



# The Metropolitan Spirit

## Church Newsletter

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Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church

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Washington, District of Columbia

### CONGRATULATIONS METROPOLITAN 2011 GRADUATES

Proudly celebrating the church's 2011 graduates and recognizing their stellar accomplishments. Wishing them the very best as they move forward in pursuit of their dreams.

#### 2011 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

Lauren Horton graduated June 11<sup>th</sup> from St. Stephens and St. Agnes School. In school, Lauren was very active, serving as the captain of the basketball, soccer, track, and field teams. Her activities, however, did not end with sports; she was a member of the Honor Council

and the Spanish Honor Society. The daughter of Michael and Alfreda Horton, Lauren will attend James Madison University this fall, where she will study psychology. Her future plan is to work with children and families, either in private practice or as a school psychologist.

**Shayla Lampkin** graduated June 2<sup>nd</sup> from Suitland

High School. The daughter of Shanika Lampkin, Shayla will attend a college in Denver and study journalism.

**Bridgette Slater** graduated June 10<sup>th</sup> from Sidwell Friends School, where she was an Advanced Placement scholar with honors, a three time Gold Medalist of the National Latin Exam, and received a blue ribbon for her participation in the National Greek Exam. She is a recipient of the National Achievement Scholarship, which is awarded each year by the National Merit Scholarship Program to a select group of outstanding black high school graduates. Bridgette spent her senior year in the country of Italy. She will attend Harvard University this fall, and study biomedical engineering. The daughter of Rodney and Cassandra Wilkins Slater, Bridgette plans to pursue medical research and possibly medical school after she finishes Harvard.

**Tony Tue** graduated June 2<sup>nd</sup> from Prince George's County Public Schools Community Based Classroom. The son of Paul and Renee Tue, Tony plans to attend Wilberforce University this fall, where he will study psychology. Tony's future plan is to pursue a career as a therapist.

**Montez Speaks McKnight** graduated from Cardozo High School. Montez plans to

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## GRADUATES, from P. 1

attend Prince George's Community College this fall, where he will study fashion merchandising. The son of the Rev. Jacqueline Speaks McKnight, Montez plans to be a designer.

### 2011 COLLEGE GRADUATES

**Derek Murphy Braxton** graduated May 7<sup>th</sup> from the University of the District of Columbia with a Bachelor of Arts degree in communication media arts. At the University, Derek was a staff writer for the *Free Voice*, the school's newspaper. The son of Metropolitan's pastor, Rev. Ronald E. Braxton, and Metropolitan's assistant pastor, Rev. Marie P. Braxton, Derek plans to pursue a career in broadcast journalism.

**Marcus Dean** graduated May 12<sup>th</sup> from Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology. At Temple, Marcus was a member of Psi Chi, the international honor society in psychology, National Society of Collegiate Scholars, and American Medical Student Association, among other organizations. The son of Kevin and Vanessa Dean, Marcus plans to attend medical school and become a physician.

**MacKenzie Green** graduated in December 2010, from the University of Miami. She is the daughter of Ernest and Phyllis Green.

**Jendayi Hogan** graduated May 14<sup>th</sup> from Howard University with a Bachelor of Science degree in health science. At Howard, Jendayi was a Howard University cheerleader, member of the Health Profession Society, mentor for Big Brothers Big Sisters, and member of the Howard University DMV Club. The daughter of the Drs. John and Michal Young Hogan, Jendayi plans to volunteer at the National Rehabilitation Hospital, and subsequently earn a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree.

**Diana Hunter** graduated May 13<sup>th</sup> from Virginia Tech University with a bachelor's degree in history. Diana is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Hunter and the granddaughter of Deaconess Wilhelmina G. Hunter.

**Imani Maya Stutely** graduated in December 2010, a full semester early, from

Duquesne University with a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration. At Duquesne, Imani was a member of the Student Government Association, Black Student Union, American Marketing Association, and Duquesne University's President's Advisory Council on Diversity. The daughter of David and Deborah Frazier Stutely, Imani will begin her studies in the fall at Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz College in Public Policy and Management. She plans to pursue a career that is centered on social justice initiatives and economic upward mobility for historically disenfranchised communities. Imani's future plan is to start her own consulting firm.

