



THE CONNECTION

CONNECTIONAL LAY COUNCIL
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH

February 2008

9th Lay Convocation

*Greensboro, North
Carolina
March 27-30, 2008*

*"Exploring
Solutions That
Enhance Zion's
Leadership,
Integrity and
Accountability"*

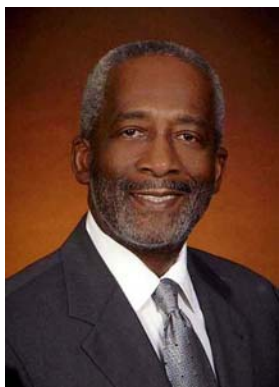
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Special points of interest:

- Answers to Laity Pursuit
- 100 Words On
- Plea from Historian
- Lay Council Closing Prayer
- Office Hours

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



GROWING OUR ASSETS

Recently, I had the pleasure of writing a letter of recommendation for a young man who is a member of the A.M.E. Zion Church and a junior at Livingstone College. While writing about the leadership skills and various ways in which this Young Adult contributes to his church and community, I marveled at how richly blessed our denomination is to have such an abundance of young people who are willing to be Kingdom Builders.

Given all that we see, hear and even feel that is "wrong" with our younger generation (young black men in particular), we must be careful to never forget that nothing created or made by God was ever wrong or worthless. Young people, in my opinion, who have chosen

Christianity as a way of life, are the church's greatest assets and, given opportunity, along with proper nurturing, training and guidance, they will produce enormous returns on our investment.

Notwithstanding the fact that their views and ways are not the same as mine were when I was their age and sometimes strangely different from how I approach situations today, many of the youngsters in our congregations have far greater potential for bringing souls to Christ than we (the older generation) recognize or are willing to accept. The challenge for the older generation is that of not being stumbling blocks but instead stepping stones for Kingdom building by the younger generation.

Too often, many of the commendable and even great things that our young people are engaged in or capable of doing are overlooked. They too want to see their church be that which it was born to be – The Freedom Church. As a denomination, we can demonstrate greater gratitude for how God continues to afford His church the ability to grow and expand its ministry with countless numbers of committed, faithful, talented and gifted young people. We must allow them to greater opportunity to serve and cause them

to believe more firmly that they are of great value to the church's mission. Oh, how blessed we are! Oh, what needless pains we bear!

It is my hope that, going forward, together and deliberately, we will in a more serious and strategic manner seek to do the following: recognize and lift up the innate value of younger Christians; give the young adults more opportunity serve in key leadership positions in the church; encourage the younger generation to witness more freely from their own perspective of how Christ lives in them.

Please make plans to attend the Connectional Lay Council's upcoming Young Adult Forum that will be held at the seat of the Ninth Lay Convocation. This special forum will take place at the Sheraton Four Seasons Hotel on in Greensboro, NC on March 27, 2008 from 1:00 PM until 5:00 PM where discussion and planning session around ways to enhance and expand the ministry of Zion's younger generations will be the focus. Although Young Adults who hold leadership positions in the YACM and YAMS departments at all level of the church structure are the targeted audience for this forum, all interested lay and clergy persons are invited and urged to attend.

HOLDING UP THE FINGER WHILE LEAVING SERVICE

Have you ever attended a church service and saw someone hold up one finger as they are exiting the sanctuary during the service? What does it mean? Here is one explanation:

During the slavery days when the masters took their slaves with them to public gatherings, the slaves would always sit in the balcony. When the slave had to go to the bathroom or wanted to be excused for any reason, they would hold their hand up and keep it up until their master acknowledged that they saw their hand and gave them permission to leave or in other words, "excused them to leave." After the slave was given permission to leave, they would hold up one finger as they were leaving to inform anyone that saw them leave that they had been excused.

So, it means, "My Master has excused me", and the "holding up of one finger while leaving the sanctuary" carried over from slavery. It is important that we investigate rituals before you follow them.

The next time you see someone holding up their finger, just tell them: "Put your finger down. It's okay to leave. You are not on the plantation; you've been freed." "Thank God

Almighty you are free at last!" (Author unknown)

9TH LAY CONVOCATION

March 27 – 30, 2008

Hosted by
Trinity A.M.E. Zion Church, Greensboro, NC

Held at
Sheraton Four Seasons Hotel

Joseph S. Koury Convention Center
3121 High Point Road at I-40
Greensboro, North Carolina 27407
Room Rate: \$116 plus tax per night

Rate available through March 1, 2008

Theme - "Exploring Solutions That Enhance Zion's Leadership, Integrity & Accountability"

REGISTRATION:

Early Bird! – Now until February 15, 2008 - \$100

After February 15, 2008 - \$125

On Site - \$150

Mail completed form and fee to:

Mr. Jerry L. McCombs, Connectional Lay Council Office, P.O. Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770

Included in registration:

Welcome Reception on Thursday; Breakfast & Challenge Luncheon on Friday; Prayer Breakfast on Saturday; Registration Packet; Materials for Plenary Sessions

- ▶ Young Adult Forum
- ▶ Candidates for General Office Dialogue
 - ▶ Candidates for Bishop Dialogue
 - ▶ General Conference Legislation
 - ▶ Prayer Breakfast
 - ▶ Challenge Luncheon

