



Northwest Texas Conference Lay Organization Newsletter

Words from our President, Roosevelt Ellis, Jr.

Special points of interest:

- Word from our President
- State Lay Convention

As we quickly approach the end of another Conference year, I would first like to thank each and every one of you who have helped me to make The Northwest Texas Conference Lay Organization a viable and visible member of the Tenth District of the A.M.E. Church.

The end is not yet as we still have a few more mountains to climb and a few more miles to sojourn.

I ask that all churches please

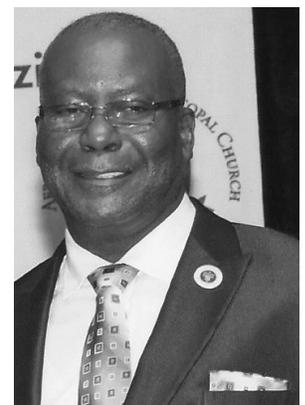
turn in your budgets for the Conference year. Also, we must remember that our Election of Officers is near.

Last, I once again beseech you to contribute to the 200 Club as the time is drawing nigh for our annual presentation at the Annual Conference.

I thank you so much for all that you have done, for all that you do, and for all that you are going to do.

Yours,

Roosevelt Ellis, Jr.



Roosevelt Ellis, Jr.

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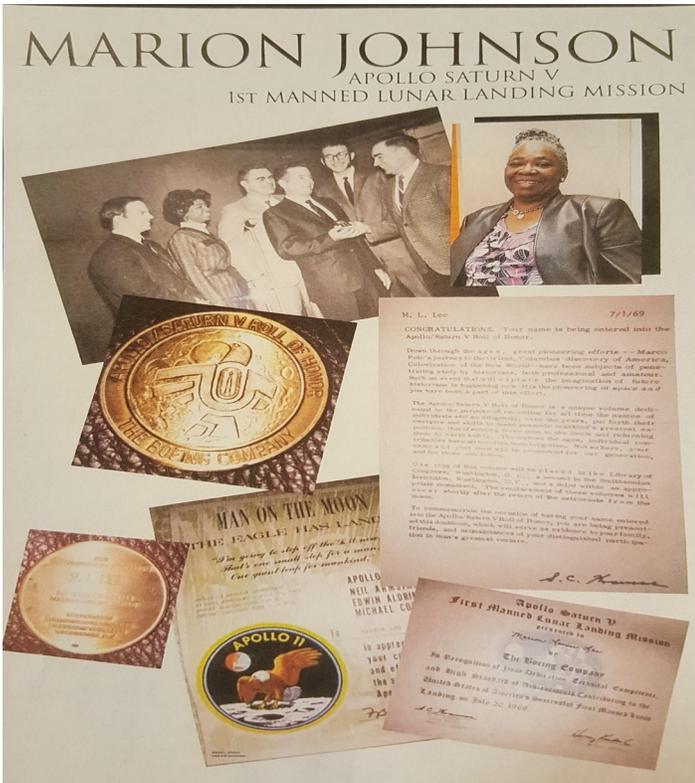
- Paul Quinn College Receives \$3.5 m **2**
- CLO Board donates \$5,000 to Flint, MI **3**
- Connectional Scholarships **4**
- 12th District Biennial Attire **4**

State Lay Convention

The State Lay Convention will be held at the Anderson Chapel AME Church, Douse Community Center, 100 Jeffries Avenue, Killeen, TX 76543. The Convention will be held on June 3, 2017.



Marion Lee Johnson: “A Hidden Figure”



capsule in 1962.

Like her predecessors, Marion Lee Johnson’s contributions were well hidden in Boeing and NASA. While working on the Boeing/NASA team in 1967, Marion Lee Johnson was responsible for preparing data inputs for simulation of vehicle piece impact trajectories. Marion Lee Johnson received significant commendations in March of 1969 for an incredible perfect score of 20 successful runs out of 20 attempts. Boeing also recognized her for her dedication, technical competence, and high standards of achievements in contributing to America’s successful First Manned Lunar Landing Mission on July 20, 1969, where Neil Armstrong said, “That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.” Sister Marion’s name is enshrined in the Apollo/Saturn V Roll of Honor. A copy of this historic Roll of Honor is in the Library of Congress, as well as the Smithsonian Institution, both in Washington, D.C. (Also see, <http://abc7ny.com/1815282/>).

