

**MINUTES**  
**International Ministers and Lay Association**  
**2021 Virtual Annual Meeting and Awards Recognition Program**  
**Saturday, February 20, 2021**

The 2021 Annual Meeting and 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual Session convened on Saturday morning at 10 a.m. as members gathered virtually via Zoom. After greetings the meeting was called to order by IMLA President, Dr. Anthony Witherspoon.

**MEMORIAL SERVICE**

The morning Memorial Worship Service was led by Rev. Marc Anthony Thomas. Scripture for the morning was read by Rev. Charlene Mapson, 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18 (New International Version). We were led to the throne of grace in prayer by Sis. Mary Matthews. Rev. Thomas stated that when he was asked to preside over this Memorial Service his mind immediately went to our late friend and brother, Dr. Kenneth Q. James and all of the souls that we have lost over this past year. Rev. Thomas yielded to our President, Dr. Witherspoon for the introduction of our morning preacher, The Rev. Dr. Margaret Blackmon, who served as the Secretary for the International Ministers and Lay Association for 8 years and is a scholar and pastor in her own right. Dr. Blackmon's meditation was based upon Psalm 121 and was entitled "Look and Live."

Major points of the message:

- Another title for this Psalm is "a song for a journey to a higher place"
  - We are all on this journey together – we have lost some along the way – those who had to get off before we did – but we are all moving upward
  - 2020 was a challenging year, but we don't know what 2021 will bring, however we do know the One who made the year
  - Trouble is a fact of life, however, it is important how we respond to trouble. Will you grow bitter or cry out to the Lord who is a very present help in the time of trouble.
  - When we run out of solutions we should keep trusting in God.
  - God is able to fix it for us – we may not see how He can do it – but our part is to cry out to Him in prayer.
1. The only true confidence we will find in this world is in God alone, who watches over us and is never caught off guard.
    - Vs. 7 and 8 – God's care for us is consistent.

The Rev. Dr. Myrtle Bowen, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President and Membership Chair led the Roll Call of Members of the Association who have passed on since our last meeting. Dr. Bowen quoted a portion of John 11:25, "...I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die...." . Regional Vice Presidents were called upon to read the names of members of the Association who had passed on. Dr. Bowen asked that we take a moment of silence in honor of each name that was called. Dr. Witherspoon thanked Rev. Thomas for allowing the Holy Spirit to use him in leading our morning worship and for the powerful word that was given by our Meditation Speaker, Dr. Margaret Blackmon. He thanked all of the participants in the worship service and commended our Chaplain, Rev. J. Martin Boulter for always putting together a wonderful worship experience.

Rev. Dr. David Miller, Treasurer, lifted the Memorial Offering for the morning of \$25 in memory or in honor of loved ones. Online offerings can be made through PayPal on the IMLA website or via check payable to "IMLA" and mailed to P.O. Box 6753, Harrisburg, PA 17112.

Dr. Witherspoon acknowledged the following visitors: Bishop Michael A. Frencher and Family, Bishop Dennis V. Proctor and Family, and Mrs. Barbara Carr, former Missionary Supervisor. President Witherspoon thanked

them for taking time out of their busy schedules to join us. He also lifted up the fact that many leaders of our denomination have hailed from the ranks of the IMLA citing that Bishop Proctor was a past Executive Director of the Association.

**Treasurer’s Report**

The Treasurer’s Report was presented by Dr. Miller. Dr. Witherspoon stated that we are presenting the Treasurer’s Report as information. However, when we reconvene next year in person we will re-present the report for it’s approval along with the following year’s report as well.

