



THE LAY EXPRESS

*"Laity walking humbly with God to do justice
and to love kindness"
Micah 6:8 (ESV)*



Second Episcopal District
African Methodist Episcopal Church

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE LAY ORGANIZATION

Website: <http://wnccloy.org/>



From
the desk
of...

Penny S. Oliver, President

I hope you spent time commemorating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s historic legacy. His courageous leadership and commitment to eradicate racism, poverty and militarism through peaceful, nonviolent acts inspired millions and still rings true today as our nation grapples with a racial reckoning.

This year's National Day of Service looked different in the midst of a pandemic. So, I hope you attended a virtual community event, organized for a local group, donated to a new cause or engaged in crucial conversations with close friends and family about race equity and justice.

"This is the time for vigorous and positive action." - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., 1963.

God is fair; he will not forget the work you did and the love you showed for him by helping his people. And he will remember that you are still helping them." Hebrews 6:10 (NCV)

Each year as a tribute to Richard Allen we, his sons and daughters, pause to remember his legacy and recommit ourselves to his dream. To understand the significance of Allen's legacy is to understand the serious barriers African-Americans have dealt with merely to have a congregation to worship with. Churches, like many other institutions throughout American history, were racially segregated, and during the civil rights movement, a handful of them proved to play a big role in providing a space for civil rights leaders to mobilize strategies to address social injustice.

We have come a long way in African Methodism; we have spread the gospel, built magnificent structure and have engaged in dynamic social change. However, there is much work to do. We are mandated to tell the whole world about Christ and to work until all God's Children live in dignity and freedom. Richard Allen's hope for us and all people, will not be realized until a liberating gospel and a radical social change are the order of the day.

From The Desk of The President, Continued

Both Richard Allen and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. were unselfish - God-fearing men. I encourage each of us to make time on earth count for eternity and to capture the vision of the WNCC-LO - help people come to know Christ, discover their purpose for life, grow in their maturity, find their ministry, and serve in their mission in the world.

Join us for our virtual conference lay meeting March 13, 2021. Online registration is available <https://form.iotform.com/203294432953154>.

The Second Episcopal District will celebrate a virtual Mid-Winter Meeting February 11-12, 2021.

Thank you for your willingness to serve!





February 1, 2021

Greetings Laity!

I greet you in the Mighty and Matchless name of our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ!

As we begin a new calendar year, it is time for us to collect conference lay dues.

Per the Discipline all AME churches are to have an Organized Lay Organization. Membership dues are \$6.00 a person, for each conference year. Lay membership runs from January through November. Make the check payable to WNCC-LO, and mail the check and membership names to Treasurer, Woodrow Winchester, 912 Fairgreen Rd., Greensboro, NC 27410. Also, please add your membership on-line utilizing this link—<https://form.jotform.com/210155653545049>.

NOTE: You cannot pay on-line! We highly encourage you to add membership names on-line and send the names, along with the check to Woodrow Winchester. We are requesting local lay presidents complete lay membership on-line on or before April 10, 2021.

Laity, we need you. We need your vision and your courage, your good common sense, your creativity, your humor and your honesty. We need you because without you we will not be complete. We will not be able to finish the great work that we have been given to do: the work of peace, of healing, of reconciliation, renewal, study, worship, fellowship and service at the local, conference, district and connectional levels. Our aim is to be Christ-centered and to strengthen the church. Our concern is for the total church and to maintain a happy working relationship between the pastor and lay.

Let's get in "good trouble". There are not as many of us as you might imagine, and the task is monumental. So, we need you to join the Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization. So together, stand with the WNCC-LO and lift your voice with us and let us proclaim that we need one another, without exception. And as we do, let's bring many more people with us into the kingdom of Christ!

Be safe! Remember to follow the three **W**'s. **W**ear (a mask). **W**ait (6 feet apart). **W**ash (hands frequently).

Thank you for your willingness to serve!

