

**GREATER BETHEL
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

**701 SE 43rd Street
Gainesville, FL 32641**



NEW MEMBERS HANDBOOK

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**“No Matter Where You Have Been, Where You Are or Where You Are Going,
There Is A Place for You at Greater Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church”**



WELCOME

We would like to welcome you to Greater Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, one of the oldest, progressive, and loving churches in the Gainesville, Florida area. We are a family church and strive to provide ministries for all God's people. It is our prayer that God's word will sustain and keep you. We pray you find our church family friendly and filled with the spirit of the living God.

As a new member, study this book and learn who we are and the nature of our church, our doctrine, our structure, our goals, and leaders. When you have learned our nature and who we are, I am sure you will be glad you joined this fellowship in Christ Jesus.

Welcome to the Greater Bethel Family, to new beginnings and new opportunities to get involved into the work of the church at Greater Bethel. Another chance to serve God in a mighty way.

We are a church that loves God and each other. It is our desire and prayer that those who are lost are save and those who believe are nurtured in the word. Our motto is from Ephesians 1:17-18. "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints".

Rev. Ron Rawls, Pastor
Greater Bethel - AME Church Family

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Who We Are

Our Name - AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL

The African Methodist Episcopal Church, which we have abbreviated “A.M.E. Church”, is first a Church. It is the “Body of Christ”, an association of people who assemble to worship the Christian God, to establish Christian fellowship and to develop a sense of kinship with God and His Son, Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit.



The word African means the church was organized by people of African descent and heritage. It does not mean the church was founded in Africa or that it was for person of African descent only.

The church's roots are in the family of Methodist churches. Methodism provides an orderly system of rules and regulations and places emphasis on a plain and simple gospel. Episcopal refers to the form of government under which the church operates. The chief executive and administrative officers of the African Methodist Episcopal denomination are the Bishops of the church.

The denomination is Methodist in terms of its basic doctrine and order of worship. It does not differ in any major way from what all Methodists believe. The split from the main branch of the Methodist Church was not a result of doctrinal differences but rather the result of a time marked by man's intolerance of his fellow man, based on the color of his skin. It was a time of slavery, oppression and the dehumanization of people of African descent. Many of these un-Christian practices were brought into the church of that day, forcing Richard Allen and a group of fellow worshippers of color to form a splinter denomination of the Methodist Church.

Our Mission

The Mission of the African Methodist Episcopal Church is to minister to the spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional, and environmental needs of all people by spreading Christ's liberating gospel through word and deed. At every level of the Connection and in every local church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church shall engage in carrying out the spirit of the original Free African Society, out of which the A.M.E. Church evolved. That is, to seek out and save the lost, and serve the needy through a continuing program of (1) preaching the gospel, (2) feeding the hungry, (3) clothing the naked, (4) housing the homeless, (5) cheering the fallen, (6) providing jobs for the jobless, (7) administering to the needs of those in prisons, hospitals, nursing homes, asylums and mental institutions, senior citizens' homes; caring for the sick, the shut-in, the mentally and socially disturbed, and (8) encouraging thrift and economic advancement.

--The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2000 page 13.

Our Motto

"God Our Father, Christ Our Redeemer, The Holy Spirit Our Comforter, Humankind our Family"

Derived from Bishop Daniel Payne (1811-1893). See "God Our Father, Christ Our Redeemer, Man Our Brother: A Theological Interpretation of the AME Church."

THE VISION

“The vision of our ministry is to build upon the whole person by providing theologically sound biblical teaching, effective worship, commitment to family, and an emphasis on understanding personal purpose.”

Vision for Financial Stewardship

1. Tithes (10% of income/increase)
2. Offering (as God purposes on your heart)
3. Sacrificial Offering (Minimum \$250 given on Holy Communion Sunday in March and October)

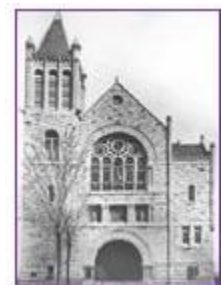
Our History



The African Methodist Episcopal Church grew out of the Free African Society (FAS) which **Richard Allen**, Absalom Jones, and others established in Philadelphia in 1787. When officials at St. George's MEC pulled blacks off their knees while praying, FAS members discovered just how far American Methodists would go to enforce racial discrimination against African Americans. Hence, these members of St. George's made plans to transform their mutual aid society into an African congregation. Although most wanted to affiliate with the Protestant Episcopal Church, Allen led a small group who resolved to remain Methodists. In 1794 Bethel AME was dedicated with Allen as pastor. To establish Bethel's independence from interfering white Methodists, Allen, a former Delaware slave, successfully sued in the Pennsylvania courts in 1807 and 1815 for the right of his congregation to exist as an independent institution. Because black Methodists in other middle Atlantic communities encountered racism and desired religious autonomy, Allen called them to meet in Philadelphia to form a new Wesleyan denomination, the AME.

The geographical spread of the AMEC prior to the Civil War was mainly restricted to the Northeast and Midwest. Major congregations were established in Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Washington, DC, Cincinnati, Chicago, Detroit, and other large Blacksmith's Shop cities. Numerous northern communities also gained a substantial AME presence. Remarkably, the slave states of Maryland, Kentucky, Missouri, Louisiana, and, for a few years, South Carolina, became additional locations for AME congregations. The denomination reached the Pacific Coast in the early 1850's with churches in Mother Bethel Church Stockton, Sacramento, San Francisco, and other places in California. Moreover, Bishop Morris Brown established the Canada Annual Conference.

