

**Annual Meeting of the International Ministers and Lay Association
February 11-13, 2020
Sheraton Birmingham Hotel
2101 Richard Arrington Jr. Boulevard, Birmingham, Alabama 35203
The Rt. Rev Michael A. Frencher, President of the Board of Bishops
Alabama-Florida Episcopal District, Host
Mrs. Jacqueline Lartey, Host Missionary Supervisor
The Right Reverend Seth O. Lartey, Host Bishop
The Rev. Dr. Eleazar Merriweather, Executive Director
The Rev. Dr. Anthony N. Witherspoon, President**

Minutes

Tuesday, February 11, 2020
Opening Worship Service 2:30 p.m.

Praise and Worship was led by Rev. Dr. H. Aaron Dade, "This Is The Day" "Alpha and Omega"
Musicians for the afternoon were The Rev. Monica H. Marshall, John Rankin, and Rev. Kirkpatrick
The worship leader for the afternoon was The Rev. O'Neil Wiley who led the prayer of Invocation followed by the prayer response, "Hear Our Prayer, O Lord"

The hymn of praise "I Am Thine O Lord" was lined and led by Rev. J. Martin Bouler, Sr., Chaplain

Scripture Lesson, 2 Corinthians 11: 16-33 was read by Mr. William Manning

Prayer – The Rev. Tajuan Kyles, Response, "I Love You Lord, Today"

The Preacher was introduced by The Rev. Dr. Sandra Coleman, Presiding Elder, Birmingham District

A Selection was given by the Rev. Dr. H. Aaron Dade, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness"

The Annual Sermon was preached by The Rev. Joshua U. Johnson, Sr., Pastor of Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church, Birmingham, Alabama

Scripture - 2 Timothy 4: 9-18 Text: 1 Timothy 4:16

Subject: When No One Else Will Stand With You

- Ministry is a daunting task – the worst job that you will ever love
- Authentic Jagged Edged Ministry
- We find ourselves under the pressure and pain of preaching
- We have to preach an age old gospel that may not be popular
- What happens when you have to preach and authentic word that speaks truth to power
- The task of preaching puts the preacher in a precarious position – loneliness and
- As you preach and minister you need to know who is going to stand with you and who isn't
- People can be fickle, two timey, ride your coat tails
- Relationships have a bearing on ministry
- The good news is that when no one else is there the Lord will stand with you.

The invitation to Christian Discipleship was made by Rev. Sharon Mitchel, who made a powerful testimony of her own healing and called worshippers to the altar for prayer.

The Offering Appeal was made by Dr. David T. Miller and Sis. Patricia Hunter of the IMLA Finance Committee. The offertory sentence, "All Things Come Of Thee"

President Witherspoon recognized Mrs. Shirley McCoy, Dr. Curtis Walker and Dr. Kevin McGill and asked them to make remarks and recognized all former members of the Executive Board. Bro. Cesar Alvarez made announcement regarding the Banquet and doors will open at 6 p.m.

Reminders regarding dues, emphasizing Presiding Elder and Church memberships of \$100 each.

Treasurers Report was made by Dr. David T. Miller, Treasurer

Summary:

Amount Brought Forward:	\$ 643.42
Income:	\$ 42,864.42
Received and Brought Forward:	\$ 43,537.84
Disbursements:	\$ 43,183.91
Balance on Hand:	\$ 389.93

Moved to receive the report by Dr. Margaret Blackmon and Second by Willie Landrum. Mrs. Lula Howard moved to amend the motion to say, "receive and refer" this motion carried and the previous question was called for and the motion carried.

