

**MINUTES**  
**85<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the**  
**International Ministers and Lay Association**  
**African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church**  
**Held Virtually - Tuesday, February 15 – Thursday, February 17, 2022**

*Theme:*  
*Ministers and Lay Journeying Together for Eighty-Five Years*  
*Building Bridges, Breaking Down Barriers*  
*Relevant to the Church's Ministry and the Global Community*

**Tuesday, February 15, 2022**

**Opening Worship Service and Annual Sermon**

The 85<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the International Ministers and Lay Association opened at 5:30 p.m. EST with a season of prayer led by The Reverend Dr. Richard Gadsekpo, International Prayer Coordinator of the A.M.E. Zion Church and Sis. Kathy Henderson. The Evening Worship Service was led by The Rev. Tajuan Kyles, who gave the invocation. The Scripture Lesson for the evening was read by Mr. Joseph King Davis – John 13: 12-17 (Good News Bible) following by the evening's prayer by The Rev. Dr. Melanie Miller. The Rev. Dr. Anthony N. Witherspoon, President of the IMLA introduced the preacher for the evening, The Reverend Yolanda Lowe, Pastor of Claiborne Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church, Pine Grove, LA., which was followed by a selection, "Here I Am To Worship," by the Praise Team of Claiborne Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church. Rev. Lowe's text for the evening was John 13:15 (NKJV) and her subject for this Annual Sermon was "Are We Doing What Christ Has Done?"

- The sermon centered around our focus on the term "What Would Jesus Do?" instead of doing what Jesus did.
  - If we want to transform lives through ministry, we have to humble ourselves and become servants.
  - Our blessing comes when we just do the work – without complaining, bickering or bias against the type of work to be done.
  - Jesus taught his Disciples that love is an action word.
  - We spend too much time telling people that we love them instead of showing that love unconditionally.
  - The expression of love changes hearts and attitudes.

Following the sermon Rev. Kyles shared a testimonial song, "I Love The Lord," and offered the invitation to Christian Discipleship inviting those you felt a "yes" in their spirits to put a "1,2 or 3" in the chat and someone will contact them to lead them in their Christian walk, for special prayer, or to join in fellowship with a local faith community. The Rev. Dr. Maurice Harden, Financial Secretary, gave the offering appeal for an offering of \$25.00, offered a prayer in preparation for the offering and the offering was lifted by Rev. Dr. David T. Miller, Treasurer. Announcements were made by Rev. Dorothy A. Patterson, Executive Director. President Witherspoon thanked Rev. Kyles for leading this service with such spiritual energy, all of the participants in this service and the Rev. J. Martin Boulter, Sr., our Chaplain for putting all of the services together. He thanked our preacher for her challenging sermon. The Rev. Yolanda Lowe pronounced the benediction.

There was a musical interlude before the Banquet commenced.

**44<sup>th</sup> Cameron W. Jackson Virtual Awards and Recognition Banquet – 7:15 p.m.**

Ms. Sarah Kinard served as Toastmistress for the occasion. After the Balm In Gilead version of "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing" the Scripture Lesson, Psalm 133, was read by Sis. M. Denise Niles, the Invocation given by Presiding Elder Myrtle Bowen and The Rev. Dorothy A. Patterson shared the occasion which included a brief history of the association and the inception of the Awards Banquet under the leadership of the late Reverend Dr. Cameron W. Jackson during his presidency of the International Ministers and Lay Association.

The following Awards were presented:

- The Paul Robeson Award: The Reverend Dr. Medis Cheek - (Postumously)
- The Samantha Wormley Lay Leadership Award: Ms. Frances Glenn
- The Sojourner Truth Award: The Reverend Dr. Evalina Huggins
- The Frederick Douglass Award: Dr. Willis Baird
- The Bishop Small & Lartey International Award: The Reverend Shelby King-Gaddy
- The Alfred G. Dunston Salute to Service Award: Colonel Peggy McManus
- The Harriet Tubman Award: Ms. Lynda Byrd
- The Young Gifted and Black Award: Ms. Adrienne Warren and Mr. Quantai Walker
- The Distinguished Community Service Leaders Awards: Miss Jade Lawson, The Rev. Javan Leach and the Honorable Senator Natalie Murdock
- The President's Award: The Reverend Philmont Bostic

Remarks were given by The Reverend Dr. Anthony N. Witherspoon and final remarks and the benediction were given by the Rt. Reverend Kenneth Monroe, President of the Board of Bishops of the A.M.E. Zion Church. (Full video of the Opening Worship Service, the Annual Sermon and the Awards Banquet is available on the Star of Zion FaceBook Page)

### Wednesday, February 16, 2022

At 12:30 p.m. EST the afternoon Business Session opened with a season of prayer led by The Reverend Dr. Richard Gadsekpo and others. The Reverend Martin J. Boulter, Chaplain led a service of Praise and Worship. The following reports were made:

- Treasurer's Report by The Reverend Dr. David T. Miller, Treasurer
- Minutes Update by Ms. Marie Denise Niles, Secretary
- Membership Report by The Reverend Dr. Myrtle Bowen, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President and Membership Chair.
- Lapel Pin Update by Ms. Carla Tyrance, Assistant Secretary

At 2 p.m. our Legislative Session was led by The Reverend Erich Schumake with assistance of Dr. Yvonne Tracey as Consultant. Following the Legislative Session The Honorable Judge Adele Riley shared a presentation entitled "The Past, Present and Future of the Judicial Council of the A.M.E. Zion Church. "Working As A Team" was presented by Mr. Joseph King Davis, International President of the Connectional Lay Council of the A.M.E. Zion Church.

