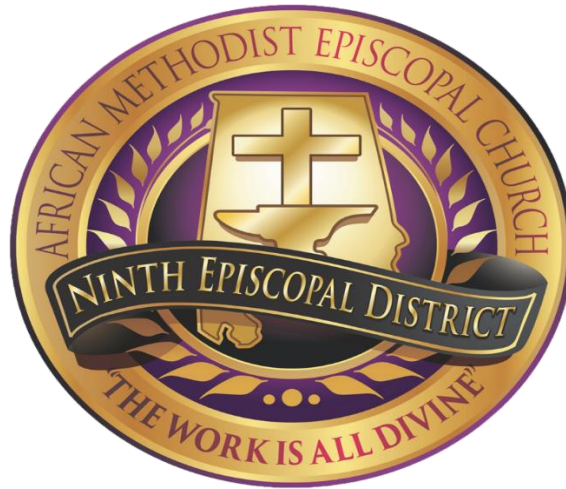


2025 Christian Education Congress
NINTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH



*The Agenda, Schedule
and Worship Guide Booklet*

Monday, June 30 – Thursday, July 3, 2025

*Theme: Christian Education in Real Time:
Connecting Our Faith to Our Culture
Acts 5:42*

Bishop Julius Harrison McAllister, Jr.
Presiding Prelate

Mrs. Deana Young McAllister
Episcopal Supervisor

Alabama A&M University
4900 Meridian Street North | | Huntsville, Alabama 35811



**Bishop Julius Harrison McAllister, Jr., Presiding Prelate
Mrs. Deana Young McAllister, Episcopal Supervisor**

The Episcopal Greetings

**The African Methodist Episcopal Church
Ninth Episcopal District
Bishop Julius H. McAllister, Jr., Presiding Prelate
Mrs. Deana Young McAllister, Episcopal Supervisor**

June 24, 2025

Dear Ninth Episcopal District Family and Friends,

Grace and peace to each of you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

It is with great joy and heartfelt anticipation that Supervisor Deana Young McAllister and I welcome you—our beloved youth, clergy, laity, and guests—to the **2025 Christian Education Congress (CEC)** of the Ninth Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church!

This gathering is especially meaningful to us, as it marks our **first CEC as your Episcopal leaders** here in the Ninth Episcopal District. What a blessing it is to begin this journey with you—our vibrant and faithful community—on the beautiful and historic campus of **Alabama A&M University – June 30 – July 3, 2025.**

Throughout this week, we will experience **powerful preaching, spirit-filled worship, transformative teaching, and joyful fellowship.** We look forward to welcoming anointed voices like **Bishop Vernon R. Byrd, Jr., Reverend Stephen Green, Pastor Smokie Norful, and our own Reverend Jessica Boanerges and Reverend Gregory McLeod,** among others. Their messages will guide and inspire us for the work ahead.

Our youth and young adults will enjoy dynamic workshops, including sessions on wellness, safety, emotions, and faith—and plenty of fun through activities like **basketball, music, and the Jesus, Jordans & JamFest.** We are especially excited for the **Dedication Ceremony of the Christian Debutante-Master Commission**—a sacred and celebratory moment recognizing the spiritual growth and commitment of our young people.

We are also thankful for our clergy and lay leaders, whose participation in continuing education, book discussions, and specialized training workshops is essential to our collective development and witness in the world. We commend the **diligent and prayerful leadership of our Christian Education Directors,** under the capable direction of **Mrs. Hattie Nathan,** Ninth Episcopal District Director of Christian Education. Their dedication, creativity, and faithful service have made this Congress possible and impactful for all ages.

Beloved, the Christian Education Congress is not just an event—it is a divine appointment. May this time together renew our spirits, sharpen our focus, and equip us to do God's will with excellence and enthusiasm. We pray that every song sung, every word spoken, and every lesson taught will be to the glory of God and for the building of His kingdom.

Welcome to the 2025 Christian Education Congress. We are grateful for your presence and excited for what God has in store. Let us worship, learn, and grow—**together.**

In His Name because of Christ and Calvary,

Julius H. McAllister, Jr.

Bishop Julius Harrison McAllister, Jr.
Presiding Prelate
Ninth Episcopal District
African Methodist Episcopal Church

Deana Young McAllister

Supervisor Deana Young McAllister
Episcopal Supervisor
Ninth Episcopal District
African Methodist Episcopal Church



**AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
NINTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CONGRESS 2025
ALABAMA A&M UNIVERSITY
HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA
JUNE 30 - JULY 3, 2025**



**Bishop Julius H. McAllister, Jr.
Presiding Prelate**

**Mrs. Deana Young McAllister
Episcopal Supervisor**

Greetings Ninth Episcopal District:

We greet each of you in the Name and the Joy of Jesus, the Christ. Thank you so much for joining us here on the beautiful campus of Alabama A & M University for our 2025 Christian Education Congress (CEC). It has been our pleasure to serve.

We gather to learn and have fun under the theme, *“Christian Education in Real Time: Connecting Our Faith to Our Culture.”* As we tarry together these next three days; hopefully we will become more aware of the fact that no matter what our differences are, we must demonstrate a strong and abiding faith in God. So, we learn and work together to live out the chosen scripture for this Congress, Acts 5:42 which reads, “They never stopped teaching and proclaiming the Good News that Jesus is the Messiah.” Whatever rituals and customs we practice, there is only one Messiah who sheds his precious blood for the salvation of the whole world.