### 2011 GRADUATE SCHOOL GRADUATES

**Jason Jeter** graduated May 14<sup>th</sup> from the University of Maryland University College. He earned a Master of Business Administration degree in Marketing. Jason is the son of Ambassador (Ret.) Howard and Donice Jeter.

**Lauren Turner** graduated May 8<sup>th</sup> from the University of Baltimore Law School. At the University, Lauren was a member of the black law association, trial team, women's bar association, and criminal justice association. The daughter of Dr. and Mrs. James Turner, Lauren is pursuing a career as a prosecutor.

**Melanie E. Younger** graduated in May from the Loyola University School of Law with a Juris Doctor degree. She is the daughter of David and Stephanie Garland Younger. Melanie is sitting for the Bar in July.

**Imogene Zachery** graduated with a Doctor of Arts degree in Community College Education from George Mason University. Imogene retired on June 30<sup>th</sup> after 24 years of service to Prince George's Community College, where she was a professor and librarian. Dr. Zachery will work with her homeowner's association and continue service at Metropolitan, where she has been a loyal member for many years.

*Dakarai Aarons*

## FAITH IN THE PROMISES AND THE VISION – A GOOD REPORT

*“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen; for by it the elders received a good report. (Hebrews 11: 1-2)*

This passage of scripture is perhaps one of the most well known statements anywhere to proclaim that vision and faith are powerful, vital, and essential to life itself. Metropolitan A.M.E. Church can surely use this as a testimony, for it is vividly apparent that accomplishments that have been made in the renovation of the physical edifice is testament to the power of a congregation’s vision and walk of faith.

Though ‘to step out’ on faith is nothing new to Metropolitan, we have now been asked and encouraged to embark on a renewed commitment of Christian service. We have been called upon to envision that a restored edifice must be used for the spiritual development of the membership so that Metropolitan can be of genuinely dedicated service to a community that is in dangerous straits, and in dire need. As sung by soul singer Donny Hathaway, “Love is in need today; don’t delay, send it right away.”

In thinking of a Biblical witness and demonstrated example of a true walk of faith, the life of Abraham comes to mind. Abraham was instructed to offer up as a burnt offering his long awaited and dearly beloved son, Isaac. Traditionally, the focus of this parable has been on the courage and faith of Abraham.

At this time of his life, Abraham was very much an elderly person, physically moving more cautiously. The hike up the hill to the high place alone, as he was instructed to make, was enough reason to give pause in and of itself.

This trek and the associated turmoil of what Abraham had been asked to do, was more than enough to compound the grief and shock that he must have been feeling at the offering he had been commanded to make. Nonetheless, Abraham “rose up early in the morning”, and set about preparing for the journey to the place where God commanded that the sacrifice be made.

Abraham followed God’s command; he raised and positioned the knife over Isaac’s chest, ready to strike his son and fulfill the action he had been told to take. Isaac is heard just one time, when he asks, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the offering?” Abraham replied that, “God would provide himself a lamb for the burnt offering.” The passage said the father and son “went off together” where Isaac subsequently watched his father build the altar, put the wood on it, and then Isaac was placed upon it, and tied down. Isaac then saw his own father raise a blade to him.

Now, that was faith and trust! Isaac was young and strong. He could have protested, fought, and even bolted against Abraham at anytime along the way. He could have resisted, demanded that the accompanying servants give him and his father the animals that were being ridden, to allow him to escape this fate.

Isaac could have fought being tied down, and surely he could have screamed ‘bloody murder’ upon seeing a knife being raised against him by one of two people he most loved and trusted, his mother and father.

Instead, Isaac complied; he trusted his father implicitly, and followed him to the very brink of death. One wonders what would have happened if either Abraham or Isaac had not had faith and a vision routed in a loving, caring, providing God, and rather had bucked or rebelled. They did not; both surrendered to the path that God had set before them. This indeed took vision, courage, cooperation, obedience, and trust.

Now, you may be wondering what this particular parable has to do with the work ahead for Metropolitan Church as we enter a renewed phase of our walk with God. For, we are not being asked to sacrifice our children; nor are we being confronted with the very literal and ultimate

## FAITH from P. 3

test of faith and surrender that faced Abraham and Isaac.

We are, however, being asked to seek God's vision for the work set before Metropolitan in new ways. And while this vision may not demand the literal death of our children, it may very well demand the 'death' of old focus, visions and notions of what should be done and why. It may demand the sacrifice of ideas as dear to us as Isaac was to Abraham. It may demand that we embark upon a path whose way we do not know and that we cannot at the time clearly see nor discern.

