

The Lay Communique

The Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Organization Convention E-Newsletter



We Don't Conform, We Transform

Breaking the Mold: The Bishop's Challenge to a Transformed Life

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EEDLO OFFICERS

Bishop Marvin C. Zanders, Presiding Prelate
Mrs. Winifred Zanders, Episcopal Supervisor
John Love, President
Rhoshonda Herring, Director of Lay Activities
Dante Buckson, Young Adult Representative
Shrin Bryant, Director of Public Relations
Evelyn Odom, South Conference President

The Majestic Ballroom at the Hilton West Palm Beach was transformed into a sanctuary as voices of praise rose and the presence of God filled the room. The 81st Annual Lay Convention of the Eleventh Episcopal District officially opened with a powerful worship experience under the theme, ***For the Culture: Celebrating our Victories through our Values, Visions, and Voices.***

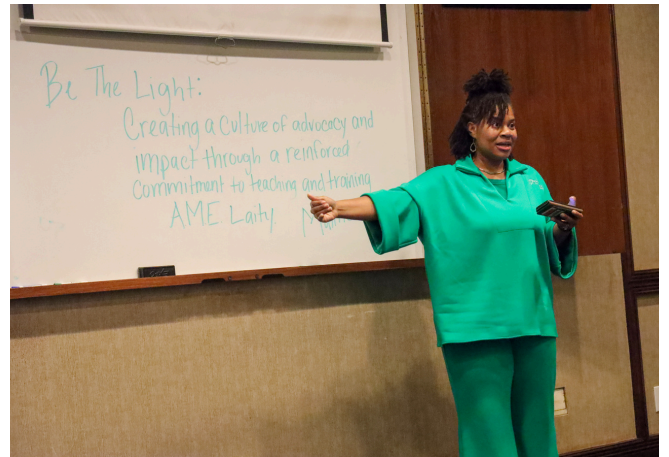
Bishop Marvin C. Zanders II, Presiding Prelate of the Eleventh Episcopal District, preached with boldness from Romans 12:2, urging attendees to "be transformed by the renewing of your mind." His message was a direct challenge to the body of Christ: this is not a time to blend in, but a season to stand up, stand out, and transform the culture through Christ.

Transformation continues

“For the Culture” was not just a backdrop. It was a call to action. Bishop Zanders reminded the congregation that transformation is not a moment but a mindset, a daily decision to live with purpose, truth, and bold faith. “Victory without vision is vanity, and a voice without value is just noise,” he declared.

This year's convention schedule reflected that purpose: from worship and leadership sessions to community service and legacy-building events. The EEDLO, for 81 years, has remained the bridge between pew and pulpit, raising up leaders and shaping lives within the Eleventh Episcopal District.

As the week continues, the Eleventh Episcopal District stands united in this declaration: We don't conform. We transform. For the culture. For Christ. Forever.



Executive Board Sets Convention Strategy

by Shrin Bryant

Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Organization President Brother John Love called the Executive Board meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday 24th, June, ahead of the 81st Annual EEDLO Convention. The meeting opened with clear direction, focusing on alignment, preparation, and spiritual grounding for the work ahead.

EEDLO Chaplain LuCretia McBride led the devotion, offering a heartfelt prayer and Scripture reading from Psalm 105:1-11. Board members were also encouraged to visit the newly designated Prayer Corner, which is available throughout the week for personal reflection and intercession.

Following roll call and credentialing updates, the board reviewed and approved the final agenda, which included the addition of a Strategic Plan presentation.

EEDLO Second Vice President Robbyn Hopewell presented the plan under the theme: “Be the Light: Creating a Culture of Advocacy and Impact through a reinforced commitment to teaching and training A.M.E. Laity.” Key goals include reinforcing AME fundamentals, organizing active lay bodies in every local church, and engaging 60 young adult members by 2028.

After discussion on proposed changes to the minute approval process, board members expressed concerns about limiting review access. To ensure transparency and accuracy, the board voted to continue the current process of full-board review and feedback. A future parliamentary workshop will revisit possible revisions with updated guidance and training.

The session closed with unified direction and clarity on responsibilities for the week ahead.

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THE LAY COMMUNIQUE STAFF

Shrin Bryant, EEDLO Director of Public Relations

Robbyn Hopewell, EEDLO Second Vice President

Joyce C. Pink, EEDLO Historiographer

Henry Love, Quincy/Monticello District Lay Organization President

Briana Robinson, South Conference RAYAC President

Rising early for a culture of wellness

Women of the lay kick off convention with first health walk of the 81st EEDLO Convention

By Robbyn Hopewell

The thunder roared, but the rain drops remained at bay as nine women from across the Eleventh Episcopal District of the A.M.E. Church used their walking shoes to rejuvenate their souls.