The Business Session adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

### Thursday, February 17, 2022

#### *Thursday Morning Session*

The Thursday morning business session opened at 10 a.m. with a season of prayer led by the Rev. Dr. Richard Gadsekpo. Dr. Mary L. Barber, M.D, gave a Medial Update, "The Black Church Perspective: Addressing Covid-19." This presentation was followed by an IMLA Young Adult Update by The Reverend Dr. Maurice Harden. And updates from our Regional Vice Presidents.

At 1 p.m. The Reverend Curtis L. Walker, Past President of the IMLA presented an update on the Association's By-laws. This was followed by The President's Address from President Witherspoon. Past IMLA Presidents were recognized and the morning session adjourned at 1:45 p.m. with remarks and announcements.

#### *Thursday Evening Session*

Our evening session convened at 7:00 p.m. (EST) Praise and worship renditions of "How Great is Our God" and "Fill Me Up" were shared virtually by the Praise Team of the Neely's Grove A.M.E. Zion Church, Gastonia, NC. The Worship Leader for the Opening Worship service was The Reverend Rodney L. Courtney, Jr., Pastor of Neely's Grove A.M.E.Zion Church, who gave the evening's invocation. The Scripture Lesson Hebrews 12: 1-2 was read by Ms. Tawana McClendon and the evening prayer was lifted by The Reverend Joseph Robbins. The Reverend Dr. Anthony N.

Witherspoon welcomed all who were in virtual attendance to this 85<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of the Annual Meeting of the International Ministers and Lay Association. President Witherspoon introduced the preacher for our Memorial Meditation, The Reverend Dairl L. Scott, Jr., Pastor of Walls Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, Charlotte, NC, followed by a rendition of "You'll Fight On." Rev. Scott's text for the evening Memorial Sermon was Hebrews 12: 1-2 (ESV) and his sermon topic was "Run On."

Major sermonic points:

- We each have a race to run no matter how challenging we are compelled to run on
- We are always running for one of three reasons:
  - from something (the world)
  - for something (the faith)
  - to something (The Sovereign)
- We should not allow the difficulty of what we have been delivered to cause us to forget what we have been delivered from and who we have been delivered for.
- We the realization of these reasons in mind we need to remind ourselves to run on
  - Run on even though you are sitting in front of a computer screen to worship
  - Run on even though you are preaching to a camera to empty pews
  - Run on even in the midst of financial inconsistencies.
- If we are going to run on and finish the race we need to remember those whose lives serve as a witness to us
  - Figures of faith have finished the race and their lives can testify that they made it with God's help.
  - We have supernumerary witnesses in our denomination
- The underlying factor to finishing and running on is not strength – but faith.
- We have to remove the weights that are before us in the race
  - Hinderances, encumbrances, limitations
  - Some of these items are helpful for preparation but detrimental for competition.
  - Clinging to these weights is equivalent to clinging to sin
- We can run this race effectively if we focus on the one who is before us...looking to Jesus

After the sermon the Invitation to Christian Discipleship was made by Rev. Courtney who prayed for the hearers of the Word and the response to the Word.

The Necrology Report was made by The Reverend Dr. Myrtle Bowen, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President of the IMLA. Rev. Dr. Bowen introduced Regional Vice Presidents who read the names of members of their respective Episcopal Districts who exchanged time for eternity. Dr. Bowen ended the Necrology Report with words of encouragement.

The Offering Appeal of \$25 was made by the Rev. Dr. Maurice Harden and the offering was listed by the Rev. Dr. David T. Miller who shared the many ways that donations to the IMLA can be made virtually – CashApp: \$IMLAAMEZION; PayPal; or mail to P.O. Box 6753, Harrisburg, PA 17112. Dr. Harden lifted a prayer of thanksgiving for the gifts that were received.

President Witherspoon thanked all of the participants in the service and the dynamic and powerful preaching of the Rev. Dairl Scott, Jr. He acknowledged the online presence of former General Officer, Dr. Mary A. Love; Bishop George E. Battle, Sr. and Mrs. Iris Battle. Bishop Battle.

After announcements from the Rev. Dorothy A. Patterson the service was turned over to our worship leader, Rev. Courtney and the preacher, Rev. Scott, for the evening for the benediction.