Like Abraham and Isaac, we may be incredulous as to what God is asking of us; we may be in fear that we cannot do it; we may be in doubt as to whether "God himself will provide a burnt offering." As the church identifies future initiatives and organizes task forces, committees and working groups, each should have trust and faith to carry on, even when the way may not be clear and the walk seems arduous and accompanied with challenges. We may find ourselves to be in a position that prompted the words that King George VI said to the people of Great Britain before the country's entry into World War II:

"I said to the man at the gate of the year,  
"Give me a light that I may go forth into the  
unknown." The man replied,  
Put your hand in the Hand of God.

This is unto you--  
Better than a lit path;  
Safer than a known way."

We are encouraged and assured that God has, is, and will indeed make and show the way. He will provide all that we need to create new and invigorated ways to ensure appropriate ministries to meet the demands of church and community. Like Abraham and Isaac, we will then receive a good report.

*Dr. Anne S. Bouie*

**METROPOLITAN A.M.E. CHURCH  
173<sup>RD</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

## INTRODUCING REVEREND JONATHAN V. NEWTON

The Reverend Jonathan V. Newton was recently appointed Assistant Pastor at Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church. He joined the church's ministerial staff at the conclusion of the 61<sup>st</sup> Session of the Washington Annual Conference in April 2011.

Jonathan V. Newton was raised in the South Bronx, New York, and attended New York City Public Schools until he entered ninth grade. At that time, Jonathan earned a scholarship to the Fieldston Ethical Culture School.

After high school graduation his post-secondary education began at Georgetown University, where Jonathan also pledged and became a member of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity. Jonathan's attention shifted from actively pursuing a quality education to becoming more interested in social activities, e.g. fraternity parties, step shows, and Big East basketball games. His social agenda resulted in his optional academic sabbatical.

Two years later, after having enlisted in the Army Reserve and working full-time, Jonathan enrolled at the University of Maryland College Park. He concentrated on studies and graduated *cum laude*. Jonathan subsequently earned a Juris Doctor degree from Harvard Law School, and a Master of Divinity degree from The Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University.

Since completing law school, Newton's career has focused on public interest work. He was accepted into the U.S. Attorney General's Honors Program at the Drug Enforcement Administration as a law clerk. After the clerkship, Jonathan returned to New York City to serve as an Assistant District Attorney in Bronx County.

Newton, for the past fifteen years, has been employed at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. He has served as counsel to the Environmental Appeals Board and Special Assistant to the Deputy Chief of Staff. Jonathan was a Congressional Fellow in the office of the

Honorable John Conyers, Jr. (D-Michigan).

Although Jonathan Newton generally has been successful and accomplished, he states that which is most important to him is his soul's salvation. Newton rededicated his life to Christ in 1997, at Ebenezer A.M.E. Church, where he faithfully served as a member of the Usher Board, Lay Organization, Ebenezer Bible Institute, Men's Season Planning Committee, Men's Praise Team, King's Men Choir, Rejoice (Young Adult) Choir, and Adult Choir.

Rev. Newton was appointed Ebenezer's Minister to Young Adults, serving under the anointed leadership of Rev. Dr. Grainger Browning, Jr., and Rev. Dr. Jo Ann Browning. He was ordained Itinerant Deacon in the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 2007, and Itinerant Elder in 2009.

Newton is the proud father of Theodore C. Newton, a student at Frostburg State University.

A favorite scripture of Rev. Newton is 1 Peter 4:8-10, *"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."*

## AN INTERVIEW WITH THE REVEREND JONATHAN V. NEWTON

This interview was conducted to introduce Rev. Newton to the Metropolitan A.M.E. Church family and community.

**Question 1:** Is there anything you would like to share about your life that affected your choice to enter the ministry? Were there difficulties or challenges encountered on your path to becoming a minister that may serve as inspirations in your assignments at Metropolitan?

**Rev. Newton:** *My journey from the*

*South Bronx to Harvard Law School led me across many socio-economic lines within the Black community. My observations along the way have revealed how economic conditions affect fundamental assumptions about life. While Black Theology has thoroughly contemplated racial disparities outside the Black community, God also equipped me to understand economic disparity within. While this understanding did not directly affect my acceptance of the call, it is a part of the foundation God established long before I realized where He was leading me.*

**Question 2:** Some youth and/or young adults feel that church workers pay greater attention to the programs for youth rather than focus on the actual ministry to youth. Do you think there is a difference? If so, what are your expectations for bridging the differences at Metropolitan?

