 churches” in Presiding Elder Districts have male clergy
- 83% of Chairs of the Committee on Ministerial Orders are chaired by male clergy
- 56% of Student enrollment at Payne Theological Seminary is female
- 50% of Student enrollment at Turner Theological Seminary is female
- 49% of Women in Ministry are Bi-vocational
- 60% of Women in Ministry are seminary graduates