Penny Oliver, WNCC-LO President
Jackie Kanipe, WNCC-LO Director of Lay Activities

Founders' Day

In African Methodism, February is an important month. Bishop Richard Allen, the founder and first elected and consecrated bishop, was born on February 14, making this year the 260th anniversary of his birth. This month, African Methodism celebrates the 204th year of our Zion's founding. In December 1816, at Bethel AME Church in Baltimore, Maryland, Allen and other leaders from various areas called a meeting, now known as the first General Conference,

Many people refer to Bishop Allen as an "Apostle of Freedom." Does this really apply to him? Based on some highlights of his life, the label applies to our founder's life.

Allen was born a slave. He lived with his mother and five siblings on a plantation in Delaware. His mother and two of her children were sold, leaving Richard, his brother, and his sister. Through hard work and careful planning, in 1780, this industrious young man purchased his freedom from Stokeley Sturgis.

Before purchasing his freedom, he answered the call to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Afterward, he moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he continued his evangelism, preaching throughout the area. He and others purchased an old blacksmith shop, named it "Bethel AME Church," and, in 1787, organized the Free African Society.

For Allen, earning his freedom was not enough. His heart, dedicated to social justice, called him to free others. As a result of his commitment, many people were blessed.

One of Allen's first business ventures was the founding of a chimney sweeping company. Through his leadership, he hired persons to work as chimney sweeps. By cleaning the soot from chimneys, employees learned the rewards that came from gainful employment.

In 1793, when Yellow Fever broke out in Philadelphia, more than 5,000 people died. Many of the wealthy White citizens left the city. Those who remained were poor Whites and African Americans. Strangely enough, early in the plague, Yellow Fever did not affect any African Americans. Allen's wife, Sarah, was a nurse. During this time, with support from Absalom Jones and little or no financial compensation, the Allens mobilized nurses and other African Americans to care for the sick and bury Yellow Fever victims. After risking their health to assist with the plague, African Americans faced negative comments and accusations. Allen's and Jones's responses to such racism led them to expand their social justice efforts.

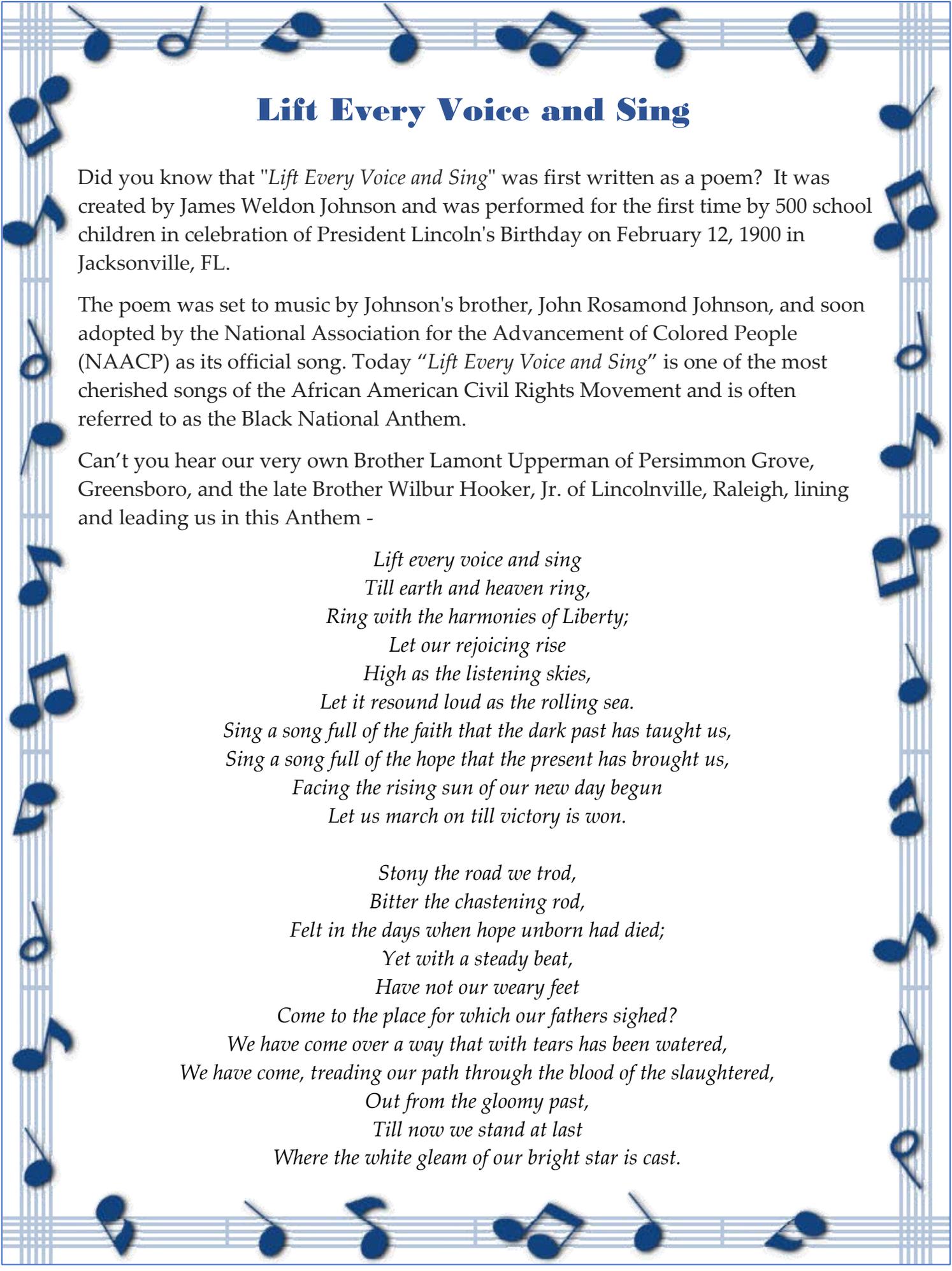
Bishop Allen was a genuine servant leader. He personally ministered to the people in his care. He always trusted God, believing that God would supply whatever was needed for ministry. God always provided, even to the point of Bishop Allen receiving and riding a blind horse to carry salvation's message.

