

# Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization



## OUR VOICES

Newsletter can also be viewed at [www.philadelphiaconferencelay.org](http://www.philadelphiaconferencelay.org)

Anita Hanna Matthews, Editor – Director of Public Relations

Volume 5 - #2 - June 2013

*“And are we yet alive – to see each other’s face!*

*Glory and praise to Jesus give – For His redeeming grace!”*

During this past year, our lives have been encircled with events and occasions that either evoked high and joyous spirits, or thought-provoking challenges and low valleys where HIS “grace and “mercy” faithfully carried us through. **And, through it all, God was always in control.**

In reflecting, we realize how “great is our God” as He blessed us in every situation - - whether it was celebrating Annual Lay Days, fellowshipping at the Awards & Unsung Hero Luncheon, attending our Annual Conference Lay Night, listening to great messages from our Lay Guest Speakers, and even being blessed with safe travels

throughout our AME Zion to attend the General Conference, Annual Conferences, Connectional and District Meetings, monthly Lay meetings, etc.

God even sustained **US** as **WE** tearfully had to bid farewell to our “**dearly beloved ones**” at Home Going Services of family and friends who left behind great legacies of leadership. And, because of their legacies, we must continue to daily commit ourselves **to serve the present age** through the **WORD** and by our **SERVICE** in order to perpetuate our “**unique and anointed heritage**” of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

**Pictures below: Annual Lay Night Service of the Philadelphia Conference**



Bishop Gregory G.M. Ingram preaches the Annual Lay Message



Philadelphia Conference Liturgical Dance Ministry



Philadelphia Conference Lay Choir directed by Reverend Jay Broadnax



# ST. PAUL A.M.E. CHURCH ELMWOOD

## ANNUAL LAY DAY



St. Paul's Lay President Bro. J. Curtiss Ayers, Guest Speaker Cheryl Hammond Hopewell, & Rev. Frank I. Smart, II, Pastor

The Lay Organization of St. Paul A.M.E. Church (Elmwood) observed their Annual Lay Day on Sunday, March 24, 2013 at 11:00 am under the leadership of our President, Brother J. Curtiss Ayers. This was also Palm Sunday. Oh, what a blessed day we had with songs from the *Choral Ensemble* accompanied by our own *Alan Nelson*. Alan stood in for the choir director at the last moment, however he did a great job. Alan is the son of Ernestine Nelson and the nephew of Ruth Nelson, who are both active members of our Lay Organization.

Now to our speaker of the hour who brought forth a great message. Our speaker was ***Sister Cheryl Hammond Hopewell, President of the Philadelphia Lay Organization.*** Her message was taken from one of the Connectional Lay scriptures, Mark 16:15, and her subject was, ***“Something to Say”.*** In her message she was sure to commemorate both Palm Sunday and the work of the Lay Organization. She is a dynamic speaker.

She informed us that#***“Everybody ought to know who Jesus is and as lay we need to have “something to say”.*** She told us that we should be able to share our faith. We were reminded that it was *Passion Sunday* and we are still in the *Lenten Season*. During this season of renewal, we need to renew our minds, bodies

*and our souls so we can be prepared to do the work. Then when we are called to be a bold witness for Jesus, we will have “something to say”.*

She truly delivered a wonderful message to all who had ears to hear. Let us all take heed and do the work of God and the church.”

We thank all visiting Lay persons from churches throughout the Philadelphia Conference. We greatly appreciated their attendance at our service and we are looking forward to seeing everyone next year. We also thank all those who participated on the program.

