



# Western North Carolina Conference LAY EXPRESS



Volume II

September 2016

Issue 7

## General Conference from a Young Adult's Point of View

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Webster's Dictionary defines family as a group of people who are related to each other or are alike in some way. While all AME's may not be blood related we all are alike in some way due to the teachings and leadership under Richard and Sarah Allen and of Christ Jesus. The primary theme that I took from General Conference was family or at least the results of what family can produce when it comes together. Let me be clear before I give you my full experiences and opinion of General Conference, "No family is perfect." Again, let me be clear "No family is perfect." We love as much as we may potentially hurt/argue with one another. When asked to write about my experiences as a youth delegate my first reaction was sure I've grown up in the church and this should be an easy report to do. When in reality I had mixed emotions the entire time I was writing about my experiences at General Conference. On one hand I was at a glorious 8-day event filled with worship services and meetings with like-minded people whose primary objective for over a week was to better the church in any way possible. On the other hand drama and personal agendas were also on full display. I say this to say that General Conference was quite fulfilling but eye opening as well. I feel comfortable making these statements because they do not come from a negative place. My experiences at General Conference motivated me to be involved more not less. General Conference forced me reexamine the institution of the AME Church in what it looks like and what our basic backbone consists of. Times are changing and to ignore those changing winds would be a grave mistake. I advise all of you to read in full the words of Bishop DeVeaux's Episcopal Address as he graciously stepped down from serving the 2nd District. He provides in great detail what must be done to keep the church thriving for the future.

As being a part of the AME family more is asked of us given the historical lineage we came from. General Conference reemphasized talking points that we hear each Sunday from the various pastors and church folk that are among us. "The church is more than going to a service once or twice a week." "The church is more than being proactive within the confines of the location of your home church." "The church is also more than the clergy that are the faces of the places we worship." Too often in a more secularized society we see those who are disinterested in the faith backgrounds that helped establish the mindsets and beings of the very same people we interact with in our schools, communities, and work environments. It was quite refreshing to interact with my fellow AME brethren. While all of our personal views may be different, all of us are called to serve. There are two incidents during General Conference that shaped the remarks that I made earlier. The first about the AME church being a family is actually derived from a personal experience that I had during General Conference. My mom and I went to the Richard Allen Memorial at Mother Bethel AME church. To see this site recognized as a historical landmark in the 1st capital city of the United States is simply remarkable. It not only tells the stories of black ancestry within the history of the American landscape it also demonstrates the power of God. To let this history go unnoticed or to fall by the wayside in a more secularized society is unacceptable. I

personally refuse to let this happen within my own lifetime. The second experience I had was during the business sessions of the AME Church. Getting through these sessions is a testament of the strength of the Lay and delegations within the AME Church. While our motives might be different than that of the pastors, we are in conjunction with them trying to help the church grow. We are not a perfect family but this imperfect family has made it through 200 years and stated several times from the podium we want the church to live to see another 200 years at the 400th Quadrennial of the AME Church in Philadelphia in July 2316. While unfortunately none of us will be here to experience this, the work that is done now will shape the future. The future of the church lies with the youth. It was very encouraging to see the work of RAYAC and interact with the various youth delegates and alternates from all 20 districts. I am pleased to note the proper funding and support from the General Officers is being thrown into supporting the young adults as we transition from adolescence and serve as the next set of stewards, trustees, YPD leaders, and General Officers for General Conferences to come.

Finally, I would like to point out the work is not going to be easy. While this is simply understood while one of us is doing God's work, it is important to also understand the reward is far greater than the frustrations that one might encounter. Being a delegate or alternate at General Conference is no serene feat. General Conference is grueling, hectic, and sporadic but if I were fortunate enough to serve in either way I would do it again without hesitation.

Respectfully submitted by:

Adam Johnston  
Young Adult Delegate for the  
Western North Carolina Conference  
WNCCLO 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President  
St. Joseph AME Church  
Durham, North Carolina  
Rev. Ronald Owens - Pastor



# Saint John A.M.E. Church History

This information was adapted from a history provided by Sis. Michelle Carson.

