



**AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
ELEVENTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT**

**149th SESSION OF THE
EAST ANNUAL CONFERENCE
LITERARY REPORTS**

**SUBMITTED BY:
THE REVEREND DR. VASEAL V. MONTGOMERY**

DATE: 1 NOVEMBER 2024

**THE RIGHT REVEREND MARVIN C. ZANDERS,, II
PRESIDING BISHOP
MRS. WINIFRED H. ZANDERS
EPISCOPAL SUPERVISOR**



ELEVENTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Bishop Marvin C. Zanders, II, Presiding Prelate
Mrs. Winfred Zanders, Episcopal Supervisor
Rev. Dr. Paula Lake, Christian Education Director
Rev. Dr. Montgomery, East Conference Christian Education Director

Literary Report: 21st Century Bible Discovery Hour

Conference: East

Bible Discovery Hour is an important part of the church and essential for spiritual growth and maturity in the word of God. Believers must be intentional in the study of God's word, purposeful in the selection of church teachers and committed to curriculum that will reveal God's word and enhance spiritual growth and development. Jesus demonstrated the importance of teaching as he taught people in synagogue (Mark 6:2), in public places: seashores (Mark 4:1) and mountainsides (Matthew 5). The Church School is the one of the best structured ministries in the local church for effectively carrying out the teaching ministry of Jesus the Christ. The importance of Church School is essential, necessary and crucial with four vital parts: reaching, teaching, winning and caring. The Church School is the arm of the church that reaches people of all ages and where people gather to hear, learn, and know God. It is also evangelism and allows us to communicate the gospel, care for people and win people to Christ. Beloved, let us get busy and intentional in the study of God's word and be motivated, innovative and purposeful in reaching and teaching God's word to God's people.

Recommendations (3):

Be diligent and committed to teaching the word of God.

Make Church School a fun and caring place to hear and learn the word of God.

Select persons and curriculum that will be understandable and utilize new teaching methods: audio visual, internet and teaching in person and virtual.

Recommended Resource(s):

Church School Quarterlies, Commentaries, Holy Bible, Bible Dictionaries.

Humbly Submitted,

Rev. Mandella P. Smith



149th SESSION OF THE EAST ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Bishop Marvin Clyde Zanders, II, Presiding Prelate
Mrs. Winifred Houston Zanders, Supervisor
Rev. Dr. Vaseal V. Montgomery, Christian Education Director

Literary Report: EVANGELISM & CHURCH GROWTH

STATEMENT/SUMMARY

There has been a decline in the attendance in the churches over the past few years. Some members have left the church and others are still members but choose not to attend. Churches are lacking growth in membership and conversions. The number of youth in churches have declined to little to none. Youth are vital for the future life of the church. Most youth have not returned after the pandemic which causes the church to be stagnated. It is important for the life of the church for evangelism to be strongly implemented in the ministry of each church. For churches to grow in membership and in conversions, we must serve the present age and be intentional in setting up a strategic evangelism plan to reach the masses by lifting up Jesus. After all, we are commissioned to go reach the masses and make disciples!

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. INCORPORATING EVANGELISM IN THE DISTRICT AND CHURCHES. Each Presiding Elder District and local churches are encouraged to designate an Evangelism and Church Growth Coordinator and develop the ministry. Each church should incorporate evangelism as a line item in the church budget to have resources for the ministry.

2. EQUIP THE MEMBERS FOR EVANGELISM. Evangelism training is one of the most basic components to have an effective evangelism ministry. Training educates and prepares members to deal with those identified who need to be reached for Christ in the church and community.

3. PLAN EVANGELISM MINISTRY PROJECTS. Plan outreach activities to reach the lost for Christ. Many lost people will not attend a church service but will come to special outreach activities such as a community wide event. Make plans targeting men, women, children, youth, young adults, etc. in order that all may be reached. Be intentional in reaching the young adults and youth to foster growth through evangelism, outreach, service and community engagement.

Events are to be relevant and appealing to younger generations, such as social gatherings, volunteer opportunities, and digital evangelism campaigns. By empowering youth and young adults to take leadership roles, the church can create a sense of ownership and belonging encouraging them to invite their peers and grow the congregation organically. Additionally, leveraging social media and technology for outreach will help connect with younger audiences more effectively.



Humbly Submitted,

The Reverends: Kennetta Carter, Ron Rawls, Jr., Mandella Smith, LaMone Gibson, Brenda McCaslin, Cynthia Bailey, **Delegates:** Emerson Perry, Catherine Cason, Edna Daniels, Brenda Young, Felicia Rogers, Gina Monilyn, Mae Lee, Aurora Arnold, James McGill



149th SESSION OF THE EAST ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**To: Bishop Marvin C. Zanders, II, Presiding Prelate,
Mrs. Winifred H. Zanders, Episcopal Supervisor,
Presiding Elders and Members of the 149th Session of the East Annual Conference.**

After reviewing the relevant statistical data, the Committee on the State of the Church has determined that the state of the church is improving.