***God Bless you all,***

***Sister Deloris Williamson,  
Director of Public Relations  
Brother J. Curtiss Ayers, President  
Rev. Frank I. Smart, II, Pastor***

**METHODIST EPISCOPAL**

THE FIRST EPISCOPAL DISTRICT  
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INVITES YOU TO ATTEND  
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CONGRESS**  
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*First Things First*

July 22-25, 2013  
Delaware State University  
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**The Reverend Marcellus A. Norris**  
Chairman— 1st District Department of Christian Education

**The Reverend Dr. Jessica Kendall Ingram**  
Episcopal Supervisor

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

# BETHLEHEM AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

215 S. Pine Street, Langhorne, PA 19047



## 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL LAY DAY HIGHLIGHTS

Sunday, January 20, 2013 - 3:00 P.M.

*Submitted by: Sis. Kimberly Reddick*

In spite of the effects of the weather and the flu season, our 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Lay Day here at historic Bethlehem, Langhorne, was off to a spirit-lifting start. After being fed physically with a delicious dinner, it was time to enter the sanctuary for the start of the program.

Sis Peggy Pinder of Allen AMEC led the Call to Worship, followed by the singing of the "Laymen's Hymn", as it was excellently rendered at the piano by Sis. Kimberly Reddick of the host church. The Invocation was given by Sis. Ethel Wanner, while the Scripture reading was taken from Ephesians 4:11-13, and Mark 16:15.

Our Welcome was extended by Sis. Ann V. Guiles of the host church, with the accompanying Response given by Sis. Lillie Gorham of St. Matthew AMEC.

Sis Cynthia Douse introduced the Guest Speaker, preceded by the reading of the Lay Litany. Throughout the program, our own Combined Choir, under the direction of Bro Craig Herder (also providing musical accompaniment at the keyboard), graced all the attendance with their fine singing. That, along with Bro. Herder's playing, kept all in a worshipful mood that afternoon; so, after they performed "Holy Spirit", we went into the **LAY MESSAGE**, given by **Sis. Marie L. Butler of Campbell AMEC, Frankford**. Her subject: ***A WIDE DOOR: FOR AN EFFECTIVE LAY MINISTRY, LET THE LAITY MOVE UP, AND MOVE OUT FOR GOD.***

Taken from 1 Corinthians 16:6-9, Sis. Butler reminded all in attendance that as Laypersons, even seemingly ordinary things we do in helping others is a MINISTRY -- rocking someone's baby during a service; or helping another churchgoer park his/her car, -- that's a ministry!

She then brought forth ten points to remember on how to make our Lay ministry more effective. Some of the points were:

1. The New Testament **lifts** laypersons to use their gifts and talents to **God's** glory. We are as **priests in**

**God's service; offering ourselves** unto him. (see Peter 2:9).

2. Spiritual growth requires us to use our **spiritual** gifts. We are God's **instruments**, not ornaments

3. God depends on the **laity** to be an extension of His ministry.

4. The church is **incomplete** without believers using their gifts.

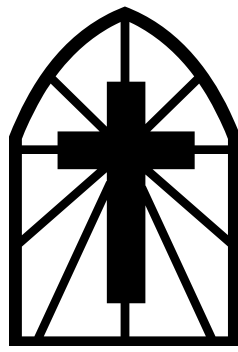
5. Our gifts must never be abused, misused, or disused. That goes for our natural as well as our spiritual gifts. **Not** using them also **displeases** God!

Sis. Butler then used the examples of a squirrel, duck, rabbit, and an eagle to illustrate that whatever gift(s) God bestows upon one believer may not be right for another. Each layperson must learn to serve God well with the gifting(s) He has given him or her, for **GOD'S GLORY. MINISTRY SERVES IN JESUS' NAME!**

After the invitation to Christian Discipleship was given by Pastor Moore, the program continued with the call to Lay Membership, as given by Bro James Lake of Jones Tabernacle. We were blessed to have Bros. Craig Harder and Daryl Clark to join us!! All our prayers had been answered on that day. Pastor Moore then called us to the altar for prayer and rededication, for another year of service in the local Lay. **PRAISE BE UNTO GOD!**

Remarks were given by our local Lay President, Sis. Mamie Price, our Conference Lay President Cheryl Hammond Hopewell; and Pastor Moore. In closing, this Annual Lay Day at Bethlehem, Langhorne has been a glorious and uplifting even that will be remembered richly by all who had taken part. We hope that every layperson present will take to heart the message the guest speaker delivered and thus apply it, so to be ready to render a more effective service to God ....ready to **MOVE UP AND MOVE OUT, FOR HIM!**

The program closed with the Lay Benediction.



