



Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization Christmas Celebration

Held at the First District Plaza, 3801 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA on December 19, 2015

Seated front & center, Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization President Cheryl Hammond Hopewell, with Conference Lay Organization officers, members, family and friends who attended this gala affair



The Reverend Alberta Jones, Pastor of Bethel A.M.E. Church, Reading, PA delivers the Christmas Message.



Anticipation and joyous expectations permeated the air as members and friends filled the elegantly bedecked dining room.

PHILADELPHIA CONFERENCE LAY ORGANIZATION OFFICERS

Cheryl Hammond Hopewell, President

Gilroy Reid, 1st Vice President

Hosea Jackson, 2nd Vice President

Andree Turner, 3rd Vice President

Marion G. Bolton, Recording Secretary

Valerie O. Ward, Asst. Recording Secretary

Wanda Ringgold, Corresponding Secretary

Deborah Stancil, Treasurer

Anna M. Cobb, Financial Secretary

Mamie Price, Chaplain

Cynthia Douse, Historiographer

Henry Murray, Parliamentarian

Shirley Moore-Harris, Director of Lay Activities

Anita Hanna Matthews, Director of Public Relations

Earl Knight, III, Young Adult Representative

Walter Jeffers, Connectional Director of Public Relations

The Right Reverend Gregory G. M. Ingram, Presiding Prelate

The Reverend Dr. Jessica K. Ingram, Episcopal Supervisor

The First Episcopal District - African Methodist Episcopal Church

**December 19, 2015: Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization Christmas Celebration
Held at the First District Plaza, 3801 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA**



Christmas Greetings extended by Conference Lay President Cheryl Hammond Hopewell



The color "RED" pervaded throughout the room



Despite the festivities, "due diligence" was applied to financial record keeping by Deborah Stancil



Anticipation and joyous expectations filled the air as members and friends filled the elegantly bedecked dining room

**December 19, 2015: Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization Christmas Celebration
Held at the First District Plaza, 3801 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA**



**Prizes and Gifts Galore -- and Much, Much More!!
donated by our Conference Lay President Cheryl Hammond Hopewell**

! LET THE FUN BEGIN !



**A "choreographed" version of "The 12-days of Christmas Sing-A-Long"
led by Conference Lay President Cheryl Hammond Hopewell
AND, THE WINNERS ARE...**



WINNERS AND MORE PRIZES!

PRIZES AND MORE WINNERS!

December 19, 2015: Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization Christmas Celebration

Held at the First District Plaza, 3801 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA

WINNERS AND MORE PRIZES!

PRIZES AND MORE WINNERS!



A FELLOWSHIP OF WORSHIP, FUN, GAMES, PRIZES, GIFTS, FOOD, SONGS, LAUGHTER, and ABOVE ALL THE BLESSINGS OF A JOYOUS CHRISTMAS SEASON



HEADLINES AND DEADLINES

The next publication of **“OUR VOICES”** will be in **June 2016**.

The editor must receive all information you wish published by **May 15, 2016**.

Please e-mail all news articles and pictures to anitamatt@verizon.net

PLEASE NOTE: The editor reserves the right to publish and/or edit articles when deemed necessary.

Anita Hanna Matthews, Editor - Director of Public Relations – PCLO



BETHLEHEM AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

215 South Pine Street, Langhorne, PA 19047

Rev. Dr. Ethel L. Moore, Pastor
Sis. Mamie T. Price, Lay President

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR ANNUAL LAY DAY SUNDAY, JANUARY 17, 2016



Submitted by Sis. Kimberly Reddick
Local Lay Secretary

Greetings in the precious, Holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Once again, severe weather threatened, but it did not deter us from opening the doors of historic Bethlehem AMEC, Langhorne, in the celebration of our local Lay Organization's ANNUAL DAY, at 3:00 PM.

The program, under the direction of Sis. Mamie T. Price, Lay President, commenced with the Call to Worship, led by Sis. Starsha Frierson of Grimes AMEC, Phoenixville, Pa; preceded by the Doxology. This was followed by the spirited singing of the Laymen's Hymn.

The Invocation was given by Sis. Gloria Sharp of Bethel AMEC, Kennett Square; followed by the reading of the Scripture lifted from Matthew 28:16-20, by Bro. Daryl Clark of the host church.

Following the second musical selection, our own Sis. Corrine King gave the Welcome Address and graciously acknowledged visiting lay members, clergy, and congregants.