We continue to teach, to learn, and to grow through this process called Christian Education. Christian Education is so important in every facet of our lives. Our faith impacts the whole person, spiritually, mentally, emotionally and intellectually. While we are together here this week, practice proclaiming Jesus as the one and only Messiah. As you depart, continue the proclamation at home, at church, at work, and wherever you go.

We thank you, Bishop, for the opportunity to serve in this space. Thanks to our presenters for sharing their time, talent, and resources during this CEC 2025. Thank you, Presiding Elders and Pastors, for your continued support of all our Christian Education endeavors. Thank you to all the loyal laity, including youth and young adults, for the power of your presence and your participation in our Christian Education programs and projects. With thanksgiving, may God bless each of the committee members with blessings that continue to overflow.

As we move forward, it is our prayer that God will continue to bless this Ninth Episcopal District with His choicest blessings.

CEC Committee,
Mrs. Hattie Nathan, Northeast Alabama Annual Conference,
and Episcopal Director of Christian Education
Presiding Elder Raymond B. Swafford, Member At-Large
Reverend Yvonne Howze, Alabama River Region Annual Conference
Reverend Sheryl Shipman, Northwest Alabama Annual Conference
Dr. D. Michelle Sherrod, Southeast Alabama Annual Conference
Reverend Charles Reeves, Southwest Alabama Annual Conference

**NINTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DIRECTORS**

Mrs. Hattie Nathan
Episcopal Director of Christian Education
Northeast Alabama Annual Conference

Reverend Yvonne Howze
Alabama River Region Annual Conference

Reverend Sheryl Shipman
Northwest Alabama Annual Conference

Dr. D. Michelle Sherrod
Southeast Alabama Annual Conference

Reverend Charles Reeves
Southwest Alabama Annual Conference

Presiding Elder Raymond B. Swafford
Director At-Large

CEC HOST CHURCH AND PASTOR
Saint John African Methodist Episcopal Church – Huntsville
Reverend Maurice Wright, II – Pastor
Dr. Thalia Love, Christian Education Director
South Birmingham-Huntsville-Bessemer District
Reverend Bruce W. Hunter, Presiding Elder

NINTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH 2025 CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CONGRESS AGENDA AND SCHEDULE

Sunday, June 29, 2025

12:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Kit Preparation	Knight Center VIP Room
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Monday, June 30, 2025

8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.	CEC Check-In	Knight Center VIP Room
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12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Lunch	Wilson Dining Room
Noon – 1:00 p.m. Group A		Knight Center

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Group B		
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2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Youth Choir Rehearsal & Youth Usher Rehearsal	Elmore Gym
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3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Clergy Workshop Sexual Misconduct Training Dr. Jonathan “Jay” Augustine Pastor, Big Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church Atlanta, Georgia	Elmore Gym
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5:05 – 5:35 p.m.	Recruitment Presentation to Clergy for Turner Theological Seminary Dr. Ammie L. Davis President & CEO, Turner Theological Seminary Atlanta, Georgia	Elmore Gym
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4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Dinner	Wilson Dining Room
4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Group A		Knight Center
5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Group B		

6:30 p.m.	Presentation by Alabama A&M University Navigating the Campus	Elmore Gym
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7:00 p.m.	The Church in Worship Opening Worship Service Guest Preacher: Bishop Vernon R. Byrd, Jr. Presiding Prelate, Seventeenth Episcopal District African Methodist Episcopal Church	Elmore Gym
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9:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.	Basketball	Wellness Center
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Transportation will be provided for all youth under the age of 15 to and from the Wellness Center.

Tuesday, July 1, 2025

6:30 a.m. – 7:30 a.m.	Breakfast	Wilson Dining Room Knight Center
8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	CEC Check-In	Knight Center VIP Room
8:09 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.	Morning Glory Worship Service Preacher: Reverend Jessica Boanerges Pastor, Jones Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church Fairfield, Alabama	Elmore Gym
9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	WORKSHOP SESSION 1 Ages 13 & Over Pathway to Christian Education: Word, Wisdom, and Work	Elmore Gym Breakouts
	Clergy and Laity Prophetic Preaching in the Era of Trump Presenter: Reverend Stephen Green	Knight Center Ballroom
9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Ages 4-7 & 8-12 Stepping into God's Word	Elmore Gym Breakouts
11:00 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.	Clergy and Laity The Ninth Episcopal District Women's Missionary Society Book Club Discussion: <i>Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom</i> Author: Lynda Lowery	Elmore Gym
12:09 p.m.	Hour of Power Worship Service Guest Preacher: Reverend Stephen Green Senior Pastor, Greater Allen African Methodist Episcopal Cathedral Jamaica, New York	Elmore Gym
1:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. 1:15 p.m. – 1:50 p.m. Group A 1:50 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Group B	Lunch	Wilson Dining Room Knight Center
2:45 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	WORKSHOP SESSION 2 Ages 4-7 & 8-12 Secure at Home; Safe in the Street	Elmore Gym Breakouts
	Ages 13 & Over Pathway to Safe Arrival – DWB	Elmore Gym Breakouts
	Clergy Workshop Presenter: Reverend Maurice Wright, II	Elmore Gym