**Rev. Newton:** *This is difficult to answer in the abstract. The phrase "bridging the difference" assumes that programs for youth and ministry to youth are mutually exclusive; that assumption is not necessarily true and should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.*

*However, I should distinguish youth ministry from young adult ministry. My focus will be on young adults, which is roughly defined as ages 18-39 in The A.M.E. Discipline. This is a stage that often entails life-changing transitions through college, career, marriage, family, child rearing, and/or home-ownership, among various other things. Consequently, young adults have specific ministry needs that are not usually encountered in youth ministry.*

**Question 3:** How do you plan to blend the challenges of being a lawyer and being a minister at Metropolitan? That is, how will you meet the demands of the two professions, as you attempt to do both well, so that neither profession is short sighted?

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**Rev. Newton:** *The balance between being a lawyer and minister is admittedly an ongoing challenge. However, that challenge is an essential element of the ministry to which God has called me. These days, most people have competing demands on their time; the church must remain sensitive to that reality and its multi-faceted implications in order to effectively meet the needs of a changing community. Dual professions means the issue is not just academic for me and increases my sensitivity to the demands placed upon church members.*

**Question 4:** What are your expectations of the congregation and its involvement in your ministry at Metropolitan?

**Rev. Newton:** *While I am grateful for the ministry God has given me, Metropolitan is a dynamic and talented community of which I will be just a part. I am honored to be a part of something that is much bigger than me. The Bible is clear that we all have gifts that contribute to God's plan and my prayer is that each member of the congregation will share (and/or continue sharing) their gifts in concert with each other to glorify God. "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." (1 Peter 4:10, NIV)*

**Question 5:** How do you expect Metropolitan's congregation to benefit from your reactivation of "The Bethel Literary and Historical Society"? How will youth and young adults benefit since the original audience of this organization seemed to have been adult participants? (**Note:** Rev. Newton indicated that he intends to reactivate the Bethel Literary and Historical Society. The original organization held meetings at Metropolitan A.M.E. Church from 1881-1913.)

**Rev. Newton:** *The Bethel Literary and Historical Society provided a venue where the community could openly discuss issues, share insights, and provide exposure to the vast talent pool within their ranks.*

*Today, that type of discussion is often compartmentalized and relegated to smaller forums where new and/or conflicting ideas can be stifled. I think community development is enhanced when its members express opinions, are exposed to new ideas, and learn to address differences without predetermined outcomes.*

*As this relates to the youth, young people can learn character through observation. Consequently, if the Bethel Literary and Historical Society can bring complex issues into the light and address those issues without excessive emotionalism, prayerfully we will inspire a generation of youth that communicates better.*

We welcome Rev. Jonathan V. Newton to Metropolitan A.M.E. Church and look forward to his faithful service.

*Delores Zimmerman-Jeter*

### THE BETHEL LITERARY AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

"The Bethel Literary and Historical Society" was an African American learned society that met from 1881-1913 at the Metropolitan A.M.E. Church, 1518 M Street NW in Washington, DC. The Bethel Literary Society was a large, formal group that regularly attracted hundreds, who would listen to a presentation by an invited speaker, then participate in an open public discussion." (Excerpted from "The Bethel Literary and Historical Society," by Kim Roberts, The Washington Post website, Literary Organizations.)

The Bethel Literary and Historical Society, organized by Bishop Daniel Alexander Payne of Union Bethel A.M.E. Church (one of two congregations that merged to form Metropolitan A.M.E. Church), was inspired by a similarly organized group that met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

*Delores Zimmerman-Jeter*

## ON THIS SPOT

### CONSTRUCTION OF METROPOLITAN AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

A newly completed Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church was dedicated on May 30, 1886. The church, "large enough with such architectural beauty and arrangements to be a fit monument to the congregation and entire A.M.E. connection," was the lofty fulfillment of a modest ambition that had begun 99 years earlier.