Registration forms can be obtained by logging onto www.clcamezion.org and clicking on the FORMS tab at the top of the Home page, Hotel Reservations can be made (under Events and Announcements ~ Lay Convocation) Click on Contact URL. In attendee code box type AMEZ-CLC. Or 1 800 242 6556 or www.sheratongreensboro.com - Code: AMEZ-CLC

Yvonne Baskerville – Convocation Chairperson
David A. Aiken – Connectional Lay Council President

Bishop Clarence Carr – Chairman, Board of Lay Activities
Bishop Richard K. Thompson – 1st Vice Chairman, Board of Lay Activities
Bishop George E. Battle, Jr., - 2nd Vice Chairman, Board of Lay Activities

LAY CONVOCATION

Program-at-a-Glance

THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 2008

- 1:00 P.M. Young Adult Forum
- 3:00 P.M. Registration (until 6:00 P.M.)
- 7:00 P.M. Welcome Program (at Trinity African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church)
- 7:30 P.M. Worship Service (at Trinity African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church)
Welcome Reception

FRIDAY, MARCH 28, 2008

- 7:00 A.M. Devotions
- 8:00 A.M. Registration
- 9:00 A.M. Plenary Session I— CLC Constitution/By-Laws Revision
- 10:15 A.M. Plenary Session II—General Conference Resolutions
- 12:00 P.M. Challenge Luncheon
- 2:00 P.M. Plenary Session II continued
- 3:00 P.M. Plenary Session III—Report from Young Adult Forum
Summit Report
- 5:00 P.M. Orientation and Introduction of Candidates for General Office and the Episcopacy
- 6:00 P.M. Dinner (on your own)
- 8:00 P.M. Plenary Session IV—General Officer Candidates Forum

SATURDAY, MARCH 29, 2008

- 7:00 A.M. Devotions
- 7:00 A.M. Prayer Breakfast
- 9:00 A.M. Plenary Session V—Episcopal Candidates Forum
- 1:00 P.M. Closing

SUNDAY, MARCH 30, 2008

- 11:00 A.M. Worship at local Churches

LAY CONVOCATION

Connectional Lay Council Prepares to Launch Youth and Young Adult Ministries Initiative

Yvonne A. Tracey

1st VP Connectional Lay Council

When the final report of the Summit Committee of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was disseminated in July 2006 it carried an aggressive challenge to embrace the abysmal findings and prayerfully pursue viable solutions. David Aiken, Sr., the visionary president of the Connectional Lay Council was inspired to appoint Yvonne Baskerville to provide leadership for the development of the Youth and Young Adult Ministries Initiative.

As a strategic imperative an agenda was developed for the Quadrennial Evangelistic Retreat held in October 2006 to provide a platform for dialogue with Young Adults. The positive response of Zion's Young Adults who participated gave credence to the inaugural efforts of the Connectional Lay Council to provide early transforming educational and practical experiences in the doctrines, discipline and polity of the A.M.E. Zion Church that will serve to unite, edify, nurture, and encourage Youth and Young Adult lay persons.

The upcoming 9th Quadrennial Convocation provides another strategic opportunity to connect particularly with Young Adults as the Connectional Lay Council brings to the table for discussion and consensus its mission and goals for the formal establishment of ministries within the lay council at the local, district, conference and connectional levels for youth and young adults.

The Connectional Lay Council Pre-Convocation Young Adult Forum will take place on Thursday, March 27, 2008 from 1:00 PM until 5:00 PM at the Sheraton Four Seasons Hotel Joseph S. Koury Convention Center Greensboro, North Carolina. Proposed Young Adult Forum discussion topics are as follows:

"Bless Be The Tie That Binds" Final Report of the Summit Committee

Facilitator: Rev. Alyce Walker

Organization of Young Adult Ministries within the Lay Council at the local,

district, conference and connectional levels

Overview: 48th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference of

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

Purpose of the Connectional Lay Council Quadrennial Convocation

The Connectional Lay Council extends an invitation to young adults in leadership positions in the YCAM and YAMS departments at all levels to support of this significant Young Adult Initiative. Interested Young Adults may contact Yvonne Baskerville @ eyb1022@yahoo.com

No Registration Fee Is Required For This Session.

The Connectional Lay Council is committed to perpetuating positive experiences in Zion that will ultimately stimulate continued growth of Lay Council memberships, retention of association with the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and a life long commitment to Kingdom building.

You will rise up and have compassion on Zion, for it is time to favor it;

the appointed time has come. Psalm 102: 13

Lay Convocation Plenary on General Conference Resolutions

by Patricia Lewis, Facilitator

The word *plenary* means full; complete. For this purpose, it also means 'for all members.'

By now you should have given much thought to the rules you'd like to change.

With very few exceptions

our members have a free range.

The Quadrennial Lay Convocation

will offer a plenary forum.

This opportunity is a rare one,

and for this you will not need a quorum.

Submitting or sponsoring a Resolution

for the General Conference this year?

Get it to the General Secretary on time

or you'll miss the boat, I fear.

Share your resolution and your views

To assure the greatest impact.

You can be the first to gain support

of many delegates; and that's a fact.

In order to get your point across

There are some things you need to do.

