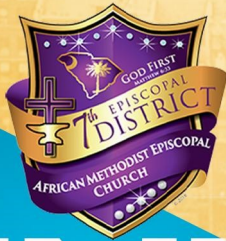




LITERARY REPORTS



ANNUAL CONFERENCE

S E R I E S

Bishop Samuel L. Green, Sr.
Presiding Prelate, Seventh Episcopal District
African Methodist Episcopal Church

Reverend Jarrett B. Washington
Secretary, Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference
Editor

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JUDICIAL REPORT

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Juenarri Keith

Members: Reverends: James Keeton, Jr., Brian L. Williams, Bettye Broomfield, Barbara Chisolm, Winston Jones

Report

To be reported live during the Palmetto Annual Conference

TRIERS OF APPEALS

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Remus Harper, Jr.

Members: Reverends: Kelly Spann, II, Rosetta Gant Swinton, Betty D. Clark, Arthur Ford

To be reported live during the Palmetto Annual Conference

MINISTERIAL EFFICIENCY

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Robert Kennedy

Members: Reverends Richard K. Harkness, Barbara Nelson, Carl Anderson, Leondra Stoney

To be reported live during the Palmetto Annual Conference

CONFERENCE TRUSTEES

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: The Reverends Juenarrl Keith, Remus Harper, Jr., Sandy Drayton

Members: Reverends: Carl Anderson, Betty D. Clark, Jarrett B. Washington, Michael Burgess, Aundry N. Evans, Robert Kennedy, Franklin Fulmore, Arthur Holmes, James Keeton, Jr., William Swinton, Jr., Richard C. K. Harkness Brothers: Gerald Williams, Anthony Vaird, Sr., Sister: Tamara Mathis

To be reported live during the Palmetto Annual Conference

MUSIC

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Brother Wayne Singleton

Members: Reverends Michael Alton, Elsa Syndab; Lay Cleveland Milton, Cassandra Strickland, Cynthia Geathers

“The trumpeters and singers performed together in unison to praise and give thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals, and other instruments, they raised their voices and praised the LORD with these words: “He is good! His faithful love endures forever!” At that moment, a thick cloud filled the Temple of the LORD.” (2 Chronicles 5:13)

“And are we yet alive to see each other’s face? Glory and praise to Jesus give for His redeeming grace.” The mission of the Committee on Music and Worship is to educate, elevate and expand the understanding and use of the arts in worship.

The music committee and the annual conference choir of the 113th session of the Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference is now in its 7th year of service. Members of the Palmetto Conference Choir have been preparing for the annual conference. When rightly kindled, our expectations should be that worship is a glorious opportunity for us, together as the people of God, to draw near and enjoy the very One who is our joy, life, and salvation.

This year, members of the conference choir participated in the Seventh Episcopal District God First Holy Convocation Choir. Conference choir members also traveled with Bishop Green to the First Episcopal District for their Post Conference Convocation and to the Second District Episcopal District Ordination Service.

We, the Committee on Music and Worship, solicit your prayers to equip the saints, empower the people, and transform lives through Christian arts.

DEEDS, ABSTRACTS, AND ABANDONED PROPERTY

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Dr. Sandy W. Drayton and Reverend Eduardo Curry

Members: Reverends Shri McClain-Brown, Adrian Kollock, Sr., Larry C. Stevens, Albert L. Jones, Joseph Swinton, Otis Dorsey, Barbara Nelson, Barbara Chisolm, Claudia Lawton, Robert Morris, Jr.; Lay Joseph Pendergrass, Kennedy Saunders, Michael Johnson, Michael Nick, Christopher Burgess, Robert Barr, Jacques Blake, Florine Russell, Elaine Rouse, Lourine Walters, Madison Bennett, Shirley Cooper, Frazalee McNeil

As Reported by the Kingstree District: Rev. Remus Harper, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Kingstree District presently has on file (38) thirty-eight copies of deeds for its churches. The Kingstree District would like to report one (1) church as abandoned -the site of Leonard Chapel/Greeleyville Mission. The church is located at Route 2, Box 202, Greeleyville, SC 29056. While this address no longer exists, the Map and Deed description has the property location as 10612 US Highway 521 in Deed Book A 047, page 51. Plat Book 046, page 385. Presently Rev. John Taylor, Pastor of Mt. Zion, Greeleyville, is maintaining the yard. However, the insurer has canceled the policy due to the condition of the building. Recent storms have further deteriorated the building. The District is referring this situation to the Conference Trustees to determine how best to proceed with this building and property.

As Reported by the Georgetown District: Rev. Dr. Sandy Drayton, Presiding Elder

The Georgetown District has a deed on file for each of the (32) thirty-two churches of the Georgetown District, as well as the deed for the property known as The Meeting Place, which is located at 2921 Highmarket St. Georgetown SC. The Georgetown District would also like to report one (1) parcel of property abandoned: Bethel AME Church located at 1242 North Santee River Road, Georgetown, SC 29440. Bethel AME Church, founded in 1857, is considered a historical landmark. Presently, the cemetery is still used for burial. Those requesting burial of their loved one are assessed a fee in the amount of \$600.00. This fee is used to offset the cost required for maintenance and upkeep of this historical site.

As Reported for the Mt. Pleasant District: Rev. Dr. Juenarri Keith, Presiding Elder

The Presiding Elder received (28) twenty-eight of the 31 churches deeds. The Mount Pleasant District also reports zero (0) known properties to be abandoned, and that 100 percent of the churches in the Mount Pleasant District through our quarterly conference system has given an account of all real estate being held in trust by local trustees for the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Recommendations:

The Committee recommends that each presiding elder shall receive and keep in a secure place all deeds of churches in their district. We further recommend that all deeds are written in the language accepted and of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The Committee also asks that all Trustees, of all churches under the auspices of the AME Church, be informed that all deeds and properties, etc. must be kept in trust that we may give an accurate account of our holdings, true and factual.

Reference: 2021 Doctrine & Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

After prayer and repentance, the harvest will return if we do not lose hope and work to reclaim the lost, hurt, disengaged unbeliever. It is our calling. It is what we are mandated to do.

INCORPORATION OF CHURCH PROPERTY

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Kelly Spann, II

Members: Reverends Eduardo Curry, Christopher Mathis, Arthur Ford, Harold Wilson, Curtis J. Fludd, Brian Swinton, Alonzo Redic, II, Oliver Burns, Jr, Vincent Vereen, Wallace Hurrell, Rickey Dennis, Jr.; Lay Courtney Franklin, Harris, Borden, Jr, Kennedy Saunders, Idella Bradford, Naomi Alston, Acquanette Williams-Lee, Erica Hicks, Micky Livingston Jones, Jaylen Williams, Shirley Thompson, Janice McCrea, Tiffany Adams, Shanell Adam, Hazel Cuttino

The presiding Elders of the Palmetto Annual Conference were contacted. Each Presiding Elder was asked “Are the Churches in your district incorporated properly?”

Reverend Dr. Juneral Keith, of the Mt. Pleasant District reported, “All is well”

Reverend Dr. Sandy W. Drayton of the Georgetown District reported, “It is stated that we are”

Reverend Remus Harper Jr. of the Kingtree District reported, “Everything is well”

Thus ends our report.

PRESIDING ELDERS SALARY AND UPKEEP

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Dr. James Keeton, Jr.

Members: Reverends Betty D. Clark, Carl Anderson, Aundry Evans, Michael Burgess, Peggy Pope, Jarrett Washington, Barbara Nelson, Alfred Darby, Robert E. Kennedy, Brian L. Williams, Glannie Tisdale, Richard Crummy, Eduardo Curry, Adiran Kollock, Sr. William Swinton, Jr., Darien Jones, Leondra Stoney, Clinton McPherson, Albert L. Jones, Pamela Vereen; Lay Sterlin Green, Kaleb Lincoln, Betty Frazier, Vergie Tennison, Yvette Bellinger, Fharen Grant, Tamara Mathis, Bobby Greene, Wilhelmenia Pressley, Hope Manigault, Helen Fluitt, Marilyn Dingle, Cynthia Geathers

The Mount Pleasant District

The pastors and district stewards of the Mount Pleasant District met during the District Conference on Saturday, March 25, 2023, at Greater Goodwill AME Church to discuss the salary and upkeep for the Presiding Elder of the Mount Pleasant District for the 2023-2024 Conference Year. It was moved by the Reverend Dr. William Swinton, Jr. and seconded by Reverend Rosetta Gant Swinton that the salary and upkeep for the Presiding Elder will be increased by three percent for the upcoming conference year. The vote passed unanimously to support the increase.

The Kingstree District

The pastors and delegates of the Kingstree District held a meeting at the District Conference at 9:00 AM on January 14, 2023, at Greater St. Luke AME Church, 78 Gordon Street, Charleston, SC, to discuss the Presiding Elder's salary and upkeep. Rev. Dr. Eduardo Curry presented for consideration an across-the-board three percent salary increase for the Presiding Elder. Rev. Dr. Robert Kennedy made a motion, which was seconded by Rev. Dr. Bettye Broomfield. The vote was unanimous for the three percent increase across-the-board.

The Georgetown District

A meeting was held at the District Conference on March 4, 2023, at Historic Bethel AME Church to discuss the Presiding Elder's Salary/Upkeep. The committee chairman shared with the members about a cost-of-living increase for the Presiding Elder. The motion was made by Brother George Brown and seconded by Reverend Kelly Spann, Sister Virgie Tennison, Sister Lorine Gibson, several other clergy members, and lay. It was passed unanimously, and there were 262 persons in attendance. The agreement is a three percent increase for Churches 1-32 for the 2023-2024 Conference Year.

Conclusion

Bishop Green, this concludes the report of the Committee on Presiding Elder's Salary and Upkeep. Thank you very much for the opportunity to serve.

