

146TH SESSION OF THE
COLUMBIA SOUTH CAROLINA
ANNUAL CONFERENCE

819 Bethel AME Church
Woodrow Street, Columbia, SC 29205

The Right Reverend Samuel L. Green, Presiding Prelate
Dr. Phyllis N. Green, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Rosalyn Grant Coleman, Host Presiding Elder

The Reverend Dr. Charmaine Ragin Merrick, Associate Presiding Elder

The Reverend Samuel McPherson, Associate Presiding Elder

The Reverend Dr. Caesar R. Richburg, Host Pastor

Sis. Ella Richburg, Host Spouse



ANNUAL
CONFERENCE

S E R I E S

2023

LITERARY REPORTS

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

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JUDICIAL

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Presiding Elder: Presiding Elder Rosalyn Grant Coleman
Reverends: Phillip Washington, Mary Glisson, Steven Evans, Yvonne Feaster, Caesar R. Richburg

Report

To be reported live during the Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

TRIERS OF APPEALS

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Presiding Elder: Presiding Elder M. Charmaine Ragin Merrick
Reverends: Carey A. Grady, Rodella Rivers, Wanda Rapley, Ertha Bowman

Report

To be reported live during the Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

MINISTERIAL EFFICIENCY

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Reverends: Kenneth Taylor, Larry Clark, Rhudene Toomer, Tobie H. Pollock, Stanley Flowers

Report

To be reported live during the Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

BOARD OF EXAMINERS

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Presiding Elders: Rosalyn Grant Coleman, Sr., M. Charmaine Ragin Merrick, Samuel L. McPherson

Reverends: Maxine R. Sumpter, Yvonne Feaster, Jannie Collier, Rhudene Toomer, Debora Grant Scotland, James Dennis, III, Danté Kenly, Bobby Seepersaud, Tobie H. Pollock, Carey Grady, Larry Clark, Moses Rembert, Elaine Eskew, Mary Glisson

Report

To be reported live during the Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

CONFERENCE TRUSTEES

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

- Presiding Elders:** Presiding Elders Rosalyn Grant Coleman, and M. Charmaine Ragin Merrick, Samuel L. McPherson, Sr.
- Reverends:** Caesar Richburg, Carey Grady, James Dennis, III, Debora Grant Scotland, Furman Miller, Jr., Michael Harp, Ertha Bowman, Sonya Lybrand, Mary Glisson, Steven Evans, Phillip Washington, Danté Kenly
- Brothers:** Larry Thompson, Allen Etheredge, Clinton Huff, Walter Savage, Alton Cobb
- Sisters:** Joann Richardson, Joan Brant

Report

In the interim of the Annual Conference, the Columbia Conference Trustees met on Sunday, June 4, 2023 at 7:00 PM via Zoom virtual platform. The purpose of this meeting was to address a request made by Pine Grove AME Church, Peak, SC located on the Columbia District. On behalf of the church, the pastor of Pine Grove, Rev. Jannie Collier requested approval from the Board of Trustees to proceed with acquiring a loan in the amount of \$20,000.00 to finance the purchase and installation of two (2) HVAC units, to replace the kitchen ceiling and to renovate the men's restroom. The Pastor explained the terms of the loan. Bishop called for any questions. Both Board members and members of the congregation were given opportunity to speak. All questions having been answered, Bishop expressed concern about the need for HVAC units during the peak of the hot season. He then offered two options:

Option 1: Bishop Green would commit to donate \$10,000.00 and the Conference Trustees would come together in worship and help to raise additional funds. If these two actions did not reach the goal, then the church would proceed to borrow what was needed.

Option 2: The Church would proceed with the process of borrowing the \$20,000.00. Bishop admonished that if this option was chosen, they would need to proceed immediately.

On behalf of the congregation, the pastor chose option one. Bishop then informed Rev. Collier to pick up the check from his office the next day and coordinate with Mrs. Neal to schedule a date for the Worship Service.

Addendum: Pine Grove AME Church, Peak celebrated Family and Friends Day on July 23, 2023 at 2:30 PM. The Right Reverend Samuel L. Green was the preacher. The Church was successful in meeting the goal.

On November 26, 2022, the 7th Episcopal District of the AME Church, representing the Six (6) Annual Conferences, consented to action without meeting by its Annual Conference. The action taken ratified, adopted, and certified for the records of the Church the amendment of the Vision Center's Articles of Incorporation. This document clarified its purpose as required by the Internal Revenue Code. (See Attachment)

Recommendations:

1. All churches should follow the Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church as it pertains to securing funds.

2. All churches should be diligent in keeping financial records readily available at all times for the purpose of fiduciary accountability.
3. Churches should be able to trend and forecast the impact of the pandemic on their financial stability.
4. Trustees in the local church are advised to review church records and documents to ensure that there is adequate coverage to meet the physical and mechanical needs of the church should any need arise.

The Columbia Annual Conference, like other Annual Conferences throughout the Seventh Episcopal District has benefited from the generosity of Bishop Samuel L. Green Sr. His commitment and demonstration of support has afforded many churches the resources to complete much-needed repairs to local church facilities. We salute you Bishop Sam and thank you for all you have done to build the real estate portfolios of the 7th Episcopal District.

Respectfully Submitted,
Annual Conference Trustees

DEEDS, ABSTRACTS, AND ABANDONED PROPERTY

Reverends: James F. Johnson Jr., Timothy McKinzie, Isaac Booker, III, Leonard Simmons, Timothy Taylor, Aaron Davis
Brothers: Herbert McCray, Leroy Harvin
Sisters: Margie B. Mack, Lillie Boozer

Report

We, the Committee on Deeds, Abstracts, and Abandoned Property, beg leave to make our report.

- The Presiding Elder's District of Columbia reports that The Columbia District has clear title to the properties.
- The follow up work in Presiding Elder's District of Lancaster reports the properties remain intact to the Connectional A.M.E. Church.
- The Presiding Elder's District of Newberry reports that The District has clear title to the properties.

Recommendation:

- Adhere to the 2019 -2020 report on abandoned property in Lancaster District, Newberry, and Columbia Districts.
- That the Board of Trustees consider marking, and maybe cleaning them up to discourage further vandalism, and defacing of the property.
- Furthermore, it is the committee's recommendation that each District's appointed members, on this committee, make their reports at their District Conference of any abandoned property issues, and forward that report to the conference committee's chair.
- And we, the committee, would also like to further recommend that each presiding Elders' district consider having these cemetery properties insured. This would protect the A.M.E. Church from any liability issues.

Respectfully Submitted,
The Committee on Deeds, Abstracts, and Abandoned Property

INCORPORATION OF CHURCH PROPERTY

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Reverends: Schrendria Robinson, Furman Miller, Jr., Dennis Broughton, Jr., Ertha Bowman, Lorenzo Dinkins, Janie Williams

Brothers: Charlie Smith, André Thompkins

Sisters: Fayette Belton, Kathy Rabb

Report

This report is based on conversations with the Presiding Elders of the Columbia Annual Conference and continued review of South Carolina Secretary of State's listing of AME Churches in the Columbia Annual Conference.

Rev. Rosalyn Coleman – Columbia District: It is understood that the churches representing the Columbia District are all deeded in trust for African Methodist Episcopal Church and are properly incorporated.

Rev. Samuel McPherson– Lancaster District: It is understood that the churches representing the Lancaster District are all deeded in trust for African Methodist Episcopal Church and are properly incorporated.

Rev. Dr. M. Charmaine Ragin Merrick – Newberry District: It is understood that 29 of 33 the churches representing the Newberry District are deeded in trust for African Methodist Episcopal Church and are properly incorporated.

The following 4 churches: Elisha, Hannah, St. Matthews, and White Rock. After a review of their deeds, there was insufficient evidence to validate that properties are properly held in trust for the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the incorporation documentation for those churches is in question.

Recommendations:

1. That Presiding Elders and Leadership in local churches view the language of deeds and incorporation documentation to make sure they are worded as referenced in the 2016 African Methodist Episcopal Church Book of Discipline pages 57-67, section 21, page 67.
2. That Presiding Elders and Leadership of Elisha, Hannah, St. Matthews, and White Rock would expedite legal action to ensure that churches be properly deeded and incorporated.
3. Continued training to explain the two basic reasons for incorporation: to help a church provide clearer rules for operation (Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and Policies and Procedures) and protection of the membership from liability.

Respectfully Submitted,
The Committee on Incorporation of Church Property

PRESIDING ELDER'S SALARY/UPKEEP

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair:	Reverend Dr. Caesar Richburg
Reverends:	Phillip Washington, Michael Harp, Rodella Rivers, David Owens, Jr., James Dennis, III, Elaine Eskew, Furman Miller, Jr., Valarie Walker
Brothers:	Eddie F. Goins, II, Walter Nathaniel
Sisters:	Wendy Clark, Jurelsan Pratt, Beverly Brown, Dorothy Wilson

Report

We are all grateful for the work of Mission and Ministry of the Presiding Elders as they superintend the work in their respective districts of the Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference. We are mindful of Paul's writings which states: *"For God is not unrighteous to forget our work and labour of love, which ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister"*. Hebrew 6:10 KJV

The Columbia District Conference convened on Saturday, March 18, 2023, at Turner Memorial AME Church under the leadership of The Reverend Rosalyn G. Coleman, Presiding Elder of the Columbia District. The Committee on Presiding Elder's Salary and Upkeep chaired by The Reverend Caesar R. Richburg met to discuss and make a recommendation regarding the Salary and Upkeep of the Presiding Elder. After discussion the motion was made by The Reverend Kenneth Taylor and seconded by The Reverend Timothy Taylor that the Presiding Elder's Salary and upkeep be increased by three percent (3%) for Conference Year 2023-2024.

The District Conference of the Lancaster District convened on Saturday, April 1, 2023, at High Hills AME Church led on by the leadership of The Reverend Samuel L. McPherson, Presiding Elder of the Lancaster District. The District Conference Committee on Presiding Elder's Salary and Upkeep chaired by The Reverend Phillip Washington met via Zoom to discuss the Salary and Upkeep for the ensuing conference year. It was noted during discussion that there was no increase in the previous two years. It was moved by The Reverend James Johnson and seconded by Sister Tonita Miller that the Presiding Elder's Salary and Upkeep be increased by three percent (3%) for Conference Year 2023-2024.

The Newberry District Conference met on Saturday, March 18, 2023, at Mount Olive AME Church in Kinards, SC under the leadership of The Reverend Dr. M. Charmaine Ragin Merrick, Presiding Elder of the Newberry District. The motion was made by The Reverend Dr. James Wesley Dennis and seconded by The Reverend Michael Harp that the Presiding Elder's Salary and Upkeep remain the same and be reallocated within the district for Conference year 2023-2024.

MISSIONS, CIRCUITS, AND STATIONS

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend John G. Davis
Reverends: Sonya Lybrand, Teresa Clark, Wayne Pratt, Wallace Preston, Kayla Eskew, Ernestine Pringle
Brothers: Walter Nathaniel, Sr., James Anderson, Jr.
Sisters: Emma Geiger, Janet Adams, Doretta Irby, Rita Wise Lane, Bessie Ruff

Report

To the Rt. Rev. Samuel L. Green, Sr., Presiding Prelate of the Seventh Episcopal District, Dr. Phyllis N. Green, Episcopal Supervisor, Bishops of the Church, active and retired, Supervisors, active and retired, Host Presiding Elder Rosalyn Grant Coleman, Columbia District, Associate Presiding Elder Dr. M. Charmaine Ragin Merrick, Newberry District, Associate Presiding Elder Samuel L. McPherson, Sr., Lancaster District, Host Pastor Rev. Dr. Caesar R. Richburg, Pastors, Delegates, and members of the 146th Session of the Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference, Greetings!

Your Committee on Missions, Circuits, and Stations beg to make its report.

As a committee, we were privileged to consult the three Presiding Elders of this Annual Conference and there are no requests for actions regarding the Lancaster District nor the Columbia District.

However, the Newberry District has one request – Wateree AME Church is requesting a Status Change, to be removed from a Station to become a Circuit in the Newberry District.

Respectfully submitted,

Your Committee on Missions, Circuits, and Stations

CHURCH SCHOOL

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair:	Reverend Eric R. Dent
Reverends:	Maxine Sumpter, G. Bernard Davis, Vincent Hall, Sonya Lybrand
Brothers:	Thomas Miller, Wilson Caldwell, Leroy Harvin
Sisters:	Laurene Davis, Janet Adams, Luevester Davis, Rhonda Anderson, Fayette

Report

We, the Church School Committee, beg leave to make our annual report for the Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference. **We find guidance for the Columbia Conference Church School in 2 Timothy 2:15 King James Version (KJV) 15** “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Our Mission: Shall be to teach, train, and nurture adults, young adults, college students, teenagers, and children in GOD’S Word; preparing them for Christian service by emphasizing Christian principles. Currently, there are approximately 1400 participants attending Church School throughout the Columbia Conference. Church School is slowly increasing after the return to church due to Covid-19 absence.

The Lancaster District Church School met at Orangehill, Wedgefield SC in-person and virtual under the leadership of Presiding Elder Sam McPherson on Saturday, June 24th beginning at 9:00 am. This was a very meaningful experience for all two hundred and one attendees. The theme was: **“The Empowerment Church School.”** During the 2023 church school convention attendees heard from Presenters on the topic of the Empowerment Church. Everyone in attendance received an empowerment playbook as a tool to use to empower themselves within their church school and their churches. The youth and young adults took part in hands-on learning activities that allowed them to develop their skills as members of the body of Christ as well as how they can share their church experience with those in their communities. We truly had an amazing Christian Educational Learning experience.

The Newberry District Church School met at Miller Chapel, Newberry SC via in-person and virtual under the leadership of Presiding Elder M. Charmaine Ragin Merrick beginning at 8:00 am. On Friday, July 21st, 98 were in attendance, and on Saturday, July 22nd, 169 were in attendance. The theme was **“Developing Spiritual Fruit.”** This Church School event included instructional material on church growth, biblical instructional points, arts and crafts, and horseback riding for those young and those young at heart.

The Columbia District Church School met under the leadership of Presiding Elder Rosalyn Grant Coleman at Big Bethel Columbia SC on Friday, June 23rd, and Saturday, June 24th. The Church School consisted of two-hundred and forty-five people via in-person and virtual. The Theme was **“God’s Vessels over Gun violence: “A call for Peace.”** Workshops included dos and don’ts for gun safety. Topics were “Recognize the importance of firearm safety, root causes of gun violence, identify what children can do if they see a gun if someone tells you they have a gun or shows you a gun, and if guns are in the home.” Children and young adults were engaged by way of Paper, poster board, crayons, markers, colored pencils, scissors, glue, tape, dry-erase markers, chalk, poster board, and cell phones. The adults had biblical educational presenters as well.

It is the view of this committee that Church School must be made attractive to all participants. Church Schools can be improved by ensuring that teachers are spiritually formed, mature members of the body of Christ. The gift of teaching should be evident in their lives. When these basic elements are in place, the Holy Spirit will empower them to show an enthusiastic desire to teach the Word with power, creativity, and authority. This will draw men, women, boys, and girls to hear the word of God.