Today, as African Methodists face racism, sexism, gender bias, and other forms of disrespect, Bishop Allen's legacy calls us to stand for truth and justice. In committing to help our sisters, brothers, and other people who struggle, we must acknowledge our truth, confess our shortcomings, utilize our many resources, and follow Bishop Allen's lead.

I pray the AME Church will continue to serve Christ as we serve each other. We must be committed to staying true to our mission and God's Word while empowering others. Our work in the church defines us as a reconciling and loving people who are committed to truth, justice, and encouragement. We do this by educating the masses. We must support our educational institutions and local communities through civic engagement, health care initiatives, economic development, and creating programs that counteract mass incarceration. We are a people of faith who believe in the possibilities of God. The problems are gigantic; yet, not impossible to overcome.

The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright

President of the Council of Bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church



Lift Every Voice and Sing

Did you know that "*Lift Every Voice and Sing*" was first written as a poem? It was created by James Weldon Johnson and was performed for the first time by 500 school children in celebration of President Lincoln's Birthday on February 12, 1900 in Jacksonville, FL.

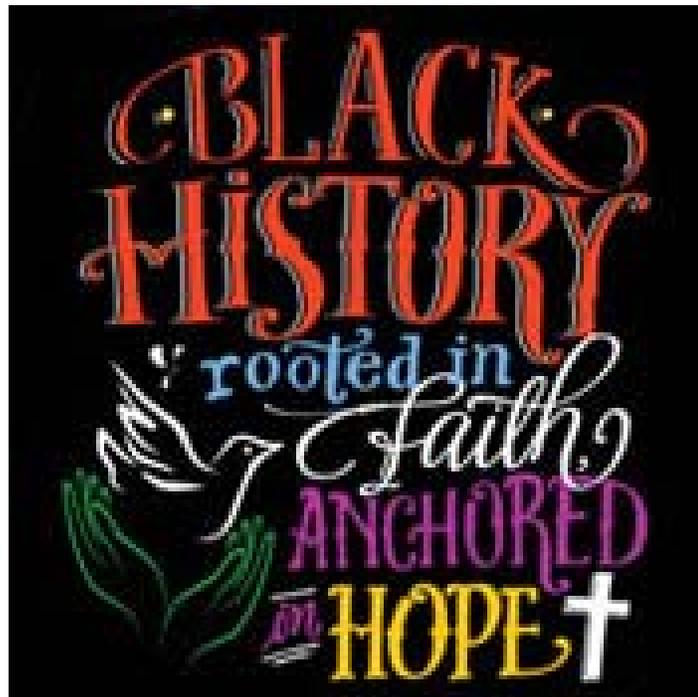
The poem was set to music by Johnson's brother, John Rosamond Johnson, and soon adopted by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) as its official song. Today "*Lift Every Voice and Sing*" is one of the most cherished songs of the African American Civil Rights Movement and is often referred to as the Black National Anthem.