MISSIONS, CIRCUITS, AND STATIONS

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Dr. Bettye Broomfield

Members: Reverends Joe N Knowlin, Nathalee Nelson, Debra Geathers, Ronald Lewis, Vincent Vereen, Ronald McInnis, Maggie Milton, Franklin Rutledge, Gwendolyn McNeil, Otis Dorsey, Earl Harris, Brian Swinton, Peggy Snipe, Viola Hardy, Clement Blake; Lay Robert Ford, Samuel Darby, Takisha Herriott-Blain, Vergie Tennison, Macie Davis, Dora Howard, Rhonda Fordham, Claudette Graham, Frazalee McNeil, Valencia Burnett

We the committee acknowledges that recent studies on church growth and development today is unveil that it is a big business. The issue on one hand shows that rural areas and some cities, churches are not about Kingdom building. We are commissioned as servants of God to reach the unreachable.

The apostle Paul knew that fundamentally a growing church is made up of growing Christians. And so he took time to pray for and to instruct the Christians he knew. And by God's grace, the church grew. The Thessalonians saw in chapter 3:1-3 the importance of growth:

1} Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live to please God, as you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. 2} You know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. 3} It is God's will that you should be holy; that you should avoid sexual immorality;

We, the committee on Missions, Circuits, and Stations consulted with the Presiding Elders of the Palmetto Conference: Presiding Elders: Remus Harper, Jr., Dr. Sandy Drayton, and Juenarri Keith. The following are the results on Missions, Circuits, and Stations:

The Palmetto Conference consists of 100 Stations. The Palmetto 31; Kingstree 37; and Georgetown 32 Stations. We all are aware of the Pandemic affecting the Churches and having to implement services, with virtual worshipping since the second Sunday in March 2019. As we exhibit faith and strength through virtual meetings and worship, the church is maintaining.

The smaller churches are sponsored through organizations such as the Women Missionary Society, Sons of Allen, and Lay organizations. Bishop Samuel L. Green, of the Seventh Episcopal District, sponsored the smaller congregations each year with gifts. The mission offering is redirected to the smaller churches in the Palmetto Conference.

Recommendations:

Transformation

Let us seize this opportunity that has been afforded us, by preaching and teaching on these social media platforms. Yes, we want to return to in person worship but we must also continue to provide the word for those persons that we have reached outside the walls through these social media platforms of the church and keep them engaged to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Edification

1. We must continue, to increase the kingdom and proclaim the word of God. Allowing our presence to be holistic and transformative.
2. We must help the congregation understand the tools of God that are at their disposal. Work in unity on all levels.
3. Teach and train the members on all levels of the church.

ANNUITY AND INVESTMENTS

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Jarrett Britton Washington

Members: Reverends William Swinton, Jr., Glannie Tisdale, Franklin Fulmore, Ida Mitchell, Jason Rouse, Betty D. Clark, Timothy Cooper, Thomas Habersham, Barbara Chisolm, Barbara Fludd; Lay Gerald Williams, Doral Grimmage, Joseph Smalls, Joel Chapman, Anthony Vaird, Sr., Jerry Burns, Ethel Blake Bellamy, Idella Bradford, Roselyn Andeson, Barbara Flynn, Helen McFadden, Shelia Powell, Sandra Cave, Michelle Holt, Shantell Brown

The African Methodist Episcopal Church is excited to welcome this new era of faith, hope, and the assurance that our ever-growing communion will reach generations to come with our brand-new partnership with Wespath Benefits and Investments.

At the 2008 General Conference in St. Louis, Missouri an inclusive motto was adopted and now declares *God Our Father, Christ Our Redeemer, the Holy Spirit Our Comforter, Humankind Our Family*. The evolution of our motto demonstrates that African Methodists engage in ongoing assessments of our theology and how God speaks to us in changing circumstances. One changing circumstance is the need for the AME Church to position itself to minister to the whole person of our salaried servants. As a denomination we want to be intentional about making certain that the security, longevity, and financial well-being of those who give so much to our Zion are safe and secure.

The AME Church is excited to partner with Wespath to secure the financial future of our salaried servants. Wespath is a not-for-profit administrative agency of The United Methodist Church (UMC) and responsible for the general supervision and administration of the retirement, health and welfare benefit plans, programs, and funds for more than 100,000 active and retired UMC clergy and lay employees. The company has a longstanding history rich in service and ministry to those who are called to serve.

As African Methodist we are honored to introduce the New Life Personal Investment Plan to extend the mission and ministry of our beloved church, while maintaining our mission to provide the highest quality retirement investment and financial security services available to the valued servants, employees, and members of our Church in tandem with our Department of Retirement Services.

Different from times before this new plan will be able to:

1. Have 24/7 access to your personal retirement account;
2. To utilize tools to help your project your future as well as manager your investments and distributions;
3. To update your personal information, beneficiaries and track your future at the click of a button.

Here in the 7th Episcopal District we are elated to report we have the highest activity of any district in the continental united states.

Participants Registered for Benefits Access	460	94%
Participants Not Registered for Benefits Access	29	6%
Total Active Participants	489	
Participants with Beneficiary assigned in Benefits Access	389	80%
Participants without Beneficiary assigned in Benefits Access	100	20%
Total Active Participants	489	

Participants with a Plan Balance	467	96%
Participants without a Plan Balance	<u>22</u>	4%
Total Active Participants	489	
Participants with a bad or no email on file	2	

CLASSIFICATION OF PASTORS

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Richard C.K. Harkness

Members: Reverends Jarrett B. Washington, Elsa B. Syndab, Lowis Dorsey, Joseph Swinton, Jr., Patrick Staggers, Adrian Kollock, Sr. William Pinckney, Gloretia Spann, Pamela Vereen, Oliver Burns, Jr., Robert Morris, Jr., Peggy Snipe; Lay Ervin E. Greggs, James Alston, Angelo Muldrow, Christopher Burgess, Macie Davis, Stephanie Singleton, Yvonne Barnes, Mae Frances Scott, Angela Anderson, Tanya Tucker, Mary Grant, Marilyn Dingle

This report is reported through consultation with Presiding Elders and committee members from the Mt. Pleasant, Kingstree, and the Georgetown Districts.

The **Mt. Pleasant District** has 13 Class A Pastors, 14 Class E Pastors, 3 Class C, 1 Class D.

Georgetown District has 24 Class A Pastors, 4 Class E Pastors, 1 Class C, 3 Class D.

Kingstree District has 18 Class A Pastors, 16 Class E Pastors and 2 Class D Pastors.

The Palmetto Conference Totals:

- Class A 55 Pastors
- Class E 32 Pastors
- Class C 4 Pastor
- Class D 6 Pastors

Recommendation:

The committee recommends ALL pastors faithfully seek God presence, as they give their time and talents in their service to God and within their pastoral duties. Furthermore we recommend that all pastors stay in tune with the needs of all members, especially the seniors during this pandemic.

SOCIAL ACTION

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Carl Anderson

Members: Reverends Alfred Darby, Kelly Spann, II, Ronald McInnis, Clement Blake, Reddit Andrews, III, Isaac Grant, Franklin Fulmore, Larry Stevens, Debra Briggman, Rickey Dennis, Jr, Rose Stokes Smalls, Terry Alston; Lay James Holmes, Tristen Lovejoy, Floya A. Grant, Sr., Kenny Parson, Joel Chapman, Margaret Rush, Kathy Cash, Fharen Grant, Doral Grimmage, Angela Anderson, Dora Howard, Yvonne Lincoln, Valencia Burnett, Shirley Cooper

Our mission must be the mission of Jesus. As we press towards the mark of a higher calling. We must proclaim good news to the poor, freedom for the prisoners, recover sight for the blind and to set the oppressed free.

Our Community is in a crisis. Voters turnout are low. We can not afford to lose any seat in US House or Senate in the upcoming election. If we do the opposition then we will have the house and Senate.

It is imperative that we get out and vote. We must put people in office that will work for the oppressed, downtrodden, poor and needy. We must continue to fight the good fight to liberate those in need.

We have a deep concern about the social injustice in our state and across the nation. As Community leaders, we have a responsibility to ensure that all our students have equal access to a quality education and a safe learning environment. However, the data shows that African American male students are disproportionately suspended from school, which negatively affects their academic achievement and future opportunities. This is unacceptable and unjust.

Join us in taking action to end these inequities and to advocate for the rights and well-being of our students of color. We need to raise our voices and demand change from our policymakers and leaders. The SC House of Representatives has passed the Clementa C. Pinckney Hate Crime Act twice and H. 3014 is still on the Senate calendar. School Vouchers (S 39, Act 8) Education Scholarship Trust Fund. Eligible elementary and secondary students may be awarded scholarships in the amount of \$6,000 to pay for education expenses starting in 2024. Public and Independent Schools may accept scholarship funds but Charter Schools and Home Schooled Students are excluded. Teachers received a \$2,500 pay increase across all salary levels. The starting salary for teachers increased from \$40,000 to \$42,500. We need to stand in solidarity with our students and their communities and show them we care. We need to educate ourselves and others about the systemic racism and oppression that pervades our society.

CHURCH PLANTING

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Remus Harper, Jr. and Reverend John Taylor

Members: Reverends Harold O. Wilson, Diana Davis, Jason Rouse, Reddit Andrews, III, Thomas Habersham, Gwendolyn McNeil, Merrielee Smalls Salley, Samuel Johnson, Sr., Rose Stokes Smalls; Lay Henry Griffin, Madison Bennett, Terry Alston Wilson, James Alston, Helen McFadden, Kadence Taylor, Stephanie Singleton, Idella Bradford, Acquanelle Williams Lee, Ernestine Campbell, Teresa Humes

Church planting is the process when an individual, a group of people or an established church congregation go out and build a church in a specific community. Church Planting has always been the expansion strategy of the AME Church that is now comprised of twenty (20) Episcopal District in thirty nine (39) Countries on five (5) Continents.

The Mt. Pleasant, Georgetown, and Kingstree Districts of the Palmetto Conference are continuing to do feasibility studies to determine where best to plant a new church in their Districts. The closing of several companies and lack of Industry coming into the rural areas of the Georgetown and Kingstree Districts has created unfavorable conditions for church planting. However, in the urban areas of Charleston and Berkely Counties, there is a population explosion with many people moving from the North back to the South. With this increase in population, studies show these areas are conducive to church planting. Strategic church planting must be utilized to overt overlapping of churches already existing in neighboring Conferences.