International Ministers and Lay Association - Sheraton Birmingham Alabama		
Treasurer's Report		
February 2020-21		
I. Amount Brought Forward		\$ 733.46
II. Income		
A. Membership Dues		\$ 5,760.00
B. I M and L Annual Banquet 2020		\$ 17,500.00
C. Offerings		
Tuesday Feb 11		\$ 1,559.00
Thurs Feb 13		\$ 2,534.00
F. IMLA Pins		\$ 350.00
	<b>Total (I and II)</b>	<b>\$ 27,703.00</b>
III. Disbursements		
Registration B.O.B		\$1,300
A. Honorariums		
B. Plaques, Programs, Printing, Supplies, Banquet refunded		\$1,085.00 \$650.00
C. Shearton lunch, banquet, & AV		\$14,900.45
D. Travel /Reimbursements		\$2,976.00
Reimbursement AME Zion Church		\$3,300.00
F. Monthly Maintenance Fees/Charge Backs/Ordering of New Checks		\$180.00
G. Denominational Representation/funerals		\$311.15
H. Website fee		\$300.00
	<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>\$26,202.60</b>
IV. Summary		
A. Amount Brought Forward		\$733.46
B. Income		\$27,703.00
	<b>Total (A and B)</b>	<b>\$28,436.46</b>
Final Tab		
Income		<b>\$27,703.00</b>
Disbursements		<b>(\$26,202.60)</b>
		<b>\$1,500.40</b>
Reverend Dr. David T. Miller, Treasurer		

## Membership Update

Dr. Witherspoon presented Rev. Dr. Myrtle Bowen, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President and Membership Chair who presented our Membership Update.

**International Ministers and Lay Association  
Summary Membership Report 2021  
Receipts from February 22, 2020-February 19, 2021**

**As of February 19, 2021**

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Annual Membership		4	\$140
Life Membership		8	\$460
Church Membership	MA/Bethel AMEZ	1	\$100
PE Membership			0
<b>Total</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>\$700</b>
On- Line Annual Membership		44	\$1628
On-Line Life Membership		8	\$606
On- Line Church Membership	MW/ Washington Metropolitan AMEZ	1	\$106
On- Line PE Membership			0
<b>Total</b>		<b>53</b>	<b>\$2340</b>
Special Membership	MA	1	\$35
Special Church Membership	MA/HD – Wesley Union AMEZ	1	\$100
<b>Total</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>\$135</b>
<b>Grand Totals</b>		<b>68</b>	<b>\$3175</b>

*Rev Dr Myrtle Bowen,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
International Ministers and Lay Association*

February 19, 2021

Dr. Bowen indicated that any membership received by 11:59 p.m. on this date will be included in our membership report for this year. She added that no membership cards have been produced at this point but upon receipt of the funds members will receive their cards. She thanked the members for the opportunity to serve in the capacity of 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President and Membership Chair for the past quadrennium.