The most significant era of denominational development occurred during the Civil War and Reconstruction. Oftentimes, with the permission of Union army officials AME clergy moved into the states of the collapsing Confederacy to pull newly freed slaves into their denomination. "I Seek My Brethren," the title of an often-repeated sermon that Theophilus G. Steward preached in South Carolina, became a clarion call to evangelize fellow blacks in



Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Texas, and many other parts of the south. Hence, in 1880 AME membership reached 400,000 because of its rapid spread below the Mason-Dixon line. When Bishop Henry M. Turner pushed African Methodism across the Atlantic into Liberia and Sierra Leone in 1891 and into South Africa in 1896, the AME now laid claim to adherents on two continents.

In the 1990s, the AME included over 2,000,000 members, 8000 ministers, and 7000 congregations in more than 30 nations in North and South America, Africa, and Europe. Twenty bishops and 12 general officers comprised the leadership of the denomination.

FOUNDERS AND LEADERS



Richard Allen, the founder and first Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, was born a slave on February 14, 1760 on the estate of Benjamin Chew. Richard Allen, his parents and three other children were sold to a Mr. Stokely in Delaware, near Dover. As Richard and his brother grew older, they were allowed to attend meetings of the Methodist Society. Converted at the age of 17, Allen began preaching in 1780. Through thrift and industry, he and his brother worked at night to pay for their freedom.

He commenced traveling in 1783 and later returned to Philadelphia and joined the white congregation at St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church. He was licensed to preach in 1784 and permitted to hold services in the morning about 5 AM.

As the attendance of colored people at St. George's increased, the hostile attitudes of the officers and members also increased and on a Sabbath morning in 1787, the sexton met them at the door of the church and sent them to the gallery.

One morning, at St. George's, while prayer was going on Allen heard considerable scuffling and low-talking. As he raised his head, he saw the trustees pulling Absalom Jones and William White off their knees telling them that they could not kneel there. When the prayer was over, the black people, led by Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, withdrew from the St. George's Church.

Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, William Gray and William Wilcher were appointed to find a lot to build a church where the worship of God could be carried on without interference. A lot was selected on Sixth Street near Lombard, in

Philadelphia, and Richard Allen was authorized to negotiate for its purchase. This lot, purchased by Richard Allen in 1787, is the oldest parcel of real estate owned continuously by black people in the United States. All church buildings of Mother Bethel have been erected on the same ground.

In 1791 Allen established what was known as the Blacksmith Shop Meeting House when he purchased an abandoned blacksmith shop and moved it to a plot of ground on 6th Street between Lombard and Pine Streets. This building was dedicated as a church in 1794 by Bishop Francis A. Asbury of the Methodist Episcopal Church.



From July 1805, Allen conducted services in the "Roughcast Church". This had been the first brick church erected on American soil by people of color. The African Methodist Episcopal denomination was organized in Philadelphia in 1816. Richard Allen was consecrated as its first Bishop at the General Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, April 10, 1816. In 1841 the red brick church was built to replace the old roughcast one and remained in use until the present church (dedicated in 1890) was erected in its place on the original plot of ground.

Allen was an organizer of the Free African Society, a group that fostered self-help and self-dependence. He established day and night schools and was co-organizer of the first Masonic Lodge among colored men in Pennsylvania, African Lodge 459 in Philadelphia. From 1797 to his death on March 26, 1831, Allen operated a station on the Underground Railway for escaping slaves. This work was continued by Bethel Church until the Emancipation.

Bishop Allen was married to Sarah Bass Allen. He was the father of six children- Richard Jr., James, John, Peter, Sarah and Ann.



William Paul Quinn was born in Calcutta, India on April 10 in 1788. He was the fourth Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

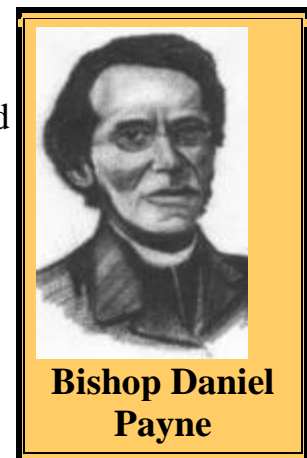
Quinn was admitted to the conference in 1816. He was ordained a deacon in 1818 and ordained an elder in 1838. He was present at the organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1816. Bishop Quinn

was pastor in Gouldtown, Springtown, and Salem Churches in New Jersey. He also worked in Pennsylvania and Illinois. He did monumental work as a great missionary: preaching, traveling and organizing churches in the "Western Mission". He defied slavery and organized churches in Missouri and Kentucky.

When he submitted his report on the churches he established, the General Conference at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania elected him a Bishop on May 19, 1844. He presided over the General Conference in 1848. He delivered at that conference a written Episcopal address for the first time in any conference.

He became the Senior Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church May 9, 1849 after the death of Bishop Morris Brown and remained the Senior Bishop of the church for 24 years and 8 months, the longest term a Senior Bishop had served up to that time until his death in Richmond, Indiana, February 3, 1873.

Daniel Alexander Payne the sixth Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church was born February 24, 1811 in Charleston, South Carolina to free colored parents, London and Martha Payne. He attended a private school in Charleston, South Carolina and Gettysburg Seminary in Pennsylvania. He also did a great deal of studying on his own. Payne was the first Bishop to have formal theological seminary training. He, more than any other individual, is responsible for the A.M.E. church's interest in trained ministry.



Payne was ordained an elder in the Lutheran Church in 1837. He was admitted to the Philadelphia Annual Conference in 1842. He was the first Black president of a Black college in the western world, (Wilberforce University), where he served as their president for sixteen years advising that the school be purchased by the African Methodist Church. Overall, Payne was the sixth Bishop of the African

Methodist Episcopal Church. He built and nurtured churches in Washington D.C., New York and Baltimore.