WORKSHOP SESSION 3

3:45 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Ages 4-7 I Have Feelings, Too Presenter: Sis. Shantez Carter	Elmore Gym Breakouts
	Ages 8-12 I Have Feelings, Too Presenter: Reverend Shelia Williams	Elmore Gym Breakouts
	Ages 13-18 Can We Talk?	Elmore Gym Breakouts
	Ages 19-39 Can We Talk ? Presenter: Reverend Dr. Jacquelyn Long	Elmore Gym Breakouts
	Ages 40 & Over Pathway to Wellness: My Brother's Keeper Presenter: Sister Salenthia Washington	Elmore Gym

4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.	Dinner	Wilson Dining Room
4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Group A		Knight Center
5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Group B		

7:00 p.m.	The Evening Glory Worship Service Guest Preacher: Pastor Smokie Norful Senior Pastor, Victory Cathedral Worship Center in Bolingbrook, Illinois and Victory City Atlanta in Sandy Springs, Georgia	Elmore Gym
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9:00 p.m.	Basketball	Wellness Center
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Transportation will be provided for all youth under the age of 15 to and from the Wellness Center.

Wednesday, July 2, 2025

6:30 a.m. – 7:30 a.m.	Breakfast	Wilson Dining Room Knight Center
8:09 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.	Morning Glory Worship Service Preacher: Reverend Gregory McLeod Pastor, Gaines Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church Phenix City, Alabama	Elmore Gym

WORKSHOP SESSION 4

9:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Pathway to Digital Faith Connections Rewiring Social Media S.T.E.M. Presenter: Alabama A&M University
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Students will be picked up at the Elmore Gym and transported to the STEM Class.

9:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	Clergy and Lay – “The Bishop Speaks”	Elmore Gym
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch	Wilson Dining Room
11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Group A		Knight Center
12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Group B		
1:45 p.m.	Practice Christian Debutante-Master Commission	Elmore Gym
2:00 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.	Basketball	Wellness Center
Transportation will be provided for all youth under the age of 15 to and from the Wellness Center.		
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Dinner	Wilson Dining Room
4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Group A		Knight Center
5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Group B		
6:30 p.m.	Dedication Ceremony for Christian Debutante-Master Commission	Elmore Gym
9:00 p.m. – Midnight	Jesus, Jordans, & JamFest	Elmore Gym

Thursday, July 3, 2025

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Check-Out	Knight Center VIP Room
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**NINTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
2025 Christian Education Congress**

The Opening Worship Encounter

Monday, June 30, 2025 – 7:09 p.m.

***Reverend Bruce W. Hunter, Worship Leader
Presiding Elder of the South Birmingham-Huntsville-Bessemer District***

THE PRAISE AND WORSHIP

“How Great Is Our God”

How great is our God, sing with me
How great is our God, and all will see
How great, how great is our God
Name above all names
Worthy of our praise
My heart will sing
How great is our God

THE GREAT PROCESSIONAL

“Every Praise”

Every praise is to our God
Every word of worship with one accord
Every praise, Every praise
Is to our God
Sing hallelujah to our God
Glory hallelujah is due our God
Every praise, Every praise
Is to our God
God my savior, God my healer, God my deliverer
Yes, He is, Yes, He is
God my savior, God my healer, God my deliverer
Yes, He is, Yes, He is

THE DOXOLOGY

*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. Amen.*

THE CALL TO WORSHIP

REVEREND DR. LETITIA WATFORD

*Presiding Elder,
Phenix City District*

Leader: Keep your Creator in mind while you are young! In years to come you will experience burdens and troubles and say that you don't find joy anymore. (Ecclesiastes 12:1)

People: We are the youth of the Church; we will remember to take refuge in God, and we have come to worship. There is joy in knowing Christ!

Leader: The prophet Isaiah spoke of a day when "even young people will get tired, then stumble and fall." (Isaiah 40:30)

People: The prophet also said that those who trust the Lord will find new strength, to be strong like eagles, soaring upward. That's why we have come to worship God. (Isaiah 40:31)

Leader: Jesus said, "Let the children and youths come to Me, and don't try to stop them. People who are like these children belong to God's Kingdom." (Matthew 19:14)

People: Like the young people who were brought to Jesus by their parents for prayer and His special touch; like those who felt safe to play at His feet - we believe that Jesus has made room for children, teens and young adults in His Kingdom and in His Church. With only a little prodding from our parents, we have also come to worship our God in Christ. (Matthew 19:13)

*(A Call to Worship by Bishop Adam J. Richardson, Jr.,
115th Elected and Consecrated Bishop of the AME Church; Retired Senior Bishop)*

THE HYMN OF PRAISE

REVEREND ANTONIO THOMAS

Presiding Elder, Camden District

Hymn No. 221 How to Reach the Masses (Lift Him Up)

How to reach the masses, those of every birth,
For an answer, Jesus gave the key;
"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth,
Will draw all men unto Me."