If you hold to your end of the bargain;

we'll provide the audience for you.

1. Be a registered Convocation attendee.

Download the form online.

Send it in with the appropriate fee—

and everything else will be fine.

[Send the completed Form and Registration

Fee to: Mr. Jerry L. McCombs, CLC Office,

PO Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770]

2. Complete the Resolution Form.

Get it from the Web site—don't wait.

Send it to CLC Headquarters.

The deadline is January 8.

[Send the CLC Resolution Form to: Patricia Lewis,

Facilitator, Resolutions Plenary II, 2008 Lay Convocation

PO Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770]

Visit the CLC Web site: clcamezion.org

Event: Lay Convocation, for details. Download the CLC Resolution Form from the FORMS link.

LAY CONVOCATION

2005 CONVENTION DIRECTIVE “BYLAWS REVISION” UPDATE

A major task of the Constitution Revision/Legislation Committee during this quadrennial is to draft for staffing revised by-laws as directed by The 2005 CLC Convention. Over several quadrennials our conventions have approved/adopted resolutions that have changed our bylaws extensively and generally causing it not be user friendly. To this end The 2005 Convention directed the Constitution Revision/Legislation Committee to conduct a review of the bylaws and draft a proposed re-write of the bylaws, called a revision. Such a revision is notice that a new document will be submitted, and it will be open to amendment as fully as if the Council was adopting bylaws for the first time. The revision can be rejected altogether, leaving the old bylaws intact, however, the old document cannot be altered. The committee has been working to draft a revised working document that will add clarity and will be more functional as a governing statute. During a plenary session of The 2008 Convocation the current status of the drafted document will be presented. It is the committee desire that this presentation will generate feedback over the next six months as the committee continues to develop/refine the revision as directed by the 2005 Convention. It is the goal of the committee to present to the 2009 Convention a revised document that: 1) provide functionality, 2) provide clarity and interpretation, and 3) a document developed with today's preferred practices.

Come share in this opportunity to help make our bylaws a model within Zion.

ATTENTION ALL LAY PERSONS

Please log on the CLC Web site clcamezion.org, click on the Survey/Poll link and participate in the Social and Political Concerns Committee Survey.



WALT BELAMY

CHALLENGE LUNCHEON SPEAKER

Hall of Famer, Walt Bellamy has had a diversified career in college and professional sports, matched only by his civic and community involvement.

Mr. Bellamy was born and reared in New Bern, North Carolina where he received his secondary education. He graduated from Indiana University in 1961. In 1960 Walt was a member of the United States Olympic Basketball Team and won a gold medal. While attending Indiana University, he achieved All American Honors as a result of his outstanding skills on the basketball court.

Walt's professional career began officially in 1961 when he became affiliated with the National Basketball Association as a member of the Chicago Packers. During his rookie season, he was named the National Basketball Association's "Rookie of the Year" for his outstanding performance. During Walt's professional basketball career, he played on the team of the Baltimore Bullets, the New Knickerbockers and the Atlanta Hawks.

During the 1973-1974 season with the Atlanta Hawks, Mr. Bellamy reached the 20,000 point career mark, the sixth player ever to achieve such a feat in professional NBA history. He began the 1973-74 season ranking third in career rebounds and ranks third in field goal percentage and fifth in minutes played. He also served as the vice president of the NBA players Association during his pro basketball career. In 1984, Walt was selected to the United States Olympic Hall of Fame, the Indiana University Sports Hall of Fame and the NBA Hall of Fame in May 1993.

Mr. Bellamy is a member of the Atlanta Urban League; served as an Advisory Board member of the Maryland Old Line Corporation; Board member of the Southwest YMCA. In 1976 Walt served as a delegate to the Democratic Convention. Walt was elected and served as delegate to the 1984 and 1988 National Democratic Convention. Mr. Bellamy served as Senate Doorkeeper for the Georgia General Assembly 1977-1981.

Mr. Bellamy is also a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., the Indiana University Alumni Club, Indiana University Advanced Leadership Council. Alpha Phi Omega Service Fraternity, member of the Board of Trustees of Gate City Day Nursery Association, Board Member—Southwest Youth Business Organization, Founder and First President of "MEN OF TOMORROW, INC." of Maryland and Membership Chairperson of the Campbellton/Cascade Y's Men's International Club. He is listed in the 38th edition of WHO'S WHO IN AMERICA, Outstanding Young Men in America, 1975.

Mr. Bellamy is a member of Shaw African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, where he serves as Vice President of the Lay Council.

LAY CONVOCATION

Connectional Lay Council 9th Convocation Featuring Thought-Provoking Candidates Forums

There is still time for certified candidates to solicit support from the laity at the Quadrennial Connectional Lay Council Convocation.

The candidates Forums will convene March 28th Friday 8:00pm for the General Officer Candidates and Saturday March 29th 9:00am for the Episcopal Candidates at the Joseph S. Koury Convention Center in Greensboro, NC. All candidates will be officially introduced on Friday March 28th prior to the dinner hour. All interested candidates are reminded to do the following:

Visit the Connectional Lay Council website www.clcamezion.org

To register for the CLC Convocation and make hotel reservation.