Creative teaching methods must be used to serve this present age. Classrooms and nontraditional spaces should be prepared so that people will be interested and excited about participating. There are many teaching methods that should be employed to accommodate various learning styles that exist in our congregations. Unfortunately, most teachers tend to use only the lecture method. Other teaching methods such as demonstration, creative arts, testimony, Q&A, storytelling, etc. should be used to make lessons interesting and engaging.

Furthermore, we believe that to make Church School more attractive is to advertise or Market Church School. We often promote worship services and get the word out about it, but do we ever advertise church school? Church School is also an opportunity to spread and hear the voice of God through the teaching of his word, so we should promote it as such. We should use social media, Cell phones, Billboards, Word of mouth, Flyers/Mailings, and Radio as an opportunity to promote Church School with the hope of drawing others to Christ. We should use this approach to not only invite people but also to attract others by showing what we do during Church school via these models.

Next, we need to focus on creating a meaningful experience when people do choose to attend/participate in church school. A meaningful experience does not only mean reviewing the lesson from the church school quarterly. An experience can be made by role-playing, creating songs, playing games, using puppets, testimonials, etc.

Finally, we should Fast and Pray for God to help us live righteous lives. If we live right and get excited about Church School, then naturally we will draw others because they will see God in us.

Recommendations:

1. Create a culture that embraces technology inclusive of all ages.
2. Create a curriculum that includes creative methods to enhance and increase church school participation and retention.
3. Create a multi-district church school explosion that meets virtually once a quarter to present and share new ideas regarding church school growth.
4. Create an annual model to involve youth and young adults in developing leadership skills for succession planning in our church school, inclusive of evaluation.
5. And do more Q&A Church School lessons that involve current life discussions.

Respectfully submitted, your Committee on Church School!

ANNUITY AND INVESTMENTS

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Chaunte Rogers

Reverends: Larry D. Clark, Rhudene Toomer, Rodella B. Rivers, Janie Williams, Steven Dowling

Sisters: Joann Richardson, Joann Grant, Brenda Jones, Catherine Brown, Fay Henley

Report

To Bishop Samuel L. Green, Sr., Supervisor Phyllis N. Green, Presiding Elder Rosalyn Coleman, Presiding Elder Samuel McPherson, Presiding Elder M. Charmaine Ragin-Merrick and members of the 146th session of the Columbia Annual Conference.

Having been presented with reports of each Presiding Elder District's Salary and Annuity Report, and after reviewing those reports, we your Committee on Annuity and Investments offer the following.

Total Amount of Annuities Per Presiding Elder District

	Salaries 2022-2023	Annuity 2022-2023
Columbia	\$617,171.66	\$74,060.60
Lancaster	\$746,510.41	\$98,395
Newberry	\$750,158.00	\$94,993

The Columbia District has no clergy shortages in Annuity.

The Lancaster District has no clergy shortages in Annuity.

The Newberry District has 2 clergy shortages in Annuity totaling \$3,793.48.

Name	Amount
Rev. Gary Dent	\$417.50
Rev. Silas Spann	\$2,416

Recommendation:

All Pastors should continue to support and invest through the Annuity and Investment Department. As per Discipline, all Pastors are required to be an enrollee of the Church Annuity Department at a rate of 12% of his or her salary.

Humbly submitted,

Your Committee on Annuity and Investments

CLASSIFICATION OF PASTORS

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Tim McKinzie

Members: Reverends: Ruth E. D. Robinson, Mary Glisson, Camille Carpenter, David Owens Jr., Janie Williams

Report

To: Bishop Samuel L. Green, Sr., the Presiding Prelate of the 7th Episcopal District

To: Mrs. Phyllis Nadine Green, Episcopal Supervisor of the 7th Episcopal District

To: The 146th Session of the Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

The Committee on Classification of Pastors beg leave to make our Annual Report on the Classification of Pastors.

In accordance with the **2021 Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church**, pages 153-154 Section C, the pastors of the Columbia Annual Conference are classified as follows:

C. Classification of Pastors

All Itinerant Elders of the AME Church shall be class according to tenure of service as full-time Pastor or Presiding Elder and training for the ministry. The following qualification shall constitute classes:

CLASS A: Full-time pastors having traveled eight consecutive years; and any ordained Elder holding a degree from a college or seminary and shall travel at least one year as full-time pastor. Full-time pastor are itinerant elders who wholly and solely give of their time and talent to pastoral duties without any other work, profession or common, that interferes with or prevent the performance of the regular ministerial duties of a pastor as negotiated between the pastor and the Board of Stewards.

CLASS B: Itinerant elders having traveled four consecutive years as full-time pastors.

CLASS C: Full-time pastors who are itinerant elders in the AME Church.

CLASS D: Full-time pastors who have not been ordained itinerant elders.

CLASS E: Part-time ministers.

As a result of the above information, and a report from each Presiding Elder's District, we submit the following.

The Columbia District – Presiding Elder Rosalyn G. Coleman

Classification A – 10 Pastors	Classification C – 0 Pastors
Classification B – 0 Pastors	Classification D – 0 Pastors
Classification E – 16 Pastors	
Total Pastors: 26 Pastors	

The Lancaster District – Presiding Elder Samuel McPherson

Classification A – 12 Pastors	Classification C – 0 Pastors
Classification B – 0 Pastors	Classification D – 0 Pastors
Classification E – 12 Pastors	
Total Pastors: 24 Pastors	

The Newberry District – Presiding Elder Dr. Charmaine Ragin-Merrick

Classification A – 9 Pastors	Classification C – 2 Pastors
Classification B – 2 Pastors	Classification D – 2 Pastors
Classification E – 17 Pastors	
Total Pastors: 32 Pastors	

It is our prayer that each pastor and Presiding Elder will continue to flourish in their ministries while encountering the favor of God.

Respectfully Submitted,
Your Committee on Classification of Pastors

Presiding Elder Rosalyn G. Coleman
Columbia District List of Pastors

	Names	Church	Classification
1	Caesar Richburg	Bethel	A
2	Kenneth Taylor	Turner Memorial	A
3	Deborah Scotland	Spring Hill	A
4	Steven Evans	St. Paul - Irmo	A
5	Rodella Burns	Bishop Memorial	A
6	Michael Buckson	Chapelle Memorial	E
7	Ertha Bowman	Emmanuel	A
8	Timothy McKinzie	Mt. Pisgah	A
9	Elaine Eskew	New Bethel	A
10	Tobie Pollock	Greater St. Paul	A
11	Chaunte' Rogers	Friendship	E
12	Marion Reeves	Pleasant Spring	E
13	Jose' Lozano	Piney Grove - Gaston	E
14	Maxine Sumpter	Youngs Chapel	A
15	Chaunte' Rogers	Pine Grove - Peak	E
16	Lynda R. Jones	St. John	E
17	Kayla Eskew	Williams	E
18	Timothy Taylor	New Mt. Zion	E
19	Michelle Simpkins	Moores	E
20	Camille Carpenter	Calvary	E
21	Supply	Cedar Creek	E
22	Gaylen Dion Richmond	Mill Creek	E
23	Schrendria Robinson	Mt. Olive	E
24	Teresa Clark	Stover Chapel	E
25	James Vant	Adams Northeast	E
26	Krystle McHoney	Greater Hopewell	E
			A10 E16 T26

Presiding Elder Samuel L. McPherson, Sr.
Lancaster District List of Pastors

	Names	Church	Classification
1	Carey Grady	Reid Chapel-Columbia	A
2	Phillip Washington	High Hill - Dalzell	E
3	Stanley Flowers	Saint Phillip - Eastover	A
4	Furman Miller Jr.	Allen Chapel - Sumter	E
5	Larry Clark	Bethel - Wedgefield	A
6	Eric Dent	St. Paul - Shaw	A
7	Wallace Preston	Orange Hill - Wedgefield	E
8	Darryl Lee	Saint Paul - Lancaster	E
9	David Owens	Willow Grove - Harito	E
10	Lorenzo Dinkins	Pine Grove - Rembert	A
11	Steven Dowling	New Hope - Winnsboro	E
12	Yvonne Feaster	Saint John - Winnsboro	E
13	Leonard Simmons	Bethlehem - Winnsboro	E
14	James Johnson	Shiloh - Eastover	A
15	Debra Bradley	Lagree - Sumter	A
16	Ruth Robinson	Saint Luke - Eastover	A
17	Cassius Barclay	Mount Zion - Winnsboro	E
18	Sonya Lybrand	Ebenezer - Winnsboro	E
19	Terry Gillyard	James Chapel - Lugoff	A
20	Odell Glenn	Mount Sinai - Elgin	E
21	Ernestine Pringle LE	Reeder Point - Columbia	
22	Lillie Williams LE	Benjamin Chapel	
23	Valerie Walker	Adam Chapel - Rock Hill	E
24	Noluthanda Ntsangani	Jacobs Mission - Elgin	E
25	P.E. McPherson	Rock Hill - Columbia	E
26	Janie Williams	Shady Grove- Blythewood	E
			A12 E12 T24

Presiding Elder Dr. M. Charmaine Ragin Merrick
Newberry District Pastors

	Names	Church	Classification
1	James W. Dennis	Pine Grove	A
2	Michael Harp	Lower Mount Olive	E
3	Dennis Broughton Jr.	Brown Chapel	A
4	Wanda Rapley	Providence	E
5	John Davis	Jeter Chapel	A
6	Mary Glisson	St. Mark	A
7	Bobby Supersaud	Trinity	E
8	Jacques Days	Thomas Chapel	E
9	Angela B. Days	Thomas Chapel	E
10	Dante' W. Kenly	St. James (Cola)	E
11	Rhudene Toomer	Mt. Olive	A
12	Wayne Pratt	Mt. Hebron	A
13	Slyvia Roberts	Miller Chapel	E
14	Sherry Highbaugh	Mt. Moriah	E
15	Ronald McFadden ID	Bethany	E
16	Sylvia Roberts	Pleasant Grove	E
17	Rosa Kelly	St. James - Pomeria	E
18	Silas Spann	White Hall	A
19	Michael Hill	Shiloh/Mt. Zion	E
20	Bernard Davis	Elijah	E
21	Richard McKnight	Hannah	E
22	Isaac Brooker III	Lever Chapel	A
23	Vonda D. Gallman	Antioch/New Chapel	E
24	Michael Hill	Mt. Zion	E
25	Ben Pratt Lic.	Bethel - Union	E
26	Stephany Pratt	Wateree	E
27	Lawerence Pralour ID	St. Matthew	E
28	Cassandra S. Conway	Paradise	E
29	Eric Ginyard	Brown Chapel/Sweet Springs	E
30	Theodora Black	Mt. Zion - Jalapa	E
31	Kenneth Charles	St. Paul	E
32	Aaron Davis	St. Mary	E
			A9 B2 C2 D2 E17 T32

SOCIAL ACTION

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair:	Reverend James W. Dennis, III
Reverends:	Steven Evans, Leonard Simmons, Silas Spann, Sr., Chaunté Rogers, Terry Gilyard, Ronald McFadden, Lillie Williams
Brothers:	Leroy Harvin, Jr., Joshua McFadden
Sisters:	Connie Lumpkin, Sandra Roach, Ursula Rivers, Gayle Pitt

Report

To the Right Reverend Samuel Lawrence Green, Supervisor Phyllis Green, Presiding Elders, and members of the 146th Session of the Columbia Annual Conference. The Committee on Social Action makes the following report:

In a rapidly evolving world, where societal challenges continue to mount, it is imperative for faith-based institutions to extend their reach beyond the spiritual realm and embrace a more active role in addressing social and community issues. The Columbia Conference AME Church, deeply rooted in its commitment to justice and equality, stands poised to become a beacon of hope and change within its local communities. This report underscores the pressing necessity for the Columbia Conference AME Church to be actively engaged in social action and offers recommendations on how the church can immerse itself in local politics and community affairs to effect transformative change.

The Call for Action:

The essence of religious teachings lies not just in spiritual salvation but also in fostering a just and compassionate society. The challenges faced by communities today – be it poverty, racial discrimination, inadequate education, or healthcare disparities – are intrinsically connected to social injustices that demand a response from faith-based organizations. The Columbia Conference AME Church, with its historical commitment to civil rights and social equality, is uniquely positioned to heed this call for action.

Reasons for Engagement:

- **Biblical Mandate:** The core tenets of the Christian faith emphasize love, compassion, and justice. Engaging in social action aligns with these teachings, as exemplified by Jesus Christ's teachings and actions to uplift the marginalized and oppressed.
- **Community Relevance:** A church deeply involved in its local community becomes a haven for individuals seeking not only spiritual guidance but also practical assistance and empowerment.
- **Relevance to Gospel:** Taking part in social action is not a deviation from the Gospel but rather a manifestation of it. By addressing systemic issues that hinder human dignity, the church amplifies the message of love and salvation.
- **Unity and Fellowship:** Community engagement fosters unity within the congregation and the broader community. Working together for a common cause strengthens the bonds of fellowship.

Recommendations for Engagement:

- **Education and Awareness:** Host seminars, workshops, and panel discussions to educate the congregation about pertinent social issues. Knowledge is the first step towards informed action.
- **Collaboration with Community Organizations:** Forge partnerships and collaborations with local NGOs (non-governmental organizations), the Biden-Harris administration, community centers, and advocacy groups already addressing specific issues, including cybersecurity awareness and digital safety. Collaboration amplifies the impact and resources available.
- **Voter Education and Registration Drives:** Organize events that educate community members about their civic rights and responsibilities. Promote voter registration to empower the community's voice in local politics.
- **Advocacy and Lobbying:** Train members on effective advocacy techniques and encourage them to voice their concerns to local representatives. Attend town hall meetings and advocate for policies aligned with justice and equality.
- **Social Service Initiatives:** Establish outreach programs that provide practical assistance, such as food drives, health clinics, and educational support. Demonstrating care builds trust and opens avenues for broader conversations.
- **Community Development Projects:** Invest in community development initiatives that focus on affordable housing, job training, and youth empowerment. These projects address root causes of many social challenges.

Conclusion:

The Columbia Conference AME Church holds a pivotal role in shaping the destiny of its communities. By embracing its heritage of social justice activism and weaving it into its modern mission, the church can spark tangible change that uplifts lives and brings forth a more equitable society. It is not just an option, but it is a sacred duty for the church to engage actively in social action, aligning its efforts with the Gospel message of love, compassion, and justice. Through concerted and sustained engagement, the church can truly become a force for positive transformation in the lives of those it serves.

Respectfully Submitted
Social Actions Committee

CHURCH GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair:	Reverend Debora Grant Scotland
Reverends:	Odell Glenn, Bobby Seepersaud, Michael Buckson, Sonya Lybrand, Theodora Black, James Vant, Valarie Walker
Brothers:	Thomas Miller, Jr., Jason Simpkins, Reggie Macon, Bruce Fuller
Sisters:	Juanita Burrell, Vickie Capers, Pat Green, Janet Adams, Gloria Williams

Report

The church is still recovering from the impact of COVID- 19 and the church continues to experience growth challenges in membership, motivation, money, and ministry.