After Bro. Shawn Lee, Bethel AMEC Bryn Mawr, led all in the recitation of the Lay Litany, we were blessed to hear the Reverend Natalie Mitchem, Pastor of Calvary AMEC, Phila. as she introduced **GUEST SPEAKER, SIS. TAMEKO PATTEN**, also of Calvary AMEC.

Another musical selection was rendered after which we heard from Sister Patten. Her scripture reference was from *Philippians 2:1-18*; and from *Galatians 6:9*, and her topic was, "**RELATIONSHIPS**".

In her message, Sister Patten stated that: *"Although human relationships, like marriages and family, can last even for years, a relationship with Jesus Christ is most*

enduring. For the Christian church to grow, its members MUST maintain that relationship! The Philippian church had a serious problem with this: saints were constantly arguing, bickering, and trying to compete with each other; there was NO UNITY, much less LOVE and FELLOWSHIP".

(She also stated, "As laypersons, how can we show forth God's love to an unsaved and dying world if we are not showing love for one another? Until we do so, our testimony will prove a sham and our relationship with the Lord withers on the vine! Let's act accordingly".

Pastor Moore then gave the Invitation to Discipleship, followed by her calling our local Laity to the altar for rededication. Remarks by Local Lay President Sis. Price, the Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization President Cheryl Hammond Hopewell and Pastor Moore.

Before the service, all in attendance enjoyed a nourishing dinner.

Sister Reddick graciously rendered all musical selections at the piano.

Thanks also to all participants, visitors, culinary staff, and all others for their presence in helping to make our Annual Day successful.

Thanks also to all participants, visitors, culinary staff, and others for their presence in helping to make our Annual Day successful. Our program concluded with the singing of the Lay Benediction.



Mt. Pisgah A.M.E. Church Organization Founder's Day Celebration



Led by the Mt. Pisgah Lay Organization, Philadelphia, PA - Sunday, February 14, 2016
By: Cheryll Morris-Davis, Director of Public Relations, Mt. Pisgah Lay Organization

The year 2016 has marked the historic celebrating of the African Episcopal Church 200 years in bringing forth our denomination. Tuesday, February 2nd a special service was held at our beloved Mother Bethel Church located Sixth and Lombard Streets. Many of Mt. Pisgah's Lay members were present for the unveiling of the postage stamp of our founder Bishop Richard Allen. We witnessed history and ended the day by many of us purchasing Richard Allen stamps, pins, and shirts.

We continued the journey at First District Headquarters, 3801 Market Street, for the three-day event of Founder's Day, February 11th, 12th and 13th. At the conclusion, there was the once in a lifetime event in participating in the painting of a mural that will be unveiled Monday, July 4th.

Churches throughout the connection, continued in the celebration Sunday, February 14th Founder's Day, as well as Richard Allen's birthday. The worship service this year was spearheaded by Mt. Pisgah's Lay Organization. Twenty-five members were present. Sister Margaret Miller, our president, was the worship leader. Sis. Bernadine DeVose Walls, wore two hats. She helped usher in the Holy Spirit by being part of the praise team, and leading in the Decalogue.

We were honored to have Brother Walter C. Jeffers, Director of Public Relations, Connectional Lay Organization to lead the prayer. The Chancel Choir ministered in music with the Negro Spiritual, "I Want to be Ready." There are five members in the Chancel Choir that are part of our Lay Organization. Brother Keith Arrington, our first Vice-President, welcomed our visitors in his warm and friendly style. There was a brief slide presentation highlighting the life of our beloved founder prepared by Sister Cheryll Morris-Davis.

The script was read by Brother Richard Floyd and he fully accomplished this in preparing the Founder's Day Message to be delivered by Sister Cheryl Hammond Hopewell, President of Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization, and a longtime member of Mt. Pisgah A.M.E. Church.



Brother Andree Turner, 3rd Vice President,
Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization



read the scripture: *2 Timothy 4:1-8.*

We cannot forget our youth. They were part of the worship service and are tomorrow's leaders.

We were ministered in dance by the "Angels of Praise" and the "Excelsiorette Choir" rendered the sermonic selection.

Our pastor, Reverend Jay B. Broadnax, introduced our beloved Sister Hopewell, noting that she is a person that wears many hats, knowledgeable and growing every day in the faith.

Prior to hearing the “word from on high,” prayers were lifted to God in Heaven to let the spirit use her to deliver the message.