**St. Matthew A.M.E. Church**

**57<sup>th</sup> & Summer Streets  
Philadelphia, PA**



## **7<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL LAY DAY BREAKFAST**



**Submitted by: Lorenzo Cruger  
Director of Public Relations - St. Matthew AMEC**

On Saturday, March 9, 2013, the Lay Organization of St. Matthew AME Church held its 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Lay Breakfast. The breakfast once again was well organized and the food was outstanding. It looked like a "Can you top this" from last year, with fresh fruit, 4 types of Quiche, scrambled eggs, home fries, grits, sausage and bacon (both pork and turkey) kielbasa, biscuits, pastries, coffee and tea. What more could you ask for?

**Sister Juanita Bryant, (Mt. Tabor AMEC,)** was our worship leader and did an outstanding job. Also on our program were Sandra Armstrong (Mother Bethel AMEC), Josephine Langston-Davis (Hickman Temple AMEC), Ann Pharis, (St. Matthew AMEC), Linda Frazier Manson (Zion AMEC) and Deborah Stancil (Metropolitan AMEC). The **St. Matthew Praise Team** livened up the place with some great music. It set the tone for the day. The **Drama Ministry** of St. Matthew gave another outstanding performance with three short presentations. Namely, the **"FOOT AND EYE"** was presented from 1Cor. 12:24b, 25; **"CHOICES"** was presented from Joshua 24:15 and last but not least, they presented the **"DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY WINNER."** You had to be there, one couldn't tell you anything but that they enjoyed it. If anyone didn't laugh out loud they must have been asleep and that would be hard to believe.

The program concluded with remarks from Marion Bolton, St. Matthew, Lay President, Cheryl Hammond-Hopewell, Philadelphia Conference Lay President and Rev. Roland C. McCall.

On Sunday, March 17th, we had our Lay Day Worship Service. It was well attended and the message was well received. The **Speaker** for the 7:30 AM service was our pastor, **Rev. Roland McCall** who spoke from Ephesians 1: 4 to 6. His Subject was **"YOU ARE CHOSEN."** It was well presented and very informative.

The **Speaker** for the 10: 45 AM service was **Exhorter Lethonia (Toni) Dennison**. She spoke from Isaiah 64:8. Her subject was **"ARE YOU IN GOOD HANDS?"** Her approach was different and enlightening.

We had two new members added to our organized lay membership roll. In all, the St. Matthew Annual Lay celebration was a success spiritually, physically and financially and we look forward to next year.

# GRIMES AME CHURCH

## PHOENIXVILLE, PA

# ANNUAL LAY DAY

Submitted by:

**Sis. Wendy R. Kelly**  
Christian Education Director

**Bro. Fred Bearden**  
Lay President

Phoenixville, PA – Pastor Carolyn V. Jordan, Officers and members of Grimes AME Church, 338 Morris Street, Phoenixville celebrated their annual Lay Day 2013 on Sunday, April 14th. We maintained the Connectional Lay Theme of “Building On Our Global Legacy of Christ-centered Leadership and Training”.

The day was filled with some dynamic guest speakers. The morning message, referenced from *Mark 16:15*, was brought by **Sis. Stephanie Bearden**, a member of Grimes. She spoke on **“going beyond these walls and proclaiming the goodness of JESUS and all that he has done for her through her sisters Rev. Robin Bearden-Reed (Youth Pastor) and Karen Bearden (Church Secretary)”**.