## President's Address

President's Address Delivered February 20, 2021 at the 83rd Session of the International Ministers and Lay Association of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Virtual Meeting hosted by the Piedmont Episcopal District Dr. Anthony Witherspoon Moving Forward Together: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Our Continued Commitment to Accountability *To the Sons and Daughters of James Varick, especially the members of the International Ministers' and Lay Association: A retrospective trip to an American Literature Class at Livingstone College where the late Mrs. Mattie Lakin was the professor is in order. Each of her students were required to memorize a poem. She assigned the poem "Heritage" to half of the class. Some of you tuning in today remember Mrs. Lakin. She demanded "No notes in hand, only the use of the brain when reciting the poem." She had asked the question prior to making the assignment, "What is Africa to you?" Yet, she substituted the name of the country "Africa" and posed the question another way; "what is your faith to you?" as well as asked, "what is your belief in God to you?" She did this, ironically, having in the back of her mind the words found in the first line of the poem "Heritage" which asks the question, "What is Africa to me?"<sup>1</sup> Today, I would like to challenge us as an association by asking a similar question, What is the International Ministers and Lay Association to us? Even when we will find ourselves existing beyond a post-covid, an initial post-vaccinational existence, each of us must personally ask this question, what will the association mean to us? Perhaps our response to issues appears to be sporadic at times, at best. Yet, we cannot forget what we have been called to do. We cannot forget the role we play for the overall fruitful good of our church. As in times past, I have stated and continue to contend, "our association is still being chosen for such a time as this." The bylaws of our association remind us that one of the reasons we exist is to "provide a forum for Ministers and Laity" in our church "to address problems and issues which are relevant to the Church's ministry to the nation and the world."<sup>2</sup> We cannot evade issues and problems that exist within our church for fear of making waves. We cannot run from issues and problems that exist within our church for fear of alienation. Nor can we evade issues and problems within our church for fear we may be ostracized, especially when our convictions fall in line with doctrine and practice. An even greater accountability prompts us to continue to address issues and problems head-on in the fear of God. This does not, in any way, disregard, overlook or disrespect our stance on highly controversial issues. In fact, the denomination is often quite clear, at least in word, about where we stand as a religious body. Still, we cannot become complacent, ignoring that which is 1 "Heritage" found in Anthology of American Literature Volume II: Realism to the Present, Fourth Edition, pg. 1312, by George McMichael, J.C. Levenson, Leo Marx, et. al. Macmillan Publishing Company, New York; 1974. 2 The Bylaws of the International Ministers and Lay Association of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Article II – Purpose, number 1 evident, that which affects us, and that which must engage us. We are not immune to worldwide occurrences, for that which exists externally often directly and/or indirectly affects us too. However, now, more than anytime, we are challenged all the more to examine, reexamine and help give direction to those who look to us for direction. Please allow me to address just a few of the areas our association can continue to provide such direction: 1. During our Annual Meeting in 2020, I highlighted the challenge that centers around convincing the masses that church still matters. If this last year has revealed anything to us, it has revealed the number of people who do not find solace in church gatherings, but rather a spiritualist understanding of the creation. Over the years, our general neglect of establishing an effective methodology for engaging the church intergenerationally has led to a great falling away from consistent church attendance. As a result, we are being prompted to continue to make necessary shifts, not only in Zion, but within mainline Protestantism. While our church makes necessary shifts to maintain viability, we are faced with a gentle reminder: we are not shifting, per se', because we desire to, but we have been brought to a fork in the road where we have to. Perhaps we never knew to what extent Free Conference.com, Zoom and Facebook Live would become three of our greatest friends. Our association holistically and unapologetically continues to forge into twenty-first century relevancy, viability, and sustainability. Our bylaws state that part of our purpose is "to keep before the church, proposals, to improve, maintain and/or expand the influence and effectiveness of the Church's life, work and mission."<sup>3</sup> Coming into the twenty-first century does not ignore why we exist, nor the pain staking sacrifices of those upon whose shoulders we stand. Rather, such a shift acknowledges and appreciates their labors, their beliefs that our association "speaks truth to power" and will always possess a voice that helps to make liberation a reality. We will continue, as is stated in our bylaws, to monitor "the Church's compliance with the law as is mandated by the General Conference."<sup>4</sup> 2. The Importance of the 51st Session of The General Conference. In just a few months, our denomination will again make history in several ways. Cutting edged legislation will be presented, some of which requires us to examine our actions from top to bottom and vice versa, which calls for the church to be more accountable. True Methodism holds all members to accountability. In every respect this will be our quadrennial check-up meeting. We will be faced with a host of proposals that will either be collectively embraced, put on the back burner, or reveal our ambivalence. Yet, while we cannot and should not evade the needs that exist in the U.S., we are being called out, even challenged, if you will, to think*

