

African Methodist Episcopal Church

Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Organization

Conference President's Reporting Form

Name of Conference: East Conference

President of Conference: Aaron Jones, Jr.

Number of Districts of the Annual Conference: 3

Number of members attending the Conference Lay meeting: 125

Number of Training Sessions/Workshops held this year: 6

Number of members under the age of 30 attending your meetings: 15

Number of churches without organized lay organizations: 5

Number of Lay members in the conference: 11,900

Total Number of Lay Members in the organized Lay: 1020

List the names of churches that have not been organized as per discipline.

- Saint James A. M. E. Church, Lake Butler
- Bethel A. M. E. Church, Bellville
- New Bethel A. M. E. Church, Jasper
- Saint Paul A. M. E. Church, Windsor
- New Bethel A. M. E. Church, Jacksonville

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this organization shall be to organize and train the laity of the African Methodist Episcopal Church so that each lay person may utilize to the maximum the abilities and skills granted by God, in assisting with the improvement and extension of God's kingdom, and creating happiness, peace, and harmony among its members.

Objectives – To accomplish this purpose, the following objectives are adopted;

- a. To instill in the membership of the church a love for, and an appreciation of, the history, traditions, principles and development of African Methodism by encouraging, motivating, and educating all lay persons.
- b. To keep forever alive the sacred memory of Richard Allen, our illustrious founder.
- c. To advocate respect and loyalty at all times to constituted authority and leadership.
- d. To encourage the laity to support the total program of the church in the local congregation, in the community, and throughout the Connection.
- e. To foster a systematic and regular study of *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* and of parliamentary procedure, to the end that greater knowledge and information may be disseminated among the laity, and with the further purpose of encouraging lay members to participate more largely in the general functioning and supervision of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.
- f. To foster, influence, and support all constructive and progressive legislation for the church that promotes the teachings of Jesus Christ.
- g. To encourage development, recognition, and utilization of the most appropriate operational practices and modern technology in conducting the activities of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.
- h. To promote the spread of personal evangelism through activities designed to prepare lay members for appropriately conveying God's Word.
- i. To provide training in Christian stewardship, which causes lay members to recognize that the connotation of stewardship addresses more than giving money.
- j. To increase the circulation of church papers.
- k. To provide for the orderly and systematic training of lay persons, especially officers, in order that they might more effectively perform their service assignments.
- l. To promote activities which will result in harmonious fellowship for lay persons throughout the Connection?
- m. To help in the support of the AME educational institutions.

President's Questionnaire

1. What is your conference's purpose and objectives?

The purpose of the East Conference Lay Organization is to organize and train the laity of the African Methodist Episcopal Church so that each lay person may utilize to the maximum the abilities and skills granted by God, in assisting with the improvement and extension of God's kingdom, and creating happiness, peace, and harmony among its members. In meeting this purpose the East Conference Lay Organization has chosen to concentrate on the following objectives:

- a. To instill in the membership of the church a love for, and an appreciation of, the history, traditions, principles and development of African Methodism by encouraging, motivating, and educating all lay persons.
- d. To encourage the laity to support the total program of the church in the local congregation, in the community, and throughout the Connection.
- e. To foster a systematic and regular study of *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* and of parliamentary procedure, to the end that greater knowledge and information may be disseminated among the laity, and with the further purpose of encouraging lay members to participate more largely in the general functioning and supervision of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.
- g. To encourage development, recognition, and utilization of the most appropriate operational practices and modern technology in conducting the activities of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.
- i. To provide training in Christian stewardship, which causes lay members to recognize that the connotation of stewardship addresses more than giving money.
- j. To increase the circulation of church papers.
- k. To provide for the orderly and systematic training of lay persons, especially officers, in order that they might more effectively perform their service assignments.
- l. To promote activities which will result in harmonious fellowship for lay persons throughout the Connection?
- m. To help in the support of the AME educational institutions

2. Which objectives as shown above were you able to achieve this Episcopal Year?

- a. To instill in the membership of the church a love for, and an appreciation of, the history, traditions, principles and development of African Methodism by encouraging, motivating, and educating all lay persons.

This is done through the varying workshops that are given on all levels of the Lay Organization within the East Conference. The workshops presented cover the history, traditions, responsibilities of the varying offices, all aspects of The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, economics, the Biblical teachings, and health in an effort to ensure that the lay persons attending be well rounded in their education.

- d. To encourage the laity to support the total program of the church in the local congregation, in the community, and throughout the Connection.

Encouraged Lay participation in the varying organizations such as the Sons of Allen, YPD, RAYC, and Women's Missionary Society.

- e. To foster a systematic and regular study of *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* and of parliamentary procedure, to the end that greater knowledge and information may be disseminated among the laity, and with the further purpose of encouraging lay members to participate more largely in the general functioning and supervision of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Held workshops on Parliamentary Procedures on the Districts of the Annual Conference level and on the Conference level.

- g. To encourage development, recognition, and utilization of the most appropriate operational practices and modern technology in conducting the activities of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Continue providing the schedule at the beginning of the Conference Year reflecting all Conference meetings and workshops to be provided in an effort to assist in better planning. District Lay Organizations of the Annual Conference have a combined calendar of events that cover all activities from District to the Connectional not only of the Lay but also of all other components in an effort to assist in conducting activities on all levels for the betterment of the A. M. E. Church. This calendar is also listed on the website of the District Lay Organization of the Conference that has a website so that the information can be obtained not only in paper format but also electronically.