Announcements by the Executive Secretary

Benediction and closing at 4 p.m. by Rev. Johnson

Wednesday, February 12, 2020 – Afternoon Session

The afternoon session opened at 3:30 p.m. with a period of praise and worship led by Rev. Tajuan Kyles and opening prayer by Dr. Sandra Davis. President Witherspoon presented Dr. Brenda L.G. Smith, Secretary -Treasurer of the Department of Christian Education, who moderated a panel on "Intergenerational Participation in Ministries and Worship." Members of the panel are: Dr. Kenneth Q. James, Pastor of Walls Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, Charlotte, Editor of the Church School Literature, Rev. Robyn Anderson, Commission on Family Life, Dr. Sandra Davis, Episcopal Director of CED, Western Episcopal District, Alison Lee Greensboro, N.C, Co-Advisor of VCYC, Minister of CED Trinity, Greensboro, Eric Smith, President of the Assembly of Christian Educators, Mr. Cesar Alvarez, Ebenezer A.M.E. Zion Church, Event Planner University of South Carolina, Rev. Domonique Turner, Metropolitan Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church. Dr. Smith read Scripture Proverbs 22:6. In her opening statement she recalled a childhood experience of reading announcements in church. We need to become intentional about involving our youth in every aspect of the church. She mentioned the late Dr. Dabney Napoleon Montgomery, Tuskegee Airman and member of Mother A.M.E. Zion Church who served as a mentor to many of the young people in the Junior Church, including our late CED Secretary-Treasurer, Dr. Kathy Brown. Dr. Smith asked each of the panelists to speak on the subject.

1. Dr. Kenneth Q. James: Related his experiences with Dr. Montgomery as a Sunday School teacher and other life lessons. He is the product and the beneficiary of great nurture.
2. Rev. Robyn Anderson: Related quizzes of the catechism in the Episcopal Church. We are all developing into credible witnesses. It is not just going to church, it is realizing that we are the church. The church is a welcoming place that can meet people where they are.
3. Dr. Sandra Davis: Strategies in the church in which we can intentionally involve our young people. Having all generations participate in all aspects of the church is a system in itself. She gave examples of instances where the understanding between generations is difficult and where in planning we endeavor to include all groups.
4. Sis. Alison Lee: remarked on the nurture that she received in Church and there were always people urging her to participate in things. Mentorship is a good strategy as well as the Near Peer

5. Bro. Eric Smith: we spend more time talking about dividing ourselves up instead of working together. There is no competition between one generation and another. Benefited from the Near Peer Model also.
6. Mr. Domo Turner: Lewis Anthony was his pastor growing up who asked him to read the scripture during Lent as early as 9 years old. Young people cannot be absolved of responsibility but accommodations need to be made for them.
7. Mr. Cesar Alvarez: all of us have had a “Dabney Montgomery” in our lives. Some are gone. They were rare people and we didn’t have a choice. Many of us are not stepping up to be the Dabney Montgomery’s that our young people need.

Dr. Smith thanked all of the panelists for their contributions. She stated that we have individuals in our midst who could be the leaders of strategies to bring generations together in the church. Questions were taken from the floor on how to get children involved when the parents have no parenting skills. Dr. James suggested changing the language from “Sunday School” to “Church School” and he mentioned “10,000 Hours” from the book “Outliers” by Malcolm Gladwell. Opportunities need to be provided for youth to view and discuss movies so that they can process the content in a safe space, i.e. “Just Mercy” and “Harriett”, “13th.”

Dr. Witherspoon thanked Dr. Smith for presenting this excellent panel discussion. He suggested that we utilize our Association website for things that are working in our area and send them to Rev. LaKeshia Womak to be uploaded so that we can share. Reminders for membership and Lapel Pin.

The Minutes of the 2019 Meeting were read by the Secretary. Members were reminded that the minutes have been uploaded to the IMLA website along with a form for submissions of corrections. Corrections from the floor: The amount of the presentation to Bishop George Crenshaw was corrected from \$1,500 to \$2,500. President Witherspoon entertained a motion to approve the minutes with necessary corrections. It was moved by Dr. Margaret Blackmon and seconded by Dr. Willie Johnson that the minutes be approved with necessary corrections. On unreadiness Mr. Willie Landrum asked if he was supposed to have been appointed to the By-Laws Committee. President Witherspoon responded that he would take care of this momentarily. The previous question was called for and the minutes of the 2019 Annual meeting were approved with necessary corrections.

Dr. Witherspoon appointed the following persons to the By-Laws Committee: Rev. Dr. Curtis Walker, Mrs. Yvonne Baskerville, Mrs. Melva Polk-Wright, Rev. Dr. Charles Tillett, Ms. Vanessa Watt, Rev. Dr. Melanie Miller, Rev. Dr. Jerret Fitte, Rev. Hanna Broome, Bro. Willie Landrum, Rev. Brandon Moore and Rev. Kelsey Hopson. He asked Dr. Walker to chair the committee. Dr. Witherspoon also appointed as our Parliamentarian the Rev. Dr. Claude Shufford.