The afternoon lay message was brought by **Sis. Juanita Bryant**, PCLO Director of Lay Activities and a member of Mt. Tabor AME Church of Philadelphia. Sis. Bryant continued with *Mark 16:15* and also made reference to *Luke 20* and spoke about **“the gifts that were given to us to go out and preach the Gospel.”**

Both spiritually filled speakers' messages complimented **the mission of the Lay Organization, “which is to understand the program of the church and to relate the church program to the world around us.”**

We should become involved in social action such that the church is our community, our job, our school and everywhere we may assemble; and we should carry the church with us.

Several members of the Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization came in support of this emotionally, spirit driven day of the Lay including **Philadelphia**



**Conference Lay Organization President, Sister Cheryl Hammond Hopewell.**

The Lay members welcomed a new member, Sis. Starsha Frierson, who joined the Lay Organization.

The President of Grimes Lay Organization, Bro. Fred Bearden gave his remarks and thanked everyone for their support. Pastor Jordan also thanked everyone and rededicated lay members, Bro. Fred Bearden, Bro. Bobby Josey, Sis. Dana Frierson, Sis. Carol Lee Stinson, Sis. Juanita Bearden, Sis. Lillie Holmes-Crabb, Sis. Judy Keys, Sis. Janet Pickett and Sis. Ann Bearden (Emeritus) to the Grimes Lay Organization.



**33rd Biennial Session  
Connectional Lay Organization  
July 29 - August 1 2013**

Pre-activities including convention committees and registration will start on July 27.

Opening worship service: Sunday, July 28 at 7 p.m.

# ST. PAUL A.M.E. CHURCH

## MALVERN, PA

### ANNUAL LAY DAY

On Sunday **May 5<sup>th</sup>**, at 3:30p.m., St. Paul's A. A.M.E. Church held its Annual Lay Day. We were aware of the number of events that existed this weekend for the Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization, so we were grateful to see so many Lay members from our sister churches in attendance.

We were certainly very happy to see *Sister Louise Coursey* from Bethel Ardmore, who came out for our morning worship and stayed the full day. We realize and truly appreciated the efforts of all the attendees who pressed their way, difficult as it is to get away from one's church on the first Sunday of a month.

Preceding the worship service, our very capable *Mary Turner and Dawn Dodson* prepared a most delectable meal. Also, the willing and helpful hands of our *young people, Kam'ron Safford, Xiania Price, Ayan and Amon Scott-Hicks* were kept busy setting up, serving and clearing the dining room.

*Sister Cheryl Hammond Hopewell*, the **President of the Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization**, was our speaker and was introduced by *Brother Hosea Jackson*, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President. Sister Hammond Hopewell delivered an incredibly inspiring and informative message using the Ephesians 4:11&12 verses of the Connectional Lay Organization scripture and spoke on the subject, **"Strengthening the Lay"**. She reminded us that the Lay Organization has 101 years of a Legacy in the A.M.E. Church. She clearly specified who are considered laity in the church and explained the importance of strengthening the Lay Organization, as it is foundational in all parts of the church. Sister Cheryl Hammond Hopewell stated the individual aspects of how membership in the Lay Organization is vital for taking church "membership to discipleship." She even reflected on how she stepped up, in her youth, to become a lay member as a young adult and first spoke at a lay day in 1986, and we all can see where God has taken her today!

*Sister Peggy Pinder*, of Allen A.M.E. Church, Phila. was extraordinary as she guided the worship service in an excellent way. The invocation was given by *Rev. Louis R. Manon*, who served in the past as a Lay President before being ordained. We were thankful as *Sister Linda Frazier*, of Morris Brown AME Church



(L.-R.) St. Paul's Lay President Doreth Hicks, Worship Leader Peggy Pinder, Guest Speaker Cheryl Hammond Hopewell, Rev. Richard Allen King, Jr., Pastor

trusted God to see her through the adversity of traffic and arrived just in time to read The Litany. St. Paul's "Lay Youth Leaders in Training" again, so willingly helped us with the scripture reading, by *Kam'ron Safford and Xiania Price*. They were then joined by *Ayan and Amon Scott-Hicks*, along with *Chase and Autumn Ingram* to give the Welcome to all the guests, as a multiple-part-spoken-effort. Three year old Autumn, enthusiastically expressed her part, of the welcome, with a loud and clear **"ENJOY, ENJOY, ENJOY!"**

*Bro. Gilroy Reid*, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President of the Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization responded to the welcome with appreciative verbalizations of surprise and amazement.