Refrain

*Lift Him up, Lift Him up;
Still He speaks from eternity:
"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth,
Will draw all men unto Me."*

Oh! the world is hungry for the Living Bread,
Lift the Savior up for them to see;
Trust Him, and do not doubt the words that He said,
"I'll draw all men unto Me."
Refrain

Don't exalt the preacher, don't exalt the pew,
Preach the gospel simple, full, and free;
Prove Him and you will find that promise is true,
"I'll draw all men unto Me."
Refrain

Lift Him up by living as a Christian ought,
Let the world in you the Savior see;
Then all will gladly follow Him Who once taught,
"I'll draw all men unto Me."
Refrain

THE PRAYER OF INVOCATION

REVEREND DR. JACQUELYN L. DENSON
*Presiding Elder,
Montgomery-Selma District*

THE CHORAL RESPONSE

"I Just Want to Praise You"
I just want to praise you
Forever and ever and ever
For all you've done, done for me
Blessings and glory and honor
They all belong to you
Thank you Jesus for blessing me!

THE WORSHIP THROUGH MUSIC

THE CONGRESS CHOIR

THE SCRIPTURE READINGS

THE OLD TESTAMENT
Joel 2:28-32

REVEREND DWIGHT E. DILLARD
*Presiding Elder,
Birmingham-Florence-Tuscaloosa District*

New International Version

²⁸ "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. ²⁹ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

THE EPISTLE
Acts 2:14-18; 37-42

REVEREND GLORIA HALL
*Presiding Elder, West Birmingham-Ensley
-Greensboro District*

English Standard Version

¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. ¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ “‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams;

¹⁸ even on my male servants and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

³⁷ Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” ³⁸ And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” ⁴⁰ And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” ⁴¹ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

THE GOSPEL
John 20:19-31

REVEREND RAYMOND B. SWAFFORD
Presiding Elder, Tuskegee District

New International Version

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

²⁸ Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹ Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” ³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this

book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

THE PREFACE TO THE DECALOGUE

Hymn #69 | | “From All That Dwell”

From all that dwell below the skies, let the Creator’s praise arise;
Let the Redeemer’s name be sung, Through every land by every tongue.

THE DECALOGUE

REVEREND DR. WILLIE EUGENE MARSHALL

*Presiding Elder,
Ozark-Troy District*

Leader: Let us express our commitment to keep God’s Law.

People: God of salvation, only You are God. We will make no idols.
We will not invoke with malice your name, O God.
We will remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy.
We will honor our father and our mother. We will not commit murder.
We will not commit adultery. We will not steal. We will not be a false witness.
We will not covet anything that belongs to our neighbor.

Leader: Jesus said: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first Commandment.”

People: Jesus also challenged us to live justly with a second Commandment, which is like the first: We shall love our neighbor as ourselves! On these two Commandments depend all the Law and the prophets.
(From the *Anvil*, 2018)

THE GLORIA PATRI

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen, Amen.

THE MISSION OFFERING

REVEREND DR. FREDERICK D. SHERROD, III

*Presiding Elder,
Dothan-Eufaula District*

THE OFFERTORY RESPONSE

“We Give Thee But Thine Own”

We give Thee but Thine own, Whate’er the gift may be,
All that we have is Thine alone, A trust, O Lord, from Thee. Amen.

**THE PRESENTATION OF THE
BISHOP**

REVEREND BRIAN K. BLACKWELL
*Executive Director,
Department of Retirement Services,
African Methodist Episcopal Church*

THE PRESENTATION OF THE PREACHER

BISHOP JULIUS H. MCALLISTER, JR.
*The 144th Elected and Consecrated Bishop
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Presiding Prelate, Ninth Episcopal District*

THE SERMONIC SELECTION

THE CONGRESS CHOIR

THE SERMON

BISHOP VERNON R. BYRD, JR.
*The 145th Elected and Consecrated Bishop
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Presiding Prelate, Seventeenth Episcopal District*

THE INVITATION TO CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

REVEREND CHARLES LEWIS
*Presiding Elder,
Mobile District*

"I Give Myself Away"

I give myself away (2x)
So You can use me
I give myself away (2x)
So You can use me

THE WORSHIP THROUGH GIVING

REVEREND MAURICE WRIGHT, II
THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

THE OFFERTORY RESPONSE

"All Things Come of Thee"
All things come of Thee, O Lord; and of Thine own have we given Thee. Amen.

THE ANNOUNCEMENTS

MRS. HATTIE NATHAN
*Christian Education Director,
Ninth Episcopal District*

THE DOXOLOGY

THE BENEDICTION

BISHOP BYRD

**NINTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

2025 Christian Education Congress

The Morning Glory Worship Service

Tuesday, July 1, 2025

8:09 a.m.

*The Reverend Dr. Carmen Walker Ellerbee,
Worship Leader*

PRAISE & WORSHIP

Brother Jamarien Moore

THE PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Reverend Monique Summers

THE PRAYER RESPONSE

THE SCRIPTURE READINGS

(All readings in NRSV.)