Following her two-year assignment with Boeing/NASA, Mrs. Johnson was employed at Pfizer, Inc. and retired as a Project Leader after 26 years of service. She currently works at the Branford Hall Career Institute, formerly known as the Chubb Institute, as a Computer Networking and Security Instructor.

Sister Marion Lee Johnson has been an active member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church since 1969 and a member of Mount Zion AME Church of Plainfield, New Jersey since 1985. She currently serves as president of the stewardess board. She is married to J. Frank Johnson, a member of the Mount Zion, Plainfield steward board and owner of J. F. Johnson & Co., providing accounting, tax, audit, and advisory services. They have three accomplished adult children—Dr. Sherri Wilson, Vice President of Women’s Services at Reston Hospital in Virginia; Miss Toni Renee’ Johnson, Dance Director at Savannah State University, Savannah, Georgia; and Mrs. Tracy R. Hardy, Women’s Health Nurse Practitioner at Lorain County Health & Dentistry in Lorain, Ohio.

Rev. W. Golden Carmon, Sr., 1st Episcopal District
Marion Lee Johnson, a “Hidden Figure,” graduated from Tompkins High School in Savannah, Georgia, receiving the honor of Valedictorian of her class. She attended Talladega College in Talladega, Alabama, majoring in mathematics. After graduating from Talladega College, she began her career as an Associate Engineer at Boeing Company in Huntsville, Alabama in 1967. Boeing was a leader in building the Apollo Saturn V rocket. Sister Marion Lee Johnson was assigned to the Launch Systems Branch at Boeing, and worked on the NASA project for the Marshall Space Flight Center (NASA), under the direction of the legendary Wernher von Braun and Arthur Rudolph.

The contributions to NASA’s space program by Katherine Johnson, Mary Jackson, and Dorothy Vaughan are featured in the 2017 movie, “Hidden Figures.” Katherine, Mary, and Dorothy were physicists and mathematicians who worked directly with John Glenn. As pioneering contributors to NASA in the early application of digital electronic computers, Katherine, Mary, and Dorothy helped to ensure Glenn’s success as the first American to orbit Earth in the Friendship 7 Mercury

United We Stand

By Bishop Staccato Powell, AME Zion Church
Prior to the unjustifiable killings of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Freddie Gray, Black Lives Matters, and the election of the 45th President of these United States, the Nation's three largest Black Methodist denominations—AME, AME Zion, and CME Churches—with combined memberships of more than five million, convened a historic gathering in Columbia, South Carolina, March 1-3, 2010. The ultimate goal of the gathering was to “Address the plight of the African American male and his critical role in America's families and communities.” This unprecedented convening of historic African American Methodist gave birth to the Black Methodist United.

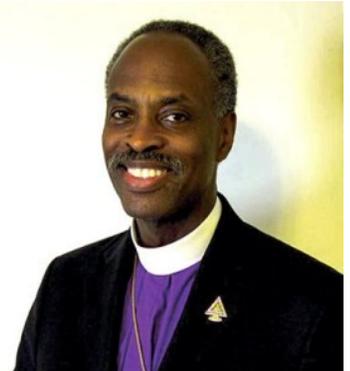
This strategic summit was titled the “Great Gathering.” It was the first meeting of the African Methodist Episcopal (headquarters in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), African Methodist Episcopal Zion (headquarters in Charlotte, North Carolina), and Christian Methodist Episcopal (based in Memphis, Tennessee) Churches in more than 45 years.