He was elected the Historiographer of the AME Church in 1848. Payne was elected a Bishop at the General Conference in New York City on May 7, 1852, where he presided over the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 7th Districts. He was a serious author, his books, "History of the A.M.E. Church," 1891 and Recollections of

Seventy Years 1888 were his greatest writings and were an authoritative source of history of the first 75 years of the church. Bishop Daniel Alexander Payne died on November 2, 1893.




Henry McNeal Turner was born free near Abbeville, South Carolina, on February 1, 1834. Unable to go to school because of state laws, he was "apprenticed" in local cotton fields but ran away and found a job as sweeper in a law office. The young clerks surreptitiously taught him to read and write. He preached to white and black audiences throughout the South until 1858. At age 20 he was licensed as a traveling evangelist for the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Turner learned of and joined the African Methodist Episcopal church in 1858, at 24, because he heard that within that church black men could become bishops. He was taken under wing by Bishop Daniel Payne and pastored at two of his churches.

During the Civil War Turner joined the lobbying effort to convince President Lincoln to enlist freedmen in the Union Army. In 1863, Lincoln acceded, and Turner became the first black chaplain.

After the war, Turner walked back to Georgia, and began organizing AME churches there. By some counts, he founded over one hundred churches. At the same time, he helped organize the Georgia Republican Party. In 1868, he was elected state representative, but he and 14 other black representatives were expelled from the Georgia legislature after whites combined in an 82-83 vote. That rejection made Turner turn his back on the American political process. He turned his attention instead to developing the political potential of the black church.

In 1880, Turner rode a wave of populist popularity to become the first southern bishop elected in the AME Church. He would also prove to be the most controversial. He provoked white racists in print and advocated a wholesale move of blacks back to Africa "to achieve our dignity and manhood." He ordained a woman, Sarah Ann Hughes, as a deacon in the church. He built alliances with Baptists. Turner came close to becoming a national leader in the mold of Frederick Douglass or Booker T. Washington. But in the end, his outspokenness on the Africa issue undermined him.

Turner organized AME Churches all over the state of Georgia and a number of members joined under his influence. He was elected a member of the



Constitutional convention in Georgia in 1868 and 1870. He was later sent to the Georgia Legislature as a State Senator.


Bishop Turner served as a Presiding Elder in Georgia. He was elected the Business Manager of the Publication Department. He founded the Southern Christian Recorder, the Voice of Missions and the Women's Christian Recorder. Turner was elected a Bishop at the General Conference in St. Louis, Missouri in 1880. During his tenure, he presided over the 8th, 5th, 1st, 12th, 6th and 7th Districts. He also established an AME church in West and South Africa.

As for his personal life, Turner married four times, Turner survived three wives and all but two of his children. His final marriage at 73 to his secretary evoked a storm of criticism and attempts were made to remove him from office. He died, isolated and bitter, in 1915.

THE HISTORY OF GREATER BETHEL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Greater Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, has a proud history, built not only by hard work, countless hours of planning, fundraisers and sacrificial offerings; but by Faith, Vision, Prayers and most of all the Members putting God first and asking for His guidance. In 1869, thirteen former members of Mt. Moriah Church with Rev. Ned Drier as pastor, started worshiping under a Brush Arbor structure on Northwest Lassiter and Pleasant Street on a site owned by one of the laymen, Rev. Ned Drier who served as Pastor. Worship Services were spiritually high and attended by large crowds, being an outside area, service could be heard for blocks away.

In 1871, the first wood frame building was constructed on the corner of Northwest Lassiter and Garden Street on a site purchased by the church. The building was started by Rev. Ellison and completed by Rev. Jenkins; the chosen was Bethel A.M.E. Church. The name of the church was changed from Bethel A.M.E. Church to Zion Temple A.M.E. Church. Reverend John Young was the first Pastor of the stone church. Pastors, Reverend A.C. Clark, Reverend H.M. Collins, Reverend T.M. White, Reverend T.D. Davis, and Reverend L.M. Moore followed Reverend John Young, as Pastor between 1920 and 1932. Worship service was held at 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., with dinner on the ground and at 6:00 p.m. The membership increased significantly during these years. In 1933 the church name was again changed from Zion Temple to Bethel A.M.E. under Reverend A.J. McCormick.




In August 1953, the second stone building was completed, Reverend J.C. Williams was the Pastor. The name changed was approved in 1957 to Greater Bethel A.M.E. Church.

In 1919, Reverend F. Josephus Johnson was appointed Pastor of Greater Bethel A. M. E. Church. He delivered his first sermon at Greater Bethel on the first Sunday in December 1991. An avid cook, Reverend Johnson organized the Pastor's Table for the homeless and hungry every Tuesday at 6:00pm in the dining hall. Guest could walk in and be served. He prepared and served a leg of lamb for the Passover Feast during Easter Worship. The Public Address System was updated. Reverend Johnson supported tithing and the Central accounting system. Reverend Johnson later retired and made Greater Bethel his home Church under the Leadership of Pastor K. Smith.

In 1993, Reverend David Green was appointed Pastor to Greater Bethel, at the age of 29; he was the youngest minister ever to Greater Bethel. In 2000, Reverend Green continued his holistic ministry to meet the needs of all people. He continued to lead the Church in Spiritual growth and development. At the end of months of planning, construction due dates and deadlines, on Easter, Resurrection Sunday, April 20, 2003, Reverend Green and the members of Greater Bethel A.M.E. Church marched into a new worship facility located at 701 Southeast 43rd Street. On July 27, 2003, Bishop John Hurst Adams officiated the dedication and Cornerstone Service. Reverend David W. Green, Sr. left Greater Bethel to pursue a doctorate degree in the ministry. On July 27, 2003, Bishop John Hurst Adams officiated the dedication and Cornerstone Service.