seriously about the connectivity between both our domestic work and work abroad. Once again, the words of Bishop Michael Angelo Frencher, Sr. in previous addition of the Missionary Seer expressed the need for the church (Zion) to think seriously about missions in a broader sense. As he reflected over a low point in ministry as a bishop in the mission fields, he states that he realized that many “cannot or will not embrace the 3 Ibid, number 2. 4 Ibid, number 3 total mission of the A.M.E. Zion Church.” He further states, should missions be truly fruitful, it must “go beyond our present environment into other environments” even visualizing the possibility of “one day placing” even “Caribbean work under one Bishop, rather than continue to keep them with Stateside Conferences.” Lastly he states that he “envisions the A.M.E. Zion Church supporting and bringing into the denomination work being proposed in Southern Central and East Africa.”<sup>6</sup> In past meetings, we have had presentations rendered by Bishops Crenshaw and Powell to learn more about the possibility of expansion throughout the world. But we have also played a role in this by providing an international inclusion since our association’s inception that respects diversity and equity, which can be observed during our annual awards banquet. The General Conference will also be presented with a host of candidates who are presently campaigning for various offices throughout our church. Today we will have the opportunity to briefly hear from them at the end of our business session by way of video to assist us in making wise, intelligent, and prayerful decisions about the future leadership of our church. Let us not take for granted, however, that the General Conference reminds each of us that there is also a call for the once again empowered ministers and laity of the world to embrace the power of “the courageous voice.” As previously stated, “This requires us to continue to work in concert with our leaders to help bring this to fruition. Yet, Lay presence beyond the physical but through word and deed is probably more vital now than ever before.” Just as the voice from the pulpit is important, so too are the voices from the pews. This can be nurtured in tandem and collectively when Ministers and Lay provide equal voice and mutual respect. Ministers and Lay must once again nurture the relevance of a collaborative whole, while seeking God’s direction—a direction that from our inception, made us the “Freedom Church,” as we have moved forward together. 3. The power of our vote during midterm elections is still relevant. While we rejoice over witnessing the first woman of color; the first woman in the history of our nation; the first African American woman to graduate for an Historically Black University rise to the office of Vice President; let us not remain vigilant, awake, and attentive to the work of the enemy. It is already time to begin to once again push our people to vote. I am grateful that our association over the years has encouraged this. It is still our bounden duty as a people of faith. 4. Lastly, Healthcare is not only a worldwide issue, but affects members of our association as well. As an association, let us support the efforts to educate our people on the Corona Virus, vaccinations, precautions, etc. Let us join forces to assist the members of the association, our families and loved ones with encouraging them against becoming complacent, idle, or comfortable simply because people are being vaccinated throughout the nation. The clarion call still reverberates reminding us the battle is not over. Our goal is not to politicize, mind you, but to help provide knowledge and encourage our people to “stay woke.” 5 “Framing Missions at Home and Overseas;” The Missionary Seer, Vol. 11, Issue 014, January-March 2020, pg. 11 6 Ibid, pg. 14 5. The Executive Team takes very seriously, with integrity and commitment, what you, as an association, elected us to do. Our Executive Team promised to provide the association with transparency, hard work and the determination to keep our association as a viable entity within our Zion. We intentionally continue to utilize our various means to keep the association informed and work towards building and maintaining our membership, while continuing to build upon the legacy that has been passed down to us. To date, we have done our level best to follow through on our commitments. A quick recapitulation over the past four years: • We promised to continue to provide information in a first-class manner from first class presenters. Prayerfully, you will agree we have accomplished this. • As with previous administrations, we promised to provide a legislative process that keeps members of our association informed. Our association has hosted Legislative Summits in Rock Hill, S.C., Orlando, Fla., Greensboro, N.C., Louisville, KY., and Birmingham, Ala. Today the association will be given a recap from Dr. Yvonne Tracey and Reverend Erich Shumake regarding legislative contributions made collaboratively that have become resolutions. Personal thanks are in order to both of them for their tireless efforts. We would also like to thank Reverend Lakesha Womack for assisting us with utilizing technology and social media so persons throughout our Zion from across the world could participate and provide vital input to bring the final masterpiece to fruition. • We promised to be more innovative in as many areas as possible. We have been able to do this to the best of our abilities through the association’s Facebook page, our Website, Zoom, etc. A special thanks to Mrs. Denise Niles, Reverend Lakesha Womack and Reverend Austin Young for helping to make this a reality. You will also find recently updated and enhanced means to pay for memberships, organizational pins and future banquet tickets utilizing the association website. We will continue to work even harder to update and utilize the website in the future. We solicit your patience in this regard. • We promised to work towards increasing young adult participation, a task we continue to explore, led by one of our team members, Dr. Maurice Harden. We will continue to keep the association updated on this process. • We promised to provide much needed updates to our Bylaws. Thanks to