Can't you hear our very own Brother Lamont Upperman of Persimmon Grove, Greensboro, and the late Brother Wilbur Hooker, Jr. of Lincolnton, Raleigh, lining and leading us in this Anthem -

*Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us,
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun
Let us march on till victory is won.*

*Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
Till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.*

*God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who has by Thy might Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
May we forever stand.
True to our God,
True to our native land.*



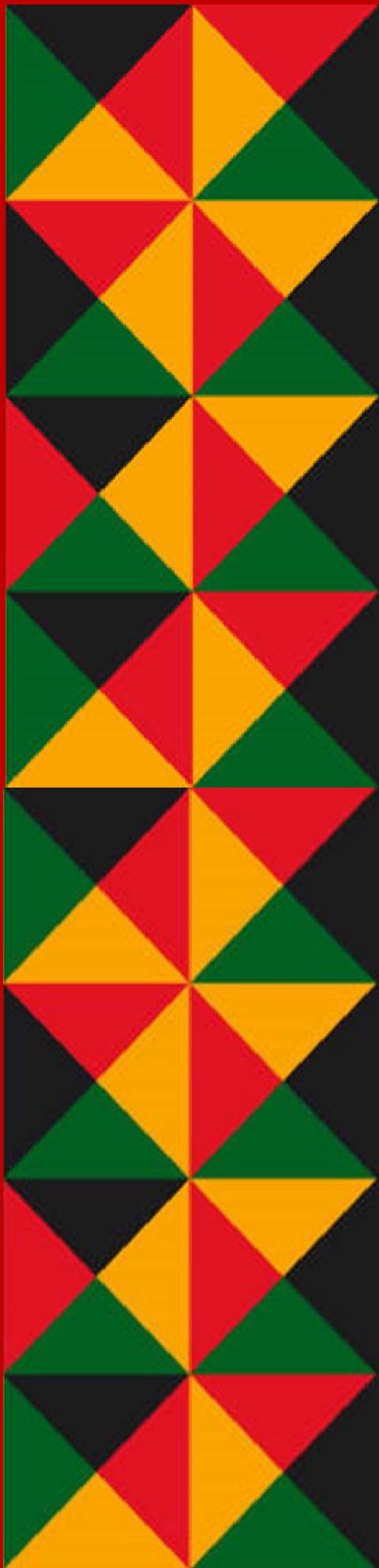
Amanda Gorman, the nation's first-ever youth poet laureate, read the following poem during the inauguration of President Joe Biden on January 20:



When day comes we ask ourselves,
where can we find light in this never-ending shade?
The loss we carry,
a sea we must wade
We've braved the belly of the beast
We've learned that quiet isn't always peace
And the norms and notions
of what just is
Isn't always just-ice
And yet the dawn is ours
before we knew it
Somehow we do it
Somehow we've weathered and witnessed
a nation that isn't broken
but simply unfinished
We the successors of a country and a time
Where a skinny Black girl
descended from slaves and raised by a single mother
can dream of becoming president
only to find herself reciting for one
And yes we are far from polished
far from pristine
but that doesn't mean we are
striving to form a union that is perfect
We are striving to forge a union with purpose
To compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters
and conditions of man
And so we lift our gazes not to what stands between us
but what stands before us