Richard Allen and other African American members withdrew from Philadelphia's St. George's Methodist Episcopal (M.E.) Church in 1787, after St. George's began to segregate the African Americans and relegated them to sit only in the balcony when attending worship. The first church for these pioneers after their exodus from St. George's was a shed that formerly housed a blacksmith shop. In 1816, Allen found that African Americans in other cities were having similar problems with discrimination within their churches, he asked these congregations to attend a meeting to discuss the situation.

Sixteen representatives of African American Methodist congregations from the cities of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Baltimore, Maryland; Wilmington, Delaware; Attleboro, Pennsylvania; and Salem, New Jersey held a conference in Philadelphia. When the conference ended on April 11, 1816, the A.M.E. denomination had organized and Richard Allen had been consecrated the first A.M.E. bishop. Annual conferences also were established in Philadelphia and Baltimore.

In the early years of the denomination, A.M.E. churches were mainly in cities in the eastern United States. Israel Bethel was the first A.M.E. church in the District of Columbia. The church was founded in 1820, by African Americans who had withdrawn from the segregated arrangements at the Ebenezer M.E. Church. In 1822, the Israel Bethel congregation was admitted to the Baltimore Annual Conference of the A.M.E. Church. Bishop Allen

appointed Rev. David Smith as Israel Bethel's first pastor.

Prior to the Civil War, Israel Bethel A.M.E. Church, located near the U.S. Capitol, was one of the largest churches in Washington, DC. Rev. Daniel Alexander Payne, one of many illustrious pastors who served at Israel Bethel A.M.E., came to the church in 1843. As pastor during 1844, he presided at a White House funeral for "Henry." "Henry," an enslaved African American and property of President John Tyler, was killed in an accident on a U.S. Navy vessel on the Potomac River. He is among few African Americans known to have had a requiem at the White House.

In 1862, Rev. Payne once again visited the White House. As presiding prelate of the Second Episcopal District of the A.M.E. Church, Bishop Payne went to the Executive Mansion to urge President Abraham Lincoln to sign legislation to free the enslaved African Americans in the District of Columbia.

Some Israel Bethel A.M.E. Church members who lived in the western section of Washington, DC, which included Georgetown, organized Union Bethel A.M.E. Church in 1838. Admitted to the Baltimore Annual Conference in 1840, Union Bethel purchased property on "M" Street in 1841, and soon thereafter erected a frame church. In 1851, that building was razed and a new and larger brick church was built.

Prior to the Civil War, Union Bethel served as a stop on the Underground Railroad. During the War, the church started the Union Relief Association to assist those former slaves who came into the city.

At the 1870 session of the Baltimore Annual Conference, Israel Bethel, whose property was to be purchased by the federal government to expand the US Capitol grounds, requested that when a new church was erected the name be changed to the Metropolitan A.M.E.

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Church. During the 1872 A.M.E. General Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, one of the first resolutions to be passed was a commitment to the building of the Metropolitan A.M.E. Church in Washington, DC.

Before any action toward building the new church could be taken, the issue of who would hold title to the Metropolitan A.M.E. Church had to be settled. Israel Bethel's property was owned by the congregation. This ownership was a holdover from the years (1820-1822) prior to Israel Bethel's affiliation with the A.M.E. Church.

If the new Metropolitan would be a connectional church, the title would be held in the name of the denomination and not by the Israel Bethel congregation. After some heated debate, long discussions, and many negotiations, no solution was found to bridge the diametrically opposed positions.

Therefore in 1873, with the dispute unresolved, Israel Bethel left the A.M.E. connection. After three years as an independent church, Israel Bethel became the Israel Metropolitan Colored (now Christian) Methodist Episcopal (C.M.E.) Church, a connectional church of the C.M.E. denomination.

This loss to the denomination of Washington, D.C.'s oldest, largest, and most prestigious church was a serious blow to the plan to build Metropolitan A.M.E. Church. However, the Union Bethel A.M.E. congregation valiantly "picked up the mantle" and began planning to build the Metropolitan A.M.E. Church.

The 1876 and 1880 General Conferences, affirmed the commitment of Union Bethel A.M.E. Church to construct the Metropolitan A.M.E. Church. The 1880 General Conference also ordered "the appropriation of Twenty Thousand Dollars to assist in the erection of the said Metropolitan Church at Washington, D.C."