Our pastor, *Reverend Richard Allen King Jr.* gave the invitation to Christian Discipleship and then called all the Philadelphia Conference Lay Members to the altar for a prayer. Brother Hosea Jackson came forward again to invite St. Paul's members to join the local church's Lay Organization and reminded listeners that they could come to the local meeting on the first Thursday of the month at 6:30p.m. if they decide to join later.

My closing remarks, as president of St. Paul's Lay Organization, were followed with closing remarks by Sister Cheryl Hammond Hopewell, who had each Lay Member of the sister African Methodist Episcopal Churches stand to say their name and identify their church. Our pastor, Rev. King concluded the closing remarks and I made presentations to the speaker, and other participants. We truly had a blessed day and the worship experience ended with the Lay Benediction: **"May God bless us with the true spirit of Christianity that we may live together, not as man over man, but as laypersons working with God"**.

**St. Paul's Lay sadly had to bid "Farewell" to two members this year; Brother George Reason and Sister Mildred Perry.**

# **WARD A.M.E. CHURCH – 43<sup>rd</sup> & Aspen Streets, Philadelphia, PA CELEBRATES ANNUAL LAY DAY**

**Submitted by Sister Connie Williams, Local President Ward AME Church**

In tune with the opening line of the Laymen's Hymn, local and visiting worshipers sang and were thus assembled "...in thy blessed name, O God..." for the Annual Lay Day service at Ward AME Church which occurred on Sunday, March 10, 2013 at 3:30 PM. Prior to the service, guest laymen were served a delicious meal which was enjoyed by all. Once in the sanctuary, Sister Bertha Smith, immediate past President of the Lay Organization at Ward, acted as Worship Leader. Sister Patricia Layne of Mt. Pisgah led the singing of the "Laymen's Hymn". Brother Dwight Ramsey, also from Mt. Pisgah offered prayer. Sister Marian Spivey Sudler of Trinity read Ephesians 4:11-13 and Mark 16:15. The Male Chorus of Ward AME Church, under the direction of Sister Cora Wells, ministered to all through music. Local Lay Vice President, Brother James Miles, Jr. welcomed everyone to the service. Sister Deborah Williams, Director of Lay Activities for the New Jersey Conference, gave a warm and appreciative response to the welcome for all visitors and guests stating that she felt, "Very welcome and happy to be in the service ". The Litany was lead by Brother Walter Jeffers from New Bethel Germantown. In a more solemn moment, Sister Mary Miles provided a memorial tribute to Sister Irene Richardson, a faithful member of Ward AME Church and the Lay Organization who passed away on February 22, 2013.

The highlight of the service was the message given by **Sister Cheryl Hammond Hopewell, President of the Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization.** Prior to President Hopewell coming to the pulpit, everyone present experienced an enjoyable treat.

Sister Bertha Smith had orchestrated a very special introduction of the speaker. Brother Irvin Hopewell, the **Speaker's** husband greeted the congregation with a broad smile and touch of humor. His love and sincere admiration for his wife and partner in God's work was clearly evident. He described her as dedicated and steadfast in her work



for God and the Lay Organization.

**Rev. Terrance Hensford, Pastor, Sisters Bertha Smith, Guest Speaker Cheryl Hammond Hopewell, & Local Lay President Connie Williams**

According to Brother Hopewell the "C" in Cheryl stands **Commitment** that goes above and beyond the usual.