We close the divide because we know, to put our future first,
we must first put our differences aside
We lay down our arms
so we can reach out our arms
to one another
We seek harm to none and harmony for all
Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is true:
That even as we grieved, we grew
That even as we hurt, we hoped
That even as we tired, we tried
That we'll forever be tied together, victorious
Not because we will never again know defeat
but because we will never again sow division
Scripture tells us to envision
that everyone shall sit under their own vine and fig tree
And no one shall make them afraid
If we're to live up to our own time
Then victory won't lie in the blade
But in all the bridges we've made
That is the promise to glade
The hill we climb
If only we dare
It's because being American is more than a pride we inherit,
it's the past we step into
and how we repair it
We've seen a force that would shatter our nation
rather than share it
Would destroy our country if it meant delaying democracy
And this effort very nearly succeeded
But while democracy can be periodically delayed



it can never be permanently defeated

In this truth

in this faith we trust

For while we have our eyes on the future

history has its eyes on us

This is the era of just redemption

We feared at its inception

We did not feel prepared to be the heirs

of such a terrifying hour

but within it we found the power

to author a new chapter

To offer hope and laughter to ourselves

So while once we asked,

how could we possibly prevail over catastrophe?

Now we assert

How could catastrophe possibly prevail over us?

We will not march back to what was

but move to what shall be

A country that is bruised but whole,

benevolent but bold,

fierce and free

We will not be turned around

or interrupted by intimidation

because we know our inaction and inertia

will be the inheritance of the next generation

Our blunders become their burdens

But one thing is certain:

If we merge mercy with might,

and might with right,

then love becomes our legacy



and change our children's birthright
So let us leave behind a country
better than the one we were left with
Every breath from my bronze-pounded chest,
we will raise this wounded world into a wondrous one
We will rise from the gold-limbed hills of the west,
we will rise from the windswept northeast
where our forefathers first realized revolution
We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of the midwestern states,
we will rise from the sunbaked south
We will rebuild, reconcile and recover
and every known nook of our nation and
every corner called our country,
our people diverse and beautiful will emerge,
battered and beautiful
When day comes we step out of the shade,
aflame and unafraid
The new dawn blooms as we free it
For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see it
If only we're brave enough to be it



Did You Know?

North Carolina is home to 13% of the nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

Did you know – Vice President Kamala Harris attended a HBCU (Howard University)?

Prior to the conclusion of the Civil War in 1865, the majority of African Americans in the United States were enslaved persons living in the southern states. Education for African Americans was sparse, especially in the South with laws such as North Carolina's that prohibited teaching enslaved persons to read and write. It was a rare occurrence for an African American to be literate.

While there were a few schools dedicated to African American education in the North prior to the Civil War, the first college available to African Americans in the South was Shaw University, which opened its doors in 1865. A number of institutions dedicated specifically for the education of African Americans were founded in the era immediately following the Civil War and others followed when segregation limited equal access to education. These schools are often known as Historically Black Colleges and Universities, or "HBCUs".

North Carolina has twelve historically black colleges and universities, including the oldest in the South, Raleigh's Shaw University, founded in 1865, and North Carolina's newest HBCU, North Carolina Central University, founded in 1910 in Durham. Ten of these schools continue to operate today.

- Barber-Scotia College (1867)**
- Bennett College (1873)**
- Elizabeth City State University (1891)**
- Fayetteville State University (1867)**
- Johnson C. Smith University (1867)**
- Kittrell College (1886-1975)**
- Livingstone College (1879)**
- North Carolina A & T State University (1891)**
- North Carolina Central University (1910)**
- St. Augustine's University (1867)**
- Shaw University (1965)**
- Winston-Salem State University (1892)**

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY

PEARLS ON PARADE

Allen's Chapel AME Church (Roxboro)



Donna Brooks-McDougal



Jacqueline Brandon



Shirley A. Clay



Alice F. Mitchell



Kaye Carver



Sheila McDonald

Bethel AME Church (Greensboro)

Dickerson Chapel AME Church (Hillsborough)



Bertha McClendon

Clapp Chapel AME Church (Whitsett)



Carlene Timmons



Myrtle Mayo

Gaines Chapel AME Church (Efland)



Rev. Sherri L. Gibbs



Maggie Loftin



Joyce Cobb



Elaine Minor

Gaines Chapel AME Church (Efland), Cont'd



Marie Tate



Cynthia Brooks



Ann Riley-Caldwell



Linda Holman



Aretina Mangum

Greater Bethel AME Church (Charlotte)



Whitney Johnson

Macedonia AME Church (Milton)



Dorothy McCain



Joan Brandon

Poplar Springs AME Church (Sanford)