Concerns/Challenging Issues:

Increase in conversions-The church has experienced a one hundred forty eight percent (148%) increase in conversions from 2021–2022 (97) to 2022–2023 (144).

Increase in accessions-The church has experienced an one hundred thirty four percent (134%) increase in accessions from 2021–2022 (262) to 2022–2023 (350).

Increase in baptisms-The church has experienced an one hundred seventy three percent (173%) increase in baptisms from 2021–2022 (66) to 2022–2023 (114).

Stabilization of membership- Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the church has experienced a four percent (4%) decrease in membership from 2021–2022 (10,436) to 2022 – 2023 (9,981).

The following recommended actions are proposed to enhance the health of the church:

- 1. Conversions-** Continue the trend of increased conversions by utilizing online services to invite unsaved persons to accept Christ as their Savior.
- 2. Church Membership-** Equip local leadership to move the members of our conference to become fully committed to achieving the great commission through personal witness and/or financial support specifically designated to support the church's outreach effort (see Matthew 28:19).
 - Train each member in our local church to regularly invite friends, family and work associates to our online or in person church services.
 - Train each member in our local church to either go to the mission field themselves (if they are properly gifted) or financially support the marketing and evangelistic ministry of the church.
- 3. Church Stewardship-**Instruct all our members in the principles of biblical giving, including tithing and sacrificial giving so that we might have sufficient funds to implement the mandates contained within the great commission. Instruct our membership in and stress online giving.
- 4. Church Fellowship -** Find creative ways to meet the fellowship needs of our members and our neighbors as we adjust to the aftermath of the Covid 19 crisis.

Humbly submitted,

The **Reverends:** Gillard S. Glover, Pauline Tucker, Willie N. Barnes, Jr., George Hartsfield, Vaseal Montgomery; **Delegates:** George Moultrie, Beverly Green, Patricia Matthews, Terry Harrell, Anthony Lawson, Jacquelyn Taylor, Frank James, Marion Grant, Michael Edwards, Juanita Johnson.



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Bishop Marvin Clyde Zanders, II, Presiding Prelate
Mrs. Winifred Houston Zanders, Supervisor
Rev. Dr. Vaseal V. Montgomery, Christian Education Director

Literary Report: Christian Education Committee 2023-2024

Conference: East Annual Conference

Statement/Summary:

Christian Education continues to be the foundation of the overall church experience. It is essential to learning the true essence of Jesus Christ's intention for ministry in the twenty-first century. It is imperative to engage, develop and support youth and young adults to ensure the mission and vision of the AME Church remains a vital part of the spiritual community of the future. World and community situations have made access to educational opportunities a critical part of the church experience. The implementation of the recommendations of this committee, will facilitate youth and young adults of the East Annual Conference to experience increase spiritual growth to help them live and witness within their daily settings.

Recommendations (3):

- 1). **Engage** – Help youth and young adults discover and use their spiritual gifts, talents, and abilities in an effective manner to support the various ministries within the church. Engage them to ensure they are aware of what is going on in the world around them and how their relation with God and their knowledge of the scripture can facilitate their ability graciously integrate into today's society.
- 2). **Develop** – Enhance youth and young adult skills in the functions, operations, and organization of the church by giving them responsibilities that enhances growth and development. Be intentional about progressively integrating them into every phase of the Christian Education Ministry.
- 3). **Support** – Give youth and young adults responsibility for various tasks and support them throughout the process; as they develop and learn how to effectively engage task, support society, and interact within their communities to share the importance of salvation through various projects throughout the conference year.

Recommended Resource(s):

- 1). Reverend Kabrina Bass, Christian Education Consultant, Organization Assessment and Design, KWVISION, LLC, presentation on The Difference In Learning and Communicating Styles of the Seven Generations (i.e., The Greatest Generation (born 1901-1927), the Silent Generation (1928-1945), Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964), Generation X (born 1965-1980),



Millennials (born 1981-1995), Generation Z (born 1996-2010), Generation Alpha (born 2011-2025))

2). Gospel Centered Youth Ministry: *A Practical Guide*, Cameron Cole and Jon Nielsen, editors.