Lastly, the church planter should train people in the art of evangelism. Evangelism will be the catalyst for growing the new church at a particular location.

Recommendations:

1. The formulated Church Planting Committees should continue Feasibility Studies to ensure that the church planted has great potential for future growth.
2. Establish a budget to facilitate the initial investment
3. Identify seed members for the new church.

STATE OF THE CHURCH

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Darien Jones

Members: Reverends Arthur Lee Holmes, Terry Alston, Patrick Staggers, Robin McGhee-Frazier, Gilbert Jenkins, William A. Pinckney, Karen Reed-Perrineau, Michael Alston, Alonzo Reddic, III, Dorine Fabor, Debra Smalls-Gardner; Lay Henry Griffin, Cleveland Milton, Kenny Parson, Dakare Chatman, Antonio Ward, Joesph Smalls, III, Frank Wilson, Sr., Kertrina Graham, LaVerne Brown, M. Frances Middleton, Betty Smalls, Mary Grant, Thomasena Grant

Matthew's gospel shares an exchange between Jesus and his closest followers. Jesus asks his disciples, "Who do [people] say that I am?". To his disciples, Jesus' question seems rather misplaced. Why would Jesus be concerned about who or what others believe he is? Jesus follows by asking them more directly, "But who do you say that I am?". I suppose Jesus' question is primarily concerned with those who will eventually follow his teachings and form the body of Christ. The State of the Church is directly connected on two points: who we believe Jesus to be and who we believe ourselves to be.

Discerning the State of the Church, other denominations, churches, and annual conferences have taken up Jesus' question to his disciples. Now, I offer this question for our consideration, whom do we say Jesus is?

Who we believe Jesus to be, inspires what we do as a body of believers.

We believe that Christ is the cornerstone of The Church (Universal, connectional AME Church, and local churches).

Christ's teachings are timeless and contain within them all things necessary for salvation. These teachings are who Christ is and further, these teachings serve as our organizing principles and values. A church committed to Christ's teachings is a church that remains faithful to its foundation. Whatever the state or condition of the church, we are only a church as long as we teach what Christ teaches.

We believe that as members of the church we are the body of Christ and our well-being invariably determines the overall well-being of the church.

Who are we and what distinguishes us as Christ's followers?

The people are what form the church and how we embody and enact our faith legitimizes our standing as the body of Christ. At this critical moment in the history of our world, Jesus' question to his disciples calls for suspicion rather than curiosity.

Curiosity invites us to consider ways we might better perform our duties as a church. On the other hand, suspicion calls into question whether or not we are aware of such duties or if we value our duties.

It is possible to gather weekly for services and gatherings under the moniker "AME Church" and yet have not any detectable signs of Christlike teachings or Christlike activity, thus not valuing our duties as a church.

So I ask again, who do we say Jesus is? Who are we and what distinguishes us as Christ's followers?

The Church is the sum of its individual parts. Each individual matters to the collective church body. Within the individual ranks of our church, there is a growing divide between generations and generational values as it relates to things like supporting local churches with regular attendance or financially. This is highlighted in a study conducted by Pew Research Center. According to their findings, only twenty-nine percent (29%) of Generation Z and twenty-seven percent (27%) of Millennials attend church services.

This is contrasted against the forty-six percent (46%) of Gen Z and forty-nine percent (49%) of Millennials who seldom or never attend religious services. Older generations, namely Baby Boomers and the Silent Generation (those born between the early 1920s thru the 1960s), are nearly twice as likely to attend church. Our efforts to reach each generation must take seriously the varying needs of respective generations. As a body we must always be careful to be intergenerational, effectively ministering to all generations present in our congregations and communities.

More broadly, there are deep suspicions about how or if the church will advance ideas about relevant and pressing topics, namely, gender and sexuality, anti-black racism, capitalism, nationalism, fascism, global warming, and earth's destruction, etc. All of these issues determine our lived experiences beyond the church. Notwithstanding, the church can guide us through these challenges and offer us new ways of thinking and living together in the world. However, the church cannot offer itself as a truth-telling terrace, while failing to confront [on-going conversations]. We are obligated to tell the truth while upholding Christlike compassion and care, maintaining intellectual depth, and preserving sound doctrine.

Advancing the church means growing in our understanding of who Christ is and remains. Jesus' question is timeless, who do we believe Jesus to be? This question for us is existential, its primary concern is about our existence as Church. If we fail to regularly entertain this question, we will slowly lose sight of who we are and eventually cease to be Christ's church.

Who are we yet to become as the body of believers aiming to embody and enact what Jesus instructs?

Our recommendation: Hold in tension our growing understanding of who Jesus is and how we as the church embody and actualize our understanding of Christ with the evolving world around us.

As the church we remain faithful to discerning and being Christ's activity in the world.

¹ Matthew 16:13, NRSV

¹ "2021 State of the Church Report." ResourceUMC, June 1, 2022. <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/churchwide/the-connectional-table/2021-state-of-the-church-report>.

¹ Article V, Articles of Religion

¹ Mitchell, Travis. "Faith among Black Americans." Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project, July 21, 2023. <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/02/16/faith-among-black-americans/>.

STATE OF THE COUNTRY

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Eduardo Curry

Members: Reverends Gloretia Spann, Mervin McBride, Gilbert L. Jenkins, Diana Davis, Debra Grant Briggman, Rose Stokes Smalls, Adrian Kollock, Sr, Vincent Vereen, Alfred Darby, Wallace Hurrell, Lay Anthony Vaird, Sr., Melvin Smith, Louie Davis, Shirley Thomson, Janie McCrea, Doretta E. McKnight, Hazel Cuttino, Ernest Frazier, Betty Smalls, Barbara Flynn, Tanya Tucker, Betty Pressley, Shirby Cooper, Gwendolyn McBride

The United States of America has reached its Two Hundred and Forty-Seventh (247) year of existence. Located between the country's of Canada and Mexico it consists of 50 states, a federal district, five major self-governing territories and various land possessions. The estimated population is approximately 328 million and it was approximately the third (3rd) most populous country in the world. Yet, today it is a country fife with inequality, recession, sexism, and social unrest, poverty and unrighteous activities. This country has become a nation of unrest and unconstitutional behavior. There has been assaults on our Nation's Capital. Our laws of opportunity and civility and equal access have been rolled back and retracted.

Not only is our country in a plethora of social discords, it is in a political upheaval. The tension between the political parties has escalated. There is unreasonable opposite polarization, while the tension of financial and social process continues to underperform for the good of the people. The general masses are in need of help. The rich are getting richer, and the poor are getting prison!

The houses of worship and particularly the Christian Church and specifically the African Methodist Episcopal Church are faced with serious dilemmas that affect the cores of religions and spiritual life of our congregants. A virus called Covid-19 has decimated our religious attendance.

We believe that this is a divine opportunity for the African Methodist Episcopal Church to assess its influence in perilous times, to the nation who is in need of God's goodness, mercy and grace.

The uniqueness of the African Methodist Episcopal Church origins and calling collides with the incredible need of recovering lost souls and to minister to people who desperately need to hear a clarion call for repentance and restoration. Yes, even in a pandemic, this committee believes that when all else fails and death, poverty and desperation looms all around, God is still in charge!

The committee still believes Matthew 24:6, it says "And you will hear wars and rumors of wars, see that you are not alarmed, for this must take place but the end". (KJV). We must remain diligent and faithful to see Jesus.

Wars, unjust-killings, social, unrest, incredible hunger, homeliness, crime, unbelief and sin has a cure, and it is in the word of God. This committee recommends a return to God by our Zion for repentance, restoration, reconciliation, and re-manifestation of the Holy Ghost. Then and only then will our Zion and the nation live out its destiny and purpose for greatness, effectiveness and humanity.

After prayer and repentance, the harvest will return if we do not lose hope and work to reclaim the lost, hurt, disengaged unbeliever. It is our calling. It is what we are mandated to do.

TEMPERANCE

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Rosetta Gant-Swinton

Members: Reverends Barbara Chisolm, Isaac Grant, Sheri McClain Brown, Alice Wright, Terry Alston, Timothy Cooper, Lowis Dorsey, Joesph Swinton, Viola Hardy, Ida Mitchell, Earl Harris, Lay Gerald Williams, Ervin E. Greggs, Terry Alston Wilson, Silas Williams, Kaleb Lincoln, Sandra Cave, Malik Rivers, Frances Scott, Vergie Tennison, Betty Pressley, Mae Bell McBride, Lourine Waiters, Jacqueline Gray, Diana P. White, Shirley Thompson

The committee on Temperance wishes to share the impact of our ministry. How we have shared God's word in person, through social media and personal contact. This report shares our methodology of introducing and implementing God's word to understanding and practicing Temperance. We made ourselves a tangible resource to our sisters, brothers, and colleagues. To God be the glory for a good year and rewarding experience!

As the bible teaches us about Temperance in Titus 2:12 NIV, ¹² It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age. Our ministry has given liberty to spread this word to all. Engaging in sometimes extensive discussions, giving references through texts and emails and one on one conversations. We offered encouragement and support of our everyday walk with explanation that self-control is imperative to our relationship with God.

We as a ministry group found that our sisters and brothers are struggling with flesh and spirit. What has become evident is that people are hungry for explanation and encouragement. We have found that so many have been taught in a manner not to ask questions, to just do as they are told. Our ministry found that this does not reach our millennials and Gen Zs. We've found that in James 1:19-20 NIV _ 19 My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20 because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Our ministry took hold of this scripture and found it to be very effective and fruitful.

Future continuation of making ourselves tangible resources will support and give behavior modification that can be useful to kingdom building. While improving the lives of others with repetitive conscious behaviors is worship and faith.