This combination of issues continues to adversely affect the church's potential to attract new members, develop critical ministries and connect to a community in diaspora. In other words, we have gone beyond reaching the community in traditional ways (i.e., canvassing neighborhoods, busing in persons from the surrounding area, vacation bible school as a means of evangelism, etc.). While these strategies hold some merit, we must move to the next level in serving the present age.

Amid the threat to our nation's health, social and economic instability and political upheaval, the church must remain faithful in addressing the social, spiritual, and cultural needs of God's people in innovative and relevant ways. *Sidney Williams, author of Fishing Differently, writes:*

Established congregations seeking to develop transformational ministries must learn to fish differently by taking full advantage of all the capital resources available to them — Faith Capital, Intellectual Capital, Social Capital, and Human Capital. (F.I.S.H.) Whether we are speaking of a new church development or an established congregation, many churches are facing the challenge of declining attendance, increased financial pressure, and a growing frustration with the decline in church membership. The goal is to develop transformational ministries that have a real impact on the community, exercise good stewardship, and reward the commitment to doing ministry differently. To achieve this goal, established congregations need to take full advantage of the capital resources available to them.

Fishing differently requires a collaborative investment of faith, intellectual, social, and human capital, not just finding different ways to ask the same people for more money!

We recognize that pastors are serving churches in rural, suburban and urban areas, requiring varied approaches because of the different cultural context.

Therefore, we make the following **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. **Learn the Culture:** It is important to know and understand the cultural differences and similarities within the community where service is rendered. Cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity is critical. The church must have a working understanding of the difference in knowledge, perception, experiences, attitudes, and needs. Knowing the community's culture will help to shape service ministry in community.

2. ***Invest in Community:*** Knowing who you are serving and the needs will help the church and its leaders to identify critical areas of the community to make an investment. Funding, experience, projects, ministries, and resources are all ways to invest in the empowerment of the people and will enhance the effectiveness and relevance of the church in community.
3. ***Expand your Ministry Reach:*** Technology has provided new and innovative ways to keep people connected and to expand the church's ability to connect to communities beyond traditional means. While in person gathering should never be replaced, we must expand our reach to include those who are homebound, those who are worshiping online and the generation of mobile people who acknowledge they need God but have not and may never return to worship and ministry within in the church we once knew. Embracing technology has proven to be an effective way for churches to provide meaningful worship, impactful studies, and engaging ministries beyond traditions.
4. ***Develop Your Human Library:*** Know the power of ONE! There are great resources within your congregation. Identify them, train them and utilize them in servicing Christ, Church and Community.
5. ***Practice Selfcare:*** Take a personal development retreat for your own growth and development. This will help to refuel you for this ever challenging and changing work!
6. ***Fall In Love Again:*** Re-acquaint yourself with your calling and permit yourself to fall in love again with what God has called you to.
7. ***and finally, F.I.S.H. Differently***
While there are many other strategies to encourage growth and development of our church, we pray that these few recommendations will help to expand and strengthen our Zion.

Respectfully Submitted
The Committee on Church Growth And Development

CHURCH PLANTING

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Presiding Elders:	Rosalyn Grant Coleman, M. Charmaine Ragin Merrick, Samuel L. McPherson
Reverends:	Schrendria Robinson, Valarie Walker, Kenneth Charles, Darryl Lee, Lorenzo Dinkins
Brother:	Reggie Macon
Sisters:	Mary Arnold, Nicole Kessler, Vernie Oliphant

Report

Church Planting has been an area of great challenge especially in the COVID 19 pandemic. In the midst of this challenge, the three districts of the Columbia Conference have been working on finding creative ways to plant new congregations. For the past few years, the pandemic has helped to delay growth in some areas while providing opportunities for growth in other areas.

Newberry District:

As we look forward to church planting opportunities, this year we worked hard to reassemble our workers. Those who have accepted their calling to ministry to reach those outside the body of Christ, will be placed in motion this upcoming year. We will examine those who have watched us virtually and seek to meet them. We will reach out to the needs of the communities and establish relationships among those outside the body of Christ. During the pandemic, we found many who needed a relationship with God. It is our time to provide whatever is needed and establish ongoing communication, meals, clothing and other needs while sharing the blessings of God.

Lancaster District

Working within the guidelines of COVID-19, the Lancaster District will continue to look into establishing ministries for local residents that will help us to develop new congregations within the designated communities of Camden, SC, Indian Land, SC and Chester, SC.

Columbia District

With a focus of doing ministry in a way that addresses real needs of people, the Columbia District approached church planting through the virtual platform. We are connecting and cultivating relationships with persons outside the walls of the church with the hopes that in the future we can plant our roots in a designated community.

Recommendations:

1. The Lancaster District: Continue working with the extension sites in progress i.e. Camden, Indian Land and Chester.
2. The Newberry District: Continue to use the virtual platform to engage in Ministry in new and creative ways.
3. The Columbia District will continue to explore church planting through the virtual platform with hope that it will grow
4. All Districts to continue to explore other areas for church planting.

Respectfully Submitted,
The Committee on Church Planting

STATE OF THE CHURCH

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Stanley Flowers,
Reverends: Jose Lozano, Lawrence Pralour, Yvonne Feaster, Krystle McHoney,
Michelle Simpkins
Brother: James Anderson, Jr.
Sisters: Fayette Belton, Catina Whitner, Carolyn Gates, Janet Adams, Loretta B.
Moon

Report

To: **Bishop Samuel L. Green, Sr.**, the 125th Elected and Consecrated Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Presiding Prelate of the 7th Episcopal District

Dr. Phyllis N. Green, Episcopal Supervisor

Reverend Rosalyn G. Coleman, Host Presiding Elder

Reverend Dr. M Charmaine Ragin Merrick, Associate Presiding Elder

Reverend Samuel L. McPherson, Associate Presiding Elder

Reverend Dr. Caesar Richburg, Host Pastor, Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church
819 Woodrow Street Columbia, South Carolina, 29205

Committee Members:

Chair: Reverend Dr. Stanley Flowers

Reverends: Jose Lozano, Michael Harp, Kristen Mahoney, Yvonne Feaster, Teresa Clark,
Lawrence Pralour, Michelle Simpkins,

Brothers: Vincent Taylor, Charlie Smith, Asia Allen

Sisters: Vergie Moore, Pandora Jones, Fayette Belton, Loretta B. Moon, Jasmine Drayton-Cohen

Our Zion's Viability

The practicability of the church lies in her devotion. "The church's assignment is to be disciples who make disciples. The church's survival is predicated on the will and power of God. The church's job is to be the church." With membership on the decline in some of our districts, the church must always understand and know its primary mission: to spread the Gospel and witness Christ in our congregations, neighbors, and communities where we reside. We must display love, peace, joy, and unity. Our biblical teaching must be unchanging and transparent. Everything we do must honor God and be within—his will for the church. We should avoid becoming so focused on the administrative aspect of the ministry that we ignore the real challenges. Yet, in prayer to God, we can ensure divine planning and strategizing for our spiritual and numerical growth as we plant and water, knowing God always provides the increase.

As the A.M.E. Church appears to decline in membership, the church of God is critical, and more focus needs to be placed on evangelism and sharing the Word of God in our communities. As the Immigrant population grows in most of our community, we must be ready to provide services to them. For almost 20 years, people worldwide have celebrated World Refugee Day on

June 20. Four percent of South Carolina's population is comprised of immigrants. Most immigrants in South Carolina live in the Columbia and Charleston areas.

Our Zion has congregations on every continent. The majority of our congregations in the United States are predominately African American. South Carolina is a refuge state. As immigrants leave these continents, the church has an opportunity to come alongside them, making their transition smoother. The church must reach out to the immigrants entering South Carolina to welcome them to our local congregations. We must embrace and care for strangers, both foreign and domestic.

We are harbored in God, and African Methodism is anchored in rich Christian history. African Methodism is declared the first independent Protestant denomination founded by black people, birthed out of racism, destined to fight against social injustice and stand up for civil and human rights. We are not silenced by threats but vocal through political engagement and social improvement for all minorities.

African Methodism has something worth propagating and something worth learning from. African Methodism is so crucial that propagation to other contexts in its current version is necessary. Methodists thought that way in the Second Great Awakening. **Richard Allen** and those who followed him thought in the same vein. We must pick up the banner and run with it. We must move from normalcy. We are a royal nation, a peculiar people. We are filled with the Spirit and led by the Spirit. The Spirit is ever-present.

Yes, we have churches that are declining in worship, but there are areas we have not explored or witnessed. We cannot stop being the church. As our congregations' growth ebbs and flows, we must continue to explore new territory, seek out places as our fore parents did, planting churches where people gather. The churches in South Carolina were planted where the populations of people were. In rural South Carolina, churches were planted where agricultural and manufacturing industries once thrived, and many people moved away because of a lack of employment. As a result, many churches in those areas have experienced a significant decline in membership.

The church is more than a building. The church is the people. When one church closes, the remaining members gather and join other churches. When we trace our history, we see this happen repeatedly. African Methodists may plant and merge new churches but never give up the church's mission.

Recommendations:

- 1) Have more workshops on how to make disciples.
- 2) Develop a Children's Church Ministry.
- 3) Pastors and leaders must become more accessible to changes without compromising the Word of God.
- 4) Include both contemporary and traditional music in worship services.
- 5) Invest in additional technology that clenches the attentiveness of young adults and meets up with the diversity and advancement of society.
- 6) Have more teaching and training on communication skills, especially between senior members and young adults.
- 7) Feature Your Church Family on social media.

STATE OF THE COUNTRY

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair:	Reverend Carey A. Grady
Reverends:	Debora Grant Scotland, Stepheny Pratt, Michael Buckson, Debra Bradley, Noluthando Ntsangani
Brothers:	Herbert McCray, Robert Cunningham, Charlie Smith
Sisters:	Joann Richardson, Helen Grant, Dorothy Irby, Mary Arnold, Debora W. Jones, Linda Williams

Report

The History of the United States of America is marred with the history of racism, class and gender discrimination mixed with hyper capitalism that has exploited black and brown people for hundreds of years. Our story is the troubled history of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, American Chattel Slavery, Racial Discrimination and its dehumanizing effects on the Black Family, Black Institutions and Black Wealth.

While many strides towards freedom have become a reality, we acknowledge for every step forward there seems to be several steps backwards. From the strides made through the Civil Rights Movements and the various Black Protests Movements to the election of African American public officials, we still find legal lynching a reality across America, Mass Incarceration of the Black Male is at an all time high, and Voter Suppression is an ingrained part of the electoral process.

We are still dealing with the backlash of American Racism after the historical elections of President Barack H. Obama and later Vice-President Kamala Harris. The murders of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Walter Scott, the Emmanuel 9, Tamir Rice, George Floyd, Ahamad Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Ralph Yarl, Ta' Kiya Young and countless others have shown us up close and personal the flaws in our Judicial Systems.

Ever since the 2000 Presidential Election was decided by the Supreme Court, America has been erupting at the seams as it relates to Race, Class, Gender, Mass Incarceration, Voter Suppression, and special interest Foreign Policy. The past year we have seen a former American President indicted multiple times on the Federal and State level in a conspiracy to steal votes cast in the 2020 for Democrat Joe Biden.

The fabric of our nation is seemingly falling apart. The Church in America seems to be declining yet Christianity in the Global South: Africa, Asia and India is

growing exponentially making Christianity the largest Religion in the World. Globally Christianity is growing. Philip Jenkins, in his book The Next Christendom suggests that every American Congregation should be connected to at least one congregation in the Global South.

As our country continues to go through an identity crisis it is the Church that has the answer for our woes. Now is the time for the church to move from strictly charitable causes to training our churches in Justice Work and building healthy economics in Black and underserved communities.

Justice Work and Ministry gets to the heart of injustice and rights the wrongs in our community. Micah 6:8 says, “He has shown you, O Man, what is good: And what does the Lord require of you

As all of us recognize the precarious and unique era that we are experiencing in our Nation, it is imperative that our Faith Community continue to empower people through

- Voter Rights Education
- Adoption of School Programs
- Development of Black Economics (Rural and Inner Cities)
- Adoption of Healthy Lifestyles (Community Gardens, Preventive Healthcare)
- Prevention of the Cycle of Mass Incarceration
- Youth Development Programs with an Emphasis on Entrepreneurship
- Senior Programs (Adult Daycares)
- Caregiver Ministries
- Continuous Political and Educational Engagement

“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Micah 6:8)

Respectfully Submitted,

TEMPERANCE

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair:	Reverend Marion Reeves
Reverends:	Terry Gilyard, Gary Dent, G. Dion Richmond, Leonard Simmons, Kenneth McFadden, Cassius Barclay
Brothers:	Thomas Miller Jr., Jimmie Metts, Leroy Harvin
Sisters:	Lorene Anderson, Catherine Brown, Beverly Wise, Inda C. Huggins re, Ashley Pearson

Report

To: Bishop Samuel Lawrence Green Sr. Presiding Prelate of The Seventh Episcopal District. Dr. Phyllis N. Green Episcopal Supervisor, Rev, Rosalyn G. Coleman Host Presiding Elder, Presiding Elder Samuel McPherson, Presiding Elder Rev, Dr. M. Charmaine Ragin Merrick, Pastors, Officers, and Members of the 146 Session of The Columbia Annual Conference

Temperance is defined as moderation or voluntary self-restraint. It can be described in terms of what an individual voluntarily refrains from doing. This includes restraint from revenge by practicing non-violent forgiveness, restraint from arrogance by practicing humility and modesty, restraint from excesses and extravagant spending and splurging, restraint from rage or craving by practicing calmness and self-control.

Temperance has also been described as a virtue by many religious thinkers, Philosophers and and in more recent times by Psychologist of the positive psychology movement. Temperance has a long history in philosophical and religious thought. References to restraint can be found in our Bibles. James 1:19 tells us, “be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger”. You cannot listen carefully while you are talking, or even while you are thinking about what to say. Many discussions are fruitless for the simple reason that all parties are paying more attention to what they want to say than what others are saying.

The Temperance movement was dedicated to promoting moderation and more often, complete abstinence in the use of intoxicating liquor. We now know that temperance relates to more than just alcohol. When properly applied, it develops characteristics such as chastity, modesty, humility, self-regulation, hospitality, decorum, abstinence, and Love that help control impulses such as sexual desires, vanity, and anger. When faced with the temptation for excessive physical pleasure, Temperance allows us to keep from excess. In other words, this virtue enables us to drink a glass of champagne, wine or beer without getting drunk. Eat cookies, a slice of pie or chocolate cake without becoming a sugar addict.

We must become calming influences in our homes, churches, communities, schools, and society as a whole. Philippians 2:2-5 tells us to be like minded, be on one accord, do nothing through strife or vain glory, esteem others better than yourself and to look also on the things of others. In 1965, Burt Bacharach and Hal David summed it up this way in their song, “What the world needs now is love sweet love, it’s the only thing that there’s just too little of.”

Recommendations:

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:1-2.

Temperance should be our lifestyle; it is a good self-control tool that should be practiced daily. We must abstain from those things which attempt to separate us from the love of God and allow ourselves to be changed outwardly into conformity to our redeemed inner natures.