Purchase space to display and disseminate campaign literature

Standard exhibit space (skirted 6' table w/2 chairs) is available on a first come basis for a fee of \$50.00.

Mail Check To: Connectional Lay Council C/O Jerry McCombs PO Box 2677 Charlotte, NC 28221-6770.

Convocation packets will include a brochure of certified candidate profiles w/pictures

Submit the profile form and picture for the 2008 Candidates Information Brochure.

Email Rhandi Stith @ Randim@aol.com for an electronic copy of the profile.

Prepare to dialogue in structured forums

Equal Time Format: Candidate randomly draws questions. Response time: 3 minutes.

Pro & Con Format: Same question presented to three or more candidates. Response time: 3 minutes.

Town Meeting Format: Questions by the audience. Response time: 2 minutes per question.

The Connectional Lay Council is looking forward to your full participation in the Quadrennial Convocation. We are continuing to pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to sustain us as we work towards providing an agenda that will meet the mandate of the church and is pleasing to God. For questions or additional information email Yvonne A. Tracey @ ytracey@bellsouth.net or call 704-637-8687.

In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Proverbs 3:6 RSV

Submitted By:

Isaiah Pinkney, Chairperson of the Candidates for General Office Forum

Yvonne A. Tracey, Chairperson of the Candidates for Bishop Forum

LAITY PURSUIT ANSWERS

By Rhondi M. Stith, Editor of The Connection

1. President – Mr. David A. Aiken, Sr.; 1st Vice President – Mrs. Yvonne A. Tracey; 2nd Vice President – Mrs. Jessie Riddick; Secretary – Ms. Mary Matthews; Treasurer – Mrs. Connie Williams; Financial Secretary – Mr. Jerry McCombs; Chaplain – Mr. Charles Montgomery.
2. May 20, 1948; General Conference, Louisville, Kentucky.
3. Chicago, Illinois.
4. Mrs. Annie Williams
5. Judicial Council
6. Ministers and Lay Association
7. Dr. Betty V. Stith and the Reverend Frank E. Jones
8. Mrs. Alean Rush
9. Mrs. Charlotte Riggins
10. "Onward Christian Laity"
11. "Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah"
12. Eight
13. Dr. Victor J. Tulane (1952-?); Mr. Arthur E. Brooks (1964-1976); Dr. Betty V. Stith (1976-1985); Dr. C. DuPont Rippey (1985--1988); Mr. James E. Hewitt (1989-1993); Mrs. Mary E. Taylor (1993-1997); Mrs. Lula K. Howard (1997-2001) and Mr. David Aiken (2001-Present).
14. Dr. Betty V. Stith, Mrs. Mary E Taylor and Mrs. Lula K Howard.
15. "Seek Out, Recall and Reclaim"
16. Omni Hotel, Military Circle, Norfolk, Virginia.
17. Mr. Arthur E. Brooks
18. The Harriet Tubman Properties Grounds Beautification Project.
19. Dr. C. DuPont Rippey
20. Person with voting privileges; Clergy
21. 3rd Sunday in October
22. Department of Christian Education and Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society.
23. Bishop Clarence Carr
24. Bishop George Junis Leake III
25. The Reverend Carlton Mathis; 3rd Quadrennial Convention, Norfolk, Virginia.
26. St. John African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, December 13, 1975.
27. Bishop J. Clinton Hoggard
28. Charlotte, North Carolina; July 14-17, 1977.
29. "Come With Us To Christ"
30. New Orleans, Louisiana
31. Fulfilling the Mission of Laity Thru: Enlightenment- Leadership - Stewardship - Praise - Worship and Celebration
32. Fifteen
33. Mr. D.D. Garrett
34. Charlotte, North Carolina - 1977; Birmingham, Alabama - 1981; Norfolk, Virginia - 1985; Los Angeles, California - 1989; Salisbury, North Carolina - 1993; Louisville, Kentucky - 1997; Akron, Ohio - 2001; New Orleans, Louisiana - 2005.
35. Four
36. Eleven
37. By recommendation, one person from each Episcopal District.
38. Constitution Revision/Legislation; Social/Political Concerns; Bishop George J. Leake III Scholarship; Education; Budget/Finance and Convocation.
39. Birmingham, Alabama - 1981
40. New Orleans, Louisiana - 2005.

WHY WE NEED A RENEWAL OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT (VRA): WHAT'S A LAITY TO DO? (Part II of Three Part Series)



By Queen E. Degraphenreid, Chairperson, Chair, Social and Political Concerns Committee & the 2006 Lamplighter Recipient - the Dr. John Hope Franklin Humanitarian Award

LOOK WHERE HE BROUGHT US FROM—(IMPORTANT TIMELINES IN US VOTING)