CHURCH SCHOOL

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Sister Eunice F. Brown

Goals:

1. To engage in biblical literacy and faith exploration through new lens
2. To collaborate with other churches to energize and broaden their program
3. To include representation from the entire church (Youth, Young Adults, Clergy, Laity)
4. To provide, fun, and engaging model for Church School

Church schools over the conference were energized to reset, reclaim and restore their members in participating in church school. Church school staff started the year off by planning and strategizing new ways of doing things. Letters of invitation was sent to every parent inviting them to reconnect or thanking them for their diligence in support of church school by making sure their children were involved. Church schools involved their students in a variety of learning modes to make sure the word of God was grasped in a fun and engaging way such as: skits, trivia games, movies, discussion, revivals and outings.

Most of our church schools have returned to in-person participation with an increase of students, especially adults. Others continue to utilize the service of zoom or tele-Conference. Whichever mode they are using, our church schools are thriving. Some of the activities superintendents and teachers were committed to during the 2022 – 2023 conference year were:

- To visit at least one other church school in their area to support and gain new awareness of different programs.
- Many observed open house incorporating guest participation with neighboring churches (AME and Baptist) to collaborate on the lesson.
- The Nutrition Zone: The Ice Cream Float Event – the scripture reference for this event was: Exodus 18:20, “Teach them God’s decrees, and give them his instructions. Show them how to conduct their lives.” The event provided a safe and nurturing place to be fed and receive spiritual and healthy facts from the teachings of God and to learn about the AME Church through bible movie, trivia games and participants making their own edible Bread of Life craft ending with them making an ice cream float to show how sweet God’s word is.
- Easter participation was incorporated into worship service or as a stand alone event with youth taking the lead in the worship experience.
- Church school continued their outreach project by sponsoring another blood drive, provided food and gift cards for the elderly of the church and community, and Christmas bags to residents of assisted living facility.
- We know the importance of making sure our teachers and staffs are equipped with the knowledge they need to be an effective and innovative worker in the vineyard; therefore, March Madness Teacher Training Seminar was held again this year with three point shots made with each presentation (one for the Father, one for the Son, one for the Holy Spirit). The presenters and topics for these awesome presentations were: The Role of the Superintendent - Rev. Gwendolyn McNeil; Creative Teaching in Church School – Sister Eunice F. Brown; Church School at –A – Glance Rev. Sandra Ladson. The Scripture Reference for the presentations came from I Peter 4:10 (NIV).
- Churches united to conduct VBS which brought a wealth of knowledge, expertise, and experience to attendees. Equipped with the knowledge of how to be creative in their teaching, instead of purchasing VBS materials, teachers developed their own curriculum for VBS. Such as “Taste and See,” “The Brave and the Beautiful,” “Exercise Your Faith - Walk with God,” “Remember Who You Are” utilizing the Lion King movie.
- Students were provided an opportunity to be leaders at Church School Convention with election held for various church school youth position.
- On the 4th Sunday each month the pastor engages with the youth participants in a chat and chew round table discussion of the lesson.

Even though, church school has seen an increase in adult participation we are striving to find ways to connect with our children/youth participants and let them know that they are the church of today and their engagement is vital to the health and growth of our church.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Virgil Hammett

Members: Reverends Brian L. Williams, Bettye Broomfield, Bernice Cooper, Reddit Andrews, III, Lewis Dorsey, Curtis J. Fludd, Merrielee -Salley; Lay Michael Johnson, Gerald Williams, Harris Bolden, III, James Alston, Dakare Chatman, Joseph Smalls, III, Melvin Smith, Frank Wilson, Sr., Elaine Rouse, Aniya Johnson, Narvie Stewart, Georgetta Bryant, Bobby P. Greene, Betty Frazier, Naomi Alston, Shenell Alston, Robin Shaw, Angela Anderson

Christian Education is that ministry that undergirds all other ministries of the church.

The Christian Education Department of the Palmetto Conference continued to serve the Lord during this conference year. The following is a summary of the activities of the Presiding Elder District Christian Education Departments.

The Mount District under the leadership of Sister Georgetta Bryant featured quarterly learning sessions, the District Recommitment Service, regular meetings with the District Christian Education Board and the Annual Christian Education Convention.

The Georgetown District under the leadership of Sister Narvie Stewart featured the following; Christian Education One Day Seminar themed: “God’s Word is Power” with presentations from two esteemed pastors Rev. Maxine Sumpter & Rev. Virgil Hammett, reminding all of the need of religious growth to apply God’s Word to our everyday walk. Held our first Georgetown District Wide “Prayer Survival Revival.” Churches throughout the district came together as pastors prayed for our communities, health, religious growth, our children, and leadership. Assisted with all district Worship Services. Provided educational materials to congregations pertaining to religious holidays and observances monthly. Recognized forty-two combined high school and college graduates. Awarded two “Book Scholarships” for students entering college in the fall of 2023. Vacation Bible School held in clusters (community churches). Developed a district wide Calendar of Events.

The Kingstree District under the leadership of Rev. Virgil Hammett featured bi-monthly meetings and learning sessions. This year the Kingstree District returned to an in person Christian Education Convention which featured a soul stirring morning worship experience with a powerful sermon by the Rev. Jason Rouse, workshops surrounding the theme “Reset-Restore-Reclaim,” outdoor games, a basketball tournament, prizes, and awards.

Each District Director has continued to work with the Presiding Elders to ensure that information regarding the Ministry of Christian Education is disseminated to all local Christian Education Directors and Church School Superintendents.

The Christian Education Department of the Palmetto Conference is grateful for the leadership and guidance of the Presiding Elders Keith, Drayton, and Harper.

Recommendations:

1. Christian Education Department will continue to explore new ways to witness the gospel.
2. Christian Education Department be focused on ways to encourage and increase the involvement of youth and young adults in the life of the church.
3. Christian Education Department to receive continued guidance from the Presiding Elders through the help and participation of the pastoral ministry.
4. Christian Education Department will also continue to explore and share new ways to use computers and other technology to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

FAMILY LIFE COMMITTEE

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Debra Smalls-Gardner

Members: Reverends Claudia Lawton, Barbara Fludd, Beverly Burgess, Franklin Rutledge, Barbara Nelson, John Taylor, Joe Knowlin, Lay Samuel Darby, James Holmes, Bonnie Cameron, Joseph Smalls, Brister Harvin, Myron Steed, Deloris Johnson, Cassandra Strickland, Barbara Flynn, Vera Waterman, Vernetha McFadden, Rhonda Fordahm, Rosa Wilson, Jametta Carter

In Today's family, the circumstances surrounding family has changed. Family has to take into account and be prepared to cope with the many issues posed by our society. Family life are on the decline in the United States, divorce, remarriage, and families are smaller now due to growth of single parent household. Family is defined commonly as a group of person related by marriage or ancestry. The important of belonging to a family provides a sense of belonging make it easy for family to accept the ways and value of this society.

There are three types of family structures: Nuclear, Extended and Augmented family. A nuclear family consisting of a father and a mother, and their children all in one household dwelling, extended family extends beyond the nuclear family grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other relatives who live nearby or in one's household and augmented family or family group in which the extended family member or non relatives or both live and provide significant care to the children.

The structure of the family unit has changed, mothers has entered the labor force and more are becoming breadwinners in their families. The nuclear family is changing when you take a look at how divorce, family timing, size, adoption and LGBTQ families are creating a new norm in family life.

In all family units, one has to look at what going on in our society today. Socializing children, ensure economic stability, families further affection care and adaptive functions, mental health is the highest concern for families. Many families are finding that parenting is harder than they expected. Families have to become concern with COVID-19 pandemic, anxiety, depression, children being bullied, sex trafficking, physical threats, drugs abuse, alcohol, teen pregnancy, and getting into trouble with the police, and smart-phone pornography.

Religion are linked to marital and family well being in family life. Families must allow the Holy Spirit in sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with many family members to promote biblical truth. Many young children are less likely to have grown up in church and to observed religious practices by their parents. Those families who attend worship services are reported high levels of life meaning and happiness than those who don't attend at all. It is said that families that study, pray, read scriptures and talk about their faith at home; are children who will practice similar religion in Adulthood.

Statistics shows that families around the world prioritize family time in different ways. In America it is said that 45% of families eat dinner together every day while 57% report sharing meal sometimes. Families spend 37 minutes per day during the week engaging in quality activities. 57% of United State's adults says spending time with family are important. 34% of parents feels too busy for family time and 28% cite work as a barrier.

Children spend 3 hours a day with their parents in active presence; 95% value shared meals as a way to bond, 86% believe it is very important to share dinner in a family unit. 9 out of 10 American parent believe strong bonds come from sharing experience and time spent together. 40% of families indicate that screen time is more of a priority than family time a their household. In today digital age, family time is important. With technology, parents need to prioritize screen time over quality time with their family. The amount of time their children spend on screen time; family time spend should be given the same importance.

47% of family believe family vacation strengthen in bond, and 80% consider vacation essential to bonding. It is believed in the United States, lower income families spend an average of 8.8 hours together while higher income families an average of 7.4 hours together. Today 67% of family agree that children today spend less time with their families than they did when they were growing up.

Conclusion: In Family Life today communicating these facts can help build stronger families in the years to come and beyond.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Sister Joyce Linnen

You make me happy...

During the 2022-2023 Conference Year we did a blood test and we discovered that we had the right DNA; therefore, we wanted to instill in our young people that we are covered by the Blood of Jesus and no matter what obstacles or challenges they may face, they have the Victory because they are covered by the Blood of Jesus.

This you can bet...

Our activities for the conference year began with the Palmetto Conference YPDers paying tribute to those that are breast cancer and domestic violence survivors by participating in various walks and workshops. We were also intentional in instilling in our youth that they have the winning formula with Jesus on their side. To keep the momentum with the theme “*We Have the Right DNA*” | #WinningFormula, our planning meeting was held on November 5, 2022, with the presenters focusing on the fact that God is always with us even in our struggles, trials and tribulations.

You stood right beside me...

Our Mid-Winter meeting was centered on educating our youths and adults about vaping, so Palmetto Conference YPD partnered with the American Heart Association in a campaign on February 11, 2023.

I won't forget...