In 2004, Bishop McKinley Young appointed Rev. George L. Champion, Sr., Pastor of Greater Bethel. Greater Bethel hosted the 131st Session of the East Annual Conference, October 21-27, 2006 at 701 Southeast 43rd Street. This was the first Annual conference to be held at the new church location. Reverend Joseph Sanchez, Presiding Elder and Reverend McKinley Young, Presiding Bishop.

In 2006, Reverend Karl V. Smith, Sr. was appointed Pastor of Greater Bethel A.M.E. Church, third Pastor at the 701 Southeast 43rd Street location. Under his leadership automation and technology updated and enhanced all ministries in a most effective way. We were Blessed to have a Spiritual Leader that led by example, doing and giving of himself, teaching that God's people takes Ministries beyond these walls, showing Love and Compassion for all; God's Grace and Mercy has no boundaries, no restrictions. Always remembering everything is a Ministry done to the Glory of God and should be to Honor God, continue to love one another, encourage one another and most important, talk to each other as we grow spiritually Touching, Teaching, and Turning lives to Christ.



On October 30, 2020 at the Virtual 145th Session of the East Annual Conference, the Senior Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, The Right Reverend Adam Jefferson Richardson appointed The Reverend Ron Rawls as the Pastor of Greater Bethel A.M.E. Church. Rev. Ron Rawls and his wife, The Honorable Meshon T. Rawls received an overwhelming reception by the Greater Bethel Family. The work continues...

No Matter Where You Have Been, Where You Are or Where You Are Going
There Is A Place for You at Greater Bethel A.M.E. Church

What We Believe

Apostle's Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only son our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead; and buried. The third day he arose from the dead, he ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Church Universal, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

The General Confession

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men; we acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and sickness which we from time to time most grievously have committed, by thought, word and deed, against us. We do earnestly repent and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; the Remembrance of them is grievous unto us.

Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon, most merciful Father; for Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ's sake; forgive us all that is past, and grant that we ever hereafter, serve and please Thee in the newness of life, to the honor and glory of Thy name through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Articles of Our Faith

1. OF FAITH IN THE HOLY TRINITY

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead, there are three persons of one substance, power, and eternity: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

2. OF THE WORD OR SON OF GOD, WHO WAS MADE VERY MAN

The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the God-head and manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man, who suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.

3. OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Christ did truly rise from the dead and took again his body with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith he ascended into heaven, and sitteth until he returns to judge all men at last day.

4. OF THE HOLY GHOST

The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

5. THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES FOR SALVATION


The Holy Scripture contain all things necessary to salvation; so that whatever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scriptures, we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.

The Names of the Canonical Books	
Genesis	The First Book of Chronicles
Exodus	The Second Book of Chronicles
Leviticus	The Book of Ezra
Numbers	The Book of Nehemiah
Deuteronomy	The Book of Esther
Joshua	The Book of Job
Judges	The Book of Psalms
Ruth	The Proverbs
The First Book of Samuel	Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher
The Second Book of Samuel	Cantica, or Songs of Solomon
The First Book of Kings	Four Prophets, the Greater
The Second Book of Kings	Twelve Prophets, the Lesser

All the books of the New Testament as they are commonly received, we do receive and account canonical.

6. OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and the New Testament, everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and man. Wherefore, they are not to be heard, who feign that the old fathers did



look only for transitory promises? Although the law given from God by Moses, as touching ceremonies and rites, doth not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity to be received in any commonwealth; yet notwithstanding, no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the Commandments, which are called moral

7. OF ORIGINAL OR BIRTH SIN

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk) but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.

8. OF FREE WILL

The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and works to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore, we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God; by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

9. OF THE JUSTIFICATION OF MAN

We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, by faith, and not by our own works or deserving's; wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.

10. OF GOOD WORKS

Although good works, which are the fruit of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgments: yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and spring out of a true and lively faith, insomuch that they by them a lively faith may be as evidently known, as a tree is discerned by its fruit.

11. OF WORKS OF SUPEREROGATION

Voluntary works, besides, over, and above God's Commandments, which they call works of supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogance and impiety. For by them men do declare that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for His sake than of bounden duty is required; whereas Christ said plainly, "When ye have done all that is commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants."

12. OF SIN AFTER JUSTIFICATION

Not every sin willingly committed after justification is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore, the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after justification. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin and by the grace of God, rise again, and amend your lives. And therefore, they are to be condemned who say they can do no more sin as long as they live here; or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

13. OF THE CHURCH

The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

14. OF PURGATORY

The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardon, worshipping, and adoration, as well as images, as of relics, and also invocations of saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture, but repugnant of the Word of God.

15. OF SPEAKING IN THE CONGREGATION IN SUCH A TONGUE AS THE PEOPLE UNDERSTAND

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the custom of the primitive Church, (to have public prayer in the Church,) or to minister the Sacraments, in a tongue not understood by the people.

16. OF THE SACRAMENTS

Sacraments ordained of Christ are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they are certain signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by the he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him.

There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord, in the Gospel; that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony and Extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel; being such as have partly grown out of the corrupt following of the Apostles; and partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not the like nature of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, because they have not any visible sign, or ceremony ordained of God.

The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about; but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation; but they that received them unworthily, purchase to themselves condemnation, as St. Paul saith.

17. OF BAPTISM

Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference; but it is also a sign of regeneration, or the new birth. The baptism of young children is to be retained in the church.

18. OF THE LORD'S SUPPER


The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather is a Sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death; insomuch, that too such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Supper of our Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthrow the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the means whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted, or worshipped.

19. OF BOTH KINDS



The cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay people: for both parents of the Lord's Supper, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to administer to all Christians alike.