- 1776** - White men with property could vote. Free Black men could vote in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Connecticut
- 1789** - Only white adult male property owners had the right to vote. Poor people, women, Native-Americans and enslaved African-Americans could not vote.
- 1790** - US passed first laws granting citizenship to white men and some women, and the right to vote for those who had a two-year US residency.
- 1820** - The property laws are taken off the books and all white men who had lived in the country for two years could vote, but they must pay a poll tax, and pass both literacy and religious tests in order to vote.
- 1840** - Poll taxes, literacy and religious tests were removed from the books.
- 1848** - The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo ended the Mexican-American War and guaranteed citizenship to Mexicans, their voting rights were denied through property laws, language and literacy requirements and intimidation by "Night Riders."
- 1850** - Almost all adult white males now had the right to vote.
- 1855** - Connecticut, followed two years later by Massachusetts, adopted the first literacy test for preventing the Irish-Catholic immigrants from voting.
- 1860** - Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island and Massachusetts allowed free African-American men to vote.
- 1866** - The Civil Rights Act of 1866, following by the Civil War ending in 1865, granted citizenship to native-born Americans but excluded Native-Americans.
- 1870** - The 15th Amendment established the right of African-American men to vote. This newly acquired right was not exercised, especially in the South, because of poll tax, reading requirements, physical violence, property infringements, and changing of voting polls.
- 1882** - The Chinese Exclusion Act barred people of Chinese ancestry from becoming citizens, and thereby denying them the right to vote.
- 1887** - The Dawes Act gives citizenship on to Native Americans with tribal affiliations.
- 1889** - Florida adopts a poll tax. Other states, north and south, would follow suit.
- 1913** - The 17th Amendment calls for members of the US Senate to be elected directly by the people instead of the state legislatures.
- 1915** - The United States Supreme Court declared that the grandfather clause was in conflict with the 15th Amendment of 1870, thereby outlawing literacy tests for federal elections.
- 1920** - The 19th Amendment guaranteed women's suffrage, giving white and African-American women the right to vote. Some white women could vote earlier on.
- 1921** - The Sons of America organized to fight for equality and the rights of Mexican-American citizens, including the right to vote.
- 1922** - The Asian-Americans rights to citizenship, and thereby voting, was barred by thee the United States Supreme Court. The court rescinded this vote a year later in 1923.
- 1924** - The Indian Citizenship Act grant all Native-Americans the rights of citizenship, primarily due their service during WWI, yet most western states denied voting rights.
- 1943** - The Chinese Exclusion Act is revealed, giving Chinese immigrants citizenship rights.
- 1944** - The US Supreme Court outlawed "white primaries", where primary elections were conducted by private associations that could exclude whomever they chose.
- 1946** - Filipinos are now given their citizenship rights.
- 1952** - The McCarran-Walter Act repeals the racial restrictions of the 1790 Naturalization Law. Now, first-generation Japanese could become American citizens.

WHY WE NEED A RENEWAL OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT (VRA): WHAT'S A LAITY TO DO? (Part II of Three Part Series) Cont'd

- 1957** - The Civil Rights Commission is established to further implement the 15th Amendment, and among other duties, to investigate voter discrimination.
- 1960** - The US Supreme Court outlawed "gerrymandering" – changing election boundaries.
- 1961** - The 23rd Amendment allowed District of Columbia to vote in presidential elections.
- 1964** - The 24th Amendment bans the poll tax as a requirement for voting in federal elections. Also, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson.
- 1965** - The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson, eliminating voting barriers such as literacy and language tests, and protecting voters.
- 1970** - The renewal of the Voting Rights Act placed a five-year moratorium on literacy requirements that were still being practiced in eighteen states - East, West, North and South.
- 1971** - The 26th Amendment set the minimum voting age at 18.
- 1972** - The US Supreme Court declared that the lengthy residency requirements for state and local elections were unconstitutional, and suggested that a 30-day period was sufficient.
- 1975** - The Voting Right Act is amended to include language assistance to minority voters, who had routinely been denied their voting rights because they spoke other languages or had limited English abilities.
- 1990** - The American with Disabilities Act required access to the polls and to the ballot box.
- 1995** - The Federal Motor Voter Law, making it easier for voters when they changed residences.
- Federal Voting Standards and Procedures Act requires state to streamline registration, voting, and other election procedures, making the voting process more "user friendly".
- 2006** - President Bush signed into law, the "Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Reauthorization and Amendment Act of 2006", appropriately named, renewing the Voting Rights Act of 1965 for the fourth time.

LESS WE FORGET, VOTING IS NOT AN OPTION—IT'S A HARD WON RIGHT

How ONE Little Vote Can Make ONE Big Difference

- ONE VOTE** gave America the English language instead of German instead 1776.
- ONE VOTE** in the Electoral College gave Thomas Jefferson the President over Burr in 1800.
- ONE VOTE** elected Marcus Morton Governor of Massachusetts in 1839.
- ONE VOTE** brought the state of Texas into the Union in 1845.
- ONE VOTE** saved President Andrew Johnson from impeachment in 1868.
- ONE VOTE** gave Rutherford B. Hayes the President of the United States in 1876.
- ONE VOTE** changed France from Monarchy to a Republic in 1876.
- ONE VOTE** won Woodrow Wilson the Presidency by carrying California by less than one vote per precinct in 1916.
- ONE VOTE** gave Harry Truman the Presidency by carrying California by less than one vote per precinct in 1948.
- ONE VOTE** could have made the difference in the La Honda-Pescadero Unified School District when two candidates had a tie vote in 1973.
- ONE VOTE** could have made the difference in the municipal election in Wade, NC when five candidates ran for five seats, and two of candidates received 55 votes each in 2003.
- ONE VOTE** could have avoided a coin toss in Falcon, NC when two of the candidates received 19 votes each in the 2003 municipal election.