Brother Andree Turner previously read the the scripture from 2 Timothy 4:1-8 and **Sister Hopewell message topic was Keep the Faith** and the concentration was on verses 7 and 8: *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is a store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day - and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*



Sister Hopewell said that *“we must do the work of evangelism. Even though you may not be an evangelist, we are called to evangelize. Do the work in the ministry God has given you. If you know you do not possess the most pleasant personality, then just maybe you should not be an usher. If you cannot sing with the choir unless you are the soloist, then just maybe you should not be in the choir. You must study the word of God continuously. Attend prayer meeting, Bible study, and church school. You cannot teach what you do not know!!!!!! This is a requirement of our ministry and in the process, we must put our best foot forward. In this process, we must keep the faith. Yes, you will be met with opposition. Keep the faith. Bishop Richard Allen’s life is an example for all of us. He kept the faith despite huge oppression and opposition from the hierarchy of the Methodist Church. He kept the faith despite the yellow-fever epidemic. He kept the faith even when circumstances looked dim. He kept the faith*

to be able to purchase freedom from slavery for his brother and himself. She compared those circumstances back then to the circumstances we face today”. She referenced Hebrews 11:6, “And without faith it is -impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”



Sister Hopewell noted the great significance in the unveiling of the Richard Allen stamp at Mother Bethel. In spite of difficulties, Bishop Richard Allen continued to fight and endure the injustices that beset him and the African Methodist Episcopal Church. This was God’s calling for his life. What is God’s purpose for your life? We must learn to operate in God’s perfect will and not on our own. Sister Hopewell challenged us to **Keep the Faith!** Bishop Richard Allen did.



ST. MATTHEW A.M.E.

CHURCH

215 N. 57TH STREET - PHILADELPHIA, PA 19139

Reverend Roland McCall, Pastor

Sis. Marion Bolton, Lay President

St. Matthew Lay Honors Veterans

*Submitted by Lorenzo Cruger, Director of Lay
Activities*



at each service including female veterans.

The Lay Organization gave several gifts to the veterans including a bookmarker with a lapel pin of the US flag attached, an invitation from State Senator Vincent Hughes to a special presentation, a US flag (8" x 12"), and free breakfast. They also received Citation from Darrell Clark, President of Philadelphia City Council.

Reverend McCall preached from 2nd Timothy 2:3-4 (subject "**Veterans of Faith**") in the 7:30 AM Service and from Matthew 8:10 (subject "**Amazing Faith**") in the 10:45 AM service. Reverend McCall's main points were "**ENLIST, ENDURE, ENGAGE, and ENTANGLE**" during the first service and "**POWER OF GOD, HUMBLE OURSELVES and JUST TOUCH GOD**" in the second service. Everyone seemed to enjoy the day, even those who were not veterans.



Sunday November 8, 2016, the St. Matthew Lay Organization honored "**Those Who Served**". The Lay Organization invited those members of the church who are veterans to serve as liturgists for both services as well collect the offerings and direct the altar call.

They served their country well and now they willingly serve their church. All branches were represented as follows: Army - 4; Navy - 5; Marines - 1 and Air Force - 4.

During the program the Music Staff played the music representing each branch. There were about 30 veterans



Congratulations to Brother Walter C. Jeffers

Walter C. Jeffers was nominated by the African Methodist Episcopal Church to serve as a delegate to the World Methodist Council for the 2016-2021 quinquennium, which will be held in Houston, Texas, in September 2016.

As a delegate Brother Walter will represent the African Methodist Episcopal Church at the meetings of the World Methodist Council which will take place three times during the quinquennium.

This meeting of the 2016-21 World Methodist Council will follow on the heels of a dynamic and uplifting Conference where participants will strengthen existing relationships, establish new relationships, and forge lifelong friendships. Inspiration, education, and fellowship will take place among a richly diverse family of believers in the Methodist/Wesleyan tradition.

Brother Walter serves as the A.M.E. Church Connectional Lay Organization Director of Public Relations, is a member of the Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization and a member of New Bethel A.M.E. Church, Germantown, PA. He is most certainly a man for all seasons.

We have the confidence in knowing that
Brother Walter C. Jeffers
will represent the African Methodist Episcopal Church
spiritually, intellectually and outstandingly well.

We pray that God's richest blessings will fall upon you and abide with you as you continue to expand your Christian service throughout the world!