*Dr. Curtis Walker's leadership, a draft of the has been prepared, to be further reviewed by the Bylaws Committee. Upon final review of the committee, the committee will make its presentation to the Executive Team for any corrections, additions, and suggestion, who in turn will present the final product to the association for review and for approval. • We promised to work diligently toward increasing our association's membership. We have established an online membership registration option (imlaamezion.org), which can assist Regional Vice Presidents with both promoting memberships in their respective areas, and for persons wishing to obtain and/or renew the same. As usual, persons may also obtain and/or renew their memberships today and in the future via the website. Persons should also feel free to mail their memberships throughout the year to Dr. Myrtle Bowen, 2nd Vice President. Although we have not reached our total goal for membership, we continue to endeavor to do so. • We have designed our own association lapel pin. It is our hope that every member will purchase a pin for \$10.00 to help spread the proud word that we are still viable to the denomination. Pins may be purchased via the association website. Ms. Carlous Tyrance, assistant secretary will see to it that persons receive the same. • We promised to honor the veterans of our church and association both past and present with a plaque that will be displayed at the AME Zion Headquarters. Our plan was to have a special ceremony this Spring. Due to Covid-19, we will plan for this to become a reality upon being able to meet in person, post-covid. In conclusion, I thank the almighty God for the grace bestowed me, and you for the opportunity to serve these past four years. Allow me personally to thank again this extraordinary Executive Team elected by you to serve this past quadrennium. We have worked tremendously hard to continue the legacy of times past, while striving to innovate, educate and cultivate. Thanks to the Regional Vice Presidents who helped to promote our association tirelessly, and for their unwavering support in helping to both recruit and keep members abreast of association particulars. Thanks to Dr. Mary Matthews, International President of the Connectional Lay Council for your teamwork and council; Miss Rhandi Stith, the Connectional Lay Council and Dr. Addie Lisby for their support, use of various mediums for advertisements, as well as any others of you who have shared our information. Thanks to everyone from across Zion who played a vital role during our various summits by serving on committees as well as providing extraordinary input. The manifestation of your labor has not been in vain. Thanks to the Board of Bishops for continuing to support and recognize us as a viable entity within our church. Last, but definitely not least, we would like to thank the ministers and lay as a whole who consistently purchase new and renewed memberships, who represent us throughout our Zion. Without you the association would not continue to exist. Thinking back to the question posed to our American Literature class by Mrs. Mattie Lakin, "What is Africa to you?," I came to understand the deep respect she had for the motherland. I also realized her query was not limited to a continent but had an even deeper meaning. Abel Meeropol wrote the lyrics to the poem "The House I live In; That's America to Me" that later became a song, sung by Frank Sinatra. At the end of each stanza, the statement is made, "That's America to me?" 7 It is easy for me to assume Mrs. Lakin was aware of the song's lyrics as she posed the question from the first place. She matriculated during the era the song was written, produced, and sung. Perhaps she also thought seriously about Frank Sinatra's adamant and blatant omission of a line in the poem/song which served as a slap in the face to people of color, as the words written by Meeropol expressed his profound belief that a real American community could include diversity, equitability, and inclusivity. It is possible this reality may have moved Mrs. Lakin psychologically, as it may move so many. The line that was omitted by Sinatra was omitted on purpose. Mrs. Lakin challenged the students back then, as we are challenged today not to allow a rich history that is ours to be omitted, become ineffective, docile, unimpactful, or unimportant. With all that people try to erase from our Heritage already, we must never allow our organizations to become non-existent. "The House I Live In: That's America to Me", by Abel Meeropol, 1951 Family, what does the International Ministers' and Lay Association mean to us? What does our voice mean to us and so many? What does our right to exist today mean to the future of our existence for years to come within the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church? Mrs. Lakin continues to answer this question; "Our people exist because our fore-parents existed." Brothers and sisters, our association continues to exist because others before us saw to its very perpetual existence. We too must continue to see to it.; no omissions! Thomas Ken can perhaps assist with expressing how we feel as a unit: "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."*