20. OF THE ONE OBLATION OF CHRIST, FINISHED UPON THE CROSS

The offering of Christ once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the sacraments of masses, in which it is commonly said that that priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, is a blasphemous fable, and dangerous deceit.

21. OF THE MARRIAGE OF MINISTERS

The ministers of Christ are not commanded by God's law either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage; therefore, it is lawful for them, as for all other Christians, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve best to godliness.

22. OF THE RITES AND CEREMONIES OF CHURCHES

It is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same, or exactly alike; for they have been always different, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely, doth openly break the rites and ceremonies of the church to which he belongs, which are not repugnant of the Word of God, and are ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, that others may fear to do the like, as one that offended against the common order of the Church and wounded the consciences of weak brethren.

Every particular Church may ordain, change, or abolish rites and ceremonies so that all things may be done to edification.

23. OF THE RULERS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The President, the Congress, the General Assemblies, the Governors, and the Councils of State, as the delegates of the people, are the rulers of the United States of America^[1], according to the division of power made to them by the Constitution of the United States, and by the constitution of their respective states and the Councils of States delegates of the people, are the rulers of the United States of America, and by the Constitutions of their respective States. And the said states are a sovereign and independent nation and ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

24. OF CHRISTIAN MEN'S GOODS

The riches and goods of Christians are not common as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as some do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesses, liberally, to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.

25. OF A CHRISTIAN MAN'S OATH

As we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord, Jesus Christ and James, His apostle: so we judge that the Christian religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the magistrate required, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the prophet's teaching, in justice, judgment, and truth.

About Salvation

What is Salvation

Salvation is God's action of grace whereby people are delivered from their sinful nature into newness and fullness of life. It is something done for us by the will and work of God, through Jesus Christ. Salvation denotes a liberation or release from the effect of sin. It is not that we are removed to a safe place in existence where danger cannot overtake us, but rather that we find an unexpected and undeserved power to stand fast and not be shaken in the midst of danger.

Salvation occurs when human life is founded upon openness to God. The saved life is the fully human life, spacious and unhindered, free for God to use and direct as He please, accepting God's healing and forgiving grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Thus, salvation is receiving God's love, assurance, comfort, hope and protection.

Reference: Romans 5:12, 3:23, 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; John 3:16-17, 3:36, 1:12; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Revelations 3:20; Romans 10:8-10; Matthew 10:32.

If once saved, are we always saved?

Many churches believe that one can fall out of the arch or state of salvation or move out of the "safety zone" by no longer living under faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation is a life process that reaches its final completion after death.


Is salvation identified with any denominational or religious movement?

No. Salvation crosses all denominations lines. No sect or religious movement of the Christian faith can claim a monopoly on salvation. "Whosoever call upon God in faith and believes on Jesus Christ shall be saved." (Ref. Romans 10:12-13)

By what name and person are we saved?

We are saved by the name and person of Jesus Christ. (Ref. Acts 4:10-12)

About Us - Our Structure



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

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

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


Conferences and Conventions

The African Methodist Episcopal Church is a connectional organization. Each local church is a part of the larger connection. Local churches are related to other local churches through Conferences - Quarterly, Annual and General.

The Church Conference - Presided over by The Pastor of Your Local Church

A Church Conference is a meeting of the members and ministers residing and worshipping at a given place for the consideration and transaction of local church business. The minister in charge is the presiding officer.

The duties of the Conference may be many and varied, such as, calling the roll of membership for the correction of the same; recommending persons to the Presiding Elder and members of the Quarterly Conference for license to preach the Gospel; adopting petitions to the Bishop, District and Annual Conferences for the ordination of local deacons and elders for the use of the church; encouraging church love, patriotism, and unity; lecturing upon and explaining the duties of the members toward the General Budget Fund; giving members information of what is being done in church work, mission fields, church schools and colleges; presenting the claims of our church literature and periodicals; benefits of supplying themselves with hymn books, Disciplines, etc., as well as having literary societies,



missionary societies, and seeking the cooperation of the members in measures of benevolence and mercy for the sick, poor, and needy; enlisting their efforts to build up the Sabbath Schools; searching out poor children, and engaging in whatever will promote the kingdom of God on earth.

The Pastor should report to the Church Conference his labors, burdens, cares, and point out places where the members, or a portion of them, could work for the glory of God. The officers, also, should give information of their work, explain the indebtedness of the Church, and agree upon rallies for the payment of the same; and establish additional prayer meetings.

The Quarterly Conference - Presided over by The Presiding Elder.

The Quarterly Conference shall consist of the traveling preachers on circuit or station, supernumeraries, retired ministers, local preachers, exhorters, stewardesses, trustees, class leaders, general officers, deaconesses, licensed missionary workers, evangelist, the superintendent of the Church School, the presidents of the A. C. Fellowship and Missionary Societies, administrators of the A.M.E. Institutions, organizations and agencies, provided the latter are members of the A.M.E. Church. The head of each auxiliary shall be answerable to the Quarterly Conference for his or her official conduct.

The sessions of the Quarterly Conference shall be held every three months, or four times a year. In every circuit and in every station. The Presiding Elder shall appoint the time and place of meetings after consultation with the Pastor. If there is no Presiding Elder, the meeting shall be appointed by the Pastor. Where there is no pastor, the Presiding Elder shall appoint the time and place of the meeting.

At each Conference, there shall be a secretary or secretaries elected who shall faithfully and carefully record the proceedings, in a suitable book, which shall be preserved by the stewards. If no efficient secretary can be obtained, the Pastor or Presiding Elder shall act as secretary of the Quarterly Conference.