The End of Year meeting was held on June 24, 2023, in which we recognized our 8-year directors, Area YPDer of the Year and our self-denial winners. Self-Denial winners were rewarded monetary gifts and gift cards. The young people participated in Self-Denial by submitting artistic, literary, and digital expressions on the topic “*Speak Life*.” We also elected our 2023-2024 Conference Year Officers.

I really love you...

On the Episcopal Level, Palmetto Conference attended the 30th Annual SED Retreat on March 3-5, 2023 with a total of 192 registrants. The theme: “*Renaissance the Reawakening*” taken from Isaiah 43:18-19. Our Souper Bowl of Caring drive totaled \$4,700.41 in monetary donations.

In addition, we were off to the Connectional YPD Quadrennial on July 25-29, 2023, with a total of 42 youths and adults registered.

You should know...

God has truly bless Palmetto Conference YPD with another successful conference year for that we are grateful for what he has done.

Recommendations:

1. Create opportunities through programs and workshops where the youth can be heard and express their talents.
2. Create more activities that will motivate our youth both spiritually and mentally.
3. Recommend partnerships with the Women Missionary, Sons of Allen, and Lay for training opportunities.

I want to make sure Palmetto Conference YPD is right, before I let go...

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Brian J. Swinton

Members: Reverends Gilbert L. Jenkins, Jarrett B. Washington, Jason Rouse, Rickey Dennis, Jr., Darien Jones, Rosa Singleton; Lay Cleveland Milton, Johnathan Davis, Jaylen Williams, Eugene Alston, Jr. Tayveon Vasquez, Myron Steed, Takisha Herriott-Blain, Kathy Gamble, Margie Livingston, Jasmine Edwards, Courtney Franklin, Kathy D. Greene, Reva Footman Gadson, Tremone Davis, Emalla Hamlet, Shantell Brown, Shirley McPherson, Valencia Burnett

Going into the 113th session of this Palmetto Annual Conference reminds us of how time is filled with swift transition. Nothing in our world is the same as it was 10 years ago or even yesterday. We have seen major changes in the world, our lives, and even in our churches. The young adults are continuing to try to maneuver, through challenging times. Some of the major questions for us as the body of Christ is how do we help young adults keep God at the center of their life when the world seems not to be walking away from the church? How do we as the church do ministry in our churches that young adults would want to be involved in?

We applaud the tremendous accomplishments of the Palmetto Conference, which is encouraging young adults to become more active in the life of the church. We must continue to unite to address the needs of our young adults, helping them understand that they belong and that they have a place in the church.

To accomplish this, we respectfully make the following recommendations:

1. We recommend that every true believer in God would reach out to at least two young adults that you know are wrestling with their faith and with the church and pour into them. We need more people who are not afraid to pull our young adults who are coming behind you up to where you are in life. When you see them struggling you find a way to encourage them. That the body of Christ would be more loving and caring like our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
2. We continue to recommend that the church worship experience would be inclusive to all generations. We recommend that churches being to establish ministries that young adults would be interested in serving. Some of those ministries could be a young adult night in the word, a Christian poetry night, a young adult game night, and a young adult social.
3. We also recommend that our churches would do more outreach ministries in the local community. The young adults are wanting to be able to give back to their local communities on so many different levels.

PRISON MINISTRY

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Arthur Ford

Members: Reverends Ronald McInnis, Johnny Vereen, Gilbert Dekine, Reddit Andrews, III, Samuel Johnson, Sr., Debra Grant, Wallace Hurrell; Lay Ervin E. Gregg, Sr., Louie Davis, Robert K. Ford, Angelo Muldrow, Myron Steed, Harris Bordone, Jr., Elaine Rouse, Yvonne Barnes, Kathy D. Gamble, Samantha Wynn, Micky Livingston, Diane P. White, Claudette Graham.

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” **Matthew 25:34-40 KJV**

Conversely, there are many people incarcerated in this country, justly and unjustly. It is a common thought that in a civilized society we must have rules and laws to govern our society. While this mindset is correct it is unfortunate that these are applied unequally.

We are facing a system that has been carefully designed to dismantle the families of people color and the less fortunate. A system that is built upon racial profiling, unfair sentencing and an emerging prison system designed for profit. Too many people are being incarcerated at an unprecedented rate. The numbers are a matter of public record. Prisons have become a thriving industry and our people are the source of this illicit income.

We, the church, cannot sit by idly and let this behavior go unchecked. The church born on the day of Pentecost is birthed on the rock, the blood and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus carefully showed us that it is our responsibility to care for and come to the rescue of the least, the loss and the left behind. We therefore must take our “Thus saith the Lord”, our war cry, and speak truth to power.

We must provide the link to individuals who are incarcerated. Maintaining meaningful contact with them reminding them that the church and the people of their communities have not forgotten them. Provide assistance to their family members when possible.

Develop realistic and achievable goals to prevent our children from being incarcerated. We must work with our legislators to achieve true sentencing guidelines that are truly fair and consistent.

It is always important to remember that before undertaking any form of ministry one must consult God. We cannot do anything without the power of God. *“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”* **John 15:1-2 KJV**

We must ensure that we bathe our requests in prayer. Spending quality time with God before undertaking any ministry. Then and only then can we begin the work of Prison Ministry.

It is very clear there is disparity in sentencing guidelines for people of color. We propose, the church, make sure all of our representatives are of aware of this problem and they work toward remedying this problem.

We cannot continue to allow our people to spend their lives behind the walls of incarceration without making a concerted effort to change this plan of evil. Prisons have now become a money- making enterprise for some but heartache for others.

We must take our “Thus shalt the Lord” into the halls of government to make aware to all that the status quo will not be allowed to continue without serious electoral consequences. We are a church born out of struggle and the struggle continues.

Let us not be like Rip Van Winkle waking after the revolution is over. Our voice and actions must be loud, clear and consistent.

HOSPITAL MINISTRY

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Claudia Lawton

Members: Reverends Yvonne L. Jenkins, Winston T. Jones, Barbara Nelson, Maggie Milton, Mervin McBride, Nathalee Nelson, Debra Geathers, Oliver Burns, Jr.; Lay Joseph Smalls, Jerry Burns, Eva Greene, LaVerne Brown, Reva Footman Gadson, Ruther Henry, Yvonne Lincoln, Kate Mapels, Taylor McCullough, Frazalee McNeil

The Mission of the Hospital Committee is to minister to the healthcare needs of our congregants and community at large!! This committee has proactively cared for members where they are in their time of illness by providing health assessments and diagnosing wherever necessary. The Commission has also extended the work of testing and mitigating/educating for Covid-19 to the local churches, district level, and all six Annual Conferences. Jesus clearly stated that we are to heal the sick by educating and caring for them. For example, Jesus wanted His disciples to heal certain folks with palsy, seizures, fever, and many other infirmities by teaching them about sin, sickness, and healing (Luke 5; Mark 2 & 5).

Therefore, the Health Commission is called to enlighten and empower members of our churches to understand what, why, and how to establish a Health Committee at the local church level. Just as Phillip, the young Evangelist was chosen by Paul to augment and supply the movement of the Holy Spirit to share what we as health ministers do to those who are seeking to serve in these areas.

As we continue to deal with the Covid Pandemic, several strains are challenging our population particularly the elderly and the immunocompromised:

“Apparently, there is erroneous information circulating about the omicron XBB variant. While omicron is the most prevalent coronavirus strain globally, omicron XBB is an older omicron subvariant and is not the strain causing the current increase in COVID cases. The EG.5 subvariant is an omicron descendant (subvariant) and has surpassed other strains.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, EG.5 has become the predominant proportion of cases in the United States though it does not seem to be more contagious. Like previous strains, EG.5 may evolve in the future but, according to the World Health Organization, it does not seem to be more virulent than recent strains.

We continue to encourage the precautions noted in our most recent update, especially up-to-date vaccinations, and booster shots (including traditional age-related vaccinations recommended by your healthcare provider). ” Dr Jaques Day, Seventh Episcopal Health Ministry Director

Our parishioners were still challenged with Long-hall related to Covid-19 such as chronic cough, heart disease, blood clots, diabetes, cancer, mental illness, social ills, police brutality, stress related illness & loss of jobs leading to inability to afford medications, food, child, and eldercare. There were also new stats on the increase in suicide in the black community which were historically low! Prostate cancer and eldercare were directly addressed by partnering with communities to educate on these issues more effectively by individual groups such as Missionaries, Sons of Allen, and WIM, Lay, etc.

Lastly, the Covid-19 Pandemic has impacted each one as we have seen various new Variant Strains and viruses. Therefore, the Hospital Committee in our churches, who were traditionally nurses sought to partner with any component leaders within the AME Church.

Hospital Committee will seek to implement the following recommendations:

Provide visitation of sick and shut-in members in a new collaboration with existing boards serving in the church to ensure no one would be without physical, emotional, spiritual, and financial assistance as noted in the 2021 AMEC Doctrine and Discipline & the Great Commission (The Doctrine and Discipline, 2021; The Gospels Matthews 28: 16-20; Mark 16:15-18; James 5:14).

Relevant to the Pandemic times, CDC and World Health Organization has consistently recommended throughout 2022 thru 2023 year, guidelines which still included mask wearing, social distancing, frequent hand washing and or the use of hand sanitizer and vaccinated and booster against the Covid 19 and all variant strains your health provider, health clinic, and pharmacist recommended.

The Members and Committee ought to be good custodial in self-care and work- life balance! Take prescribed medications, keep regular doctor appointments, exercising as prescribed by your MD and when you are physically able to do so, staying hydrated, eating more lean meats, fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, knowing your allergies, and finally, getting the right amount of sleep at night.

Attend worship and prayer services sharing and testifying to one another to build faith, hope, communion, and fellowship with each other during these unprecedented and difficult times.

Seek out viable resources and partnerships with communities, health organizations, clinics, and colleges to ensure diverse and relevant educational materials are available to our congregants to properly inform and navigate us in these unprecedented times.