Donna Boykin



Libby Martin



Callie Snipes

St. James AME Church (Asheville)



Renee White



Earnestine Hamlett



Lydia Baldwin



Valorie Chesney

Springdale AME Church (Burlington)



Penny Oliver



Ronda Watkins



Barbara Slade



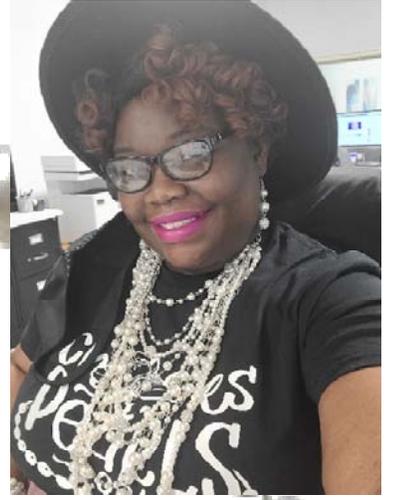
Crystal Breeze



CATES-HESTER WMS

Mount Zion AME Church
Hillsborough, NC







Mt. Zion AME Church
Dr. James C. Johnson Lay Organization
(Hillsborough, NC)

FOUNDER'S DAY

Celebration

10:00 am

February 14, 2021

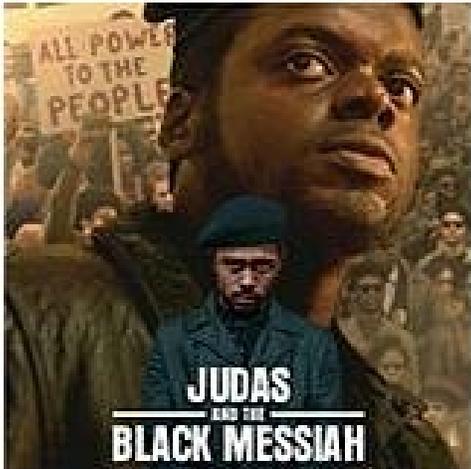


Please Join Us!!
LIVE on FACEBOOK.

Guest Speaker:
Rev. Dr. Steven L. Lyons
Pastor



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06



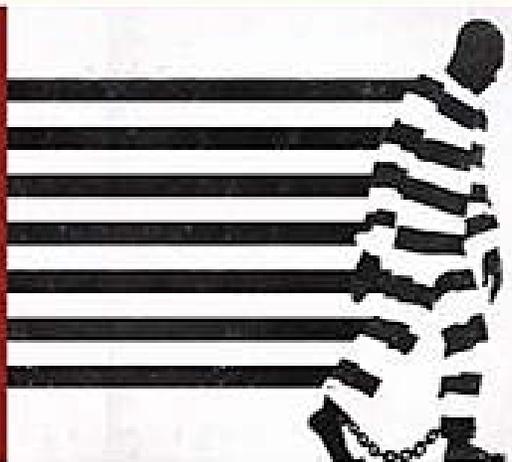
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FEBRUARY
MOVIES
+ CONVOS
SPECIAL EDITION

films begin @ 5pm
convos begin @ 7:30pm

REGISTRATION AVAILABLE
@EVENTBRITE

02
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FROM AVA DuVERNAY
DIRECTOR OF SELMA
13TH
A NETFLIX ORIGINAL DOCUMENTARY



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For additional information contact Shontea at:
unitedvoicesofeflandcheeks@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATE

EVENTS

2021

FEB. 11-12

SED Mid-Winter Meetings

WNCC-LO Meeting

MARCH 13

APRIL 10

SEDLO Leadership Retreat

Baltimore Annual Conference

APRIL 12-13

APRIL 15-16

Washington Annual Conference

Virginia Annual Conference

APRIL 19-20

APRIL 22-23

North Carolina Annual Conference

Western North Carolina Conference

APRIL 29-30

MAY 14-15

SED Planning Meeting

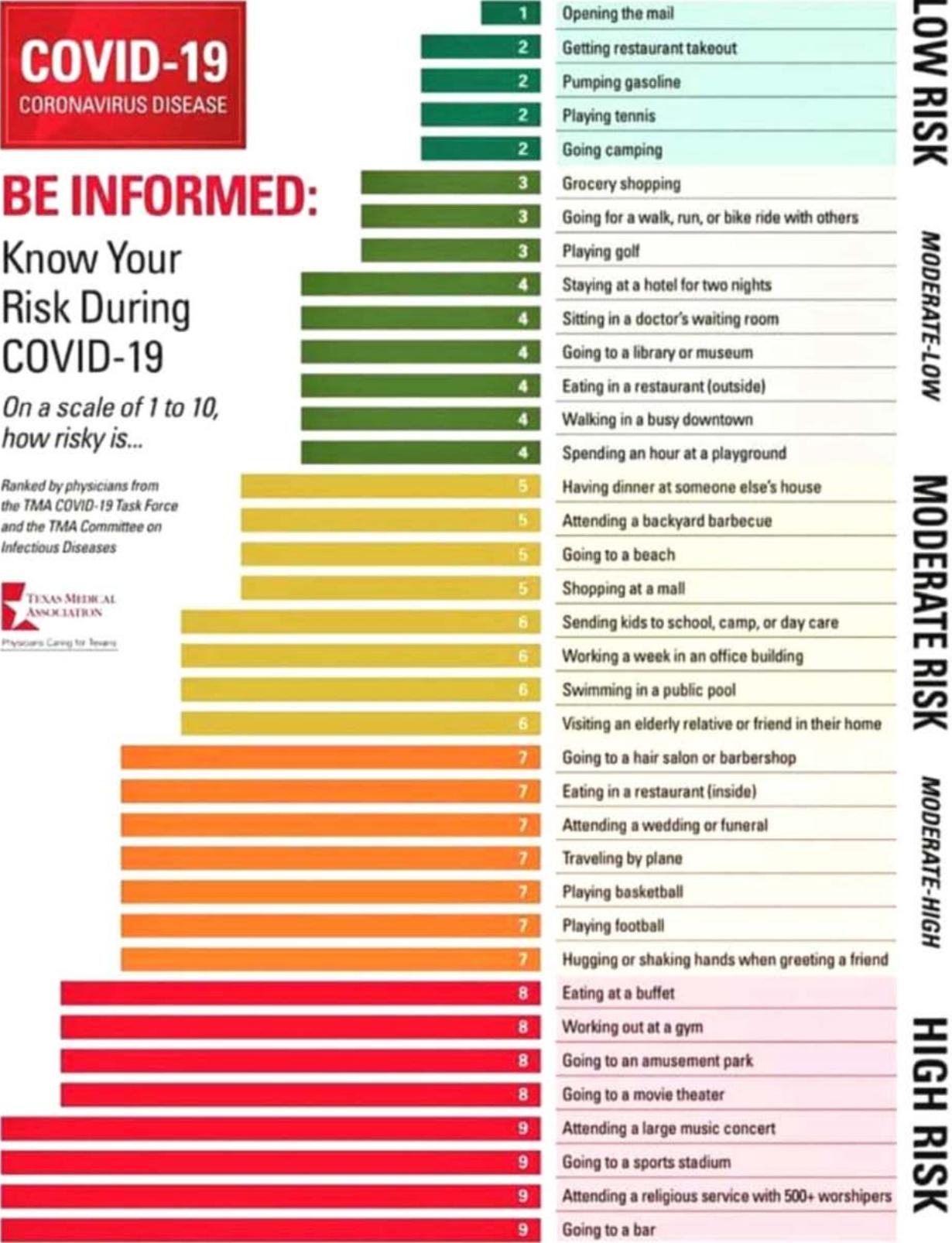
COVID-19
CORONAVIRUS DISEASE

BE INFORMED:

Know Your Risk During COVID-19

On a scale of 1 to 10, how risky is...

Ranked by physicians from the TMA COVID-19 Task Force and the TMA Committee on Infectious Diseases



UPCOMING EVENTS

AND INFORMATION

March



April



The Lay Newsletter will be published every other month.

Please submit information for MARCH and APRIL by: FEBRUARY 20th

DON'T FORGET

Email All Information to Penny Oliver ~ penny.oliver52@yahoo.com
Any Questions, email to Portia C. Holman ~ pcamille1@yahoo.com