In 1865, a group of newly freed slaves began to assemble together in the shelter of a brush arbor for the purpose of worshipping God. As the institution of slavery began to crumble and former slaves became free men and women, Negro churches began to spring up across North Carolina. It was in the midst of this rise of spiritual freedom for former slaves that the first African American Church in Nebo Township was established, located on Highway 70 East, approximately a mile from the McDowell and Burke County line.

A determined people, they would gather after their long days working as farmers and railroad men, in the waning hours of the day for the purpose of building their sanctuary. The brush harbor they constructed was built with branches and limbs. Their building materials were gathered from the grounds of slave-owner, John Rutherford, with his blessing. The brush harbor provided a crude but effective place for these former slaves to meet for worship and provided at least a limited amount of protection from the elements.

After over a decade of faithfulness to their church, on **September 7, 1879**, St. John Colored People Church, known today as St. John A.M.E., purchased land to build a new church. They purchased their first acre of land from Benjamin and Sylva Rutherford for one dollar. It is also believed that Bringer Rutherford's family donated some land to the church. After the land was bought, the African descendants built a wooden plank church on the property. Over the next few years, additional land was purchased to be used as a cemetery. That land continues to be used today for that purpose. Later, Mr. Mace, a kind cancan man, bequeathed to the church an additional twenty acres of land. For many years, the old plank church was used, until it was replaced in the 1950s by a new white block building. Although, there has been numerous improvements made, the church stands proudly on the same location.

Some older members in the community have spoken fondly of memories of the old church revivals held in that old plank building. When the big day came, the women cooked large full course meals. After service was held, everybody would spread out blankets carefully placing homemade dishes on them or those people who owned cars would have their car trunks filled with their delicious southern soul food. Those were good times! Through the years, the weekly celebration has been cut down to three days. Nevertheless, the annual revival continues each third Sunday in September uplifting the members' faith and serving as a church reunion of old friends and family.

St. John was formerly a part of the Bridgewater Circuit Church with Rev. Rupert Ferguson as pastor. This circuit consisted of three churches - St. John, Rock Hill and Corpening Chapel. In 1962, the church conference closed Rock Hill and after the church's closure, the few remaining members took up membership at either St. John or Corpening Chapel church. The circuit came to an end in 1994 and Rev. Minnie Bryant was appointed to pastor St. John.

There were three major reconstruction projects under the leadership of three extraordinary pastors. In 1979, Rev. William Propst led the church in a makeover project which included a new roof, new windows, and updated exterior. In 1999, Rev. Mitchell oversaw the construction of a new fellowship hall. Finally, Rev. Deborah Smith led the construction of new bathrooms in 2011 and St. John hosted a dedication service with Presiding Elder Rev. Dr. Conrad K. Pridgen.

Many people and families in Nebo, NC contributed to the sustaining of St. John A.M.E. church over the years. Among the early contributors were George Rutherford, Allen Rutherford and Thad Yancey. They were godly men that served as one of the first groups of trustees and advocates for the church's first land purchase. Another early leader was Sis. Cynthia Hardy, who served the Lord by organizing the first missionary society at the church in 1950. She was an active part of the missionaries until her death in 1972. In remembrance of Mrs. Hardy's contributions, the missionary society was named in her honor. Other early families involved in the life of the church included the Carson, Rutherford, Tate, Hardy, Wallace, Scott, O'Neil, and Williams families.

More than one hundred fifty years have passed since the first gathering of those faithful few that would ultimately become the forefathers and foremothers of St. John. Much has changed. Many have come and gone but the blessings of the Lord continue to rest upon this church. Now under the pastoral leadership of Sr. Pastor, Rev. Bridgette Gloster and Associate Pastor Rev. Dr. Clay Gloster, Jr., the story is continuing to be written for St. John. It is the continued prayers and faithfulness of the dedicated members that will ensure the future of this promising church.

Revival Service - Friday, **September 16<sup>th</sup>** - 7pm  
Fun Fest Saturday - **September 17<sup>th</sup>** - all day  
Homecoming - Sunday, **September 18<sup>th</sup>** - 3pm -  
Presiding Elder Conrad K. Pridgen will be preaching



Happy  
Anniversary!