28 October 2022 Appointed East Annual Conference Director, Christian Education

Humbly Submitted,

Christian Education: The **Reverends** Vaseal Montgomery, Alesia Ford-Burse, Victor Cole, Jessie L. Steele, George L. Reed, Jr., D'Mrtri C. Burke, Frederick Page; **Delegates** Detrol Alford, Gloria Lockley, Ruthie McClendon, Michael Edwards, Jeremiah Young, Sr. George Moultrie, Anthony Lawson, Rosemary James, John Herring, Gerald Allen, Stanley McHenry, Patricia Mitchell



**ELEVENTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
149th Session of The East Annual Conference
State of the Country Literary Report**

**Bishop Marvin Zanders II, Presiding Prelate
Mrs. Winnie Zanders, Episcopal Supervisor
Rev. Dr. Paula Lake, Christian Education Director**

The United States is in the midst of a Presidential election that will either confirm the country remains a democracy that the world can rely on for leadership and protection against the strong men who are imposing their fascist beliefs on their nations, or a country that adopts the stamp of the former president whose vision is one of a nation in decline, and continues to push white supremacist and Christian nationalism themes.

In an extraordinary unselfish moment, along with some push from his party, President Joe Biden dropped out of the race for President. Vice President Kamala Harris accepted President Biden's endorsement and has run on a platform of hope and change.

If elected Vice President Harris will open the door to a new generation of leaders turning the page from the baby boomer generation. Vice President Harris will inherit the leadership of a country that overcame a once in a lifetime pandemic with Covid.

She has seen recently stubborn inflationary impacts reduced to 2.5 percent. Vice President Harris will lead a country that has added more than 15 million jobs. A country that has an unemployment rate of 3.6 for the general population and 6.3 for African Americans according to the Bureau of Labor statistics.

A country where the congress is dysfunctional, and the Supreme Court delayed the former president's cases and stated the office of president cannot be prosecuted for its official acts. She will still have the burden of the Southern border, wars in Ukraine and what to do to move Israel from its brutal war in Gaza.

Vice President will have to counter the actions red states have made legislative moves to stop plans for diversity equity and inclusion and attacks on African American History which has not abated. Women's health in red states and blue states are unequal as the effects of the Supreme Court overturning Roe v Wade has produced unintended consequences for African American women health and maternal care.

We make the following recommendations to the East Annual Conference

1. Ensure all members of our congregations are registered to vote and check their voting status.
2. Participate in voter education and mobilization efforts to turnout our voters in November.
3. We call on all, please do not sit out this election!!! Vote Vote Vote!!!



Respectfully submitted: **Revs:** Roger L. D. Williams chair, Dmitri Crafton Burke, Alesia Ford-Burse, Carl Smart, Louis Kirkland, Rita Love, Ronald G. Williams, Sr. , Samuel Thomas,
Delegates: Kay Odom, Fannie Forcine, Deborah Thomas, Maxine Gordon, Ronald Cobb, Sr. , Dorothy Williams, Leo Granger, James Willis.



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Literary Report: Social Action and Community Development

Conference: East

Concerns and Challenges:

As we assemble on this day, this committee stands to inform this 149th Session of the East Annual Conference of items that have affected our communities of concern for social action.

1. In Florida, Surgeon General Ladapo warns against the new COVID booster despite FDA recommendations. This false narrative is indicative of the governor and his supporters pushing back on the FDA's approved lifesaving COVID-10 vaccines. We must continue to combat such false narratives and encourage our parishioners to follow the FDA's recommendations.
2. Governor of the State of Florida, Ron DeSantis, signed a bill on September 10, 2024, restricting challenges to books in school libraries. He states, "The bill protects schools from activists trying to politicize and disrupt a district's book review process." We must continue to be vigilant and vocal to ensure the History of African American enslavement, the Civil Rights struggle, and contributions to this nation continue to be available in school libraries across this state.
3. Lastly, the Florida Supreme Court weighed in on the state's congressional redistricting plan. Cecile Scoon, co-president of the Women League of Voters of Florida, states, "The governor understands the status of the law, still came forth with a map that diminished the minority voice of Black Americans in Florida by fifty percent. We must keep a watchful eye and have a loud voice on such political tactics to ensure Black Votes continue to Matter.

Meeting These Challenges:

1. We have marched on City Hall of Jacksonville, Florida, to support equality for all humanity.
2. We hosted a political forum of twenty candidates sponsored by the Ministerial Alliance to enable voters to make educated decisions when casting their votes.
3. Voter registration events were held during Mid-Year, CEYLC, and political forums.

We, the Social Action Committee, make the following Recommendations:

1. The disparities experienced by Black Americans will never go away, but we must continue to let America know that BLACK LIVES and VOTES STILL MATTER. We Must continue to cast our vote to ensure all are aware that our VOTE is our VOICE.
2. We must continue to educate our youth on the impact voting has on them locally and nationally. In addition to supporting them in our local churches to ensure they are equipped to face life challenges.