The transformed and renewed mind is a mind that's saturated with and controlled by the word of God. It is a mind that spends as little time as possible with the necessary things of earthly living and as much time as possible with the things of God. Only the mind that is constantly being renewed by God 's Spirit working through God's word is pleasing to God.

Respectfully Submitted,
The Temperance Committee

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair:	Reverend Dr. Maxine R. Sumpter
Reverends:	Eric Dent, G. Bernard, Davis, Jannie Collier, Vincent Hall, Cassius Barclay, Odell Glenn
Brothers:	Bernard Gilliard, Walter Nathaniel, Micah Graydon, James Anderson, Jr.
Sisters:	Rhonda Anderson, Janet Adams, Luevester Davis, Brenda Jones, Geraldine Butler, Gloria Williams

Report

In keeping with our mission of undergirding other ministries of the church, the Columbia Conference Christian Education Department is pleased to share this position paper with recommendations for how the church should address the major epidemic of gun violence in homes, churches, and communities.

Gun Violence in the United States

According to a Pew Research Center report dated June 28, 2023, gun violence is widely viewed as a major and growing national problem. With total gun-related deaths reaching new highs in recent years. Growing numbers of Americans view both gun violence and violent crime as a major national problem.

More Americans died of gun-related injuries in 2021 than in any other year on record, according to the latest available statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). That included record numbers of both gun murders and gun suicides.

In 2021, the most recent year for which complete data is available, 48,830 people died from gun-related injuries in the U.S., according to the CDC. The record 48,830 total gun deaths in 2021 reflect a 23% increase since 2019, before the onset of the coronavirus pandemic.

Gun murders, in particular, climbed sharply during the pandemic, increasing 45% between 2019 and 2021, while the number of gun suicides rose 10% during that span. The overall increase in U.S. gun deaths since the beginning of the pandemic includes an especially stark rise in such fatalities among children and teens under the age of eighteen. Gun deaths among children and teens rose 50% in just two years, from 1,732 in 2019 to 2,590 in 2021.

Gun Violence in South Carolina

According to Scott Morgan on South Carolina Public Radio, published May 11, 2022, South Carolina's gun death numbers are among the country's worst, especially if you are Black. According to CDC data, South Carolina is a violent state when it comes to guns. In fact, according to the CDC, South Carolina ranks ninth-worst among US states when it comes to the percentage of residents who were killed by gunfire in 2020, the latest annual numbers compiled by the agency. In trying to make sense of why guns factor so heavily in deaths among African American males in particular, Jack Logan, an advocate for an end to gun violence and founder of Put the Guns Down Now Young People Organization in Greenville, South Carolina said gun violence in the Black community is often anchored in feelings of betrayal and a lack of positive direction among young

men. “Young Black males with a gun in their hands are holding anger in them from being hurt by family or someone very close to them,” Logan said in an email to South Carolina Public Radio. “Then if another person they trusted crosses them they shoot because they are determined not to allow anyone else to hurt them. Also, they are irresponsible in possessing a gun because they are not able to control their anger.”

In the overview of its own data, the CDC soberly stated: “Firearm deaths continue to be a significant and growing public health problem in the United States.” The agency suggests that multiple pandemic-related stressors, including social isolation, disruptions to school and work, and eviction led to such high national numbers in 2020.

Even without this compelling data, it is evident to all that gun violence is a major problem in our communities and solutions are desperately needed. We as African Americans, tend to be emotionally reactive when gun violence erupts in our communities and churches. Social media is inundated with disapproval for a brief period of time. However, too often, we fail to develop resolutions to the root causes, and sadly retreat right back to our separate corners and our separate lives until it happens again.

The church can be a catalyst for unlocking lasting change. Gun violence should be addressed proactively from the faith community outward. The church must confront the evils, social ills, and inequities in our society that are the root causes of gun violence. The church must become a beacon of the light for Christ in a world that so desperately needs it. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral, begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it. Returning violence for violence multiplies violence. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." While this is not an exhaustive list, we share recommendations that we believe would be beneficial to our churches for combatting gun violence and thereby showing love for God and our neighbor!

Recommendations

1. Develop a unified, ongoing, denominational effort across the state to engage and influence legislators and legislation that will improve gun violence in South Carolina.
2. Establish a network ministry to keep local congregations informed and aware of gun violence updates, issues, and solutions.
3. Review physical spaces, policies, and procedures to ensure that maximum security measures are in place in our churches.
4. Be more engaged with violence prevention programs including working with local law enforcement, social services, and entities that educate and equip people for better paying jobs.
5. Connect with and support those who are directly impacted by gun violence. Support gun violence prevention programs, de-escalation groups, safety training, and support groups for survivors of gun violence.
6. Hold mental health forums in the church for the community and develop referral systems for those that may need such services.
7. Hold gun violence forums to increase community awareness without fear.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Dr. Maxine R. Sumpter
Committee Chair

MSWAWO+PKS

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference



Chair: Mrs. Gloria W. Preston, Conference President

Members: Conference and Connectional members who pay dues.

Report

Salutations: To the Right Reverend Samuel Lawrence Green, Sr., Presiding Prelate of the Seventh Episcopal District and Mrs. Phyllis N. Green, Episcopal Supervisor; Sister Lakesha Adams, Episcopal MSWAWO Plus PK's President; Rev. Rosalyn G. Coleman, Columbia District Host Presiding Elder; Rev. Samuel McPherson, Lancaster District Presiding Elder; Rev. Dr. M. Charmaine Ragin Merrick, Newberry District Presiding Elder; Officers on all Levels, Clergy Families and Laity of the 146th Session of the Columbia Annual Conference.

“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:57-58 NIV)

WHO WE ARE: This organization is known as the Columbia Annual Conference Ministers' Spouses, Widows and Widowers Organization Plus Preachers' Kids (MSWAWO + PK's). Connectionally, we operate under the auspices of the Social Action Commission of the AME Church. The purpose of this organization is to address the needs of the ministers' spouses, widows, and widowers of the Columbia Conference. To form a Christian fellowship of ministers' spouses, widows and widowers for greater and more effective service through the AME Church. To be a support group for ministers' spouses, widows and widowers sharing those joys and challenges which are unique to our role as clergy spouses, widows and widowers and to be there for each other. To foster good will, establish effective communication and develop strong interpersonal relationships on the Columbia Conference level and promote cultural exchanges with our spousal families within the 7th Episcopal District.

WHAT WE DO: One of the greatest aspects of our organization is that we do not only support our active spouses, but we service all of our clergy families, even those who do not have spouses. The Columbia Conference membership is an inspired, committed and determined organization that fosters an environment of inclusion, when we support our clergy families.

The Columbia Conference Ministers Spouses, Widows and Widowers Organization Plus Preachers' Kids as always take positive stance each year and also during the 2022-2023

conference year towards the challenges of this world. We said our goodbyes to our beloved Sisters & Brother in Christ, Rev. Jacqueline Hurston, Mother Ruth Black, Mrs. Mary H. Hinton, Rev. Jesse Anderson, Jr., Mrs. Clemigene Glover and Mrs. Theresa M. Hawthorne. Our meetings include well check-ins and real talk that includes tips and conversations that build up the spouse, be it male or female.

We are ever so grateful for our Episcopal Leadership Team, Bishop Samuel L. Green, Sr. and Supervisor, Mrs. Phyllis N. Green; who gave us the vision to show compassion on those who are less fortunate. With God's ordained wisdom in them both, they continued to find ways for the Seventh Episcopal District to worship beyond the walls of our church buildings. They've continued to raise us higher in our use of technology and personally as Bishop Sam makes time for clergy, membership and the different ministries in the 7th Episcopal District. Time spent with our Supervisor, Dr. Phyllis N. Green encourages us to be our best self for ourself and the Kingdom. Reminding us that we cannot pour from an empty vessel. She invites each conference to join her via Zoom through the "Pop-up Self-Care" sessions. Where we can speak freely on topics that enabled us to talk with other spouses across the 7th Episcopal District, who shared similar issues and give tactical tools to resolve issues within the roles we serve. The Columbia Conference MSWAWO+PKs attended the virtual sessions, participated in self-care affirmations, retreats on every level during the conference year. Each of our Presiding Elders, Area Consultants, and Clergy supported us in their individual presiding districts throughout the conference year. Although we have one of the three retiring this conference year, Presiding Elder, Reverend Samuel L. McPherson, we wish him Godspeed. He will be sadly missed in the Lancaster District for his compassionate nature and love for mankind. But we know that whatever plans God has for him, he will be very successful and bring Glory to His Holy Name.

The 2022-2023 Conference Year brought us some new spouses and they were recruited and happily joined us in many ways attending meetings and participated in the retreats bringing joy and growth within the organization. Our first event in December 2022 was the LPR which was held in Little Rock, Arkansas. We had three that were supposed to attend, but due to sickness and family matters we supported our 2020-2022 Connectional Mrs. MSWAWO+PK's, Mrs. Andrea W. Hill.

Our first meeting of the conference year was held virtually on **March 25, 2023** by the Lancaster District Spouses, Mrs. Gloria W. Preston, the Columbia conference president hosted it virtually. The meeting was called to order by our conference president. The devotion was led by our worship director, Mrs. Alice Hill and following the agenda was adopted and approved. Greetings were extended to all members to include the new member, Mrs. Anita Dent and those who were transferred into the conference; especially our retirees, widows, widowers and presiding elders and their spouses our area consultants. As always, we discussed self-care and encourage each member to tune into Supervisor Green's monthly 'Self-Care Pop-up Sessions'. We had eight (8) members who were on the sick list or was hospitalized. We ask that each presiding elder district be reminded to contact the President and/or 1st and 2nd Vice President in regards to the sick members and those in caregiving facilities and bereavement. We allowed the Columbia District to give the final thought by two of their spouses, Sister Wilhemenia Broughton, a widowed spouse and Sister Alice Hill, a retired spouse. Sister Broughton noted that this is a great organization and she has been a member since Bishop and Mother Adams was in the 7th Episcopal District. Sister Broughton reminded us to encourage, embrace, love and recruit new members. Remember to reach out to each other during the good and bad times. She mentioned that you may need a sister to step in while you are in need. Sister Alice Hill mentioned that retirement is good and you just have to learn to fill in the blank spaces. She is enjoying the break

but misses the work. She encouraged the spouses to start thinking of activities and levels of outreach that you can do on your own and to remember who your dedication truly belongs too. A closing prayer was given, the meeting was adjourned followed by our MSWAWO+PK'S benediction.

Our second conference meeting was held virtually on *May 18, 2023* hosted by the Columbia District Spouses, Mrs. Ella Richburg was the host spouse. The meeting was called to order by our conference president. The devotion was led by the Columbia District Spouses and following the agenda was adopted and approved. Greetings were extended to all members and presiding elders and area consultants. As always, we discussed self-care and encourage each member to tune into Supervisor Green's monthly 'Self-Care Pop-up Sessions' did our well-check for each member who were on the Zoom meeting. Our meeting focus was on the AME Connectional MSWAWO+PK's Level membership drive; Submitting a PK Scholarship Application Forms and purchasing breakfast tickets as a support for the PK Scholarship Awards. Our final thought was brought by Mrs. Brenda McKinzie to give the final thought. Topic: "God Will Take Care of You." Sister McKinzie stated that she observed a bird's nest on her porch and noted that it had been well protected by the weather and everyday life surrounding it. It prompted her to think of this scripture, Matthew 6:25-32 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. A closing prayer was given, the meeting was adjourned followed by our MSWAWO+PK'S benediction.

Our third conference meeting was held virtually on *August 26, 2023* hosted by the Newberry District Spouses, Mrs. Barbara Davis was the host spouse. We had a well check and discussed upcoming events on all levels. To include our annual conference preparations, annual dues and expenditures via treasurer's report, ordination and the clergy annual fellowship dinner. Questions and concerns were entertained and the meeting was brought to an end. We allowed Sis. Drusilla Davis to give the Newberry District's final thought. Topic: "Let There Be Light!" Once there was darkness over the earth and God said, "Let There Be Light"! May every dark corner of your life be illuminated today. Where there is darkness, where there's fear. Speak out and declare over your day. Let there be light of healing, light of strength, light of Holy Bold-ness, light of Joy, light of peace, light of Confidence, light of Determination, light of Ability, light of Agility and light of Love, Let There Be Light!!!" A closing prayer was given, the meeting was adjourned followed by our MSWAWO+PK'S benediction.

After our meeting we were invited by email to a SISTERCARE Education Event on September 19, 2023 **Subject: Domestic Violence & Human Trafficking**. I attended the event and thoroughly enjoyed each speaker and the two surviving victims; one was a domestic violence survivor and the second one was a human trafficking survivor who shared their personal stories. I look forward to sharing the information that I received during the presentation. I met Mr. James E. Cooper, M.H.S.M. Director of Development for Sistercare, who along with the office of the SC Attorney General hosted the event. Information can be found on the South Carolina State website under the Human Trafficking Task Force. Mr. Cooper can be reached at jcooper@sistercare.com should you have any questions regarding the agency and what they offer the victims and their families. Plans will be to share the information received during our first conference meeting in the new conference year. Information flyers to include possible signs of a

trafficking victim and some of the myths of what determines abuse and the legal definition (types) and laws regarding trafficking. What a wonder conference year and spending time to self-care and check in on one another, bringing back the old fashioned new-way (Zoom) to talk within your home to the clergy family and friends.

Thank you, Bishop Samuel L. Green, Sr. and Supervisor Phyllis Green for a great opportunity to serve this amazingly blessed organization and the beautiful people (God's People) who makes it easy to love.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OUR UPCOMING CONFERENCE YEAR

1. We recommend that each Clergy family continue to take advantage of this supportive organization by attending our retreats & meetings on each level (district, conference, episcopal) to include connectional meetings both in-person and/or virtual.
2. We recommend that Spouses and PK's of the Clergy family share their time, talents and technical skills for the advancement of the organization, benefitting all members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.
3. We recommended that the Clergy Family continue to create ways to bridge the gender and generational gaps within the organization adopting the "Each one Teaches one method of accountability.
4. We further recommend that active Clergy, Spouses and Adult PKs' help to ensure that all of our retired and widowed spouses in each church, be included in all of the annual record-keeping, events, and conferences.
5. Most importantly, we recommend that we all keep in touch with each other, lifting up one another in continued prayer regarding life, health, strength, as we have lived through a pandemic and as we persevere through COVID19 & Long COVID peacefully in love with one to another in this Christian Family of faith.
6. That we increased awareness, value, purpose, and love of this organization.