LAY ACTIVITIES

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Sister Gloria McClam

Members: Brothers: Hewitt Dominick, Thomas Mention, Leroy Spann; Sisters: Gloria A. McClam, Vergie Tennison, Debra Darby, Johnnie Ferguson, Marguerite D. Bryant, Doreen Green, Gwendolyn McBride

Greetings in the Matchless and Majestic name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

The Palmetto Conference consist of **100 churches** with **92 active Lay Organizations**:

	Churches	Lay Organizations
Georgetown	32	26
Kingstree	37	37
Mt. Pleasant	31	29

At the close of the Palmetto Annual Conference 2022, the laity, “Armed and Dangerous,” were ready for the new Conference Year. The Executive Board met, received wise counsel from the Advisory Council, and the work began, *equipping the saints for ministry*.

In addition to Executive Board Meetings, Conference Meetings were held in September, November, January, March and May. Districts of the Palmetto Conference hosted meetings, also. Each meeting featured informative Power Sessions geared to equip the laity for service. Among them were the following:

- Steps for Reorganizing the Local Lay Organization
- Reclaiming Church Members after COVID-19
- The Lay Electoral College
- Trustees Duties and Responsibilities
- The Official Board: Composition, Responsibilities, Business and Restrictions
- Development of a Transforming Leader
- A Spiritual Walk
- Objectives of the Lay Organization
- Lead, Follow, Partner and Unite

Celebration:

In December 2022, we celebrated a life well lived - Lay Legend, **Bro. Norman L. Deas** (1935 – 2022), Palmetto Conference Lay Organization Advisor (2021-2022); Allen University Board of Trustees (2005-2022); Connectional Lay Organization Advisor (2011 – 2019); and Episcopal District Lay President (2003 – 2011). We thank God for the life he lived among us. What a blessing!

Special Projects/Goals Accomplished

- Worshipped with and donated more than \$9,000.00 among 3 mission churches. (Thanks to Presiding Elder Keith who contributed \$3,000.00 to the Mt. Pleasant District’s mission church).
 - January 15, 2023 - Mt. Pleasant District – St. James AME Church, Wando, SC, Rev. Peggy Snipe, Pastor
 - March 19, 2023 - Kingstree District – St. Matthews AME Church, Cross, SC, Rev. Diana Davis, Pastor
 - June 11, 2023 - Georgetown District – Mt. Olive AME Church, Georgetown, SC, Rev. Terry Alston, Pastor

- “The youth of the nation are the trustees of prosperity.” J.T.W. Mims Little Allen Stars featured 2 Palmetto Conference’s most talented young men. Orators from the Georgetown District – **Jabrell Snow**, St. John AMEC, and the Kingstree District - **Ayden Epps**, Greater St. James AMEC
- Promoted Lay Witness Sunday in October and Connectional Lay Day in April.
 - Lay Day Speaker – Greater St. Luke AMEC, Charleston, Rev. Eduardo Curry and Reid Chapel, Columbia, Rev. Carry Grady
- Scholarships - \$2,000.00
 - Palmetto Conference - \$500.00: **Rochelle William**,
 - Kingstree District - \$500.00: **Amber Wilson**
 - Mt. Pleasant District – \$1,000.00 David Pasley Scholarship: **Reana Grace Barrentine**
- Outstanding Lay Person
 - Adult – **Leroy Spann**
 - Young Adult – **Quintella Dollard** (Episcopal Winner)
- Madame 7th Contestants
 - Georgetown District - **Sara Washington**, St. Paul AME Church, Georgetown, SC
 - Mt. Pleasant District - **Vanessa Richardson**, Greater Goodwill AME Church, Mt. Pleasant, SC
 - Kingstree District – Young Adult, **Khadijah Winns**, Mt. Carmel AMEC, Moncks Corner, SC captured 2nd Place on the Episcopal level.
 - Kingstree District - **Patricia Wright-Dawson**, Greater St. Luke AMEC, Charleston, SC captured the Episcopal title/honor.
- Oratorical Contestant **Pa’Ris Waterman**, Georgetown District, St. John AME Church (Morrisville), Episcopal 2nd Place Winner.
- Mt. Pleasant District Newsletter
- Mt. Pleasant District Ronald McDonald House
- Mt. Pleasant District MUSC Shawn Jenkins Children’s Hospital
- Christmas Pageant
- Red and White Gala
- Georgetown District Prayer Breakfast
- Kingstree District Madame 7th Pageant
- Supported Episcopal and Connectional Meetings
 - SEDLO Retreat (35 attendees) and Annual Convention (58 attendees)
 - CLO Executive Board Meetings in December 2023 and April 2023
 - CLO Young Adult Retreat
 - CLO Biennial Meeting – 36 Delegates/Observers
- The Palmetto Conference continues to provide quality leadership throughout the AME Connection
 - CLO Committee Members: Debra Darby, Johnnie Ferguson, Gloria McClam
 - Episcopal Officers
 - Completed Term of Office: Leroy Spann - 2nd VP and Valerie Frasier -Director of Public Relations.
 - Officers Elected: Debra Darby – 2nd VP and Tylaunda Corbin –Director of Public Relations

Fellowship:

We worked hard this year and celebrated in our end of the year Lay Fellowship at Short Stay Recreational Center hosted by the Kingstree District. Delicious food, door prizes galore, dancing and lots of fun. ***What a fellowship!***

Election of Officers:

- Kingstree District – Election Year 2023 – **Marguerite Bryant**, President
- Mt. Pleasant District –Election Year 2021 – **Johnnie Ferguson**, President (TBA 2023)
- Georgetown District –Election Year 2022 – **Doreen Green**, President (TBA 2024)
- Palmetto Conference – Election to be held September 2023

We praise and thank God for using us to “*transform, transcend and liberate.*” We, “*the laity of the Palmetto Conference, living a Global Witness Ministry,*” stand ready to follow God’s lead.

TOGETHER: We Can * We Will * We Must!

Recommendations:

1. All local presidents connect with their District of the Annual Conference president within 30 days after the Annual Conference to provide contact information to ensure that they are included in all Lay programs, training and ministry.
2. Clergy attend at least one Conference and one District meeting per Conference Year.

CLASS LEADERS

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Dr. Elsa B. Syndab

Members: Reverends Yvonne Jenkins, Curtis J. Fludd; Lay Ervin E. Greggs, Sr., Henry Griffin, Floyd A Gant, Rosa Wilson, Thomesena Gant, Jametta Carter

We, The Palmetto SC Annual Conference Class Leaders Committee, have surmised, to serve in the office of a Class Leader, in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, you must be a believer of Jesus Christ, devoted, and dedicated to serve the people of God. Further research and studies prove, for the Class Leaders Ministry to function as intended by the Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church, it is imperative that the Class Leader is familiar with his/her responsibilities. The number one responsibility is to assist the Pastor as mediators and serve as the middle connection that links the members to the Pastor. It is the findings of this committee, that every Class Leader, must be approachable and is proactive in this Post Pandemic season. We further concur, that through the inspiration of Bishop Richard Allen and the early teachings of John Wesley, all Class Leaders are strategically placed in position to nurture God's people with loving kindness, keeping them encouraged in the word, and making it known, through persistent service, that this Church, is a God ordained institution.

According to the Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church, a Class Leader is described as a person appointed by the Pastor, who assigns them to a class of parishioners. It is the primary purpose of the Class Leader Ministry to discern whether members are working out their soul salvation and to consistently encourage members to contribute, through tithes and offerings, to support the mission of the Church.

In addition to our research, we find that when the Class Leaders Ministry is functioning properly, each member will feel connected to the Church, the body of Christ. They will in turn, be aware of who they need to contact when they are experiencing challenges with their faith, health, loss of a family member, or personal life issues. The Church is the spiritual body of Christ, and the body can only function at its best when every member of the body is doing what they have been called and commissioned to do.

We further glean from the early writings of John Wesley, that the Class Leaders System, was purposed to instill piety and religious commitment in those who would come to affiliate themselves with the Methodist denomination. Wesley was a holiness advocate, who taught that true union with Christ in its totality, is having a new life of obedience to Jesus, through the renewing power of the Holy Spirit.

As we press forward, in this ***“new church”***, it is the Class Leaders Committee recommendations, that a Class Leader be examined quarterly by the Pastor and /or the Presiding Elder, ensuring both spiritual and natural effectiveness, to spark growth in the AME Church. Such duties and responsibilities include:

- Communicating regularly with the members in their class, to inquire how each soul is prospering.
- Consistently visiting all members in their class, via virtual meeting or in person visitation.
- Communicating with the Pastor frequently, to ensure that every member of the local congregation is accounted for. Reporting all deaths, absentees from the assembly, and relocation.
- Informing members of the various platforms available, to insure open communication with the church, via virtual or in person.
- Watching over probationers with special care and recommend those who are eligible at the end of the ninety (90) days for full membership, upon their profession of saving faith in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

- Reporting to the Official Board:
 - Those who are sick or experiencing a crisis.
 - Those who are disorderly and will not be approved to be fellowshiped in as full members.
- Encourage members who have plans to relocate:
 - Endeavour to help them find an AME Church in their new location.
 - Explicate the purpose of being under the umbrella of “watchful care”.
 - Encourage them to stay affiliated with their home church.
- Follow the instructions in the Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Sister Nevja Smalls Wigfall

We the members of the Palmetto Conference Women's Missionary Society make the following report:

Our focus for the 2022-2023 conference year was to fulfill the goals as outlined in the Connectional WMS Theme: *Empower Women, Embrace the Child, and Eradicate Hunger*. In addition, we developed a conference theme of "Manifesting Greatness" in which to guide our focus for the year while working to support our connectional theme.

The Palmetto Conference WMS is proud of our continued efforts regarding living a healthy lifestyle. We have continued our partnership with the American Heart Association Healthy Challenge program by encouraging our members to participate in a healthy lifestyle through exercise and meal choices. We have also explored the effects of vaping among our children. We have held workshops and awareness events to spread the word. In addition, as a combined effort, each area has continued with a lifestyle of healthy eating and exercise. The Conference recognized individuals, churches and areas that participated in this challenge at our end of the year meeting.