Health Walk Chair Connie E. Jenkins-Pye of the Florida Conference waited patiently in the lobby of the Hilton Palm Beach International Airport as the walkers descended from their rooms at 5:30 a.m. When the final walker, Personnel and Procedures Chair Alicia Cotton-Dixon arrived, the group took off for a circuit around the hotel parking lot and office park.

Walkers fellowshiped and shared their excitement about burning calories and meeting new people. "Thank you all for coming out. The health walk is important and we thank you for your participation," Sis. Jenkins-Pye said.

At 6:20 a.m., the walk wrapped up and returned to water and snacks provided by Sis. Ethel Wooten of the Florida Conference.

The walkers will reconvene at 5:30 a.m., Thursday, June 26, 2025 in the hotel lobby.



Opinion Column

Point of Praise & Perspective

By Briana Robinson

Attending my first Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Convention was a powerful and eye-opening experience. I was inspired by the rich tradition and deep wisdom that filled every session. I was struck by the depth of knowledge, spiritual conviction, and commitment to service that echoed through each moment of the experience.

This experience has reminded me of the important role the Lay Organization plays in strengthening the church from the inside out.

While I didn't see many young adults present, it only affirmed how much we are needed. There is room and real opportunity for us to grow, lead, and make an impact. I am leaving with a renewed commitment to help bridge the gap and encourage more of my generation to get involved.

The work is meaningful, the legacy is strong, and the future is calling. I'm hopeful, and I'm ready.



“Stand up and be different”

Bishop Marvin C. Zanders II issues call to service for laity

By Robbyn Hopewell

In lieu of a traditional Hour of Power Service, EEDLO Young Adult Representative Dante Buckson led a spirited conversation with the Presiding Prelate of the 11th Episcopal District of the A.M.E. Church, the Right Reverend Marvin Clyde Zanders II. Focusing on the EEDLO Convention theme of “For the Culture,” the incisive questions about the future of the church elicited insightful responses from Bishop Zanders.

Bishop Zanders charged the laity to serve with compassion and humility, speak God’s truth and live with God’s courage. “You’ve got to stand up and be different,” he encouraged.

YAR Buckson asked how laity can get back to the “Great Commission” as outlined in Matthew 28, and Bishop Zanders drew shouts of “Amen,” at his answer. “The Great Commission has really become the Great Omission. We have moved the needle in the church so much that we don’t have the MAIN thing as a the main thing,” he said.

To course correct, Bishop Zanders said laity must meet people where they are, relate them to Jesus Christ, nurture them into discipleship and then send them back out into the world.

This prescription for action was one of several powerful answers delivered in the hourlong conversation which drew as much applause, laughter, singing and spontaneous praise as worship program.

At the close, Bishop Zanders recommended two books for further study: *Just Say Yes: Unleashing People for Ministry* by Robert Schnase and *The Power of a Praying Church: Experiencing God Move As We Pray Together* by Stormie Omartian.

The whole conversation was recorded and will be made available for streaming on the EEDLO Facebook Page.



Bible Study Highlights Power and Purpose

Heroes, Hope, and the Gospel: A Call to Transform, Not Conform

During the 81st Annual Lay Organization Convention, delegates were captivated by a dynamic Bible study led by Rev. Dr. Anthony Reed, pastor of Martin Memorial AME Church in Miami. Known for his creative and culturally relevant teaching, Dr. Reed combined Scripture with powerful clips from *Batman Begins*, *The Avengers*, *Black Panther*, and more to deliver a timely message about identity, unity, and purpose.

“How can we transfer our culture?” he asked, referencing John 12:32, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” Dr. Reed used a clip from *Batman* to illustrate that while we create programs and strategies, we must never forget what truly attracts people to the church: lifting up Christ.

In *The Avengers*, he highlighted the importance of unity. Too often, superheroes (and church members) spend more time fighting each other than the real enemy. “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal,” Dr. Reed reminded the audience, quoting 2 Corinthians 10:4. “There’s enough room for all of us. Every hero has their own power. We must stop fighting each other and learn to embrace what others bring.”

In a powerful moment drawn from *Black Panther*, Dr. Reed recalled when the prince was on the verge of defeat until his mother reminded him, “Show him who you are.” That line, he said, should resonate deeply with AME members. “We are the sons and daughters of Richard Allen. We know who we are.”

Tying everything together with Acts 2:1 and Ephesians 6:10, Dr. Reed emphasized that unity is the fuel for transformation. “You may be an island by yourself, but you are an army together,” he declared. If the Church is going to thrive, there must be collaboration between clergy and laity. There must be a passing of the torch.

He urged attendees to always keep a hand on someone younger, lifting, mentoring, and equipping them to lead. Referencing 1 Corinthians 9:22, Dr. Reed closed with this charge: “They’re not stopping. Neither are we.” Attendees left both inspired and challenged. By blending Scripture, superhero symbolism, and cultural relevance, Rev. Dr. Reed ignited a call for a church that doesn’t just conform to the world, but transforms it.