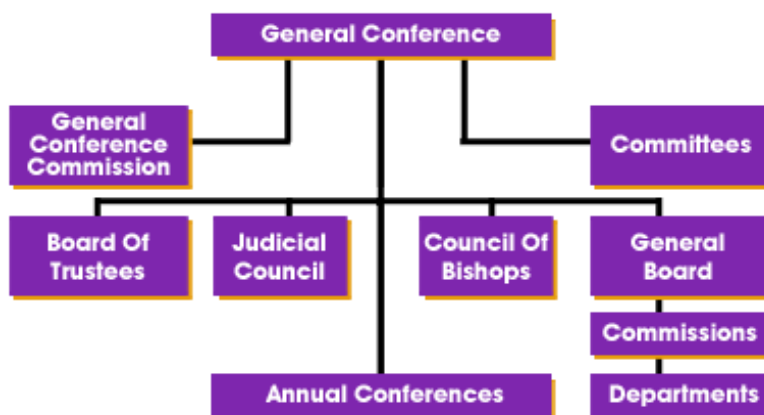
The Annual Conference - Presided over by The Bishop.

The annual Conference shall be composed of all Elders, Deacons, Licentiates, Local Deacons, President of the Annual Conference Lay Organization, Conference President of the Missionary Society, Conference Director of Christian Education, the YPD Director, together with one lay member from each charge within its bounds. The traveling expenses of the lay members shall be paid by their respective charges. Visiting members from any other Annual Conferences in the Connection may participate in debates but shall not vote.

An Annual Conference shall meet regularly once in each calendar year at the call of the Bishop. An Annual Conference may open or close on any day, from Monday through Sunday, within a seven- (7) consecutive day period. The Conference shall be in session for no less than three (3) consecutive days where practical and limited


to no more than five (5) consecutive days. On the first day, each Annual Conference shall open with Worship at 10:00 A.M. The pastoral appointments shall be read on the closing day.

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



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

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



The General Board is in many respects the administrative body and is comprised of various departmental Commissions made up of the respective Secretary-Treasurer, the General Secretary of the A.M.E. Church the General Treasurer and the members of the various Commissions and one Bishop as presiding officer with the other Bishops associating.

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

2005 AMEC - Administered by the General Secretary/Chief Information Officer

A.M.E. DISTRICTS

- 1st District Philadelphia, New Jersey, New York, Western New York, New England, Delaware, and Bermuda
- 2nd District Baltimore, Washington, Virginia, North Carolina, and Western North Carolina
- 3rd District Ohio, West Virginia, West Pennsylvania
- 4th District Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, Minnesota, Iowa Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan
- 5th District Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas,

	Missouri Wyoming, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri
6th District	Georgia, Southwest Georgia, Atlanta-North, Macon, South Georgia, and Augusta
7th District	South Carolina
8th District	Mississippi, Louisiana
9th District	Alabama
10th District	Texas, Northeast Texas, North Texas, Northwest Texas, Central Texas, West Texas, and Southwest Texas
11th District	Bahamas, Florida
12th District	Arkansas, Oklahoma
13th District	Tennessee, Kentucky
14th District	Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria, Ghana, and Ivory Coast
15th District	Cape, S.W.A. (Namibia), Kalahari, Eastern Cape, Queenstown, and Angola
17th District	Southeast Zimbabwe, Southwest Zambia, Northeast Zambia, Northwest Zambia, Zambezi, Congo Brazzaville, Katanga, Kananga, Kinshasa, Mbuji-Mayi, Rwanda and Burundi
18th District	Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Mozambique, and Northeast Lesotho
19th District	South African Provinces of Guateng and KwaZulu-Natal
20th District	Malawi North, Malawi South, Northeast Zimbabwe, Southwest Zimbabwe, Central Zimbabwe

THE BOARDS OF THE LOCAL CHURCH


The Pastor serves as the official head of all boards and auxiliaries. Each organization has a set of officers empowered to facilitate the meaning and development of these ministries

OFFICIAL BOARD

The Official Board shall be composed of all the Stewards, Trustees, Class Leaders, Deaconesses, presidents of the Women’s Missionary Society, Lay Organization, and all auxiliaries of the church.

The Pastor is the Chairman ex-officio and other officers include a secretary and a treasurer. Much of the church business is conducted at the Official Board Meeting.

STEWARD BOARD



Stewards are appointed annually by the Pastor. The number of Stewards on a board shall not be less than three (3) or more than nineteen (19). The numerous duties of the Stewards include the following:

To transact the spiritual and temporal business of the church.

To relieve the needy and distressed.

To take an exact amount of all monies.

To determine the Pastor's salary in conjunction with the Pastor.

To register marriages and baptisms.

To provide elements of the Lord's Supper.

To survey the membership and as soon as possible, bring every member into an "active" relationship with the church.

TRUSTEE BOARD

Trustees are elected annually by members of the Church. The number for each church shall not be less than three (3) or more than nineteen (19). Their duty is to manage the temporal concerns of the church, i.e., the real estate, parsonage, and other properties.

Trustees in the African Methodist Episcopal Church today must know that their responsibility is for property and not for program. Property is acquired by the congregation to carry out its program of mission and ministry. The maintenance, development, and use of property and such are under the direction of the church's Official Board for the support of the program approved by the congregation. Trustees are stewards of the property that has been entrusted to their care.

Class Leaders

Class Leaders are appointed annually by the Pastor. The members of every local congregation are divided into small groups called classes. Each class has a leader whose business it is to look after his/her members and report


to the Official Board concerning the status, and the needs of each member, both spiritually and otherwise. Each Class Leader will keep an accurate record of his/her members and see that each member is dutiful in his/her support of the work of the church.

DEACONESS BOARD

The Deaconess Board consists of a group of selected women in the church, recommended by the Pastor, who are consecrated by the Bishop for sacred duties and ministries.