Following the President's Address, Dr. Eleazar Merriweather, Executive Director presented Dr. Mary Merriweather, President of the Connectional Lay Council to respond on behalf of the Laity and Rev. Dr. Alphonso Meadows to respond on behalf of the Clergy. Members asked if the address would be made available to the members via the website of the International Ministers and Lay Association: [www.imlaamezion.org](http://www.imlaamezion.org).

## **Update on IMLA and Lay Council General Conference Resolutions**

Dr. Yvonne Tracey and Presiding Elder Erich Shumake presented this report to confirm our status and give an update of the development of Legislation to be presented at our upcoming 51<sup>st</sup> Quadrennial Session of the General Conference. Several resolutions are being passed through annual conferences:

- Western NC – Young Adult Delegates to the Annual Conference
- Philadelphia-Baltimore - Criteria for General Conference Delegates
- Southwestern Delta - Part 5 of the Book of Discipline concerning the election of indigenous Bishops and Part 6 of the Book of Discipline concerning Exhorters
- Mid-west - Resolution concerning Part 8 of the Discipline – Temporal Economy and Local Benevolence and support of Ministry

Trough the constituted body of the Connectional Lay Council:

- Book of Discipline Part 9 – Administrative Boards Connectional Budget and Allocation – equitable apportionment
- Evaluation of candidates for preaching licensure
- Pastoral Care Division – necessity for proper pastoral care
- Book of Discipline Part 9 – Board of Lay Activities
- General Conference commission on legislative process was not currently in our discipline so a resolution was submitted to include this.

Forwarded to Committee on Codification (adopted but not included in the Book of Discipline)

- Resolution GC 50 R08 – Resolution on Reformation
- Resolution GC 50 R27 – Concerning continuing education of Clergy

A copy of the full report will be placed on the CLC and IMLA websites. Dr. Tracy encouraged all members to review the work that has been done to prepare for our upcoming General Conference. She and Presiding Elder Shumake stand ready to act as facilitators of the work to help us in any way necessary.

Dr. Witherspoon expressed his appreciation for the work that Dr. Tracey and Presiding Elder Shumake have given in leading this legislative process. He also thank all of the persons who worked to draft the legislation.

## **Report of the Nominating Committee**

Dr. Eleazar Merriweather, Executive Director, is chair of the Nominating Committee for this year. He reported that the Nominating Committee met on February 8<sup>th</sup> and February 15, 2021 to consider candidates for the 2021-2025 term of office. Eleven resumes and bios were submitted for the 9 officer positions: 2 for the office of Chaplain, 2 for the Assistant Secretary and the remaining submissions were from the incumbents. The second person for the office of Chaplain withdrew before the February 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. On behalf of the Nominating Committee he presented the following report for consideration by the Association:

- |    |                                |                                 |
|----|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. | President                      | Rev. Dr. Anthony N. Witherspoon |
| 2. | 1 <sup>st</sup> Vice-President | Mrs. Lula Howard                |
| 3. | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice-President | Rev. Dr. Myrtle Bowen           |
| 4. | Executive Secretary            | Rev. Dr. Eleazar Merriweather   |
| 5. | Secretary                      | Ms. Marie Denise Niles          |
| 6. | Assistant Secretary            | Ms. Carlous E. Tyrance          |
| 7. | Treasurer                      | Rev. Dr. David T. Miller        |
| 8. | Financial Secretary            | Rev. Dr. Maurice Harden         |
| 9. | Chaplain                       | Rev. J. Martin Boulter, Sr.     |

The committee recommends that this report be included in the minutes of the Association.