Additionally, Bishop Daniel Alexander Payne, as presiding prelate of the Second Episcopal District, brought Rev. John W. Stevenson from the First Episcopal District to Washington especially to oversee the demolition

of the old Union Bethel building and to manage the construction of the Metropolitan A.M.E. Church. In August 1880, Rev. Stevenson said the new Metropolitan A.M.E. Church would be "the finest church owned by colored people in the United States."

At Union Bethel A.M.E. Church, Rev. Stevenson found a congregation with some experience in constructing church facilities. In 1874, with much fanfare, the congregation had opened a new building called "Bethel Hall" located on the north side of "M" Street, one block west of the Union Bethel location. Bethel Hall had a lecture hall, meeting rooms, and kitchen facilities. There were, at Union Bethel in 1880, several trustees and building committee members from the "Bethel Hall" project.

At the 1881 session of the Baltimore Annual Conference, Rev. Stevenson reported church membership to be 1020, the Union Bethel A.M.E. Church had no mortgage, and for the new church, there was money in the "Building Fund" bank account.

Union Bethel's pastor and trustees asked Mr. Samuel G.P. Morsell, a professional architect, to prepare the new church plans and specifications. The plans called for the building to be Victorian Gothic in design, constructed of red brick, and trimmed with granite.

There would be a sub basement for domestic purposes (furnace and other mechanical equipment), a first floor at street level (lecture hall and library), and a sanctuary (with balcony) on the second floor with seating for 2500 persons. The plans were accepted and Mr. G.T. Dearing, a competent and skillful builder of the firm Dearing and Johnson, was selected to construct the church.

The last service at the old Union Bethel A.M.E. Church was held on July 17, 1881. Between July 18, and 23, 1881, all church artifacts were moved to Bethel Hall on "M" Street between 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Streets. Bethel Hall was also headquarters for the Bethel Literary and Historical Society. Worship services were held at Bethel Hall while the new church was being

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constructed. During the next few weeks the old edifice was demolished.

On Monday, October 3, 1881, accompanied by great ceremony, the cornerstone for the new church was laid. Prior to the laying of the cornerstone, dinner and refreshments were served at "moderate prices" at Bethel Hall. The proceeds from these sales were added to the church's building fund. This was one of many fund raising projects sponsored by the Union Bethel congregation.

There were concerts, fairs, rallies, etc. to generate revenue for the building fund. The Union Bethel members also donated their time and labor for the new church building. In the evening, after having worked a full day at their regular jobs, members arrived at the building site to salvage and recycle materials (e.g., bricks) from the demolished Union Bethel. The recycled items were to be used in the new Metropolitan A.M.E. Church.

The ensuing five years were difficult times in Metropolitan A.M.E. Church history. In 1882, Bishop Payne moved Rev. Stevenson from Washington, DC and assigned him to Cambridge, MD.

Rev. Stevenson's transfer was just one of several crises in the church. Between 1880 and 1882, about 30 percent of the congregation left Union Bethel.

After Rev. Stevenson left the A.M.E. connection, he organized the Central Methodist Episcopal Church and some Union Bethel members followed him. Another group withdrew to form the Plymouth Congregational Church, and still other members joined the Israel Metropolitan C.M.E. Church.

The turmoil, defections, and lack of funds slowed the church's construction. When work started in 1881 expectations were that the construction would take two years and cost \$35,000, not including the land. As the presiding prelate of the Second Episcopal District and later as Senior A.M.E. bishop, Bishop Payne wrote of the project's financial problems in letters that appeared in "The Christian Recorder," the A.M.E. Church newspaper.

Throughout 1884, the newspaper printed pleas from the bishop, addressed to every A.M.E. congregation in the United States, asking donations for the Metropolitan A.M.E. building fund. Rev. James Handy, who succeeded Rev. Stevenson as pastor, sent similar letters to the "Christian Recorder." Both the bishop and the pastor appealed to "race pride," saying, a failure to complete the new church would reflect badly not only on the A.M.E. denomination but also on every Negro in the country.

In May 1884, with only the brick, stone work, and slate roof completed, Mr. Dearing, the contractor, halted construction. The entire contract construction price was due. Mr. Dearing demanded payment for overdue bills, reimbursement for extra work, and a guarantee for future payment.

Union Bethel funds had been exhausted. The total construction cost was then projected to be \$50,000 - \$70,000 (in 2011, estimated to be an amount equivalent to five - seven million dollars).