OLD TESTAMENT

Psalm 95:1-7

Reverend Alvelyn Swafford

THE EPISTLE

Romans 12:3-8

Reverend Charles Reeves

THE GOSPEL

John 16:29-33

Reverend Sandra Anderson

THE MINISTRY OF MUSIC

Brother Jamarien Moore

**THE PRESENTATION
OF THE BISHOP**

Reverend Dr. Agnes Lover

**THE INTRODUCTION
OF THE PREACHER**

Bishop Julius H. McAllister, Jr.
*Presiding Prelate,
Ninth Episcopal District*

THE MINISTRY OF MUSIC

Brother Jamarien Moore

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

Reverend Jessica Boanerges
*Pastor,
Jones Chapel African Methodist
Episcopal Church
Fairfield, Alabama*

**THE INVITATION TO
CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP**

Reverend Jonathan Benton

THE ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Presiding Elder Raymond Swafford
Christian Education Director At-Large**

THE CLOSING REMARKS

**Bishop Julis H. McAllister, Jr.
Presiding Prelate,
Ninth Episcopal District**

THE BENEDICTION

Reverend Boanerges

**NINTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH**
2025 Christian Education Congress

The Hour of Lower Worship Service

Tuesday, July 1, 2025

12:09 p.m.

Reverend Derrick Tiller, Worship Leader

The Praise and Worship

The Prayer

Reverend Mia Cole

The Prayer Response

The Scripture Readings
(All readings in NRSV.)

OLD TESTAMENT
Psalm 100

Reverend Keith Baker

THE EPISTLE
Philippians 2:5-11

Reverend Yvonne Howze

THE NEW TESTAMENT
Mark 8:34-36

Reverend Dexter Patterson

The Ministry of Music

The Congress Choir

The Presentation of the Bishop

Reverend Melissa Mixon-Smith

The Presentation of the Preacher

Bishop Julius H. McAllister, Jr.
*Presiding Prelate,
Ninth Episcopal District*

The Worship Through Music

The Congress Choir

The Proclamation of the Word

Reverend Stephen Green
*Senior Pastor, Greater Allen
African Methodist Episcopal Cathedral
Jamaica, New York*

**The Invitation to
Christian Discipleship**

Reverend Green

The Offering

Reverend Maurice Wright, II
The Stewardship Committee

The Announcements

Reverend Sheryl Shipman
Christian Education Director,
Northwest Alabama Annual Conference

The Benediction

Reverend Green

**NINTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

2025

The Evening Glory Worship Service

Tuesday, July 1, 2025

7:09 p.m.

Reverend Maurice Wright, II, Worship Leader

THE PRAISE AND WORSHIP

THE INVOCATION

Reverend John Dees, Jr.

THE PRAYER RESPONSE

THE SCRIPTURE READINGS

(All readings in NRSV.)

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Psalms 24:6-10

Reverend Paul Horn

THE EPISTLE

II Corinthians 4:5-12

Reverend Sheryl Shipman

THE NEW TESTAMENT

John 10:11-16

Reverend Celeste Adams

THE WORSHIP THROUGH MUSIC

The Congress Choir

THE BENEVOLENT OFFERING

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE BISHOP

Reverend Dr. Isaac N. Hudson, Jr.

THE PRESENTATION OF THE PREACHER

Bishop Julius H. McAllister, Jr.

*Presiding Prelate,
Ninth Episcopal District*

THE WORSHIP THROUGH MUSIC

The Congress Choir

THE SERMON

Pastor Smokie Norful

*Senior Pastor,
Victory Cathedral Worship Center
in Bolingbrook, Illinois
and Victory City Atlanta
in Sandy Springs, Georgia*

**THE INVITATION TO
CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP**

Pastor Norful

THE WORSHIP THROUGH GIVING

The Stewardship Committee

Bishop Julius H. McAllister, Jr.

THE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Reverend Charles Reeves
*Christian Education Director,
Southwest Alabama Annual Conference*

THE DOXOLOGY

THE BENEDICTION

Pastor Norful

**NINTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

2025 Christian Education Congress

The Morning Glory Worship Service

Wednesday, July 2, 2025

8:09 a.m.

*The Reverend Cleitis Walker,
Worship Leader*

PRAISE & WORSHIP

Brother Jamarien Moore

THE PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Reverend Darryl Ervin

THE SCRIPTURE READINGS

(All readings in NRSV.)

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 24:14-18

Reverend A. DeVonta Anderson

THE EPISTLE

Timothy 4:1-5

Reverend Donna James

THE GOSPEL

Matthew 3:7-14

Reverend Tony Latham

THE MINISTRY OF MUSIC

Brother Jamarien Moore

**THE PRESENTATION
OF THE BISHOP**

Reverend Rosalind Amos

**THE INTRODUCTION
OF THE PREACHER**

Bishop Julius H. McAllister, Jr.
*Presiding Prelate,
Ninth Episcopal District*

THE MINISTRY OF MUSIC

Brother Jamarien Moore

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

Reverend Gregory McLeod
*Pastor,
Gaines Chapel
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Phenix City, Alabama*

**THE INVITATION TO
CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP**

Reverend Roosevelt Williams, III

THE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. D. Michelle Sherrod
*Christian Education Director,
Southeast Alabama Annual Conference*

THE BENEDICTION

Reverend McLeod



Bishop Vernon R. Byrd, Jr.
The 145th Elected and Consecrated Bishop
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Presiding Prelate, Seventeenth Episcopal District

Bishop Vernon R. Byrd Jr. Esq. is the 145th elected and consecrated bishop of the AME Church. He is the son of the late Bishop Vernon R. Byrd, Sr., the 105th elected and consecrated bishop of the AME Church, and retired Episcopal Supervisor Theora Byrd. He is the Presiding Prelate of the 17th Episcopal District, which encompasses AME Churches in six countries including Zambia, Kenya, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo Brazzaville and Burundi.