Sister Hopewell's message was entitled, "**The Lay Organization: A Work in Progress**". She described the labors of the organized Lay as hard work that is never finished. For best results each laymen must "pay your dues" and "never be lazy or try to skate your way through". The individual layperson and the organization are always a work in progress. We are never a completed product and must continue to pray so that our personal study and the training we offer to others keep us striving to be better Christians. A Lay Organization that is strong and unified is created when we love God and the Lay Organization. The important objective of promoting a love and appreciation for the AME Church must be visible in our actions as well as what we say. Since there are never enough workers, we must be careful and purposeful when seeking new members. They should be invited by positive information about the church and the Lay. Encourage reflection on God and Lay service. Do not force or coerce, because if God did not send them, they may not be able or inclined to help with the mighty work of the Lay Organization. Once you have members, remember to train them with a goal of achieving happiness, peace and harmony. **(Continued on next page)**

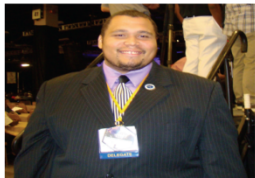
**(Continued) Ward AME Church, Phila. Celebrates Annual Lay Day**  
**Submitted by: Sister Connie Williams, Lay President**


President Hopewell concluded her message with some powerful reminders. She stated, "We cannot leave everything to the clergy. The work is not reserved for the annual day which occurs once a year, but is a continuous labor of love which requires commitment to God, church and fellow believers."

The invitation was made for Christian Discipleship by Pastor Terrence C. Hensford and he also led the rededication of the members of the Lay Organization. Brother Hosea Jackson, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President of the Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization, made an encouraging appeal during the Invitation to Lay Membership. He cautioned church leaders like stewards and trustees that they should all be members of the Lay because, "You can't lead where you don't go." The offering was collected by Sisters Barbara Alston and Marian Dossou of Ward assisted by Sister Patricia Layne of Mt. Pisgah and Brother Desmond Williams of Bethel AME in Beverly, New Jersey. Ward AME president, Connie Williams made remarks expressing many thanks to President Hopewell for her thought provoking message. All the other participants and visiting laypersons from other churches were recognized and thanked for worshiping with the Lay at Ward. Sister Williams also expressed appreciation to all members of the Philadelphia Conference Lay that have been very welcoming and supportive of her as a new local president. The service ended with everyone reciting the Lay Benediction. The Annual Lay Day at Ward AME Church was a success and we thank God for his many blessings.

**SAVE THE DATE!!**

*Service of Encouragement*



For  
**Walter C. Jeffers**  
  
 Candidate for the Office of  
 Director - Public Relations  
 Connectional Lay Organization  
 African Methodist Episcopal Church

**Saturday June 15, 2013 - 3:00PM**

New Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church  
 6153 Germantown Avenue  
 Philadelphia, PA 19144

For More Information, Please Visit:  
[www.jeffers2013.org](http://www.jeffers2013.org)

Please Submit Information for  
**"OUR VOICES" NEWSLETTER**

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**THE PHILADELPHIA CONFERENCE LAY ORGANIZATION**

Gilroy Reid, 1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President	Cheryl Hammond Hopewell, President	Andree Turner, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Vice President
Marion G. Bolton, Recording Secretary	Hosea Jackson, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President	Valerie O. Ward, Asst. Recording Secretary
Wanda Ringgold, Corresponding Secretary	Fern Wesley, Treasurer	Anna M. Cobb, Financial Secretary
Mamie Price, Chaplain	Cynthia Douse, Historiographer	Mary English, Parliamentarian
Juanita Bryant, Director of Lay Activities	Anita Hanna Matthews, Director of Public Relations	
Walter Jeffers, Young Adult Representative		

***The Right Reverend Gregory G. M. Ingram, Presiding Prelate***  
***The Reverend Dr. Jessica K. Ingram, Episcopal Supervisor***  
***First Episcopal District - African Methodist Episcopal Church***