- i. To provide training in Christian stewardship, which causes lay members to recognize that the connotation of stewardship addresses more than giving money.

Encouraged Voter's Registration in the local churches and disseminated information regarding the issues to be voted on.

Encouraged membership in LEDC (Lay Economic Development Corporation) with the majority of the Conference Executive Board being members.

- j. To increase the circulation of church papers.

The East Conference Lay Organization will develop a newsletter for communication purposes that will be disseminated both in paper format as well as online in an effort to ensure that information is passed on to the membership. This responsibility will be that of the Public Relations person who will ensure that this is done on a quarterly basis getting input from all three Districts of the Annual Conference.

- k. To provide for the orderly and systematic training of lay persons, especially officers, in order that they might more effectively perform their service assignments.

Held Conference meetings on the fifth Sundays at churches in each of the three District of the Annual Conference. Provided trainings at each of the quarterly East Conference 5th Sunday meetings. Ensured that workshops were presented in all three Districts of the Annual Conference at their monthly meetings and at the 5th Sunday Conference meetings. Provided training as requested to local churches in assisting them in meeting their specific needs (i.e. Trustee training to be in compliance with the Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church). New Presidents of the local church are given copies of the pertinent materials that will assist them in training (i.e. the Connectional Lay Training Manuals). Also utilize information and training that is done on the Episcopal District Lay level.

- l. To promote activities which will result in harmonious fellowship for lay persons throughout the Connection?

Continue to work on increasing membership and to have a YAR (Young Adult Representative) for each of the three Districts of the Annual Conference. Currently have one for 2 of the 3 Districts and have a YAR for the Conference level. Goal throughout the Conference is to increase Young Adult participation. Also had Young Adults that participated in the Young Adult Retreat. These activities will result in the inclusion of young adults within the Lay Organization and promote harmonious fellowship with all ages being represented.

- m. To help in the support of the AME educational institutions.

Assisted Edward Waters College through the Marion Bacon White Textbook/Supplies Award at Edward Waters College which is a continuous financial award by the Episcopal District Lay Organization since 2004. Currently three (3) students are receiving a total of \$1,040.95 to aid them in purchasing textbooks and class lab supplies. East Conference raised \$2,000 which was donated toward the Selmo Bradley Scholarship funding last year and this Conference Year raised in excess of \$3,600 toward the scholarship drive which was given during the Scholarship Worship Service on January 18, 2013.

East Conference is working on all levels to have students to apply for the Scholarships awarded by the Episcopal District Lay Organization for students who will be entering Historically Black Colleges/Universities in the fall 2013. Also working on ensuring that information is disseminated regarding the scholarships being given out by the Connectional Lay Organization in 2013.

3. What in your conference is working well?
Utilizing different methods of communication in an effort to ensure that information is disseminated in an efficient and effective manner. Communication is done through e-mail, in person, telephone conferencing, newsletters, and use of websites to post pertinent information. Also having meetings held at different locations throughout the East Conference has allowed for persons to attend meetings that might otherwise not have attended due to distance. Conference meetings are rotated between the Districts of the East Conference. Districts of the East Conference also rotate their meetings between their areas as well.
4. What do you need to become more effective in training your membership?

Having any changes that occur be made available so that information can be passed on to the membership. For example the changes in the Connectional Lay Constitution.

5. Who do we need to celebrate their commitment of excellence whether in the church, community, home or job?

This has and is being done by working to have Lay members be recognized through the Episcopal District Lay Award process. Each year the East Conference has presented someone for recognition through this process from the Hall of Fame through the Lay Person of the Year. During this last year one of the Districts of the East Annual Conference recognized some of individuals with a banquet as part of the Lay Centennial Celebration.

Some people to be recognized for their commitment to the Lay Organization are: Sis. Annie McBride, Bro. Clarence Pollard, and Sis. Florence Pierce.

6. What can the Episcopal District do now to help?

- **Continue to ensure that information from the Connectional level and information on the Episcopal District level is passed on to the Conference level for dissemination to the District level of the Annual Conference so that they in turn can pass on.**
- **Provide timely posting of minutes and other reports to the Episcopal District Lay website, especially as we are going green and copies are not readily available to all in attendance. Also ensure that the information posted is current.**
- **Ensure that information is made available about the Connectional Lay Biennial.**
- **Ensure that any changes that occur such as the President's Report at the Annual Conference are disseminated as soon as possible. This was very beneficial for the East Conference to know what the Lay Conference President would be expected to report on at the East Annual Conference.**
- **Have a systematic way of reporting from all levels with an explanation of what is meant by the request, especially in the area of statistics needed. Too often each Conference will give varying figures when asked for membership. Current form seems to explain things better than the previous form used.**
- **Ensure that information is sent out in a timely fashion (i.e. Meeting Agendas, Program outlines, etc.). This is especially helpful when attending a meeting to know what will be covered as it allows the Conference President to get any feedback or questions that members might have and be prepared to get them addressed.**
- **Ensure that procedures for hosting the Annual Episcopal District Lay Convention are outlined and printed for dissemination. This is especially important in terms of what the budget should be for varying things. This is very helpful in planning the activities.**
- **Discuss ways in which to address concerns within the Conference and Districts of the Annual Conference as it relates to Presiding Elders. Discussion can help those having problems to find other ways to deal with situations from finding out how others work with their Presiding Elders. In short sharing ones successes and also ones failures. This can be done in forum setting.**