In 1981 Bishop Byrd accepted his call to the ministry at Hemmingway Memorial AME in Maryland, under the leadership and tutelage of Rev. Dr. William Robert Porter. He was admitted on trial and the Washington Annual Conference under the leadership of Bishop John Hurst Adams.

The then Rev Byrd was assigned to his first pastoral charge, St Paul, South Bound Brook, NJ, by Bishop Philip Robert Cousin. After about six months Bishop Cousin assigned him to the pastoral charge of Grant Chapel AME Church, Trenton, NJ where he and his wife, now Supervisor Melinda Contreras-Byrd, had a major impact on the church and the surrounding community for approximately eighteen years. Bishop Gregory G. M. Ingrahm assigned Rev Byrd to the pastoral charge of St. Matthew AME Church in Philadelphia. He and his wife served the church and community for seven years before the AME Church elected him to the office of Bishop.

As an attorney, Bishop Byrd served as an Assistant General Counsel and Vice President for Johnson & Johnson. He also served as a Senior Counsel for The New York Times and a Senior Associate at the law firm of Cohen, Shapiro, Polisher, Sheikman and Cohen. He has been a member of the New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York Bar Associations.

At the General Conference in July of 2012, the AME Church elected Rev. Byrd to serve as a member of the Judicial Council where he served for nine years. He was Secretary for Council.

Bishop Byrd and Supervisor Contreras-Byrd are blessed with two daughters, Rev Kamaria Byrd McAllister and Alexa Byrd, son in love Rev. Bryan McAllister, and granddaughter Mireya.

Last but not least, Bishop Byrd is simply a child of God who strives to lift up the love and the lessons of Jesus and to inspire others to do the same.



Pastor Smokie Norful
Senior Pastor,
Victory Cathedral Worship Center
in Bolingbrook, Illinois
and Victory City Atlanta
in Sandy Springs, Georgia

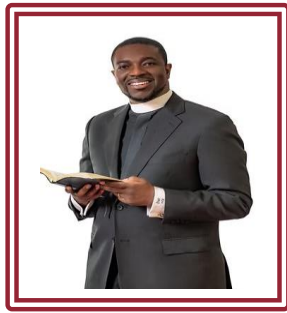
Pastor Smokie Norful is a world-renowned Pastor, award-winning recording artist, educator, author, and visionary who has a strong passion for winning souls and transforming the lives of others. He has reached the heights of success in both ministry and music, with over 27 years of preaching, 19 years of pastoring, and a celebrated music career spanning over two decades.

Pastor Norful has achieved five Number 1 Billboard albums and sold over 6 million albums sold worldwide. He has earned 2 Grammy Awards, 11 Stellar Awards, 5 Dove Awards, 1 Soul Train Music Award, 2 NAACP Image Award nominations, and 3 BET Award nominations.

Pastor Norful holds a bachelor's degree in history from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. He attended Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in pursuit of a Master of Divinity, and in May of 2018 received a master's degree in organizational leadership from Trinity International University. Pastor Norful is currently enrolled in the Talbot School of Theology at Biola University pursuing a Doctor of Ministry.

He is the Senior Pastor of Victory Cathedral Worship center in Bolingbrook, Illinois and Victory City Atlanta in Sandy Springs, GA. Pastor Norful and the Victory Cathedral church family have experienced extraordinary growth in the Chicago suburbs, connecting with over 2 million worshipers, leading 15,000 souls to Christ, and physically and spiritually assisting countless thousands of families.

Pastor Norful is married to his beautiful wife of 26 years, Carla Norful, and they have three amazingly gifted and accomplished adult children, Ashley (Graduate of Northern IL University, a corporate Fortune 500 Logistics Director; Tre' (Magna Cum Laude Graduate of Morehouse College, Finance & Spanish; and completing an MBA in May and pursuing a JD in southern California); Ashton (4.3 GPA High school Graduate and current college Junior studying Business Finance in southern California).



Reverend Stephen Green
Senior Pastor,
Greater Allen African Methodist
Episcopal Cathedral
Jamaica, New York

The Reverend Stephen A. Green is a global thought leader at the intersection of faith and social justice. He leads with radical love in action through his ministry as Senior Pastor of Greater Allen AME Cathedral of New York and as Chair of Faith for Black Lives, a faith-based social justice organization.

He is also the creator and host of the podcast, “Sacred Desk with Rev. Stephen A. Green,” which features conversations with thought leaders and change agents focused on the latest headlines.

His commitment to social justice and peacebuilding through love seems like it was predestined for one of the youngest leading civil rights activists in the country. Rev. Green’s parents met in college while protesting against apartheid. He comes from a family of liberationists, he says. His father is a bishop of a social justice leaning church, and his mother, an educator, and his brothers are also deeply involved in fighting for social justice. He is married to Mrs. Braea Tilford Green, former Miss Kentucky USA, who serves with him in ministry.

Rev. Green’s passion to help others and fight the good fight started early. He grew up helping at his father’s church. He began organizing against police brutality and gun violence while in high school in Little Rock, Arkansas. While studying at Morehouse College, the alma mater of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., he learned of the deaths of Troy Davis and Trayvon Martin and became a student organizer.