WHAT'S A LAITY TO DO?

- Include voter information, such as the facts given above in your church bulletins, on your bulletin boards, and in your newsletters at key intervals. Also, include pertinent voter information on your church's website. Our members must know our historic and gallant struggle for voting rights – and that our church was at the forefront.
- AME Zion members must vote in **EVERY** election – local, state and national. While electing our public officials is essential, equally important are the local and state elections that determine our tax assessments, medical and health services, housing, safety and security, job and the availability of other resources, such as parks, etc..
- As your community's population changes, by increases and decreases, be aware that your district lines may be re-drawn, thereby changing both your representation and voting place. Invite members of your Board of Elections to get vital information.

Include a voter registration form in each new member's packet and/or distribute them during local church's New Members' Classes.

Almost 70% of voters 65 and older are categorized as "consistent voters". If your congregation is aging, rides to the polls will become necessary. Start planning now for the 2008 primaries and Presidential Elections Also, petition your local Board of Elections for Sunday Voting to accommodate your senior citizen voters. **Be Proactive!**

THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH IS THE FREEDOM CHURCH—LET'S KEEP OUR LEGACY ALIVE!!

“LET’S DO LUNCH”

Today, I am feeling extremely generous! I am in a magnanimous frame of mind. I am offering to you a carte blanche invitation, “Let’s Do Lunch”. May I call your attention to **Spiritual Cuisine**.

We are still celebrating the New Year. Most of us grew up in an environment where there were special menus for New Year’s Day dinner. Many of us fared sumptuously on ‘good luck’ menu items for New Year’s Day. The Prophet Jeremiah wasn’t looking for good luck. As God’s spokesman during a difficult time in Israel’s history, he, in a vivid statement, (15:16) said to God, “Your **Words** were found, and I **ate** them, and Your **Word** was to me the joy and rejoicing of my **heart**.”

“Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; and you who have no money, Come, buy and **eat**”. The Lord God issues an invitation to “Let’s Do Lunch” for an *abundant life* through the Prophet Isaiah in chapter 55.

“Let’s Do Lunch”. Share a wonderfully fulfilling meal with me. “**Doing Lunch**” in the Word of God will enable our spirits to blend; you at your house and me at my humble abode. We need only to devour the **Word of God**. Jesus has in many ways said to you and to me, “Let’s Do Lunch”. His spiritual culinary delights are filled with what will make all of us privy to the fortifying nutrients needed to weather storms, walk through valleys, climb the high places, and exist in our everyday living. His Menu is replete with every substantive food necessary for the ‘good life’. Early, in Genesis 1:29, 30, a great physical menu was established. Dine in the Psalms for other delightful foods He created. Not only has God provided for our physical nourishment, He offers a menu, in His Word, that will keep us strong

of *body, mind, and spirit*.

Should we choose to *not* accept Christ’s invitation to “Let’s Do Lunch”, we will have irregular heart palpitations of love, ventricles clogged by negativity disallowing warm, red, Christian blood to flow freely through the arteries. Our Right Atrium will *not* carry compassion and the Left Atrium will cease to flow with forgiveness. Normal functions will be thwarted by sin. Corroded arteries will abort strong natural flowing because of the ingestion of food-stuffs void of nutrients; stuff that taste good, but leaves bitter character traits. Ask Eve about the ingestion of wrong foods. The heart is called the ‘body engine’ designed by our Creator with precision. It not only pumps nutrients and oxygen to every cell in our body while clearing away harmful waste, but according to our Designer, it is a ‘Spiritual engine’ for our very inner being. In Proverbs 23:6-7, we get great advice about eating and drinking and the matters of the heart. As with the physical body, it is necessary to be particularly mindful of our Spiritual food intake. The Apostle Paul admonishes us to “Let’s Do Lunch” in Colossians 3:16. Good advice to strengthen your body and give it the necessary fortification to ward off and/or treat the diseases of sin itself.

Selected, sporadic, and ‘wee’ meals from the **Word of God** will make our feet stray, distort our vision; our brains, without proper spiritual nutrients from the Word of God, will malfunction as sin, muddles its chambers. Our spiritual cardiovascular system will deteriorate. Poor eating habits from the Word of God affect all major organs of the Body. Without the ‘Living Bread and the Living Water”, we perish.

ZION’S HISTORICAL TIDBITS

LAY CONVOCATION

The concept of the Lay Convocation was presented to the Executive Board of the Connectional Lay Council by our third president, Dr. Betty V. Stith.

The purpose was to give the laity an opportunity to seriously take time to look at the issues, take a stand on which ones they wanted to develop for the next four years and to decide on who to elect to the episcopacy and general office.

A booklet consisting of profiles on each candidate was designed by this President to give all persons attending information on all candidates who were seeking election and re-election.

The first Lay Convocation was held at Omni Hotel, Military Circle, Norfolk, Virginia.

A Snapshot of those Who Shaped The Connectional Lay Council

100 WORDS

on

Theodore Essex Shaw

By Linda Byrd

Theodore Essex Shaw served as both Chicago District and Michigan Conference president. Serving on the Executive Board and the Legislation Committee of the Connectional Lay Council, he also wrote “The Laity Speaks” for several years and was elected to the Laity Hall of Fame.