## Upcoming Events

- Sep 10 Prayer Breakfast - Macedonia,  
4164 Yarboroughs Mill Rd, Milton -  
10am - Tickets - \$15.00
- Sep 11 Homecoming - 11am & 3pm  
Sep 14-16 Revival at Shiloh - 7pm nightly  
1323 Powerhouse Rd, Morganton
- Sep 25 Officers' Day at Clover Garden  
AMEC - 3:30pm  
4731 Burch Bridge Rd, Burlington
- Oct 15 153<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary Banquet  
Oct 16 Gaston Chapel Homecoming  
Oct 17-10 Revival at Gaston Chapel - 7pm  
102 Bouchelle Street, Morganton
- Oct 22 Lay Institute - Bethel, 200 N. Regan  
Street, Greensboro  
9:30am - 12:30pm
- Nov 2-3 SED Convention - Portsmouth
- Nov 4-5 SED Mid-year Conference  
Portsmouth Renaissance  
425 Water Street  
Portsmouth, VA  
Room Rate = \$99.00 per night  
757-673-3000

## Our New Bishop

Our New Prelate, Bishop James Levert Davis, has promised to visit **ALL** of his churches in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Episcopal District within the next 90 days.

The Bishop has visited all, if not most, of the churches in the state of North Carolina. All the churches report that our new bishop is very personable and down to earth. His agenda was to let the congregations know that he came to talk with us and attempt to answer any question(s) that we may have, and not just come to look at the church buildings.



Pastor Byron Grayson, Bishop Davis & Elder Pridgen at St. Paul in Lenoir



Bishop Davis & member of Bethel AMEC in Selma, NC  
Rev. Abdue Knox - Pastor



Bishop Davis & Retired Supervisor Mrs. Theora Byrd at Greater Bethel AMEC in Charlotte  
Rev. Morris Reddon, Jr. is the Pastor.



Bishop Davis, Rev. Kim Moss and Elder Wilder at Mt. Pisgah AMEC in Hickory

**CLERGY & LAITY ..... SAVE THE DATE FOR  
THE LAY INSTITUTE**

**Saturday, October 22, 2016  
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

**Bethel A.M.E. Church  
Greensboro, North Carolina  
Rev. Alphonson McGlen, Pastor  
Brother Dale Wragg, President, Local Lay Organization**

**Please bring your 2012 A.M.E. Doctrine & Discipline**

- **Dialogue with our Presiding Elders:**
  - Rev. Dr. Conrad K. Pridgen, Western District
  - Rev. J. Bernard Wilder, Eastern District
- **Church Administration**
- **From Membership to Discipleship**
  - **And other topics of interest**

**Registration \$10.00  
More information forthcoming**

**Sponsored by the Western North Carolina Conference  
LAY ORGANIZATION  
*Penny Oliver, President***

***Committee Members: Bettie Duell, Mary Royster Harris, Betty Parker, Dwight Patterson, Gertrude Upperman, Renee White, Kenneth Woods, J. Dale Wragg, & Jackie C. Kanipe, Director of Lay Activities***

# Dear Dr. Willie Glover and the Connectional Lay Organization:

## Greetings with the joy of Jesus!

Several days ago, Bishop, and Mother McAllister, along with the members of the Eighth Episcopal District, began assessing the impact that the heavy rainfalls and flooding had and are having on the 8th District members and their families, as well as other people in the communities where our churches are located. Because this disaster is so massive, as we reported earlier, the assessment process is on-going. It is difficult to get in contact with some of the members of the 8th District impacted by the heavy rainfalls and flooding because they have found temporary shelter with family, friends or are at designated shelters. It is paramount that we appeal to the AME church and friends of the Eighth District for assistance now.

The information gleaned from 8th District reports and information gathered by Bishop and Mother McAllister and members of the 8th District Disaster Relief Ministry during their tours of church facilities, homes and communities reveal just how devastating the flood damages are. In an executive meeting with the leaders of the American Red Cross on yesterday, August 22, 2016, the Bishop, episcopal supervisor and ministry members were told that the impact of this storm was three times greater than Sandy, and it would take 3 to 4 years for the people of Louisiana to fully recover.