STEWARDESS BOARD

The Pastor nominates the Stewardesses and the Stewards confirm them to assist the Stewards in the discharge of their duties, namely, to make adequate preparation



for the two Sacraments: Holy Communion and Baptism. The board is composed of a dedicated group of Christian women who train junior stewardesses; accompany ministerial staff in taking communion to the sick and shut-in; provide care, as needed, for Stewardesses who are sick and shut-in; and nurture the spiritual growth of the members.

MINISTRIES OF EVERY LOCAL A.M.E. CHURCH

Each local church should develop many ministries and organizations that are designed and developed to implement plans and to coordinate and strengthen the quality of life of our members and community by ministering to the spiritual, cultural, educational and economic needs of our membership. The goals of the ministries are:

1. To provide service and information that will inform educate and assist our membership.
2. To develop all the resources within the church.
3. To encourage economic development.

COMMISSIONS

Each church has several commissions as stated in our Discipline. These commissions will help one understand the church and its programs.

COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

This commission helps to qualify every member to lead and guide each into becoming active first-class Christians, and active first-class citizens.

CHURCH SCHOOL

The mission of the Church School is to help guide children and adults to Christ through a better understanding of His Word. The Church School seeks to increase attendance and participation. Church School begins each Monday at a time designated by the Church Superintendent.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL


A summer Bible school that guides youths and adults with new approaches to what it means to be a Christian. The program offers studies of the Word of God through workshops, tapes, videos, lectures, and other resources.

BIBLE STUDY/TEACHING MINISTRY

Bible study classes that focus on the essential biblical principles for Christian living, the role of the church and spiritual growth. The Bible Study class is held on Wednesday night.

HEALTH MINISTRY

Coordinates efforts for keeping the congregation involved on issues affecting our health individually and collectively by sponsoring workshops, seminars, and



distributing information.

WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY (WMS)

The WMS of the A.M.E. Church exist to (1) help women and youth grow in the knowledge of God and Christian experience through Jesus Christ; (2) promote fellowship with women of other lands through cooperative relationships; and (3) foster missionary activities of the local church and overseas. They conduct a study lesson at every meeting.

YOUTH MINISTRY/YOUNG PEOPLE'S DIVISION (YPD)

The YPD purpose is to provide meaningful youth training programs in all areas of church life which will provide for full participation in the total mission of the church. Specific training is given to increase knowledge of A.M.E. history and the Scriptures, and to provide opportunities for leadership experience.

COMMISSION ON PUBLIC RELATIONSHIPS

This commission is responsible for gathering and circulating information about our church which will be of public interest, circulating news about its program, projects, and personalities. Develop church newsletter when needed.

COMMISSION ON STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE

This commission operates directly under the supervision of the Official Board; it is responsible for promoting and cultivating the spirit of Christian stewardship. Based on the overall and all-inclusive church program, it works out a comprehensive budget for the year and presents it to the Official Board.

COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN SOCIAL RELATIONS

This commission should lead the congregation in being concerned about temperance, health, education, world peace, race relations, political and economic affairs and every issue related to the creation and maintenance of a good social order. The commission conducts an annual membership drive to encourage members to maintain membership in the NAACP and the Urban League.

THE COMMISSION ON WORSHIP

This commission is a part of the Steward Board, seeks to enhance and expand the worship experience, giving greater opportunity for the movement of the Holy Spirit.

Greater Bethel Boards, Organizations and Ministries

Management

Board of Stewards
Board of Trustees
Finance Committee
Security

Nurture

Class Leaders Council
Young People's Division
Christian Education Department
Bible Discovery Hour
Culinary Ministry
Daughters of Sarah
Deaconess Board
Debutantes & Masters Commission
Emeritus Ministry
Financial Wellness Ministry
Health Ministry
(Mental Health, Movement, Nutrition & Numbers)

Lay Organization

Outreach

Community Engagement Ministry
Evangelism Ministry
Public Relations
Social/Political Action Ministry
Transportation Ministry
Women's Missionary Society

Witness

Children's Church
Hospitality Ministry
Media & Technology Ministry
Ministerial Team
Music Ministry
Praise Dance Ministry
Stewardess Board
Usher Board
Security Ministry

UNDERSTANDING THE ORDER OF SERVICE

PRELUDE

An introductory musical composition to prepare the worshiper for the service: to create the atmosphere for worship and to bring unity to the group.

PROCESSIONAL

A hymn sung during the orderly process of choirs, clergy, etc. to their places.

DOXOLOGY

A short hymn of praise to God, often "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow, or



Gloria In Excelsis.

CALL TO WORSHIP

A scriptural admonition presented orally.

HYMN

A song of prayer or praise to God.

INVOCATION

A short introductory prayer invoking God's presence, and asking His blessing on the congregation, the minister, and the service.

RESPONSE

Part of the liturgy said or sung in reply to the minister, the prayer, the call to worship, etc.

ANTHEM

The presentation from the choir to God in the service of worship. A song of praise or triumph.

SCRIPTURE

The word of God read from the Holy Bible.

DECALOGUE

The "Ten Commandments". The foundation of Christian morality given to Moses by God.

GLORIFICATION

A brief ascription of praise to the three Persons of the Trinity.

GIFTS FOR MISSIONS

An act of sharing of our abundance for those less fortunate or those in need.

LITANY

A form of prayer, consisting of a series of supplications said by the leader or clergy to which the choir or people repeat the same responses.

SERMONIC HYMN

A song of praise to God to prepare worshippers for the sermon.

SERMON

A religious discourse delivered by the minister concerning Christian truth, for purposes of instruction and illumination.