The President’s Address: “Our Commitment to Accountability: We Have Been Chosen For Such a Time as This” The full text of the President’s Report can be viewed and downloaded from the IMLA website: imlaamezion.org.

Dr. Merriweather thanked the President for his powerful address. Rev. Sam Brown was asked to make a brief presentation of Dr. Matthew Whittey, the president of Wayne Pharmaceuticals, the only Black owned Pharmaceuticals in the country. They are in Cordele, Georgia and produce an 81mg aspirin and provide jobs and services for seniors. His county is one of the unhealthiest counties in Georgia with people dying in their 50’s. They started a program to reduce blood pressures and encouraged us to use the power of exercise.

Dr. Curtis Walker urged us to participate in the 2020 census and to emphasize this in our churches. He also asked to meet with the members of the By-Laws Committee after the close of the session.

President Witherspoon thanked Ms. Joyce Zimmerman for being his “Dabney Montgomery”

The session adjourned at 5:53 p.m. with closing prayer by Rev. Sam Brown.

Thursday, February 13, 2020 – Morning Session

The morning session opened at 9:10 a.m. with a period of Praise and Worship led by Reverend Justin Barbour and the Rev. Monica H. Marshall and Bro. John Rankin at the organ and keyboard – “O Give Thanks” “Thank You, Lord”

The worship leader for the morning was The Rev. Mae Pearl Hall-Clark, who led us in the singing of our Hymn of Praise, “Great Is Thy Faithfulness”. The Scripture Lesson, Psalm 116: 12-15 was read by Sis. Portia Jacobs and we were led to the throne of grace by Rev. Hall-Clark followed by “More Love To Thee.” Rev. Hall -Clark presented Presiding Elder Sandra Coleman to introduce the Preacher for the morning, The Rev. Dr. Fredna B. Grimmatt, Pastor of the Pine Level A.M.E. Zion Church, Hatchchechubee, Alabama. Rev. Barbour gave us another special selection, “Total Praise/I Need Thee” Her text was Psalm 116:15, Subject: When Life Appears To Be Gone

- Job 14 summed up the labor that the departed have gone through
- If they had a chance, they would not come back to this life of trials and tribulations
- Who has the right view of death? Jesus or humanity? Sleep or Death? Jesus says that our departed are asleep.
- Death is not only sleep but going on a journey – departure to move into another life

The Invitation to Christian Discipleship was offered by The Rev. Patrick Barrett. Rev. Dr. Myrtle Bowen asked the Regional Vice Presidents to come and read the names of our departed members. Dr. Witherspoon asked members of the Executive Team who have lost loved ones to call out the names of their departed – Mrs. Lula K. Howard, who lost her husband, Mr. William Lewis Howard and Dr. Myrtle Bowen, who lost her mother, Rev., Annie L. Bowen. He also lifted up the loss of the mother of Dr. Kevin McGill, immediate past president of the Association.

The Offering Appeal was made by Bro. Willie Landrum who asked the members to sing a verse of “Precious Memories”. Attendees were asked to call the name of a departed loved one when they brought their offering.

The Rev. Dr. Virgil Lattimore, President of Hood Theological Seminary was introduced to provide updates on the work of the Seminary.

Dr. Merriweather entertained a motion to receive and refer the Presidents Address -It was moved by Dr. Curtis Walker and seconded by Dr. Margaret Blackmon. On unreadiness, Bro. Landrum asked if there were any action items to be considered. No. Dr. Yvonne Tracey thanked the President for challenging the Laity to stand up and take ownership of our Zion. The previous motion was called for and passed.

Dr. Kathy McFadden, Executive Director of the 400 Year Celebration reported on that celebration which highlights the accomplishments of African Americans since we arrived on these shores as enslaved persons. A resolution will be coming before the General Conference and she read the same..

Mrs. Lula K. Howard asked all persons who are offering themselves for General office to come forward.