As a member of Greater Walters in Chicago, he held positions as Steward, chairman of the Trustee Board and supervised the writing of the first history of the church and organization of the church library.

He is a giant among the laity and currently resides in Memphis, Tennessee.

REGIONAL NEWS

NORTH EASTERN EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

The Right Reverend George E. Battle, Jr.,
Presiding Prelate

Mrs. Marie H. Baxter, Regional Director
Western New York Conference

Mrs. Joyce Harrington, Reporter

The Western New York Lay Council held a retreat on Saturday, October 20, 2007 at People's A.M.E. Zion Church. Host Pastor Rev. Daren C. Jamie.

Rev. Robert E. Linder, Pastor 5th Avenue A.M.E. Zion Church, was the presenter and his focus was "Stewardship" Rev. Linder cited the examples of stewardship as found in Genesis 2:15, Leviticus 25:1-5 and Matthew 25:14-30. He then focused on the components of stewardship; Use of spiritual gifts I Cor. 12:1-12, Serving Gal. 5:13, and Giving II Cor. 9:6-8.

We then discussed the Qualities of the Christian Steward's Christian steward is compassionate, content, generous, grateful, loving, loyal, obedient, prayerful, responsible, sacrifices, shares and is trustworthy. He shared that these qualities were taken, "From Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation: Stewardship, by Phyllis M. Bow-erw. (Nashville: Cokesbury, 2000)

Mrs. Julya Guins Clark is the Lay Council District President for Rochester-Syracuse. Remarks were given by Mr. William Bulow Mr. Carl Lovelady, Presiding Elder Robert L. Graham Buffalo District, Presiding Elder Ruby J. Smith Albany District and Presiding Elder Errol E. Hunt Rochester-Syracuse District.

We closed using the Laity Prayer.

New York Conference Department of Christian Education Bishop George W.C. Walker Sr., Scholarship Winner

My name is Diamond Graham; I was born in Fayetteville, North Carolina. I am senior at A. Phillip Randolph Campus High School in Harlem, New York. My mom and I live in an apartment in New York City. Although I was reared in a single parent home, I have had a great deal of support from my paternal grandparents. My father was killed when I was seven months old, leaving my mother widowed at a very young age; she was left with the responsibility of raising me as a single parent. The death of my father had a devastating affect on my mother, she became very depressed. As long as I can remember she has been on antidepressants, most of the times unable to work while we received public assistance. I have an older brother who was not raised by my mother, he was raised by my mother's sister in another city. I did not really know him until he was an adult; we were not close as children, but we have since bonded as siblings. After my father died, my mom and I lived with my paternal grandparents and my grandfather became a father figure in my life. I was three years old when my grandfather died. After grandpa's death my mother and I moved into a low income apartment in New York City. At the present we live on a small salary that is derived from part time work by me mother and me. We get food stamps and occasionally some assistance from grandma.

At my school I am involved in a group called Sisterhood, which is an organization that works with young women

of color on their self development. This organization is involve with community outreach; we visit shelters to assist in feeding the homeless on holidays. During the Christmas season we visit the Hale House to bring the children toys. Additionally, I have participated in the annual Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) AIDS walk at Central Park every year for the last ten years. Other charitable participation includes annual breast cancer walk, the juvenile diabetes's walk and the blood drive at my school. One of my jobs is to hand out pamphlets to encourage the neighborhood to give blood.

I am a member of Jackson Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. I am involved in many church activities including acolyte, drama club, the usher board, youth missionary society, Sunday school and the welcome committee. I am the youth delegate for the Long Island District, for the Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society (WHOMS) for the 2007 Quadrennial Convention in Orlando Florida. I like to try new things and meet new people. So the prospect of being a student at Livingstone in the fall of 2007 is very exciting. My choice to attend Livingstone College was influenced by the fact that I have a long list of family members, mentors and family friends who graduated from Livingstone. This includes my grandmother, Uncle James Miller and one of my favorite pastors the late Reverend Dr. Leon Walter Watts II. Reverend Watts had a keen interest in the educational of young people. Prior to his death he was the Pastor of my Church, Jackson Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. He had a special bond with all the young people in church. He exposed us to so many things that we would never have had the opportunity to experience. He introduced us to the importance of spiritual retreats and vacation bible school. He made Sunday school so interesting that, as young people we could not wait to attend each week. We young people loved him and he loved us. Reverend Watts, was truly a dedicated alumnus of Livingstone, and encouraged many students to apply. I know that Reverend Watts would be proud that I too, have chosen his Alma Mater.

I was accepted to other colleges including Morgan State, Florida A&M and several others, but I chose Livingstone because growing up, I heard Reverend Watts and my Uncle James Miller talking about the way Livingstone influenced their lives. Reverend Watts reflected on the family atmosphere he experienced at Livingstone. Students were taught to respect and love one another; they ate together as a family, and everyone was required to attend church services. Everything that I heard from the graduates sounded so exciting. I have known for a long time that this is the school I wanted to attend. Livingstone is one of the schools that I believe will help me make an adjustment from dependence to independence, and afford me the opportunity to accomplish my goad of becoming an early childhood educator. Livingstone has an outstanding record for graduating top notch teachers and this is the career path that I will be pursuing. My plan for the future is to complete college, find a job, and give back to my community.