Saturday, August 20, 2016, Bishop and Mother McAllister, presiding elders, pastors and members of the Eighth District attended the funeral service for Mr. Samuel Muse at Black Creek AME Church who drowned after being swept away by the swift, rising floodwaters.

There are more than 300 AMEs adversely impacted by the heavy rains and flooding in southeastern Louisiana. Five churches were damaged and more than 100 homes were damaged, severely damaged or totally damaged. Many families have lost everything – furniture, clothing, appliances and vehicles. Ninety-nine percent of the families have no flood insurance. One family, purchased a home the day before the heavy rainfalls, the next day that house was submerged in water. (*Photos of flood damages will be posted on the 8<sup>th</sup> District website later today – ame8.org.*) While families have expressed that they have many unmet needs, the most pressing needs are housing, replacement of clothing and transportation.

The 8th District has established a partnership with the American Red Cross and the Red Cross will not accept used clothing because of health-related reasons. The needs of those impacted by the flooding can be most effectively and efficiently met by monetary gifts and gift cards.

The Bishop of the Eighth District, along with the episcopal supervisor and members of the Eighth District Disaster Relief Ministry, is appealing to the AME church and friends of the Eighth District for monetary donations and gift cards.

**Please make checks payable to the Eighth District Disaster Relief Ministry (on memo line – Flood Donation 2016) and send checks and gift cards to P. O. Box 14227, Jackson, MS 39236.**

All contributions will be acknowledged.

Thank you Dr. Glover for your support and for all the good work you do in the name of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Yours in His Service,  
**Bishop Julius H. McAllister, Sr.**  
Presiding Prelate  
8th Episcopal District AMEC

**Eighth District Disaster Relief Ministry Members**

- Bishop Julius H. McAllister, Sr.
- Mother Joan M. McAllister
- Presiding Elder Lloyd Washington
- Presiding Elder Michele Goodloe
- Mr. Melvin Davis, Coordinator (Lay President)
- Dr. Herman Kelly, Vice Coordinator
- Mrs. Brenda Hurst, WMS President
- Rev. Samuel H. Boyd
- Rev. Nettie Ranel
- Rev. Keith Sanders
- Ms. Della Archie
- Rev. Rayfield Palmer
- Ms. Earline Blackmore
- The Presiding Elders

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**AME Voter Alert (V-ALERT)**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**CONTACT: Jacquelyn Dupont-Walker**  
**213-494-9493, [JDUPONTW@aol.com](mailto:JDUPONTW@aol.com)**

The African Methodist Episcopal Church is calling for all of its local congregations in the United States to make voter engagement a priority once again. In 2016, under the leadership of the Connectional Lay Organization, a majority of the AME Church's components, organizations, and ministries are re-committing to the very principles that led to its founding in 1787 and its incorporation in 1816. [As stated in a powerful letter from the bishops of the church, "Your Council of Bishops speaks in a unified voice challenging you to become engaged, to catch the vision, and to move forward in the fulfilling of the dream of a better tomorrow."](#)

In challenging its members to take action, the Bishops' Council continues, "If you have not already created your own action plan, please utilize this toolkit from the AME V-Alert ([www.amev-alert.org](http://www.amev-alert.org)) website. On the website you can share your events and outcomes with us. Let our voices be the voices of the voiceless. Let us use our talents, our resources and our time to insure justice to all while others ponder political correctness."

The AME V-Alert website has a smorgasbord of resources, links to partners, toolkit for advocacy and education, and worship materials. Its use is not limited to the church, but can be used by community coalitions, neighborhood block clubs, and interested individuals. The AME V-Alert Team is prepared for rapid response and connection to experts when incidents of voter disenfranchisement, voter registration challenges, voting day poll locations, etc. are reported.

Partners include the African American Ministers Leadership Council (PFAW), Freedom Sunday Coalition, NAACP, and NAACP Legal Defense Fund. **For more information and to connect with the AME V-Alert Movement, go to [www.amev-alert.org](http://www.amev-alert.org)**