1. Dr. J. Elvin Sadler, General Secretary Auditor
2. Ms. Portia Jacobs for General Secretary CED
3. Rev. Patrick Anthony Barrett, II for General Secretary CED
4. Rev. Tajuan Kyles for General Secretary CED
5. Dr. David McLean for General Secretary CED

6. The Rev. LaKesha Womack for Executive Director of Church Growth and Development
7. Dr. Eleazar Merriweather for the Office of Executive Director of Church Grown and Development

Mrs. Howard asked persons who are presenting themselves for the office of Bishop to come forward:

1. Dr. Sondra Coleman
2. Dr. Erik Leake
3. Rev. Brian Thompson
4. Dr. Melanie Miller
5. Dr M. Luther Hill
6. Dr. Wayne Walker
7. Dr. Myrtle Bowen

\$750 Sales for Lapel Pins last year was omitted from the Treasurers Report and new copies of the report were printed by the Treasurer reflecting this addition. The summary of the amended report is as follows:

Amount Brought Forward:	\$ 673.42
Income:	\$42,941.00
Received and Brought Forward:	\$43,614.42
Disbursements:	\$42,149.52
Balance on Hand	\$ 464.90

Rev. LaKesha Womack was invited to share with us information regarding the impact of the 2020 Presidential Election and what we can do to help our candidates win.

- All elections are local
- Understand your vote number – look at the data for the past primary election – you need to have at least 50% of the people who typically vote in the election. This lets you know how many people need to be registered.
- When things get bad they affect our communities first.
- Churches should hold their elected officials accountable

Questions were taken from the floor regarding issues.

18-22 demographic in the next election will out number baby boomers in the next election and they need to understand who they are voting for and what that means. The importance of having college students mail in absentee ballots. Issues of Varying State I.D. Requirements

Dr. Elvin Sadler, General Secretary-Auditor, came forward to give us information on the General Conference and stated that all delegate registrations will be done online. His Executive Assistant, Sis. McKnight, is on site and she will assist all Delegates who have not registered to do so. The registration deadline is through March 6th. Alternates can register March 7 – April 6th, then all other attendees.

General Conference Legislation Update by Dr. Yvonne Tracey and Rev. Erich Shumake. Rev. Womack was asked to explain some technical issues and invited the members to go to the IMLA website to follow along.

Report of offerings: Tuesday Opening Service:	\$1,459.00
Thursday Memorial Service:	\$2,534.00
Total:	\$3,993.00

Dr. Myrtle Bowen, 2nd Vice President present the following report on the membership of the Association:

**International Ministers and Lay Association Membership Report 2020
Greensboro, North Carolina
21 Feb 2019 – 17 Feb 2020**

Episcopal District	Annual	Pd.	Life	Pd.	On-Line	
					Ann	LM
Piedmont	84	14	31	9	2	0
Eastern N. Carolina	64	7	14	3	1	0
Midwest	46	12	7	5	1	0
Northeastern	88	12	27	4	0	1
South Atlantic	67	9	11	1	0	0
MID-ATLANTIC	92	10	61	12	2	0
AL/FL	149	50	15	9	2	0
Southwestern Delta	10	5	3	3	0	0
Western	20	10	8	5	1	0
W W Africa	1	1	0	0	0	0
Totals	621	130	177	51	9	1

Total Members 798 Total Members Paid 181 Total Certificates 7

PE Districts	2 * \$100 = \$ 200	2/12 th /20	\$4339 (\$ 1,165.00 cash /\$ 3,174 checks)
Churches	5 * \$100 = \$ 500	2/13 th /20	<u>\$1190</u> (\$ 340.00 cash/\$850 checks)
Annual Mems	130 * \$ 35 = \$4,550		\$5,529
Life Mems	51 * \$ 10 = \$ 510	2/20/20	<u>\$ 210</u> (checks)
			\$5,739
Total Collected	\$5,760		21 (Overpayment)

\$ 5,760.00 [Total Turned In]

Announcements by the Secretary

Adjourned at 1:15 p.m. with prayer by The Rev. Gloria Clemmons White. We will reconvene at 3 p.m.

Thursday Afternoon Session – 3:15 p.m.

The afternoon session opened with prayer by Dr. Jacqueline King.