We have renewed our commitment to the 17 Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by promoting the goals of No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health and well-being, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Clean Water and Sanitation, and Partnerships. We continue to support Domestic Violence Awareness, Sickle Cell Awareness, Mental Health Awareness, Diabetes Core Coalition, Florence Crittendon House, Pee Dee Coalition, Moms Demand Action against Gun Violence and Moms in Prayer.

While we strive to build our missionary society, we continue to support our Life Members, Torchlighters, Young Adult Missionaries, YPDers, and students at Allen University. We continue to identify our next generation of leaders by providing scholarships to our high school students.

Finally, as a conference we have worked to get back into our churches on a regular basis while still embracing the virtual platforms in which to worship, to educate and to continue our work in missions. The Palmetto Conference WMS is still working to perfect our website in which to keep our members updated on conference and episcopal events.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Palmetto Conference WMS will continue our commitment to fulfilling the mission of advocating for women by continuing to address Domestic Violence, Healthy Living and Health disparities.
2. The Palmetto Conference WMS will continue supporting various outreach missions within our communities in new and creative ways.
3. The Palmetto Conference WMS will continue to support our own whether it be the YPD, Our Area Consultants, Life Members, Pastors of the Palmetto Conference, and our various communities.

We would like to thank Bishop Samuel L. Green, Sr., Supervisor Phyllis N. Green, and Sister Sandra A. Anderson for the opportunity to serve. A special thank you goes to Presiding Elders, Pastors, WMS Area Chairpersons, WMS Officers, Life Members, Torchlighters and all missionaries of the Palmetto Conference on every level in your respective places for your support and commitment to this president and the work of missions.

To God be the glory for all the great things He has done!

SONS OF ALLEN

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Brother Joseph Pendergrass and Reverend Dr. Robert Kennedy

The following is a report of activities of the Palmetto Conference Sons of Allen for the 2022-23 Conference Year:

- The Palmetto Conference Sons of Allen came together to celebrate the life and legacy of our beloved Brother Norman Deas. Bro. Deas served on many levels in the Seventh Episcopal District and was serving as Coordinator for the Georgetown Chapter Sons of Allen at his transition.
- The Palmetto Conference Sons of Allen co-hosted the Seventh Episcopal District SOA Retreat along with the South Carolina Conference Sons of Allen. The Retreat was held in Charleston June 2-3, 2023. The workshops, food, worship service and fellowship among the Brothers was enjoyed by all.
- Another highlight of the conference year was when Bro. Darius Rush, a graduate of C. E. Murray High School and the University of South Carolina became the 138th pick in this year's NFL draft by the Indianapolis Colts. Darius and his family are proud members of Beulah AME Church in Kingstree, SC where Darius was an active youth participant with the Sons of Allen. Beulah AME Church is in the Kingstree District of the Palmetto Conference.
- All three SOA Chapters provided education scholarships to graduating male high School seniors in their respective districts.
- Youth from all three SOA Chapters attended and participated in ASPIRE Youth Conference in Greenville, SC.
- All three Chapters provided physical and financial support to local community agencies. The Georgetown Chapter sponsored 30+ youth to attend a NBA basketball game in Charlotte, NC. The Kingstree Chapter continued its support of the Resurrection Center for the Homeless in Lake City, SC. The Mt. Pleasant Chapter continued its support of the Windward Farms Youth Facility in Awendaw, SC by providing suitcases and gift cards to 23 Youth.

Recommendations:

1. The Palmetto Conference Sons of Allen will actively seek out and recruit young men in our local congregations under the age of 35 to become active members of the Sons of Allen.
2. The Palmetto Conference Sons of Allen will continue to focus on mentoring and supporting the young men of the church and community to help them develop into productive and responsible christian adults.
3. The Palmetto Conference Sons of Allen will actively seek out opportunities to collaborate with and support local organizations that provide services which may be beneficial to members of our congregations.
4. The three Chapters of the Palmetto Conference Sons of Allen will continue to interact and support each other to support the mission of the Sons of Allen.
5. The Palmetto Conference Sons of Allen will continue to collaborate with the South Carolina Conference Sons of Allen to support church and community events when called upon.

WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Dr. Elsa Syndab

The Women in Ministry of the Palmetto Annual Conference, which encompasses Georgetown, Mt. Pleasant, and Kingstree Districts, pressed for perfection this season, conquering challenges, and adjusting to the “*New Church*”. We acknowledge that we are our sister’s keeper and adopted the theme of The Connectional Women in Ministry, Walking in Strengths, Iron Sharpening Iron.

“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens the wits of another.” (Proverbs 27:17)

The Palmetto SC Annual Conference Coordinator, Reverend Dr. Elsa B. Syndab, organized the conference and held seven (7) Executive Board Meetings via Zoom, with Conference Officers and Presiding Elder District Coordinators.

We had an amazing conference year! We supported *our* Allen University with a \$2800.00 donation. We are elated to support Reverend Dr. Barbara Chisolm, from the Mt. Pleasant District, throughout her campaign for Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

We came together for fun, fellowship, games, and food, at our Annual Christmas Gala, held at Buckshot’s restaurant, McClellanville, SC., on December 13, 2022. We also met virtually every other month for prayer and inspiration. Through our “Good Cheer Fund”, we continued to support our sisters and families, who experienced: loss, illnesses, or hospitalization, with prayers and financial gifts. We also celebrated Reverend Debra Grant Briggman, with a special newlywed gift.

We served at the God First Holy Convocation, Florence Center, Florence, SC, April 20 - 22, 2023. We assisted in setting up and monitoring the Prayer/War Room during the Holy Convocation meeting. The Seventh Episcopal District WIM 2nd Vice President, Reverend Rose Stokes-Small, was the Prayer-Room coordinator. The experience was anointed and powerful. We also assisted Bishop Samuel L. Green Sr., around the altar with prayer and with sheets, for all who experienced the Power of the Holy Spirit.

The Women in Ministry of the Seventh Episcopal District hosted a one-day retreat on May 20, 2023, at Bishop Memorial AME Church, Columbia, Reverend Rodella Burns, Pastor. The theme was “Clearing Pathways; A New Season for Purpose”. The prestigious Jarena Lee Award was presented to a special recipient from each Conference at the retreat. The recipient for the Palmetto Annual Conference was Reverend Dr. Betty Broomfield.

We hosted a “Denim and Pearls Praise Fest” service on June 3, 2023, at Greater St. Mark AME Church, the Reverend Ida Mitchel, Pastor. The Praise Fest featured Prayers from each Presiding Elder District or a designated prayer warrior; Reverend Dr. Juenarrl Keith, Reverend Dr. Sandy Drayton, and Reverend Remus Harper Jr.; songs of praise were also rendered by the District Choirs from Georgetown, Kingstree, and Mt. Pleasant.

We ended our conference year with an “*End of the Year Meeting / Brunch*”, on August 12, 2023, at Greater Mt. Zion AME Church, McClellanville, SC, Reverend Rose Stokes-Small, Pastor. We came together to pray first, and then to fellowship, have fun, and eat! The hospitality and atmosphere were amazing!

We continue to improve ourselves by pursuing advanced seminary degrees. There are several members pursuing Master of Divinity degrees as well as Doctoral Degrees. We believe that studying the word of God should be a priority when you are called to teach God’s people. We are encouraged to be prepared for the future church. 2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV) says;

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Each Presiding Elder's District continue to adjust to the *"New Church"*, by meeting virtually or in person, once a month for fellowship, prayer, and encouragement.

- The Kingstree District goals and successes for the year of 2022 and 2023, continued as they provided sympathetic services for the local churches and surrounding community. Several Women in Ministry were chosen to be proclaimers of the Gospel for District programs. The Kingstree District WIM, continues compassionately in prayer meetings each month. They celebrate with the graduates of Green-Dickerson Seminary that will stretch forward to lead their congregations to a higher level of Kingdom Building.
- The Georgetown District WIM, after the Palmetto Annual Conference, returned to Georgetown eager and ready to do the work of the Lord, by supporting all in need, praying for the sick, and encouraging the weak in spirit. They supported the Georgetown Area YPD, who hosted a Youth Carnival held on May 6, 2023, with a love gift of \$250. The Georgetown District WIM hosted a "Twelve Tribe of Israel" Service at Dickerson AME Church, Reverend Dr. Elsa B. Syndab, Pastor, on June 2, 2023. The guest preacher was Reverend Rose Goodwater Richardson, Pastor of Allen AME Church, Edisto Island. Their theme for the year; "when we heard the words of God to "plant a seed," we wanted to plant a seed of love in the hearts of others, believing that God will surely give the increase."
- The Mt. Pleasant District Women in Ministry embraced their theme; Psalms 133:1 "We are Better Together" partnering and praying for one another. They were the host District for the Annual PAC WIM Christmas Gala, held on December 13, 2023, at Buckshot's Restaurant McClellanville, SC. Fun was had by all in attendance. On March 16, 2023, they hosted a "Hour of Power Revival" at Olive Branch AME Church, Reverend Richard Harkness, Host Pastor. Presiding Elder Juenarri Keith was the keynote speaker. They also hosted a Hat Show Extravaganza on June 11th at Greater Mt. Zion AME Church, Reverend Rose Stokes Smalls, Host Pastor. The Preacher was Reverend Viola Hardy, Pastor of St. Phillip AME Church. The Mt. Pleasant District WIM are unapologetically, looking forward to hitting God's proverbial pavement, to do the work of our Savior Jesus Christ, assigned to our hands.

It is the goal of the Palmetto SC Annual Conference Women in Ministry to:

- Continue to mentor other women entering ministry and pastoring for the first time.
- Strive to change the face of the church by creating opportunities that develop and encourage unity and love among each other.
- Continue to educate and expand the presence and leadership of WIM.
- Be extra supportive to WIM pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees.
- Support WIM pastors with smaller churches.

CHRISTIAN DEBUTANTE AND MASTERS COMMISSION

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Sister Antigone Jones and Reverend Rickey Dennis, Jr.