Respectfully Submitted,
The Columbia Conference MSWAWO+PKs

Committee Members

Mrs. Gloria W. Preston, Conference President
Mr. Herman Bethel, Conference Second Vice President
Mrs. Shirley McPherson, Lancaster Area Consultant
Mr. Winslow Merrick, Newberry Area Consultant
Mrs. Jacqueline Woods

FAMILY LIFE

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair:	Reverend Debra Bradley
Reverends:	Cassandra Sligh Conway, Steven Evans, Steven Dowling
Brother:	Heyward Neal
Sisters:	Bessie Ruff, Brenda Martin, Georgia Faye Hawkins, Bertha Allen, Frances Watson, Rita Wise Lane

Report

To The Right Reverend Samuel L. Green, Sr., Presiding Prelate of the Seventh Episcopal District; Episcopal Supervisor Dr. Phyllis N. Green; The Reverend Rosalyn Grant Coleman, Host Presiding Elder; Associate Presiding Elders – The Reverend Samuel L. McPherson, The Reverend Dr. M. Charmaine Ragin-Merrick; The Reverend Dr. Caesar R. Richburg, Host Pastor; Mrs. Ella G. Richburg, Host Spouse; Clergy, Delegates, Laity, and Guests of the 146th Session of the Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference.

We, the members of the Committee on Family Life wish to make the following report.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention officials looked at the role that American fathers play in parenting their children. Much of the CDC's previous research on family life, which the agency explores as an important contributor to public health and child development, has focused exclusively on mothers. A statistical study conducted, suggested that African American families with active fathers are more involved than most others think.

The stereotypical gender imbalance causes misconception of how active a father is in the lives of their children. This study indicates **that “contrary to popular belief, 42% of black children live with two parents (compared to 70% of all children) while 51% live with one parent (compared to 25% of all children). The reason why this is not well known may have to do with a commonly repeated statistic regarding out-of-wedlock births (70%) which only takes into account whether or not a woman was married at the time she gave birth.”** (<https://blackdemographics.com>)

According to the CDC 58% of Black fathers live with one or more of their children and even a larger majority (72.7%) of Black fathers talk with their children about things that happened during the day whether they live with their children or not. This is only one example that illustrates how fathers are involved with their children as opposed to fatherhood being defined by living arrangements. This is also an example of how the 70% out of wedlock statistic can be very misleading especially when used to emphasize Black fatherlessness, or policy and issues regarding the Black family.

A father's involvement is important for many reasons, one of which is that data shows that children with involved fathers are at lower risk for developing disruptive behavior, substance abuse, mental health difficulties, and relationship problems. Because racism still exist, and black fathers are still marginalized, some black fathers may face an uphill battle to be good fathers. This can also be complicated due to disproportionate incarceration rates or difficulty

in obtaining jobs to provide for their families. These seemingly hardships are only part of the story of Black fatherhood, it is not the end story.

As a spiritual entity, how can the churches within communities be a pivot?

- Churches can be the conduit within the community by supporting agencies, such as Midlands Fatherhood Coalition which provide programs to enhance healthy families.
- Recognized that it takes the village, and the church can be the village, to change the narrative in order to create healthy families with supporting healthy relationships between parent(s) and children.
- Acknowledge that when fathers are involved, their children are more likely to go to college; 80% less likely to spend time in jail; and 75% less likely to experience teen pregnancy or become a teen father.

Respectfully submitted.

The Family Life Committee



YOUTH MINISTRIES

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Brothers: Austin Jones, Ashton Jackson, Jeremiah Days, Zachary Shepherd, Daylon Hall

Sisters: Miranda Nixon Blocker, Adriane Boulware, Robin Cleckley, Andrea Byrd, Cierra Bowers, LaDazia Anderson, Amari Rogers, Iyanna Broadus, Sydney Largent, Cheyenne Chambers, Kristin Webber, Destinee Taylor

Report

Chairperson: Mrs. Miranda N, Blocker, Members: Robin Cleckley, Adriane Boulware, Andrea Byrd, Cierra Bowers, Cheyenne Chambers, Kristyn Webber, Destinee Taylor, Ashton Jackson, LaDazia Doiser, Amari Rogers, Iyanna Broadus, Daylon Hall, Sydney Largent, Jeremiah Days, Austin Jones, Zachary Shepherd, Alex Blocker, Nadhea Wiley, Gabriella Evans, LaAdrian Kinsler, Doretta Irby, Diamond Jones, Precious Jones and Shyla Brailsford

Salutations:

The Right Reverend Samuel L. Green, Sr., Presiding Bishop
Mrs. Phyllis N. Green, Episcopal Supervisor
Sister Tanya Harper, Connectional WMS Recording Secretary
Ms. Sylvia Blake, Connectional Member at Large
Sister Sandra Anderson, Episcopal WMS President
Dr. Ila McFadden, Episcopal YPD Director
Sister Destinee Reese, Connectional YPD Recording Secretary
Brother Jahiem President, Episcopal YPD President
Sister Felita Grady Hicks, Columbia Conference WMS President
Reverend Rosalyn G. Coleman Host Presiding Elder
Reverend Dr. Charmaine Ragin Merrick, Associate Presiding Elder
Reverend Samuel L. McPherson, Associate Presiding Elder
Reverend, Dr. Ceasar R. Richburg Host Pastor

2022-2023 Summary

Columbia Conference Theme: “New Beginnings for YPD”

Scripture: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.” Psalm 51:10

2022-2023 was a year of new beginnings for the Columbia Conference YPD. The past years of navigating through the pandemic have taught us to adjust, change and start new beginnings. We have learned that in spite of various circumstances we can still have a relationship with Christ.

We have several focus areas, which include developing leadership skills that are centered and committed to Christ and the Church. In addition, we aim to enable youth to know the historical background of the AME Church and the Connectional Women's Missionary Society in our meetings and events.

The focus this past year was to teach and to re-emphasize the structure of the AME Church, WMS and YPD. We also learned how to take care of our mental, physical and spiritual well-being, so that we can better serve others.

Our youth exhibit a passion for sharing the love of Christ through a commitment to social involvement and outreach opportunities. They represented Christ in Sunday Church, Church School, and community service social activities. The youth were not selfish in giving back to the community. They supported over ten (10) different community programs from donating through Souper Bowl of Caring to serving and visiting the sick and needy.

Other outreach projects included: monetary donations to Sharing God's Love, Mission Lexington, provided paper products and toiletries to Killingsworth home for women and children, constructing felt caps for Prisma hospital Children Cancer unit, monetary donations to Transition Homeless center, providing Grocery bags for Power in Changing; an agency that provide for babies and toddlers, trash pickup on the highways, and providing Valentine Boxes to the Sick and Shut-in.

Youth spoke loudly on causes that mattered to them and appealed to the community to vote. Youth shared in Self Denial week. The theme was "Speak Life" becoming His mouthpiece, by writing ins inspirational messages, painting/drawing canvas messages, acting out scenarios and practicing how we speak nicely to each other and being a mouth piece for Christ.

Supported Missionaries in solidarity and associated clothing colors for awareness:

- Heart Awareness
- Breast Cancer
- Domestic Violence
- Women's History Month

It is our goal to bring out the best in our youth and help them to strive to be all that they can be with Christ's help.

Recommendations:

- Create programs and events that the youth will execute on at all organizational levels to "Grow, Glow and Go" for Christ.
- Provide High School YPD Graduates Scholarships, based on academic merit and extra-curricular/community service involvement
- Provide leadership training for members, parents, officers and directors
- Develop a transition booklet for incoming officers and directors
- Use various methods of social media to communicate and stay connected with youth, youth leaders and parents.

Our mission is to provide our Youth with the tools to "Grow, Glow and Go for Christ,



Columbia Conference Branch Young People's and Children's Division Literary Report

To: The Right Reverend Samuel L. Green Sr., Presiding Prelate, Sister Phyllis N. Green, Episcopal Supervisor, Sister Tanya Harper, Connectional Recording Secretary, Sister Sylvia Blake, Connectional Member - at - Large, Sister Sandra Anderson, Episcopal WMS President, Dr. Ila McFadden, Episcopal YPD Director, Sister Destinee Reese, Connectional YPD Recording Secretary, Brother Jahiem President Episcopal YPD President, Sister Felita Grady Hicks, Columbia Conference Branch WMS, Sister Cierra Bowers, Columbia Conference YPD President, Presiding Elders, Pastors, Area Consultants, Area Chairpersons, Area YPD Directors, Local WMS Presidents, Local YPD Directors, Missionaries, YPD'ers, and my Brothers and Sisters in Missions!

Praise be to God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for allowing us to share the 2022-2023 ministry report on behalf of the Columbia Conference Young People's and Children's Division.

Columbia Conference Theme: "New Beginnings for YPD"

Scripture: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10

The following is a summary of our 2022-2023 Meetings and Events, as well as Goals and a report out of our activities and accomplishments in relationship to the requisite goals.

Timeline of Meetings and Events

Date	Meeting	Location	Attendees
Wed, 12/28/22	Columbia Conference YPD Planning Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duties and Responsibilities of Officers 	Virtual via Zoom	76
3/3 – 3/5	7 th Episcopal District, 30 th Annual YPD Retreat: "Renaissance: The Reawakening"	Embassy Suites, Columbia, SC	90
Sun, 4/30/23	Columbia Conference YPD Educational Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Denial Activities 	Chappelle Memorial AME Church, Columbia, SC	38

7/5 – 7/8	7 th Episcopal District ASPIRE Conference: “Think Big, Dream Bigger”	Greenville, SC Convention Center	30+
7/24 – 7/28	20 th WMS & YPD Quadrennial Convention	Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, FL	32
Sat. 8/19/23	Columbia Conference YPD End of Year Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election of Officers 23-24 • Overview of Rosenwald School 	Pine Grove Recreational Center, Columbia, SC	

Goal #1: Read and Study the Bible to become closer to Jesus Christ

- Columbia Conference participated in the “Speak Life: Becoming His Mouthpiece” Connectional Self Denial Program 2023 from May 7 – May 14.
 - Designed Canvas Poster
 - Wrote an essay based on theme
 - Acted out real-life scenarios at local churches to demonstrate how they would “speak life” in day-to-day activities
- Various Bible “Blast” Lessons and Bible “Blast” Stories at local churches
- Youth Christian Fellowship luncheon
- Twist and Turn Vacation Bible School
- Youth Sunday Worship Services
- Participation in YPD Retreat participated in various breakout sessions and activities
 - “Church Girl RealTalk”, “All Up In Your Mind”, “Navigating Through Your Wilderness”
 - Retreat Choir, Bible Study, Talent Show participation
- Lessons from the “Mission Education Curriculum” (YPD Speaks Section)
 - Award Winner at 2023 Quadrennial for Submitting the most articles submitted

Goal #2: Participate in Community Service to include Mission and Outreach Activities and Programs

Our youth exhibit a passion for sharing the love of Christ through a commitment to social involvement and outreach opportunities. They represented Christ in Sunday Church, Church School, and community service social activities. The youth were not selfish in giving back to the community. They supported over ten (10) different community programs from donating through Souper Bowl of Caring to serving and visiting the sick and needy.

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provide for babies and toddlers, trash pickup on the highways, and providing Valentine Boxes to the Sick and Shut-in.

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Supported Missionaries in solidarity and associated clothing colors for awareness:

- Heart Awareness
- Breast Cancer
- Domestic Violence
- Women’s History Month

It is our goal to bring out the best in our youth and help them to strive to be all that they can be with Christ’s help.

Goal #3: Teach Robert’s Rules of Order and include Political Involvement

- Collaborated with NAACP, focusing on voting and educating youth and adults on importance of registering to vote and actually voting in all elections.
- Youth were elected to student government offices at local schools.
- Held monthly meetings: (Area, Columbia, Conference) to learn Robert’s Rules of Order.
- Participation in Workshop on Parliamentary Procedure: July 2023

Goal #4: Teach how to accurately record attendance, minutes and financial reports

Secretaries on all levels kept good records of all meetings, to include an accurate account of attendance and monies collected. This was experiential learning; they learned as they participated.

Goal #5: Teach the organizational structure of the AME Church

Through the participation in presiding over YPD meetings, and attendance at the YPD Retreat, Quadrennial, and ASPIRE Conference, the youth were immersed in the protocols, history, leadership and cultural norms of the AME Church.

- Know your Church Jeopardy, Spelling Bee that focused on YPD, WMS, AME, vocabulary words
 - Youth Placed 3rd Place at Quadrennial: Spelling Bee
- The Youth submitted articles to the “Mission Education Curriculum.”

Conclusion:

Thank you to pastors, parents, youth leaders YPD Area Directors; Adriane Boulware: Columbia Area, Robin Cleckley: Lancaster Area, Andrea Byrd: Newberry Area – and local YPD Directors for the extra efforts you put forward in support of our youth.

We have been blessed to work with Sister Felita Grady Hicks and the Women’s Missionary Society. You have continuously provided unwavering support and through your servant leadership, you inspire, encourage and bless all of those connected to you.

As we close this exciting, educational, inspirational and fun year, let us embody the spirit of Sankofa as we harness the experiences from the past to move forward in greatness with God’s rich blessings and love.

May God Bless,

Miranda Nixon Blocker

Miranda Nixon Blocker
Columbia Conference YPD Director

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Danté Kenly
Reverends: Steven Dowling, Krystle McHoney, Noluthando Ntsangani, Richmond G. Dion, Lawrence Pralour, Jonique Smalls Comrie, Benjamin Pratt
Brothers: Deonta Washington, Eddie F. Goins, II, Micah Graydon, Jerimiah Martin, Cameron Hall, Johnathan Williams, Benjamin Pratt, Shelton Lybrand, DeMarkus Robinson, Donte Irby
Sisters: Sarah Hodge, Ashley Pearson, Deandra Davis, Destiny Gregg, Undrena Croomer, Quavian Mayrant, Nakeisha Shorter, Kekola Boyd

Report
See the RAYAC Report

PRISON MINISTRY

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Sylvia Roberts,
Reverends: Debra Bradley, Jacques Days, Lynda Jones, Janie Williams, Sherry Highbaugh,
Lorenzo Dinkins
Brothers: Walter Savage, Walter Nathaniel
Sisters: Ursula Rivers, Margie B. Mack

Report

To: The Right Reverend Samuel Lawrence Green Sr., Presiding Prelate of the Seventh Episcopal District and to Supervisor Dr. Phyllis N. Green, Episcopal Supervisor of the Seventh Episcopal District

To: The Presiding Elders: Reverend Rosalyn G. Coleman, Host Presiding, Elder Columbia District, Reverend Dr. M. Charmaine Ragin Merrick, Associate Presiding Elder Newberry District, Reverend Samuel McPherson, Associate Presiding Elder Lancaster District and Reverend Dr Cesar Richburg Host Pastor

To: The Pastors, Pastors' spouses, Delegates, Alternates and Members of the 146th Session of the Columbia Annual Conference; we humbly submit the following report from the committee on Prison Ministry:

As per a report by the Sentencing Project submitted to the United Nations in 2018 states, the United States criminal justice system is the largest in the world. At the closing of 2015, over 6.7 million individuals¹ were under some form of correctional control in the United States, including 2.2 million incarcerated in federal, state, and local prisons and jails². The report points out that U.S is the world leader in its rate of incarceration, dwarfing the rate of nearly every nation. Such broad statistics mask the racial disparity that pervades the U.S criminal justice system, and for African Americans in particular. African American are more likely than white American to be arrested; once arrested, they are more likely to experience lengthy prison sentences. African American adults are 5.9 times as likely to be incarcerated than Whites and Hispanics are 3.1 times as likely⁴.