Humbly submitted by,

Rev. Katie Chapman

Mrs. Matilda Merriweather

Dr. Vanessa Watt

Dr. Janice Evelyn

Rev. Monica Marshall

Rev. Marium Williams Thomas

Rev. Dr. Eleazar Merriweather, Chair.

The Nominating Committee and the Executive Board discussed the many ways that we could do the election in light of the pandemic. After much discussion it was decided that the election would be held on Saturday, February 27, 2021 and that information will be shared with all members by Monday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>. Additionally, all members will have the opportunity to pay their membership dues by 11:59 p.m. February 20<sup>th</sup> to insure that they have voting rights. Rev. Austin Young explained the voting process and stated that members will have from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. EST on Saturday, February 27<sup>th</sup> to complete their vote. Results will be handed over to an independent party for verification and handed to the Executive Board to announce. Dr. Witherspoon thanked Dr. Merriweather and the members of the Nominating Committee for their work. He commended Rev. Austin Young and thanked him for the work that he has done for the Association.

Dr. Witherspoon stated that all candidates for office have submitted videos for our meeting and apologized in advance for any omissions. Every effort was made to insure that the Association was fair, equitable and inclusive of all those who are seeking office at the upcoming General Conference. Rev. Young stated that those videos will be presented at the Awards and Recognition Program this afternoon. One video was presented before the close of the business session.

Dr. Witherspoon thanked the Executive Team and all of the members who participated in today's Business Session. Rev. Young invited us to our Awards and Recognition Program which will begin at 2:30 p.m. In the chat were all of the ways in which members could connect to the video – Facebook, The Star of Zion, YouTube. Those unable to connect in the aforementioned ways can return to this Zoom platform for the presentation also.

During the meeting there were some members who had difficulty with the membership dues through the Association website. Dr. Witherspoon asked all members to be patient during the process and Rev. Lakesha Womack is working on this to get it resolved. Dr. Miller added that members can also pay their dues via paypal and included that information in the chat and reminded us that there is a \$2 transaction fee. (Paypal.me/imlaamez). Dr. Myrtle Bowen thanked the Regional Vice Presidents for their support and stated that she has provided her personal home address to receive memberships for those who do not wish to pay their dues via debit or credit card. She assured members that their memberships that are mailed in will be processed. Sis. Yvonne Baskerville asked a question for clarification on the Treasurer's Report and Dr. Miller addressed her concern.

Dr. Eleazar Merriweather thanked Mrs. Lula Howard for her wisdom and insight and help in putting together the program. Sis. Marie Denise Niles, Secretary, stated that the Minutes of the 2020 Annual Meeting are available on our website as well as the full text of the President's Address. They will be presented for approval at our next annual meeting in 2022. Rev. J. Martin Boulter wanted to thank all of the participants in our worship program.

Dr. Witherspoon called upon Rev. Mark Thomas to close the business session with prayer and invited us to the afternoon awards ceremony.

**2:30 p.m. 43<sup>rd</sup> Cameron W. Jackson Virtual Awards Ceremony**  
**Ms. Sarah Kinard – Toast Mistress**

**2021 AWARD RECIPIENTS**

**Paul Robeson Award** - Dr. Andrew D. Brown

**Samantha Wormley Lay Leadership Award** – Mr. Jasper J. McCormick

**Sojourner Truth Lifetime Achievement Award** – Mr. Willie Landrum

**Frederick Douglass Award** - Rev. Dr. Robert F Kemp

**Bishops Small & Lartey International Award** - Dorothy McFarlane & Rev. Ordette Wells-Simms

**Alfred G. Dunston Jr., Salute to Service Military Award** - Dr. W. Robert Johnson & PFC Prentice Little

**Young Gifted and Black Award** - Dr. Xellex Rivera & Rev. L. Samuel Brown

**President's Award** - Dr. Shirley Welch

**Harriet Tubman Award** - H. Selena Nelson Allen