**A TRIBUTE TO
E. CATHERINE SHEPARD
SERVANT OF GOD, WELL DONE**

*Penned by:
Peggy E. Pinder*



It was on December 23rd while I was in the holiday spirit and thinking about the reason for the season that I decided to check my e-mail. There was an announcement of the death and funeral of my friend E. Catherine Shepard. As the tears welled up in my eyes a small comforting voice came forth and said, "Catherine is no longer suffering". All I could say then was thank you Lord for letting me know a faithful Christian Sister, a true servant of the cross.

We met in 1975 when I joined the Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization but we really got to know each other at the 1976 General Conference in Atlanta. She took me under her wing and there I remained for a long time. To God Be The Glory. She taught me not only to be a devoted AME, but also to be knowledgeable about the legislation of the church on all levels. Yes, that was Catherine and she did not mind sharing. I cannot recall how many nights I sat around the table with Catherine and her dear Sister in Christ, Irvine V. Lewis who preceded her in death discussing the Church. We traveled along with Sis. Shirley Richards (Morris Brown A.M.E.) throughout the country to Conferences and meetings.

Catherine was a member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in general but a staunch member of Metropolitan A.M.E. Church (Lansdowne) in particular. Although she was not "an out-front" person, she was "a mover and shaker" seeing to it that the work

was done in decency and in order.

One could ask - how many times did Catherine serve as a delegate to the various conferences including the General Conference? In addition, many would be, like me and shrug their shoulders and say it was a lot but who's counting?

At the Home Going Service on December 31st I listened to the accolades showered on Catherine's life story, all the tributes extended from near and far. Yes, she was a former member of the General Board, a member of the Self Help Board at First Episcopal District Headquarters, an officer with the First Episcopal District Lay Organization as well as Finance Committee Chair with the Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization to name a few positions credited to her.

At her beloved home church, Metropolitan, Lansdowne she was known as the go-to person, Aunt Catherine, Shep; Sis. Shepard was a choir member, Vice Chair of the Trustee Board, President of the Pastor's Aide and much more.

John Wanamaker, Wynnwood Department store was my favorite because Catherine was head of the dining room and I could go there and sit with her talking about the church (and eat) for hours. We had great camaraderie, one I cherish and will never forget. As the seasoned folks would say, "the shades have been drawn, night has come for Catherine". She has done a good days work. Rest in Peace!

The family and friends processed out of the Home Going Service singing, "Amen".



Life Story

F. Catherine Shepard was born August 14, 1927 to the late Mary Head and William Shepard in Columbia, South Carolina. God in His infinite wisdom granted her eternal rest at 8:15 a.m. December 23, 2015 at St. Francis Country House, Darby PA.

Catherine was raised with her three sisters, Mary, Ruth and Virginia one brother, William and other family members. She completed her formal education at 17 years old in South Carolina. After graduation, Catherine moved to Philadelphia with her sister, Virginia Branch and enrolled in Culinary School. For over 42 years, she worked at John Wanamaker's Department Store in the food service division. When she retired, she was the Head Manager of Food Service for the company. However, her real passion and work was within her beloved Metropolitan AME Church.

As a young lady, she accepted Christ as her personal savior. She joined Metropolitan AME Church under the pastorate of Rev I.N. Patterson, Sr. She faithfully served her church becoming the "go-to" person. Catherine was one of the charter members of the Self-Help Board of the First Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church that helped build and maintain First District Plaza at 3801 Market Street. E. Catherine also was a former member of the General Board of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Additionally, Catherine served as a delegate since 1976 to every General Conference except 2012. Her commitment to the AME Church was unwavering. Throughout her lifetime, Catherine also held several positions in Metropolitan, including the Vice Chair of the Board of Trustee, President of Pastor Aide, Director of Lay Activities for the Lay Organizations, Missionary, Senior Choir Member, Chair Person of Woman's Day, Chair Person of Church Anniversaries. At Metropolitan, she established the food pantry and held the position of Chairperson of Food Pantry. On the P.E. District level she served as the Director of Lay Activities for the South District. She was eventually awarded the Lay Person of the Year by the Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization. Catherine was a wiz with figures. On the Conference Level she served as Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Finance Chairperson and Advisor to the President. In the 1st District, she was the Chairperson of Budget and Finance.

In her spare time, Catherine loved to travel. She visited Mexico, Jamaica and Bermuda. She also enjoyed traveling back to her hometown in South Carolina to visit family.