As of 2001, one of every three black boys born in that year could expect to go to prison in his lifetime, as could one of every 6 Latinos-compared to one of every seventeen white boys⁵. Racial and ethnic disparities among women are less substantial than among men but remain prevalent. The sources of such disparities are deeper and more systemic than explicit racial discrimination. The United States in effect operates two distinct criminal justice systems: one for wealthy people and another for poor people and people of color. The wealthy can access a vigorous adversary system complete with constitutional protections for defendants. Yet the experiences of poor and minority defendants within the criminal justice system often differ substantially from that model due to a number of factors, each of which contributes to the overrepresentation of such individuals in the system.

South Carolina ranks twenty-sixth in the nation for its per capita incarceration rate. A combination of state prisons, local jails, and youth jails and prisons hold 27,454 people behind bars. Approximately 16,000 of those people are held in state prisons, while 11,470 of them are held in local jails. While the state is 64% white, 27% Black, 6.1% Latino, 2.1% Asian, and 0.4%

American Indian or Alaskan Native,⁶ the prison population is 58% Black⁷ and jails are 53% Black. South Carolina's carceral facilities produce premature death⁶. In Department of Juvenile Justice states, 95% black,2% Hispanic,2% white,1% other.

There are some excited ministries addressing the needs of the inmate population. Mt Moriah AME Church has an outreach program at DJJ Detention Center ministry. The ministry focuses on Campus ministry, supplies, and special holiday projects. Also, they mentor DJJ Foster Care Pregnant Girl's and Newborn ministry (with pregnancy bags and newborn diapers and clothing). Another ministry at St. John AME Church prison ministry sent letters and cards of encouragement to several of the inmates. Also, this ministry collaborated with other prison ministries in North Carolina. As a result of this outreach, two ex-offenders came to the church (God be the glory).

Rev. Roberts has and continue to counsel countless numbers of inmates about their faith walk and referring them to the Chaplin's office while serving as Clinical Licensed Social Worker (Sex Offender Treatment Program/Mental Health/SVP) for South Carolina Department of Correction. Unfortunately, one of my prison ministry members lost his battle to cancer. In his final letter: he written, "God has forgiven me and thank Ms. Roberts for her ministry". Rev. Days' prison ministry, the South Carolina Department of Correction is a ministry of health and having an attentive ear to listen to the inmate population. Also, he effectively advocates their basic needs.

Finally, Pine Grove AME Church in Rembert has an active prison ministry that supports their congregation members that may have family members incarcerated. Also, the pastor is inspired to go to visit factory workers that hires ex offender as a check method of bringing them closer to Christ.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) The churches in the Columbia Annual Conference need to develop a prayer ministry for the prison population. Also, the churches need to reach out to the congregation for incarcerated family members to assist.
- 2) The churches should explore an outreach ministry to include visits, bible study, devotion service, letters writing, volunteer with DJJ or SCDC chaplains. Department of Juvenile Justice is looking to increase their volunteer numbers with more African American volunteers.
- 3) We need to advocate for policies of fair sentencing to our legislators. We must vote to make our voices heard. Luke 4:18 said, "*The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free.*"

Respectfully submitted by,
The Prison Ministry

HOSPITAL MINISTRY

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair:	Camille Carpenter
Reverends:	Ruth E. D. Robinson, Angella Beckford Days, Tobie Pollock, David Owens, Ernestine Pringle
Brother:	James Anderson, Jr.
Sisters:	Diane LaBrew, Sandra Roach, Ernestine Mickens, Ursula Rivers, Joann Richardson, Nettie Koon

Report

To The Right Rev. Samuel L. Green, Sr., Presiding Prelate of the Seventh Episcopal District; Supervisor Phyllis N. Green, Episcopal Supervisor; Reverend Rosalyn G. Coleman, Host Presiding Elder, Columbia District; Associate Presiding Elders, Reverend Samuel McPherson, Lancaster District, Reverend Dr. M. Charmaine Ragin Merrick, Newberry District, Reverend Caesar Richburg, Host Pastor and First Lady Ella Richberg; Pastors, Clergy, Delegates, Laity, and Guests of the 146th Session of the Columbia Annual Conference.

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we, the Hospital Ministry, beg leave to make our report. In the 2022 Annual Conference report, we presented two areas of recommendations for 2023. Our report this year, will focus on those two recommendations:

1. Research avenues in which to host continuing education, certifications, networking, internships, and resource opportunities geared towards hospital ministry.
2. Establish partnerships or identify contact person with local hospitals and organizations within each Presiding Elder's District to promote hospital ministry opportunities. (Deadline, March 2023).

We were able to begin researching avenues and individuals located in our Zion within the local hospitals of the Columbia District who can provide guidance and support to promote hospital opportunities. These persons known as chaplains, have been trained in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). They can provide information and guidance on the importance of pastoral care during hospitalization. Once admitted to a hospital, chaplains are helpful in assisting you in navigating advanced care planning and decision making, provide a host of other services that will allow the patient and family members to process their thoughts, feelings, and emotions in a prayerful and spiritual environment. In the event of an epidemic (like COVID) chaplains can provide family members of a patient with any changes in hospital protocol related to patient visitation and other matters deemed appropriate according to hospital policies.

CPE CERTIFIED INDIVIDUALS

CPE Board Certified contact person for PRISMA HEALTH: Rev. Col. Addison Burgess: Columbia District

CPE Board Certified Chaplain contact person for HaDora Hospice of the Carolinas: 6156 St Andrews Rd. STE 208 Columbia, SC. 29212: Rev. Dr. Elaine Eskew, Columbia District

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS WHO WORK IN HOSPITALS AND OTHER HEALTH CARE FACILITIES, OR RETIRED CHAPLAINS.

RN, MSN, Nurse Manager: North Central Family Medical – Care Chester:
Angella Beckford-Days: Newberry District

Retired Board-Certified Chaplain. Presently Pastoral Thanatology Certified Specialist: Rev. Tobie Pollock: Columbia District

Retired Family Practice Doctor: Dr. Debra Grate: Columbia District

Recommendation

The committee recommends that in the 2024 conference year, the Hospital Ministry Committee continue to strive towards adding to the present list of hospital chaplains. Also, to:

1. Create a network directory of licensed, specialists and/or certified persons who have the ability and/or expertise to offer healthcare in the areas of counseling, training, and specialized certifications (CPR, etc.) in order to equip and/or minister to those in our Zion. (Deadline by May 2024).

DISASTER AND PREPAREDNESS

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Cassandra Sligh-Conway
Reverends: Larry Clark, Ertha Bowman, Sylvia Roberts, Leonard Simmons, Rodella Rivers, Wanda Rapley, Phillip Washington
Brother: Allen Etheredge
Sisters: Mary Thomas, Thosha Hill, Donna Bouknight

Report

To: The Right Reverend Samuel Lawrence Green Sr., Presiding Prelate of the Seventh Episcopal District, and Supervisor Phyllis N. Green, Episcopal Supervisor of the Seventh Episcopal District

To: The Presiding Elders: Reverend Dr. Caesar R. Richburg, Host Pastor, Reverend Rosalyn Grant Coleman, Host Presiding Elder, Elder Columbia District, Reverend Dr. M. Charmaine Ragin Merrick, Associate Presiding Elder, Newberry District, Reverend Samuel McPherson, Associate Presiding Elder Lancaster District

To: The Pastors, Pastors' Spouses, Delegates, Alternates and Members of the 146th Session of the Columbia Annual Conference; we humbly submit the following report from the committee on Disaster Preparedness:

Disasters continue to impact many communities. There are many types of disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, COVID 19, earthquakes, wildfires, tsunamis, etc. A disaster can be anything that is traumatic to any group that causes some type of distress, trauma, or secondary trauma. Some of the most recent and current disasters faced nationally are COVID 19, the wildfires that destroyed Maui, and Hurricane Idalia. In addition, the devastating wildfires in Maui forced families to evacuate, homelessness, no clean drinking water, and some lives were lost.

South Carolina has faced many disasters. COVID 19, hurricanes, flooding, and earthquakes, are some of the disasters that affected many. In some of the research, African Americans were noted as experiencing more alarming effects from certain disasters. In this same research, certain areas were suggested to enhance resources received by African Americans from community based and faith-based agencies. Overall, the community based and faith-based agencies were encouraged to collaborate to produce a resource guide in communities (Ross, 2022, The Demographics of Disaster, <https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2022-06-22/disaster-disaprities-natural-hazards-climate-change-threaten-underserved-communities>).

It is our sincere hope that churches will continue to collaborate, and Episcopal districts will promote collaborations and partnerships. There must be formal communication about the impact of disasters in the African American community and other diverse populations. Educating communities is a way to provide an intentional effort to safeguard diverse communities. The African American community continues to face unequal treatment and a lack of resources pre, post, and during disasters.

There is one situation that affected the world globally. According to actual accounts

noted by Dr. Susan Moore, a black medical doctor, she noted that she experienced mistreatment as she was in a hospital being treated for the COVID-19 virus. Her actual review of her experience allowed us to receive firsthand experience of health disparities and racism in health care. Dr. Moore later died from complications of COVID 19. In this case, we were able to observe Dr. Moore stating that she felt alone, and that she felt like she was being disrespected on many levels. Overall, we as a district can continue to attend seminars and workshops related to African Americans and health disparities, self-care, and advocacy. It is necessary to prepare our communities for disasters, and it is equally important to stress certain terms such as bias, oppression, microaggressions, and macroaggressions that can surface during the plight of disasters (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/23/us/susan-moore-black-doctor-indiana.html>).

The Columbia and Newberry Districts, in partnership with a Disaster Preparedness Grant through South Carolina State University, continue to use the Train the Trainer model. This grant allowed a variety of trainings on the pre, during, and post impact of disasters. Some of the third-year highlights accomplished by this partnership were as follows: an annual conference on disaster preparedness, bi-monthly community engagement seminars on topics related to disasters, creation and implementation of a Disaster Preparedness Community Advisory Board, publications on topics related to disasters, and national trainings. We hosted the 3rd Annual Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Conference via Zoom. The conference was well attended by 25 agencies that participated. Also, a radio station in Aiken S.C allowed the grant staff to discuss disaster preparedness throughout the state of S.C.

As we make this report to the Columbia Conference of the Seventh Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, we stress the importance of educating diverse communities and provide updates on the pandemic (COVID 19) that continues to impact us globally. The local church must follow the directives of the CDC and the Seventh Episcopal District of AME Church Health Ministry to minimize the spread of COVID 19 through our local churches.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Continue to check with the South Carolina Emergency Management Division, SCEMD 2779 Fish Hatchery Road, West Columbia South Carolina 29172, (803) 737-8500, EMAIL: www.SCEMD.org .
- Continue to encourage Presiding Elder Districts to provide forums and workshops related to disaster preparedness and prevention.
- Continue to develop ways to enhance the local church and community with resources to plan for disasters. Efforts might include providing emergency kits to churches and in the local community.
- Encourage Presiding Elder Districts to share a list of resources that church members and communities can update annually. This manual should be shared and updated at the Episcopal Office in case of a disaster.

Respectfully submitted by

The Disaster Preparedness Committee

LAY ORGANIZATION

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair:	Brother Larry Thompson
Brothers:	Allen D. Etheredge, Reggie Wicker, Laval Oxendine, Alonzo C. Lewis, Ervin Lane, Edison Dupree, Warnell Rhett, Kendrick Cleckley, James Green, Walter Nathaniel, Michael Mack, Darrius Hassell, Michael Miller, DaMarkus Robinson, Eric Jeffcoat, Central McFadden
Sisters:	Thelma Griggs, Margie Mickle, Cynthia Toland, Pamela Griddine, Joretha Jenerette, Deborah Portee, S. Yvette Vant, Evon Whitt, Eunice Miller, Connie Lumpkin, Loretta Moon, Diane Caldwell, Niovia Davis, Barbara Means, Dianne Boyd

Report

Salutations: Greetings to Bishop Samuel Lawrence Green, Sr., Supervisor Phyllis Nadine Green, Presiding Elders, Reverend Rosalyn Grant Coleman, Reverend Dr. M. Charmine Ragin-Merrick, and Reverend Samuel Lawrence McPherson', on behalf of the Laity, we are honored to give our stewardship report and activities.

Report:

With much prayer and joy, I give my last report as the Columbia Annual Conference Lay Organization President. The Laity of the Columbia Conference, along with the presiding elders and pastors, continues to faithfully fulfill the great mission of our Zion, the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Conference Lay meetings were held bi-monthly. God allowed the Laity to stay connected through conference calls, virtual, and more in-person meetings with CDC Covid-19 protocols in place.

The Columbia Conference Laity, Presiding Elders, and Pastors participated in the SED Lay Retreat, which was held at the Marriott in Columbia, SC., under the leadership of President, Keith Britton.

- Special Thanks to Reverend Dante Kinley (SED Lay Retreat Presenter)
- Congratulations to Sister Arianna Pinder of Emanuel AME Church (2023 Young Adult Madam Seventh Winner)

The Columbia Conference Laity along with several pastors attended the 38th Session of the Connectional Lay Biennial in Chicago, Illinois.

- Congratulations to President Britton, Sister Darlene Ravenel, and Brother Kendric Rush, as the Seventh Episcopal District Lay received the Exemplary Lay Award as well as Brother Leroy Linen, Vice President Award.

Virtual and In-Person Health Forums were held across the Columbia Annual Conference:

- Continued to recognize Heart Awareness (February)
- Continued to recognize Men's Health (Prostate Cancer)
- Continued to recognize Breast Cancer and Domestic Violence Month (October)

Additional Forums were held across the Columbia Annual Conference:

- Continued updates of Parliamentary procedures.
- Know Your Church (history facts).

Additional Lay Activities held across the Columbia Annual Conference:

- The Laity of the Columbia Annual Conference participated in the virtual Connectional Lay Spring Executive Board session
- Annual Lay Day (Honorees) – Past and Current Members who have reached the age of seventy-five and older who served as Lay Executive members of the Newberry District Lay
- Old Time Church “Praise Fest” Gospel Concert
- The Laity attended the Lancaster District Pentecost Worship Service (Ebenezer - Winnsboro)
- Participated in the Lower Richland Area “Men of Valor” (Sponsored by Saint Phillip AME Church Lay)
- Excellent participation in neighborhood associations’ National Night Out.
- Participated in the Lancaster District “Leaving a Legacy” Awards Banquet.

The Columbia Conference Lay had representation at the General Board Meeting (Observers), Investiture, Christian Education, and Sons of Allen meetings, which were held in New Orleans, LA. The Laity of the Columbia Annual Conference enjoyed traveling and supporting Bishop Green as he delivered spirit-filled messages to the First and Second Episcopal Districts.

With grateful hearts, we continued our lay ministry with Harvest Hope Food Bank of Columbia, United Ministries of Sumter, Grieving Needs Foundation of Winnsboro, Bryan Center Nursing Facilities, and Butler’s Home Care (Prosperity). As the restrictions of the Covid-19 Pandemic were lifted, some visitations were allowed; some contact was made through the family members as well. We continued our card ministry to the active military members as well.