3. With the most recent uptick in COVID cases, we encourage our families and churches to stay at the forefront of the COVID virus by vaccinating, wearing masks, and sanitizing churches.

4. With the 2025 General Election season well underway, we urge all conference members to vote and connect with initiatives encouraging and emphasizing VOTING IN ALL elections. In addition, we must stand up against the partisan redistricting efforts attempting to diminish the voting strength of black and brown people.

This committee continues to encourage members of the East Annual Conference to vote! We must vote not only in national elections but also in state and local elections. Our vote must come with a careful evaluation of each candidate and an understanding of their character and contributions locally.

Your committee: The **Reverends**, Sha'Reff Rashad, Ron Rawls, Jr., David W. Green, Jr., Nicole Pledger, Rita Love, Denise R. Page, Angela Scott, Malinda Samuel, Anthony Rogers, **Delegates:** Gina Monlyn, Francis Buckner, Betty Veal, Jimmy Cherry, Fannie Forcine, Elizabeth Strange, Lee Harris, Cornell Brown



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Mrs. Winifred H. Zanders, Episcopal Supervisor
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Literary Report: Living In Balance

Conference: East

Statement/Summary:

Life balance goes by many names — work-life balance, work-family balance, and work-non-work balance. Life balance is the concept of finding a sustainable balance between work, family, friends, personal interests, and self-care. It involves:

- Defining priorities: Identifying what's most important to you and investing more time and energy in those areas
- Managing time and energy: Allocating time and energy appropriately between different areas of life
- Prioritizing self-care: Making time for yourself and prioritizing your well-being
- Achieving optimal health: Working towards optimal health in all aspects of your life

Life balance is not about making sure every area of life receives the same amount of attention. Instead, it's about finding a rhythm that allows you to excel in your career while also enjoying your personal life.

Recommendations (3): Some suggestions on how to improve your work-life balance:

1. Set your priorities. ...
2. Concentrate on one thing at a time. ...
3. Track your time. ...
4. Respect your personal and private time. ...
5. Take a look at your routines and general lifestyle. ...
6. Set boundaries. ...
7. Ask for support and learn to say “no”. ...
8. Get plenty of exercise.

Recommended Resource(s): <https://wendyhirsch.com/blog/what-is-life-balance-and-does-it-really-matter#>; ; <https://www.equitable.ca/en/who-we-are/equitable-blog/family-and-home/10-steps-to-achieving-work-life-balance/>; and the Holy Bible

Humbly Submitted,

Rev. Jeffrey Graham



ELEVENTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT



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Rev. Dr. Paula Lake, Christian Education Director

Literary Report: Ecology, Temperance, and Health Literary Report

Conference: East

Statement/Summary:

To: Bishop Marvin C. Zanders II, Mrs. Winifred Houston Zanders, Presiding Elders: Elizabeth E. Yates, Tony D. Hansberry and Karl V. Smith. Pastors, ministers, licentiates, delegates, and attendees of the 149th Session of the East Annual Conference.

Current Situation:

As we reflect upon this conference year from the prism of Ecology, Temperance, and Health, we find that social injustice, inequity, and Covid-19 are still impacting our communities. Yet even in the midst of what seems to be turbulent times, we know that God reigns supreme. Ecology teaches us that we will be impacted by our environment however through temperance and with a divine focus on building healthy habits, we can begin the journey of restoring inner and inter spiritual, mental, physical, and emotional homeostasis. We declare that we will continue to prosper and be in good health even as our soul prospers. Therefore, we recommend the following temple maintenance regiment:

Recommendations:

1. Prioritize spiritual and mental health.
 - a. Temperance: Practice 30 minutes prayer and contemplation. This will allow be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
 - b. Attend one mental wellness workshop per quarter to develop effective spiritual coping strategies.
 - c. Create/find one brave space where you can share and find community to build resilience and wellness.
2. Prioritize your physical health.
 - a. Develop a healthy morning and evening routine which promotes 7-8 hours of sleep per night and a balanced diet.
 - b. Hydration- drinking 8 glasses of water per day.
 - c. Exercise: At minimum 30 minutes of walking per day to decrease risk of stroke, heart attack, and diabetes.

Recommended Resource(s):

1. Partner with the following boards to develop additional resources for temple maintenance to include brochures, webinars, and educational workshops:
 - a. Commission on Health
 - b. Living Well: A Life of Balance

Respectfully submitted: The Reverends Dr. Sha'Leda Mirra, Willie Williams, Tracey Mills, Frederick Page; Delegates Marshall J. Brown, Georgia Muldrow, Cornell Brown, Isaiah Mills, Emerson Perry, Barbara Brown, Patrice Parker.