Dr. Merriweather presented the 104th Bishop in the Line of Succession in the A.M.E. Zion Church, The Rt. Rev. Stacatto Powell, President of the Board of Bishop for information regarding new work that will be presented to the General Conference. Bishop Powell addressed the work that is being established in East Africa. Establishing new work is one of the primary responsibilities of an episcopate. He presented Hillary Wafulo from Uganda who brought 5 men with him to visit him in Wake Forest, NC who invited him to Uganda. They have been cultivating that relationship since then and he was joined by Bishop Hilliard Dogbe in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania and the work has become three conferences. Kenya has 11 conferences. Tanzania has 7 annual conferences. The future of the church is on the continent made up of 55 countries. The work cannot be paid for like we have done it before. The day of assessments is over. Discussion of the amount of work and the number of people required in the episcopacy to service the work.

Bishop Powell introduced Bishop George Crenshaw for an update of the work. He presented two copies of the Report of the Great Lakes Region of Africa and a strategic plan for the Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Tanzania, South Sudan and Ethiopia conferences that the Connectional Council voted to bring into the church. The South Korean Component is actually people from Liberia that went there as economic refugees. First A.M.E. Zion and Hoggard Memorial. He also reported on the work in India. Central Southern Africa will have over 1600 Churches. We are moving from sponsorship to partnership. They need help at the Maoni Orphanage

President Witherspoon introduced the Rev. Edwin Ferguson, Pastor of the Invitation A.M.E. Zion Church, in Snow Hill, NC who made a presentation on Intergenerational Participation in Ministries and Worship from a Millennial Perspective. What pleases one generation in worship may not please the others.

Generational Challenges

1. Builders – has an intrinsic trust in institutions including the church
2. Boomers – born after WWII and influenced by the introduction of television The Me Generation Some Boomers have a distrust of Institutions
3. Busters – everything is not black and white, absolute truth and morality no longer exist and bounced from one church/denomination to another
4. Millennials – children of two or single parent homes

Questions and comments were taken from the floor.

Dr Merriweather Presented Bishop W. Darin Moore who made a presentation regarding the Restructuring Commission. He asked the members of the Restructuring Commission to stand.

Issues that the Restructuring Commission is still wrestling with:

- Observations on effective and challenging with the work from 2016
- There have been cost savings and integration of offices
- Four subcommittees
 - Episcopal Districts effective structuring
 - Delay an indigenous bishop for Central Southern Africa until 2024
 - How to suggest that existing Episcopal Districts will remain the same and new Annual Conferences will be assigned by the best bishop for the work
 - Connectional Council
 - Descriptions of the Administrative Boards with equal representation

- 3rd Vice Chair of each Board was a Lay Person
- Concern that it has run the church \$90K over the budget to sustain the additional persons. Lay people have not been in attendance at the connectional Council.
- We don't have a system in place to quantify the number of registrants at connectional meetings
- Job descriptions and bonding levels for General Officers
- Land and mortgaging and property sales
 - We inherited assets that are invaluable
 - Churches are mortgaging and selling off the future of our church because they are desperate.
 - We need a level of checks and balances and a higher level of accountability than the local church and Bishop of that area
- Actions of the General Conference are taken and there is no formal way to get it to the commission
 - For 2024 recommendations for dealing with unallocated funds

President Witherspoon thanked Bishop Moore for taking the time to share with us and introduced Dr. Mary Matthews. She thanked us for the partnership with the CLC on Legislation. She invited us all to the Lay Convocation in March in Fayetteville, NC. President Witherspoon urged members who have not done so to become a member of the Association and purchase a lapel pin. He distributed copies of the President's Address.

He appointed Dr. Claude Shuford to chair a committee of one Minister and one Lay Person to look into that area. After the benediction he asked Dr. Shuford to meet with interested persons and report to us next year.

Dr. Maurice Harden asked Young Adults to caucus in March in Fayetteville, NC. Rev Henderson said that his power point presentation will be sent to the Secretary for uploading to our FB page and website.

The 2020 Annual Meeting of the International Ministers and Lay Association adjourned at 5:30 p.m. with the singing of "God Be With You" and closing prayer by Rev. Brenda Evans from the Kentucky Conference.