We give special thanks to our Presiding Elders - Reverend Rosalyn G. Coleman, Reverend Dr. M. Charmaine Ragin-Merrick, and Reverend Samuel L. McPherson for their leadership, prayers, support, and encouragement.

CLASS LEADERS

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair:	Reverend Lynda R. Jones
Reverends:	Ruth E.D. Robinson, Michael Hill
Brother:	DeMarkus Robinson
Sister:	Diane LaBrew, Mary Arnold

Report

To The Right Reverend Samuel L. Green Sr., Presiding Prelate of the Seventh Episcopal District, Mrs. Phyllis N. Green, Episcopal Supervisor; Reverend Rosalyn G. Coleman, Host Presiding Elder; Reverend Dr. M. Charmaine Ragin, Associate Presiding Elder, Reverend Samuel McPhearson, Associate Presiding Elder; Reverend Dr. Caesar R Richburg, Host Pastor, other pastors and ordained ministers, conference chairpersons and delegates of the 146th Session of the Columbia Annual Conference, we the Committee on Class Leaders wish to make our report.

The descriptive term “Lifeblood of the Church” comes close in describing the vital importance of the ministry of the Class Leader System within the AME Church. The Class Leader System is not new to the AME church as it was established and put into practice since the beginning of the birth of the A.M.E. Church. Recorded in the Methodist Polity, by Bishop H. M. Turner, in 1885 and reprinted in 1986, he referred to the “*class system*” in the church as “Next to the Word of God.” In 1992, the Right Reverend Vinton R Anderson, in his Episcopal Address, made a beacon call for the full reactivation of the Class Leader System in the A.M.E. Church. He further said “*This time is ripe, in our day as in history, our church is in great need of an effective working-Class Leader System. No doubt he saw the great need to nurture and support people in their Christian growth.*” Therefore, it is imperative that all persons joining the Body of Christ (the church) be assigned a temporary class leader, called an “anchor,” until that person completes the required new members orientation. We must remember that servanthood is an attitude we choose, not something cast upon us.

Moving forward in this post Covid-19 pandemic era in which we presently live let us continue to be the church and carry out the mandate of the “Great Commission” “*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19).*” The “Great Commission” is not an option for the Church. The need to be intentional in implementing and practicing the Class Leader System according to Biblical principles and the discipline within every local congregation will help promote spiritual growth. In preparing this report I was reminded that we must go to where people are at, if we want them to come where they should be. Let us through the Class Leader System continue to build meaningful relationships within the body of Christ and our personal lives.

Furthermore, let us not forget as the physical heart pumps and supplies blood to the body, the “Class System” is the heart of Methodism that makes sure every member is accounted for and connected to the body of Christ. Pastors are to be prayerful in assigning Class Leaders because their selection could either have a positive or negative effect within the body of Christ. Class Leaders are to be one that is sincere and serious about the call of Christ. The Class Leader System is a two-way street, and the primary focus is to establish meaningful relationships that go beyond the walls of the church.

In conclusion we would like to make the following recommendations.

Recommendations:

1. That the Class Leaders follow the teaching of Christ through acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Leaders are to develop a plan for regular contact with class members to encourage and help them grow in discipleship as each one reaches one.
2. Class leaders are called to continual training as they expand and familiarize themselves with resources to support class members as they provide ministries for the 21st century. The Bible is the key point of contact. A concise study of the church discipline and spiritual literatures are also helpful in connecting disciples.
3. The class leader should meet monthly with the pastor to keep the pastor informed of their ministry. This will also be a great opportunity for the pastor to offer encouragement and additional resources if needed. The Pastor is the spiritual leader in charge of the class leaders that are appointed.
4. Learn new technology to keep in touch with members and families by phone, text, email, FaceTime, Zoom, Facebook, etc...
5. Send birthday cards, handwritten cards, gifts, prayers, words of encouragement, small gestures to show your love and care.
6. Every class leader will give a report to the Elder during every quarterly conference of the well-being of their class members.

Remember, relationships are fundamental. Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Humbly submitted on this day during the 146th Session of the Columbia Annual Conference.

WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference



Members:

Sister Jacqueline Woods

Sister Shirley McPherson

Sister Harriet Etheredge

Sister Fayette Belton

Sister Joann Grant

Sister Eunice Miller

Sister Geraldene Robinson

Sister Deborah Portee

Sister L. Sha Robinson

Sister Annie G. Simmons

Sister Sandra Pratt

Sister Wilhemenia Broughton

Sister Evon Whitt

Sister Carolyn Gates

Sister Quianna Nathaniel- Couthen

Sister Eunice Miller

Sister Michelle Riley

Sister Martha Riley

Sister Joan Huell,

Sister Gloria Williams

Sister Ernestine Yeadon

Brother Winslow Merrick

To: The Right Reverend Samuel L. Green Sr.

Mrs. Phyllis N. Green, Episcopal Supervisor,

The members of the 146th Session of the Columbia Annual Conference

Greetings in the name of our risen Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ, whose mission of mercy on Calvary's rugged cross allows up the opportunity to "serve the present age."

The Columbia Conference WMS began the Conference Year by continuing the fight against Breast Cancer by participating in the Virtual Walk for Life. We walked in support of breast cancer survivors, and in memory of those who loved ones who succumbed to the disease. The third Sunday in October was set aside to wear pink to highlight the struggle for a cure.

We highlighted Domestic Violence on the fourth Sunday in October. We dressed in purple to bring attention to the fact that in South Carolina ranks in the top five in the nation for intimate partner deaths.

The missionaries of the conference recommitted themselves to the work of missions at our planning meeting held in November. We armed ourselves with pertinent information on financial wellness. **"Your Financial Health; Focus on who will inherit your Wealth."** was presented by Sister Barbara Davis. Following her very timely presentation, the Conference Commissioners presented their goals and objectives for the year 2022-2023 conference year. The Episcopal focus was shared, and our work this year will include the following Sustainable Goals: Decent Work



and Economic Growth (8), Partnerships for the Goals (17), Responsible Consumption and Production (7) No hunger and zero poverty.

Holy Convocation

We attended Holy Convocation in large numbers, and President Grady Hicks was privileged to take part in a panel that explored insights on employment and opportunities for young people in traditional and non- traditional settings.

The importance of internships for college students was stressed along with exploring apprenticeship and other job opportunities that do not require a college degree. We were joined on the panel by those in from law enforcement, judicial and business arenas.

The Retreat

Ninety -six missionaries from the Columbia Conference attended the WMS Retreat. This retreat planned and executed by our Young Adult missionaries was phenomenal. We thank Sisters Jessica Jones and Quianna Cauthen for serving on the planning committee and facilitating sessions; The Columbia Conference won two awards and our Area Chars were participated in the Worship Experiences and were a large contingent of the Retreat Choir.

Our Education meeting was held in March and our focus was on Career Readiness for young people. Cynthia Simpson Obioha, Counselor and Career Educator, was the featured presenter. She introduced the body to 10 Keys to College and Career Readiness that were outstanding. We also shared insights on the Power of Prayer and Self Care.

We continued our partnership with Church Women United. We are proud to announce that Life Member, Sister Joan Grant, was awarded the *Valiant Woman Award* for the State of South Carolina. We continue to support this ecumenical organization by donating funds that will be used to support various ministers around the Midlands.

We supported the March of Dimes and recognize each February as Women's Heart Health month. We wear red on the first Friday of the month and designate the third Sunday in February as wear Red Sunday. We share information on the importance of Women taking care of their Hearts. All month during Area Meetings doctors were present at meetings to share information on Diabetes, High Blood Pressure and the importance of screenings.

HER Story

On April 15, 2023 at the Reid Chapel AM E Church, Ruth Simons Family Life Center was transformed into a beautiful spring garden as we recognized 3 amazing women who have impacted the work of missions, not only in their local churches but in their communities as well. Sisters Nathalee Jones, from New Bethel, Lexington, Sister Hattie Brice from Ebenezer Winnsboro and Life Member Sister Betty Hassel received special awards. We viewed their interviews and continue to be in awe of their accomplishments amid a changing social landscape.



MDA

We joined missionaries from across the state of South Carolina in taking a stand against Gun Violence. We wore orange and rallied, marched, and sponsored letter-writing campaigns to elected officials to demand reasonable gun control legislation.

MOMS in Prayer

The Moms in Prayer initiative continues to blossom. We are pleased to announce that we have 35 registered groups regularly praying at local churches for students in school. This is a fifty-percent increase from last year. Columbia Conference Worship Leader and Mom's in Prayer Coordinator, June Huell hosted the Statewide MOM's in Prayer retreat at the church Pine Grove AME Church in April. In addition, the Conference WMS prays monthly for concerns such as care for the elderly, suicide prevention, social justice, and women's and human issues.

ASPIRE

The Columbia Conference attended ASPIRE in large numbers. During the WMS meeting we were introduced to new ways to impact our communities. President Grady Hicks also had the pleasure of reading to Elementary school aged students the story of Rosa Parks.

The YPD Quadrennial Convention July 23-28 2023, Orlando, Florida

We joined the YPDer's of the Columbia for a week of workshops, competitions, graduations and spirited worship services.

The WMS Quadrennial Convention: July 29- August 4, 2023, Orlando Florida

Thirty- Five women and (mighty men of Missions) from The Columbia Conference attended 40th the Quadrennial Convention held in Orlando Florida.

The visit and Address by *Vice- President of the United States, Kamala Harris*, was one of many highlights of the Convention, as well as the presentation by the Social Justice Panel. The delegation led by President Hicks was responsive, engaged and always in place. Members of the delegation served on committees and were front and center in all aspects of the Convention.

We salute the following Sisters for their work before, during and after the Quadrennial Convention:

- Sister Ravonne Vant, Connectional Registration Chair
- Sister Jackie Woods, Episcopal District Registration Chair
- Sister Kiara Lint -The Youngest (YAM) Missionary in the Connection serving as a delegate Sister Kiara Lint- Allen Chapel AME Church



Summary

All year, the Missionaries of the Columbia Conference Branch personified service by visiting nursing homes, supported and manned food pantries and soup kitchens. We assisted with prison ministries and supported the elderly by way of food baskets, card showers, and errand assistance. We provided diapers for babies, fans for the elderly and the list continues. We continue to support the young women leaving DJJ. The Backpack project supports young women who are leaving DJJ. The backpacks were filled with hygiene products, headbands, towels, washcloths, school supplies and inspirational reading material.

Year End Meeting

Our year end meeting was held on September 9, 2023. We heard amazing reports from the WMS and the YPD Directors. We celebrated Life Members, Torch lighters and a new class of Mighty Men of Missions. Sister Joan Huell, Columbia Conference Worship Director was the recipient of the President's Award.

To end the conference year, the WMS supported the food pantry at Bethel AME Church. During our Annual Day, on October 11, 2023, we will present gifts of toiletries to the Women housed at Goodman Correctional Institution. Goodman is a pre-release center for women who completing their sentences and are transitioning from prison to society.

Recommendations:

1. We will increase our advocacy for social justice, by becoming involved in civil rights organizations, and by writing to our elected officials.
2. We will use our platforms to encourage everyone to vote. We will personally take young people to register and will ensure that folks either get to the polls or vote absentee ballot. Not voting is not an option. The stakes are too high. Mid Tern elections are looming and there has been an aggressive assault against voting rights. We must remain vigilant.
3. We will continue to spotlight, promote, and encourage women in their entrepreneurial efforts.
4. We will continue to share trends in Education and Career planning for our young people.
5. We will intensify our evangelism efforts by using our meetings as opportunities to train missionaries to take the gospel of Christ beyond the walls of our churches.

THE SONS OF ALLEN

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Larry Clark
Reverends: James Vant
Brothers: Alton Cobb, Lowery Williams, Clinton Huff, Vincent Taylor, Monroe Miller

Report

The Sons of Allen ministry of the Columbia Annual Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church makes the following report of its activities for the Church Year 2022/2023:

- The Sons of Allen continued to meet periodically throughout the year to conduct the business of the organization as we recover from the coronavirus pandemic. Meetings have been taking place virtually by ZOOM, or by telephone conference. We did have an in-person meeting on August 19th at Springhill AME Church that was held primarily to elect conference officers for the 2023/2024 conference year.
- The organization supported the food pantry at Allen University with a monetary donation through the 7th Episcopal District Sons of Allen.
- The Columbia Conference Sons of Allen participated in the 7th Episcopal District Sons of Allen Retreat in June 2023. The Retreat was held in Charleston and was hosted by the South Carolina and Palmetto conferences Sons of Allen. Bishop Green preached the closing worship service at the Retreat on Saturday.
- The conference furnished hygiene products to the 7th Episcopal District at the Retreat that were to be distributed to a homeless shelter in the Charleston area.
- The Conference is in the process of organizing a conference-wide Sons of Allen choir for the purpose of sponsoring a “SING-OUT” sometime during the conference year.
- The Lancaster Chapter Sons of Allen provided logistics, security and transportation for the Lancaster District conference in March 2023.
- The Chapter also continued their community service deeds by making home repairs and cutting grass for the elderly and sick and shut-ins in the community, including their church members.
- The Chapter also participated in a food drive with two other AME churches in the Lancaster District that supported the Lower Richland County and Sumter County communities.
- The Newberry Chapter Sons of Allen sponsored a back-to-school bash for children in the community on August 5th.
- The Chapter provided food and refreshments for the Newberry District Church School convention and Planning meeting.
- The Chapter participated in the Mt. Hebron AME Church’s Revival which was held in Pride Park.
- The Chapter also cooked and sold food at the Newberry County MayFest in May.

This concludes my report on the stewardship of the Columbia Conference Sons of Allen. It has been my honor, pleasure, and privilege to serve in the capacity of President of the Conference Sons of Allen. TO GOD BE THE GLORY FOR THE GREAT THINGS HE HAS DONE!

Respectfully Submitted:

Alton B. Cobb, President, Columbia Conference Sons of Allen

RAYAC

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair:	Reverend Danté Kenly
Reverends:	Steven Dowling, Krystle McHoney, Noluthando Ntsangani, Richmond G. Dion, Lawrence Pralour, Jonique Smalls Comrie, Benjamin Pratt
Brothers:	Deonta Washington, Eddie F. Goins, II, Micah Graydon, Jerimiah Martin, Cameron Hall, Johnathan Williams, Benjamin Pratt, Shelton Lybrand, DeMarkus Robinson, Donte Irby
Sisters:	Sarah Hodge, Ashley Pearson, Deandra Davis, Destiny Gregg, Undrena Croomer, Quavian Mayrant, Nakeisha Shorter, Kekola Boyd

Report

To The Right Reverend Samuel L. Green Sr., Presiding Prelate of the Seventh Episcopal District, Mrs. Phyllis N. Green, Episcopal Supervisor; Reverend Rosalyn G. Coleman, Host Presiding Elder; Reverend Samuel McPherson Associate Presiding Elder; Reverend Dr. M. Charmaine Ragin-Merrick, Associate Presiding Elder; Reverend Dr. Caesar R. Richburg, Host Pastor, other pastors, ordained ministers, conference chairpersons and delegates of the 146th Session of the Columbia Annual Conference, we the Committee on Young Adult Ministry (YAM) & Richard Allen Young Adult Council (RAYAC) wish to make this report.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church has been a spiritual, social, and political force and young adults have been an integral part of each component. There's little doubt that the American church's ministry to young adults has reached an all time low. The next generation is in a mass exodus from the church. An avalanche of worrisome statistics has begun to feel normal.