Projected Ministry Objectives/Projects:

By using the Scripture Matthew 5:14 as a theme for this 2023 Class: “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.” To provide training for our young people to be leaders of light in the church, community and world. To stay connected with your youth through meetings, text messages, calls and correspondence. To conduct training workshops for new and existing Commissioners. To assist our youth with a creative service project to aid a local convalescent home with needed items for residents.

Our CDMC 2023 Participants:

Debutante - 10

Master - 5

Sub-Debutante - 7

Sub-Master - 6

Allenite - 7

Pre-Allenite - 4

Total = 39 Participants

Presiding Elder District Church Participation:

Mt. Pleasant-Pending

Georgetown - 4

Kingstree – 35

Accomplishments:

- Hosted a Zoom Meet and Greet with New Conference Commissioner and Associate
- Commissioner with Immediate Past Conference and Associate Commissioners and
- District Commissioners.
- Hosted a Zoom Meet and Greet with Conference Commissioner and Associate
- Commissioner and District Commissioners, new and returning local commissioners and
- pastors.
- Morning motivational text messages sent to Palmetto Conference Executive Board.
- Future Endeavors:
- Host meetings at local churches following CDC and AME Church Guidelines regarding:
 - Mental Health Moments (Bullying, Gun Violence, Peer Pressure)
 - Social Etiquette Skills
 - Your Vote Matters Seminar
 - Know Your Church “Walk-Through”
 - Money Matters for Youth
- Christian Education Directors will conduct small group meetings with their age groups to review
- the following:
 - Pledges of Dedication
 - AME Motto
 - The Lord’s Prayer

Recommendations:

1. Appoint a local Commissioner at **each** church within the Palmetto Conference. More focused attention on growth within the Palmetto Conference of its participation. Develop a cohesive relationship between Presiding Elders, District Commissioners, Local Commissioners and pastors to develop strategic plans to **maintain** and **enhance** growth within each District of the Palmetto Conference.
2. Encourage parents/guardians of the importance of CDMC and to reinforce the dedication to learn and know pledges. It is with much prayer that with the continued support of the Christian Debutante and Masters Commission all of our participants will grow in confidence and strive for excellence as they journey through the Rites of Christian Passage. Having this foundation will prepare them and encourage them as they enter Christian maturity. They will not only have the necessary teachings that will guide them throughout life but will be able to experience life more abundantly having been a part of this program.

I most sincerely thank Bishop Samuel L. Green, Sr., Presiding Prelate of the Seventh Episcopal District, Sister Phyllis N. Green, Seventh Episcopal District CDMC Supervisor, Sister Latoya Dennison, Seventh Episcopal CDMC Commissioner, Presiding Elders, Consultants, Pastors, Commissioners, Parents, Participants, Rev. Rickey Dennis and my Executive Board Team for your support and patience of my first year as the Palmetto South Carolina Conference Christian Debutante and Master Commissioner.

MSWAWO + PK's

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Sister Von Sellers Buckner

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not to thine own understanding in all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct your path. Proverbs 3: 5-6

What We Do (2022/2023 Conference Overview)

As we embarked into the 2022/2023 Conference year we thanked God for our leadership team, Bishop Samuel L. Green, Sr., Presiding Prelate and Mrs. Phyllis N. Green, Supervisor thank you for your vision, prayers and support.

Our meetings were held virtually--On October 29, 2022, was our first meeting under the Presidency of Mrs. Juanita Lockwood. We were truly blessed to have as our Presenter our own Pk Dr. Joan Aida Knowlin who is an Educator. Theme: Bless to Be a Blessing. Dr. Knowlin shared with us that we all have been blessed in our lives and we can't keep it to ourselves, we have to go and bless someone else in order for our lives to be richer. Dr. Joan Knowlin is the daughter of Rev. Joe & Mrs. Doris Knowlin.

During the Post Conference Rev. Joe & Mrs. Juanita Lockwood were transferred to the Central Conference and we thank her for an amazing job leading the Palmetto Conference M-SWAWO + PKs.

The Palmetto Conference was well represented at the Connectional Retreat in Little Rock, Arkansas.

On December 12, 2022, I was asked to serve as President for the remaining Conference year.

Holidays can be a challenging time for those who have lost loved ones, so the Palmetto Conference MSWAWO + PKs mailed Christmas card and love gifts to our Widows and Retired Clergy and Spouses.

As we entered the New Year, we extended our Theme: Be Blessed to Be a Blessing, Each One Reach One.

Our January meeting was held via conference call.

The Palmetto Conference MSWAWO + PKs attended the 7th Episcopal District Retreat at Ridgecrest Conference Center in Black Mountain, North Carolina and it was a joy to see everyone's face-to-face since 2019. We were truly blessed by Mrs. Karen Abercrombie, an actress, author and storyteller. We played games, gathered around the firepit and made smores, our PK's had a grand time doing Arts & Crafts and playing in the video arcade. The Grand Finale was having the 125th Elected and Consecrated Bishop of the Seventh Episcopal District the Right Reverend Samuel L Green, Sr., preach our closing worship service. A good time was had by all.

Our third meeting was a Tribute Celebration, paying tribute to our District Leadership. Presiding Elder Rev. Dr. Juenarrl Keith, Area Consultant Mrs. Anna Keith, Mt. Pleasant District, Presiding Elder Rev. Dr. Sandy Drayton, Area Consultant Mrs. Pradensia Drayton, Georgetown District, Rev. Remus Harper and Area Consultant Mrs. Tanya Harper, Kingstree District. We were blessed learning the history of our leaders and the Legacy they will leave behind. There were also tributes to our Honorees through song. the purpose and occasion is to give them their flowers while they can smell them, they were also gifted with a beautiful plaque.

Our final meeting was held in person at EME Apartments in the Conference Center Morris Brown AME Church and hosted by Reverend James & Mrs. Leslie Keaton, Pastor and First Lady. The Morris Brown family welcomed us with open arms and southern hospitality, and they served a wonderful breakfast. We closed out the business session of the 2022 – 2023 Conference year.

Finally, the Palmetto Conference MSWAWO + PKs attended the Aspire 2023 held in Greenville, SC where our own Pk Dr. Joan Aida Knowlin was a presenter.

Recommendations for the 2023 – 2024 Conference year:

1. Increase the membership by reaching out to all spouses of the Clergy to include Local, Retired, Widow and Widowers and all new spouses assigned to the conference.
2. Provide mentors and training sessions to enable members to define and better understand as well as to strengthen their skills to fill their role in the home, church and community.
3. To promote opportunities for spiritual growth of our PK's and encourage them to become active voices within our organization.
4. To serve God in unity with all our hearts, mind and soul. We will continue to support one another with prayers, gifts, and continued fellowship.

I would like to express a sincere thanks to Bishop Samuel L. Green, Sr. for your prayers and support to the Organization, Supervisor Mrs. Phyllis N. Green, thank you for your love, prayer, support and the Pop-Up sessions letting us be transparent. Retired Supervisor Mrs. Carrie Grady thank you for your prayers and encouragement. Episcopal President Mrs. Lakesha Adams, and the Past Presidents thank you for letting me stand on your shoulders. To Presiding Elders Rev. Dr. Juenarrl Keith, Rev. Dr. Sandy Drayton, and Rev. Remus Harper thank you for your prayers and support. The Area Consultants Sisters Anna Keith, Pradensia Drayton, and Tanya Harper thank you for prayers, support and encouraging words. Sisters Pricilla Heyward and Janet Baker and the Nominating Committee thank you for entrusting me to lead this organization for the last nine months. I am privileged to serve with an awesome Executive Board. We took care of all, we supported our clergy and spouses, and addressed the needs of the organization across the connection.

We stand by our motto: Be Blessed to be a Blessing: Each One Reach One:

To Rev. Alford L Buckner, thank you for being by my side the last nine months.

Only What you do for Christ will last. May God Richly Bless the Palmetto Conference MSWAWO + PKs of the 7th Episcopal District.

MEMORIALS

Palmetto South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Peggy J. Pope

Members: Reverends Barbara Nelson, Christopher Mathis, Jr., Alice P. Wright, Yvonne Jenkins, Merrielee Smalls-Salley, Ronald Lewis, Earl Harris, Francis McPherson; Lay Melvin Smith, Chayann Simpson, Acquanette Williams Lee, Vernetha McFadden, Martha Barr, Emalaa Hamlet, Tanya Tucker, Jacqueline Gray, Shelia Powell

A great hymn of the Church that is sung at our gathering,” And are we yet alive to see each other’s face”, at the end of the 2022-2023 conference year, we pause to remember our deceased brothers and sisters in the Palmetto Conference who have gone to be with the Lord. They cannot sing that song with us any longer. Their journey has ended. We will miss their presence and service among us However, every one of us has a life journey with God guiding our steps along the way.

Our heart aches from the empty place yet rejoice in their time with us. Meanwhile, we will embrace the words of the Apostle Paul and what he says, “To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord”. Therefore, our song of faith is in God’s promise to lift our burdened hearts. Our song of faith is the strength we get from knowing this life is not the end of our story. Our song of faith is that we will see our loved ones who die in the Lord again. Our song of faith as we are reminded of the absence of our loved ones is one of thanksgiving for their touching our lives.

THE JOURNEY HOME

There’s a path that leads to a turn in the road,
And we each must travel there.
Where the Father waits to take us home
To the shelter of His care.
Where happiness and peace and joy
Replace the tears and pain,
And our loved ones rest in the arms of God
To sweetly live again.

“Servant of God, Well Done! Rest from thy loved employ; The Battle fought, the victory won, Enter thy Master’s joy. The pains of death are past, labor and sorrow ceased, and life’s long warfare closed at last; His soul is found in peace. Soldier of Christ well done! Praise thy new employ; and while eternal ages run, Rest in the Savior’s joy. May those who have passed on continue to be an integral part of the rich history of the African Methodist Episcopal Church....

Be it therefore resolved that a record of this memorial be placed in the official records of the 113th session of the Palmetto Annual Conference.