Before joining St. Luke, Rev. Green was the National Director of the Youth and College Division of the NAACP, the nation’s oldest, largest and most widely respected grassroots civil rights organization. In this role, he oversaw an army of more than 30,000 young activists across 800 active youth councils and college chapters throughout the nation.

Previously, Rev. Green served as Pastor of Heard AME Church, Roselle, N.J., Metropolitan AME Church, Harlem, NY, and St. Luke AME Church, Harlem, NY. He led these congregations in spiritual and fiscal growth through prophetic preaching, passionate worship, and community empowerment. Additionally, Rev. Green established the St. Luke AME Center for Peace and Justice to inspire social change through wellness, education, and activism.

Rev. Green holds a Bachelor of Arts in Religion from Morehouse College, a Master of Divinity from The University of Chicago, and a Master of Sacred Theology from Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York. He is currently a candidate for the Ph.D. in Philosophy of Religion and Theology at Claremont School of Theology.



Reverend Dr. Jonathan "Jay" Augustine
Pastor,
Big Bethel African Methodist
Episcopal Church
Atlanta, Georgia

Dr. Jonathan "Jay" Augustine is an accomplished author, sought-after speaker, and internationally recognized academic leader, and serves on the inaugural faculty of the Hampton University School of Religion.

Before leading Big Bethel, Augustine served at St. Joseph's AME Church in Durham, North Carolina. He also served at Historic St. James AME Church in downtown New Orleans, the oldest predominantly Black Protestant congregation in the Deep South, while teaching at Southern University Law Center. He has taught at North Carolina Central University Law School and Duke University Divinity School, where he also served on the Board of Visitors and was chaplain to the Duke Football Team. He also served eight years as the general chaplain of his beloved Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

An accomplished author, his most recent books are *When Prophets Preach: Leadership and the Politics of the Pulpit* (Fortress Press, 2023) and *Called to Reconciliation: How the Church Can Model Justice, Diversity and Inclusion* (Baker Academic, 2022). His scholarly articles appear in publications including the *University of Richmond Law Review*, *Howard Law Journal*, *Connecticut Public Interest Law Journal*, *Louisiana Law Review*, *Southern California Interdisciplinary Law Journal*, and *Theology Today*, among others.

Augustine serves as chairman of the board of the Agora Strategy Council of the Payne Center, a research-based "think tank" and affiliate of the Thurgood Marshall College Fund. He also serves as a member of the board of directors of PartnersGlobal, Inc., a non-profit organization headquartered in Washington, DC. He has been invited to lecture internationally in Heidelberg, Germany, and Accra, Ghana, and has been nationally featured on C-SPAN Book-TV. His leadership was also nationally profiled in March 2024 on the front page of *USA Today*.

A gifted and nationally celebrated communicator, Augustine was inducted into the Morehouse College Martin Luther King, Jr. Board of Preachers (2024) and elevated to serve as vice president of the Judicial Council (Supreme Court) of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. He was twice awarded the President's Lifetime Achievement Award for Volunteer Service (2024 & 2017), and previously named "Outstanding Alumni Brother of the Year," by Alpha Phi Alpha (2017). He also won the fraternity's Belford V. Lawson National Oratorical Scholarship (1994). As an emerging leader, Augustine received the Ten Outstanding Young Americans Award, from the U.S. Jaycees (2004) and was named to *Ebony Magazine's* "30 Leaders of the Future" (2001). He is an active member of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity (Alpha Tau Boulé).

After graduating from Howard University, with a degree in economics, Augustine served as a decorated infantry officer in the United States Army. He subsequently earned his law degree at Tulane University and served as a law clerk to Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice (then-Associate) Bernette Joshua Johnson, before practicing law and serving in both publicly elected and gubernatorially appointed offices. He earned his Master of Divinity degree at United Theological Seminary and completed a fellowship at Princeton Theological Seminary. He later earned his Doctor of Ministry degree at Duke University and is currently a candidate for the Doctor of Education degree at The University of Alabama.

Dr. Augustine is married to his partner and friend, Michelle Burks Augustine. They are the proud parents of two college students, Mason and Jillian.



Reverend Jessica Boanerges
Pastor,
Jones Chapel African Methodist
Episcopal Church
Fairfield, Alabama

Reverend Jessica Renee Boanerges is a graduate of the University of North Alabama with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Communications/ Broadcast Journalism. During College, Jessica interned with Radio Star 94, writing, producing and voicing commercial spots for businesses in the area. She was the voice for a local Radio Station-Mix 103.5 which aired in Northwest Alabama on weekends for the Clear Channel Corporation and a News Reporter for WZZA in Muscle Shoals, Alabama.

During College, in October of 2003, Jessica confessed her calling and preached her initial sermon February 1, 2004, under her spiritual father, the Rev. T.W. Parker Sr.

On August 19, 2006, Jessica moved to Atlanta, GA., to begin Seminary/Graduate work at the Interdenominational Theological Center. October 6, 2007, Jessica was ordained an Itinerant Deacon in the North Alabama Annual Conference under Bishop T. Larry Kirkland. During seminary, Jessica maintained the Honors and Deans List, served as President of the Junior Class, Recording Secretary for the Turner Student Fellowship and the Student Christian League during her second year. She was the recipient of the following Scholastic awards: John A. Middleton Scholarship, Samuel Hopkins Giles Award and the E.D. Curry Award. During her senior year, Jessica became the newly elected 2008-2009 President of the Turner Student Fellowship of the Turner Theological Seminary (AME Denomination) and a member of the Turner Theological Seminary Board of Trustees.