The ages of 18-29 are the black hole of church attendance, this age segment is missing in action from most congregations. These numbers represent about eight million twentysomethings who were active churchgoers as teenagers but who will no longer be particularly engaged in a church by their thirtieth birthday.

70% percent of 18-30 year olds who went to church regularly in high school said they quit attending by age 23.

Only 20% of twenty somethings report that they have maintained a level of spiritual activity consistent with their teenage experiences. Another 19% were never significantly reached by a Christian community of faith during their teen years.

67% of young adults who were raised unaffiliated are still unaffiliated, a higher retention rate than most other major religious group and much higher than for older generations of none's.

The average church today has demonstrated clearly that it is ill-equipped to engage this generation and leverage its leadership in the life of the church. Though the challenges of reaching 18-30-year old's (College students and young adults) isn't a new topic for the church, the challenge of reaching young adults 18-30-year old's of this generation is something new.

According to page 504 the 2016 Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the fourfold purpose of the Richard Allen Young Adult Council Richard Allen Young Adult Council includes the following:

1. Discipleship by bringing young adults into a covenant relationship with Jesus Christ teaching them how to live Christ centered lives and serve as Christian mentors to youths.
2. Leadership training to develop young adults into Christian leaders within the AME church and

- the community at large to effectively represent and voice the concerns of a new generation.
3. Fellowship to create and provide opportunities for the Christian fellowship among young adults.
 4. Networking to provide resources for young adult ministries within the AME church and the community at large. Also, to provide opportunities for young adults to use God given gifts and talents for king building.

Although the book of discipline provides rich and undergirding guidelines of our organization and committee, the church has witnessed a paradigm shift with COVID-19 pandemic. It has forced leaders and laity to embrace technology. Consequently, like some of our young adults within your local church has been crying out for a very long time in order to connect and be useful within there local church. Now more people are using technology and social platforms to reach people beyond the four walls of the church. While we believe the African Methodist Episcopal Church has a rich history, we also believe the church must adjust some of its methods to serve the present age. To attract and retain young adults, we offer the recommendations below.

Recommendations:

1. **Connecting Young Adults with Jesus Christ:** To Foster the personal and communal growth and education of young adults toward a relationship with Jesus Christ leading to Christian maturity.
2. **Connecting Young Adults with the Church:** To contact young adults and to invite and welcome them to participate in the life and mission of the Christian community, which proclaims Jesus Christ by preaching. Establish an on-going RAYAC worship experience, or revival, per Presiding Elder district to facilitate further opportunities for discipleship for the RAYAC peer group. Coordinated by pastors and laity of RAYAC and Presiding Elder which will aid RAYAC members use and develop leadership skills while sharing the message of the Gospel to reach the target audience.
3. **Connecting Young Adults with The Mission of the Church in the World:** To invite young adults, through healthy relationships, work, and studies, to embrace the mission of Christ to promote the building of the kingdom of God in the world today, thereby bringing about the transformation of society.
4. **Facilitating opportunities for networking, communication, forums, and peer support** is important for connection, fellowship, discipleship, transformation and growth. This would allow for continuous encouragement, collaboration, and strengthen relationships across the district, conference and connection.
5. **Connecting Young Adults with a Peer Community:** To help young adults develop relationships with peers who share similar values and beliefs which nurture and strengthen their, thereby creating communities of support. Pastors and active members of local congregations should assist young adults in discovering and using their spiritual gifts in the church. Allowing young adults to use their gifts and appreciating their contributions will make them feel valued and may encourage them to take on other responsibilities and eventually become church leaders and officers.
6. That we encourage every young adult and Pastor in our local church to help to establish a RAYAC organization within there local churches and within the presiding elder districts. So that they could engaged in worship on any given Sunday, or perhaps having their own particular Sunday or separate contemporary worship experiences.

We are grateful to our episcopal leadership for including young adults in all aspects of the church whether if it was in person settings and virtual platforms. Thank you for setting the example of how to invest in our young adults and save souls for the Lord.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Committee on Young Adult Ministry and RAYAC

WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Rosalyn Grant Coleman, M. Charmaine Ragin Merrick
Reverends: Ruth E.D. Robinson, Wanda Rapley, Tobie Pollock, Yvonne Feaster, Rosa Kelly, Debora Grant Scotland, Debra Bradley, Teresa Galloway Clark, Angella Beckford Days, Stepheny O. Pratt, Kayla Eskew, Schrendria Robinson, Rodella Rivers, Debra Bradley, Yvonne Feaster, Sonya Lybrand, Betty Wannamaker, Marilyn Dorley, Tina Gogo

Report

To The Right Reverend Samuel L. Green, Sr., Presiding Prelate of the Seventh Episcopal District; Episcopal Supervisor Dr. Phyllis N. Green; The Reverend Rosalyn Grant Coleman; Host Presiding Elder; Associate Presiding Elders – The Reverend Samuel L. McPherson, The Reverend Dr. M. Charmaine Ragin-Merrick; The Reverend Dr. Caesar R. Richburg, Host Pastor; Mrs. Ella G. Richburg, Host Spouse; Clergy, Delegates, Laity, and Guests of the 146th Session of the Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference:

The Women in Ministry of The Columbia Conference Greet You In The Name Above All Names.

THEME: WALKING IN STRENGTH: IRON SHARPENING IRON

"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." Proverbs 27:17

The Report:

The Columbia Conference Women in Ministry embraced the mission of AME/WIM to define, enhance, support, and expand the presence of women in ministry. We began the conference year with the coordinator and district coordinators meeting via zoom. We had intercessory prayer for our leadership, churches, communities, and unity for Women in Ministry. Our focus and goals for the conference year were to:

1. Organize Social Events (Proverb 27:17 NLT)
2. Provide Service to Our Communities (James 1:27 NLT)
3. Embrace Our Calling and Gifting (Isaiah 6:8 NLT)

Under the leadership of Reverend Rosalyn Coleman, we celebrated Women's *Herstory* Month using the theme "The Call of God to Womanhood." The worship service was a *Tribute to our Sheroes*, women from around the conference were honored. The celebration included not only the Women in Ministry, but youth from our churches. The Reverend Rodella Rivers, and the Bishops Memorial AME Church family were our accommodating host. Participating in the celebration were the Bishops Memorial Creative Arts Club, featuring a monologue, "Tell Her Story" by the Reverend Rodella Rivers. The Youth Transformers Squad from New Bethel AME Church, where Reverend Dr. Elaine Eskew is Pastor, lifted us in song. The Youngs Chapel AME Women's Choir, where Reverend Dr. Maxine Sumpter is Pastor, gave us history through songs "I Done Sold" and "In that Great Get Up Morning." The Reverend Eliza Black, Retired Pastor, contributed to our service immensely through Poetic Praise. Instrumental Praise was given by Reverend Rosa Kelly, Pastor of Hannah AME Church and Rev. Camille Carpenter, Pastor of Calvary AME Church presented, *Turn on the Lamp*, through the reading of our scripture Ephesians 2:10.

The Women in Ministry of the Seventh Episcopal District hosted a one-day retreat at Bishop Memorial AME Church, the Reverend Rodella Rivers, Host Pastor. "Clearing Pathways, A New Season for Divine Purpose" was the Seventh Episcopal District theme. The conference attended the retreat in considerable numbers. We celebrate with the Reverend Ernestine Workman Pringle, pastor of Reeder Point, Lancaster District, who was the recipient of The Jarena Lee Award for the Columbia Conference. The Women in Ministry of the Columbia Conference seek your prayers in our endeavors for Kingdom Building.

Newberry District WIM Highlights-2023 Reverend Angella Beckford Days, Coordinator

Accomplished Goals and Projects

- Increased the membership of associate members
- Participated in an outreach to South Carolina, DJJ ministering to 11 young ladies, two of whom made profession of faith
- Sponsored our second annual scholarship luncheon in memory of our former Coordinator Reverend Rosette Gallman, and we're able to award 5 scholarships totaling \$2000
- Donated \$250 to the 20th Episcopal District for flood relief in Malawi after typhoon Freddy
- Held monthly meetings via Zoom
- Celebrated Women's History Month with a special program
- Empowered members by hosting a self-care seminar
- Supported the Conference Shereroes Program Honoring Women During Women History Month

Lancaster District WIM Highlights-2023 Reverend Tina R. Gogo, Coordinator

Accomplished Goals and Projects

- Held a Lancaster District WIM Fellowship Luncheon
- Provided community service by donating personal items and food items to D Davis Community Care Home in Columbia, SC
- Celebrated with our very own Rev. Ernestine Pringle who received the Jarena Lee Award
- Participated in the Conference WIM Program Honoring Women during Women's History Month
- Encouraged our sick & shut-in to hold on for their healing by calling and praying with them, sending cards, and giving small tokens of love
- Cards and calls were made to our retired pastors, to let them know they were not forgotten
- Several members attended and participated in the Annual SED Retreat
- Supported each other in the pastoral ministry
- Supported the Conference and Episcopal Women in Ministry projects and activities

Columbia District WIM Highlights-2023 Reverend Teresa Galloway Clark, Coordinator

Accomplished Goals and Projects

- Continued to reach out to the community to ensure that those who request assistance are aided with their endeavors to not only be confident individuals but also viable candidates in their educational and career pursuits as well
- Continued mentoring and assisting job applicants with resumes, applying for jobs and practicing interview skills
- Provided WIM members with spiritual support during times of grief, bereavement, and illness
- Held A Night of Pentecostal Prayer for Healing

-The District Women in Ministry gathered in solidarity on Zoom to lift our church, clergy, children, and nation in prayer

-Reverend Dr. Jacqueline Grant Collier, the founding organizer of WIM in 1976, continues to serve as consultant with the executive board of AME/WIM, and shared the WIM history, and offered the prayer for the Women in Ministry

-It was a night of Holy Ghost anointing as we uplifted on another. The WIM, Associates, Lay and Clergy shared songs, prayers and poems and left all our concerns at the altar with the Most High.

The Women in Ministry will seek to implement the following recommendations:

1. Focus on tutorial ministries according to the Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church for new members entering the ministry.
2. Continue to mentor women entering the ministry.
3. To be supportive of pastors with smaller congregations
4. Establish a means of communication with retirees and their families.
5. Hold workshops to educate on Mental Health

Respectfully Submitted,

The Columbia South Carolina Conference Women in Ministry

CHRISTIAN DEBUTANTE-MASTER COMMISSION

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Sis. Diane LaBrew, Conference Commissioner
Members: Sis. Deborah Washington-Jones, Conference Co-Commissioner
Rev. Dr. Dante Kenly, Conference Associate Commissioner
Sis. Natitia Hill, Columbia Area Commissioner, Host
Sis. Janice Goins, Lancaster Area Commissioner
Sis. LaVelma Toland, Newberry Area Commissioner

Report

Salutations:

Greetings to Bishop Samuel Lawrence Green, Sr., Presiding Prelate of the 7th Episcopal District
Dr. Phyllis N. Green, Episcopal Supervisor
Rev. Rosalyn G. Coleman, Host Presiding Elder, Columbia District Rev.
Samuel McPherson, Associate Presiding Elder, Lancaster District
Rev. Dr. Charmaine Ragin-Merrick, Associate Presiding Elder, Newberry District Ministers,
and all members of the 146th Session of the Columbia Annual Conference

On behalf of the Columbia Conference CDMC we bring you the following highlights of this Conference Year:

1. Columbia Conference participants: 1 Debutante and 2 Masters; 8 Sub-Debutantes and 3 Sub-Masters; and 7 Allenites.
2. All Debutantes and Masters will have completed the requirements to participate in the Ceremony.
3. The following workshops were presented:
 - “AME Youth and Young Adults Preparing for Christian and Community Service”
 - Preparing for a Successful School Year
 - Bullying! How to Recognize, Address, and Stand Up to It Safely
 - Etiquette – Why is it Important?
 - AME History and Bible Awareness

We would like to thank the Presiding Elders, Commissioners, Advisors, Volunteers, Parents and Guardians for all their hard work and dedication and for ensuring that our young people completed all requirements.

Recommendations

- Each church will support the Columbia Conference CDMC at all levels.
- Continue to partner with the Christian Education Department for training.
- Be creative in increasing participation, both for churches and members .
-

MEMORIALS

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Wanda Rapley
Reverends: Chaunté Rogers, Janie Williams, Izora Adamson, Terry Gilyard, Jose Lozano,
Darryl Lee
Sister: Faye Bookman

Report

To be reported live during the Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

RESOLUTIONS

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Reverend Ertha Bowman
Reverends: Yvonne Feaster, Vonda Gallman, Tobie Pollock, Wallace Preston, Elaine Eskew, Marion Reeves
Sisters: Sylvia Lewis, Juanita Burrell, Ursula Rivers, Kathleen Boyd, Camille Reeder

Report

To be reported live during the Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

MUSIC COMMITTEE

Columbia South Carolina Annual Conference

Chair: Rev. Darryl L. Lee
Reverends: Darryl Lee, Rosa Kelly, Lynda Jones
Brothers: Curtis Coles, Marcus Robinson, Darris Hassell, Clinton Huff
Sister: Tryphena Taylor

Report

Salutations: Ephesians 5:19 speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord,

The music Committee reports the following:

Music plays an intricate part in the worship experiences of local churches, meetings, and conferences. It stirs the very soul of the people, preparing their hearts, and minds as they enter the presence of the Lord.

Music is the universal language that unites people of all ethnic backgrounds.

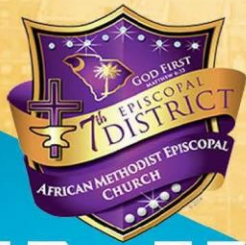
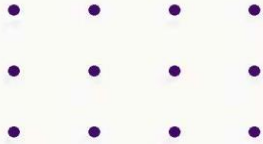
As churches unite across their districts and conferences, there could be a noticeable change in the manner music enhances and elevates the worship experience. There is also an opportunity for greater support to fulfill the opportunity to improve the music ministry within local congregations.

Recommendations:

1. With approval from Bishop Green that the music ministry of the Columbia Annual Conference formally organizes and meet quarterly to remain in readiness at the request of the bishop to serve as is needed.
2. At the approval of Bishop Green, that the CCMM collaborate with the other 5 Conference Music Ministries to form the 7th Episcopal District “AME Mass choir for the purpose of serving at the call of the bishop.
3. That all churches in the jurisdictional area of the Columbia Annual conference are encouraged to have representation in this ministry as we grow in service to God and the church.
4. To create a database for contacting churches directly using group apps, social networks and other media regarding rehearsal dates and engagements.

It remains vitally important that music be a viable part of every worship experience, and that the conference music ministry along with the local church’s music ministry establish creative ways to ensure that music remains a central part of these services.

Respectfully Submitted,
The Music Committee



ANNUAL CONFERENCE

S E R I E S

LITERARY REPORTS