INVITATION TO CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

Offers the opportunity after a sermon or other worship experience, for participants to publicly accept Jesus as Lord and Savior.

WORSHIP THROUGH GIVING

Presentation; by congregates, of tithes and offerings.

OFFERTORY

The hymns, chants, response, and prayers engaged in before or alter the receiving of financial gifts.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

The Apostles' Creed - A summary of religious belief.

RECESSIONAL

The formal retirement of the choirs, clergy, etc. at the close of the worship service.

DOXOLOGY

A short formula of praise to God.

BENEDICTION

A blessing pronounced by the officiating minister at the close of a ceremony, meeting, or service of worship.

MORNING WORSHIP

The Prelude

Worshippers in reverent meditation

The Processional

The congregation standing and joining the choir singing the processional hymn

The Call to Worship This is a suitable Call to Worship taken from the African Methodist Book of Worship.
Scripture Reference: Tradition King James Version

Minister: I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord, our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

People: For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

Minister: Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good.

People: Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.

Minister: Blessed are they that dwell in thy house. Lord I have loved thy habitation, the place where thy honor dwelleth.

People: For the Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him.

Minister: Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer.

People: O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth, and sing praises.

The Opening Hymn To be sung by choir and congregation; taken from the Hymnal.

The Prayer The congregation seated and bowed or kneeling, if able.

The Organ Voluntary: Choral Response


Music the Choir (appropriate sacred music)

The Scripture Pastor and congregation **responsively (Everyone standing for the reading of the Gospel)**

Preface to the Decalogue

Congregation arising; sing

“From all that dwell below the skies,
Let the Creator’s praise arise.
Let the Redeemer’s name sung,
Through every land by every tongue.



Eternal are thy mercies, Lord.
Eternal truth attends Thy word.
Thy praise shall sound from shore to shore,
Till suns shall rise and set no more.”

The Decalogue Congregation standing

Announcements Notices

Hymn of Preparation by Choir and Congregation

The Sermon

The Lord’s Prayer Chanted, kneeling, if able

The Invitation to Christian Discipleship (Reception of those who wish to accept Christ and /or join the Church)

The Offertory

The Affirmation of Faith Then shall be said the Apostles’ Creed, the people standing.

The Doxology and Benediction



THE SEASONS OF THE CHURCH YEAR

1. **Advent** - Season of expectancy, looking toward the coming of Christ, includes the four Sundays preceding Christmas Day.
2. **Christmastide** - Season of Nativity; celebration of the birth of Christ, which includes Christmas Day, and the two Sundays leading up to Epiphany, or Twelfth Night (the 6th of January).
3. **Epiphany** – The Season of the Evangel, celebrates our Lord’s outreach to the Gentiles. Epiphany Day is the celebration of the presentations of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the Christ Child, by the Three Wise Men. Four to nine Sundays are included in this season, depending on the date of Easter.
4. **Lent** - Season of Penitence and Renewal, symbolized by our Lord’s forty-day wilderness vigil in preparation for His ministry.
5. **Eastertide** – The Season of Resurrection, begins with Easter Sunday and continuing fifty days, the biblical time between the resurrection and the day of Pentecost.
6. **Pentecost** (or Trinity) - Celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit to the apostles, fifty days after the resurrection. In the past it became known as White Sunday, when Baptism was administered to the new converts who were all robed in white. This season includes Trinity Sunday, the first Sunday after the day of Pentecost (the birthday of the Christian Church), and extends over eleven to sixteen Sundays, depending on the date of Easter.
7. **Kingdomtide** - Season of Teaching emphasis, which begins with the last Sunday in August (the Festival of Christ the King) and extending to fifteen or sixteen Sundays to the beginning of Advent.



COLORS IN THE CHURCH

Color has always been used to denote meaning to life. So, the use of varying colors in the paraments (Altar cloths, Pulpit and Lectern scarves, and Clergy stoles) is an added means of symbolizing truths of God to the people. If only one color is used, red or maroon is to be preferred, with the addition of white for Holy Communion and, perhaps, weddings and festival days. The ideal preference would be to use the full five colors as follows:

Purple - which signifies royalty in the coming of the king in the Advent Season; in penitence, watching, self-denial, and self-discipline of Lent.

Green - which speaks to us of nature, growth, and life; used for Epiphany and Kingdomtide seasons.

Red - symbolizes blood, fire, and Christian zeal, used appropriately, for the Pentecost (or sometimes called Trinity) Seasons.

White - the color that signifies “without spot or blemish” adorns the Chancel on Easter Sunday and during Eastertide; on Trinity Sunday; on All Saints Day; on Festival of Christ the King Sunday; on Christmas Day and the first and second Sundays after Christmas; on the first Sunday after Epiphany Day; and, in the A.M.E. Church, on all Holy Communion celebrations.

Black - the color of mourning; used only on Good Friday, if at all.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Was the AME Church founded in Africa?

The AME Church was organized by people of African descent and heritage. It does not mean the church was founded in Africa or that it was for person of African descent only. (See AME Church history)

2. Was Absalom Jones the founder of the AME Church?

No, Absalom Jones was an African American abolitionist and clergyman who became prominent in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He along with Richard Allen (Founder of the AME Church) and others established the Free African Society in Philadelphia in 1787.

3. Who was the founder of the AME Church?

Richard Allen was the founder and first Bishop of the African Methodist Church.

4. What Sacraments are ordained of Christ our Lord, in the Gospel?

The Supper of the Lord (Holy Communion) and Baptism.

5. How many Districts are there in the AME Church?

20 AME Districts



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SPECIAL THANKS TO

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Verna Johnson

Madelyn Vallery

Alfred Peoples

Emeritus Gladys Alexander

Rev. Ron Rawls, Pastor