Since the initial meeting seven years ago, the general and connectional officers of the three communions have held annual meetings and the senior bishops of the three denominations have had two face-to-face meetings annually to discuss strategies for confronting the challenges which continue to plague our communities. Whether it is mass incarceration of African Americans in disproportionate numbers, the perpetual proliferation of violence across the landscape, toxic water in Flint, Michigan, or a political climate which attempts to establish draconian policies, Black Methodist United seek to alter conditions for our people by identifying and seeking unified solutions for the key issues that are devastating the African American community.

According to immediate past Senior Bishop John R. Bryant who passed the baton to the present Senior Bishop McKinley Young for the AME Church, the motivation for the Black Methodist United is to “Send an image and model of unity. Together, all our denominations represent a people and a community with many ills and problems...but we feel strongly that we can overcome all that might separate our churches so we can all focus collectively on what we can do to make things better for our people.”

Bishop George E. Battle, Sr., Senior Bishop for the

AME Zion Church, who grew up without the presence of his father in the home echoes the sentiment of his immediate predecessor Bishop George W. C. Walker, “The African American male is noticeably absent in the church. He is also absent in the home.



If we can find answers to what is happening with the Black male in this country, these solutions will have a positive impact on Black family life in this nation.” The plight of the African American continues to be the principle plank in the Black Methodist United efforts. During their last meeting in Columbus, Ohio hosted by AME Senior Bishop McKinley Young, Dr. Aaron Crutison was designated to give leadership to the Male Investment Plan.

The organizers of the Black Methodists United believe that a solid plan of action and the unified power of the faith, beliefs and commitment of the participants can bring significant change to the African American Community and the nation. Confident of the imperative nature of its collective witness in this chaotic culture of racial intolerance and lack of diverse inclusion this corporate consciousness cultivates a committed and concrete course of action to speak with a cogent voice to the perceived powers to be.

It is the contention of the CME Church Senior Bishops past William H. Graves and present Senior Bishop Lawrence R. Reddick, “We have the collective resources within our own denominations to address the problems in our communities... We can't look for the government or other agencies to do this for us. We can do it ourselves.”

The Black Methodists United continue to issue the clarion call to the congregants and communities of African ancestry to stand united for the cause of liberty and justice. In the lyrics of the gospel balladeer, Donnie McClurkin, we are determined to “STAND” convinced that God has a purpose and God has a plan!

The Right Reverend Staccato Powell is Presiding Prelate of the Western Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

We're on the web at <http://www.nwtclo.org>

Church Rip-Off Artists

Rev. Mark Whitlock, 5th Episcopal District

In bad economic times, churches are the target of professional con artists committed to ripping the church off. Some rip off artists hit 50 churches a day. Con artists are good at creating compelling stories for financial gain. Pastors and the benevolent committee are tasked with making donations to people in need and weeding out the rip off artists. How should we determine who should receive a financial donation?

Helping the poor and people who have a temporary need for financial help is a never ending ministry of the church. The church is called to serve the needy. The church is the place people go for help but what method is used to determine the value of the gift? How does the church know the difference in a person in need and a rip off artist?

One method is to establish a set of metrics for giving funds. The church board may choose to help people based on their church membership, age, whether or not they have children, family size, employment status, or homelessness. The metric should determine the degree of problems. For example, a senior needing medicine may receive priority over a person needing a telephone bill paid. A church should also decide who not to give money. Many churches don't donate money for rent because there is a strong reality the person will return for another donation in thirty days.

Churches should have written policies on giving to the poor. This gives the benevolent committee the opportunity to rely on the policy and not personal opinions. It's recommended that a church gives no more than \$200 to a person or family in the same year. This prevents the family from looking at the church as an ATM. The church may require a grantee to go to a financial literacy class to learn financial planning.

A church is wise to have a written policy voted on



by the entire church on giving to the poor and needy. This cuts down on all confusion. Remember, the poor will always be with us but the church treasury has a limited life span.

The Rev. Mark Whitlock is the Senior Minister, Christ Our Redeemer AME Church, Irvine, California, and Executive Director of the University of Southern California Cecil Murray Center for Community Engagement.