Livingstone is a small private college and this interests me a lot. The class size will be small and it offers opportunities for students to participate in spiritual and cultural activities. Many of the graduates that I have met have done very well in their professional careers. I like the fact that Livingstone is noted for the success of their graduates excelling in their careers. The Livingstone graduates hat I know are positive role models and mentors for me. I hope that I will be as successful as they

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have been. I would like to make them proud. I don't want to follow in their footprints but rather make my own right beside theirs, I believe mine will be just a big.

Livingstone offers me the opportunity to complete my college education at an affordable cost, but it is still a struggle for me because of my circumstances. Emotionally I am all ready to go, but still struggling with the financial aspect. As stated previously my grandmother has stepping in to help us financially in a crisis, but can not afford to send me to college. She is a very positive influence in my life. I have spent every weekend with her since I was three years old so that I could attend church and participate in church activities. She reminds mom and me that God should be first and foremost in our lives and then school and, everything else will fall into place. This taught me at an early age to set priorities. Another reason why I chose Livingstone as my first choice is because they are affiliated with the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and this spiritual connection will create a sustained environment of love and learning.

Thank you for allowing me to apply for your scholarship.

Diamond Graham

MID ATLANTIC II EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

The Right Reverend Warren M. Brown, Presiding Prelate
Mrs. Renee Felton-Pullen, Regional Director
Contee A.M.E. Zion Church
Washington, D.C.
Celebrates Lay Sunday
1st Regional Lay Academy

Speaker: Ms. Tena Hamilton

Theme: Fulfilling the Mission of Laity thru Stewardship
Ms. Tena Hamilton first and foremost gave God the glory

for allowing her to be in such a sacred place. Truly, it is a reflection how God can use you. She thanked her Pastor, Rev. Samuel Whittaker for permitting her to bring the message to the congregation, family and friends. She acknowledged Contee's ministerial staff, Rev. John L. Walker, Sr., and Rev. Helen Haynes. She also, acknowledged Rev. Kathryn Brown (her advisor), and the Laity committee for asking her to be the Lay Day speaker. All were greeted in the Marvelous Name of Jesus Christ.

She prayed: Lord, we thank you for this Laity Day here at Contee and we thank you for all of the willing hearts and minds that have assembled here today. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable unto you. Amen.

Ms. Hamilton took us back when our parents and their parents not only had religion and their love for Christ but they were doers of the Word. They used their time and talents by taking care of their immediate family, extended family, neighbors, community and their church. They shared, prayed and sung hymns all day long. Yet, the words Laity nor Stewardship didn't exist in their vocabulary.

It was a time when the community looked out for and corrected each other's children, pooled their mental, physical, financial and spiritual gifts, by taking care of each other regardless of how little they had, just as Ruth and Naomi did for each other. Sounds like a lot like stewardship

If we want God to speak to our hearts so that we can perform the Mission of Stewardship, spend quiet time with him, He will open our eyes to every day situations where we can be a blessing to others. God will provide us with the courage to step out of our comfort zone and help others in ways that we may have been uncomfortable in doing before. Let's increase the circle by going outside of our box.

She encouraged us to keep or start a journal that will allow you to see for yourself how you are growing and fulfilling the mission of Laity thru Stewardship in your life. Read Philippians 4:13. AMEN.

LAITY NEWS

The Editor of the Connection is urging the laity across Zion to submit news to be published in The Connection. Each Episcopal Area has a representative whose name is listed below. Please contact them with your news. Thank you.

PIEDMONT—Lele Davis lsivade@bellsouth.net

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CLC Website
www.clcamezion.org

Remember to use the Lay Council Closing Prayer

Oh, God, our Father, pour out your steadfast love upon us and keep us in your care, now and forever more. Amen.

Written by Miss Mildred R. Faulkner New York Conference

We would like to remind you that the main thrust of "The Connection" remains to help publicize and promote the Lay Council programs throughout the denomination. Many informative and exciting events are taking place and we want to share them with you. We hope the articles in this Newsletter will inform, and inspire, instruct and guide, encourage and challenge. Hopefully the Lay Council will continue to use this to promote Lay Councils. But I want to remind you that we also would like to receive articles pertaining to the Lay Council from the local, church, Presiding Elder District, Annual Conferences and Episcopal Districts (300 WORD LIMIT). So that the whole denomination knows what your Lay Council is doing or plans to do.

Material may be mailed, faxed or e-mailed to the Editor, Miss Rhandi M. Stith, Carrington Arms Apt. 10L, 33 Lincoln Avenue, New Rochelle, New York 10801 1 (914) 235-3596

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MRS. ROSA ALEXANDER, CLC HISTORIAN IS IN THE PROCESS OF GATHERING THE HISTORY OF THE CONNECTIONAL LAY COUNCIL. SHE IS APPEALING TO ALL PERSONS THAT HAVE ANY ITEMS (PICTURES, PROGRAMS, MEMORABILIA, ETC.) IN THEIR POSSESSION THAT THEY WOULD NOT MIND PARTING WITH TO PLEASE SEND THEM TO HER.

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