On May 2, 2009, Jessica graduated from Turner Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity degree and ordained an Itinerant Elder the fall of 2009. God has blessed her to minister throughout the state of Georgia, Southern California and Alabama.

In November of 2009, Bishop James L. Davis appointed Jessica to serve as Pastor for Saint Paul and Dulaney A.M.E. Churches in Camden, AL. At the 2011 Planning Session, Jessica was promoted to the Ward Chapel A.M.E. Church family in Selma, AL. All God needed was one year to further groom Jessica for yet another Ward Chapel A.M.E. Church located in Montevallo, AL. She began serving in Montevallo on November 10, 2012. During her time in Montevallo, the ministry expanded, and God was glorified! Under her leadership, debts were cleared, Souls were Saved and bodies were healed. The church and parsonage went through several major renovations inclusive of new roofs on both buildings and completely paid off. On October 12, 2014, Pastor Boanerges was awarded the 2014 Female Pastor of the Year for Shelby County.

On June 25, 2017, Bishop Harry L. Seawright promoted Pastor Boanerges to Metropolitan A.M.E. Church in Mobile, AL. During her time at Metropolitan, a few renovations and additions were made, such as a new roof on the parsonage, new doors, church sign, music room dedication and a \$14,000 dollar sound system that was paid in full. The church also become completely debt free. Pastor Boanerges has served in the Southwest Conference as the Board of Examiner Secretary, the Women in Ministry Coordinator and the 9th Episcopal District Christian Recorder Liaison. Pastor Boanerges was recently featured in the Mobile Bay Magazine for her leadership and ministry impacting the church and the city of Mobile.

On April 2, 2022, Bishop Harry L. Seawright promoted Pastor Boanerges to Jones Chapel A.M.E. Church in Fairfield, AL. Pastor Boanerges is happily married to Bro. Jacob, and they have one son Israel.

Affectionately known as Pastor Jessica, she has a love and compassion for all of God's people! Pastor Jessica's focus is Souls Saved and Lives Changed through the Word and Spirit of God for they truly Work Together!



Reverend Gregory McLeod
Pastor,
Gaines Chapel African Methodist
Episcopal Church
Phenix City, Alabama

Alabama native, husband, son, father, friend, soldier, activist, leader, diplomat, ecclesiastical brother, teacher, shepherd, servant and prisoner of the Lord, are a few titles that can be bestowed upon him.

The Reverend Gregory Keith McLeod I., the fourth born to the late Reverend Willie Joe McLeod and Janet Gail McLeod Harris was born in Marion, Kentucky on October 9, 1981, and reared in Ozark, Alabama. Reverend McLeod has demonstrated a life-long love of the Gospel.

The Spirit of the Lord was upon Rev. Gregory McLeod at the tender age of twelve, when he heard the clarion call and felt the anointing of the Holy Spirit to preach good tidings of great joy unto all people. In obedience to the divine summoning, he responded to that the call with "Here am I, Lord send me!" Realizing that it was imperative to preach the word in season and out of season.

He preached his first initial sermon on March 26, 1994, at Shiloh AME Church, Mt. Andrews, Alabama where his father, the late Reverend Willie Joe McLeod, served as Senior Pastor. He was licensed to preach by Reverend David Earl Reddick, Presiding Elder of the Troy District, Ninth Episcopal District of the AME Church. By age 19, he was ordained an Itinerant Elder in the AME Church by the late Bishop Zedekiah Lazett Grady and begin his pastoral journey at Mt. Olive AME Church, Pine Apple, Alabama. Subsequently, he has faithfully lead congregations across Alabama, Missouri, California and Nevada.

In November 2024 during the Planning Meeting at St John's AME Church in Montgomery, Alabama, Bishop Julius Harrison McAllister Jr. appointed Pastor McLeod to shepherd the flock at Gaines Chapel AME Church in Phenix City, Alabama. Embracing the theme "Building Back Better," it has been declared, "Gaines will thrive in '25!" At Gaines, numerous souls have been added to the body of Christ.

In order to rightly divide the Word of Truth and desiring to walk worthy of the calling to which he was called, Pastor McLeod began to study to show himself approved and matriculated in the Ozark City School System and graduated from Carroll High School, in Ozark, Alabama. He matriculated at George C. Wallace State Community College in Dothan, Alabama; Miles College, Birmingham, Alabama; and Troy University, Troy, Alabama where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology with a minor in Sociology. He received his theological education at Bethel Seminary of Bethel University, in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Pastor McLeod has also been the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions. A loving husband and father, Pastor McLeod is married to Lady Savalla Nicole Tanner McLeod, a Board-Certified Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner. He is the proud father of four sons: Jeremiah Josiah, Gregory Keith II, Gabriel Kayden and Joshua Gavin.

For the past 31 years, Pastor McLeod has abided in the same calling in which he was called, preaching the word with passion, power and persuasion. His guiding principles have been to Exalt the Savior, Equip the Saint and Evangelize the Sinner.

Yes, it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things."