More importantly, \$17,000 was needed immediately for construction to resume. Union Bethel members were very despondent and anxious about the fate of their endeavor. Dissenters of the building project asked, "When will the 'For Sale' sign appear on the property?"

Desperate Union Bethel trustees requested financial assistance from the 1884 General Conference meeting in Baltimore. The trustees cited the commitments of the 1872, 1876, and 1880 General Conferences to provide money for the construction of Metropolitan. Their petition was received and a committee appointed to assess the situation.

Finally in April 1885, the A.M.E. Financial Board actually committed monetary support. To complete a payment plan that would be acceptable to the builder, twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) was needed to resume construction. When the connectional church did not provide the funds, Bishop John Mifflin Brown obtained the money from a friend as a personal loan.

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During 1885, additional funds were collected in various amounts (from five cents to one dollar per person) from each member in every A.M.E. church. In 1886, those funds would be forwarded to the Union Bethel trustees. In another arrangement, each A.M.E. Annual Conference was asked to contribute \$100.00 or more toward construction of the church.

The church construction resumed in June 1885. By November, the basement was completed and opened for worship. Bishop Wayman, a former pastor of Union Bethel, preached the dedicatory sermon. Six months later, the following description was given of the completed church, *"The largest church in the connection; worthy of the great church that we represent – the largest body of Negroes in the world."*

Distinctive stained glass windows honored each Annual Conference that had contributed funds for church construction. In addition, windows were dedicated to the episcopacy and the departments of the connectional church. Gas lighting was installed throughout the edifice, carpeting covered areas in the sanctuary and pulpit, and the pews were cushioned.

On May 30, 1886, A.M.E. senior bishop, 75 year old, the Right Rev. Daniel Alexander Payne, preached the consecration sermon at Metropolitan's dedication. Bishop Payne had a long association with Washington, DC and the Metropolitan A.M.E. Church. At Israel Bethel, Payne had met and married his wife.

On the day of dedication, Bishop Payne was suffering the lingering effects of a malarial fever he had contracted in January. During late winter and early spring of 1886, the bishop had been too enfeebled to attend his annual conferences.

Bishop Payne recalled in his autobiography that he was so weak he could hardly climb into the carriage that had been sent to convey him to Metropolitan. The short carriage ride further exhausted him and he had to be basically carried up the stairs to the new sanctuary. In the sanctuary, instead of being

seated in a pulpit chair, an easy chair had been provided for the Bishop's frail frame.

Bishop Payne planned to stand, only for a minute to say a few words during the service. He felt so exhausted that he feared whatever he said might be too faint for the audience to hear. He took Psalm 92:12-14 as his text and then preached for forty minutes in a clear voice that was heard by everyone in the auditorium. Bishop Payne credited the "Spirit of the Lord" that came to him as he stood behind the sacred desk and transformed an invalid into a powerhouse.

Others who participated in the week long dedication celebration: A.M.E. Bishops Alexander W. Wayman, John Mifflin Brown, Henry McNeal Turner, Thomas M.D. Ward, and James A. Shorter. Local luminaries Francis Cardozo and Frederick Douglass assisted at the dedication. Bishop Payne said that the church was *"the noblest of our chapels for dimensions and beauty."*

And now, 125 years after its dedication, Metropolitan A.M.E. Church continues to stand valiantly as a tribute to seven generations of pastors, officers, members, and friends. In the 1880s, with "a mind to work" the members overcame internal disputes and financial hard times to construct the edifice and to implement empowering ministries.

In these latter days, the congregation has emulated our ancestors' commitment. Since 1986, we repaired the damage to the church caused by the construction of a neighboring office building, completed an elevator project (1994), renovated and constructed the lower level (1997), and in 2011 completed Phase One of a multi-million dollar restoration project.

With an unbroken bond of commitment to the past and in preparation for a glorious future, Metropolitan A.M.E. Church is confident that in another 125 years a vital and vigorous Metropolitan Church will still remain "on this spot."

*Terry H. Johnson / Thelma Dean Jacobs*  
(Update of a May 1985 Metropolitan Spirit article)

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**In memoriam:** The Metropolitan Spirit remembers Deaconess Wilma George Shepherd (January 15, 1910 - April 23, 2011), former editor and sponsor of this newsletter. Deaconess Shepherd blessed many of us with her Christian spirit, her genuinely charitable heart, and her kindly disposition. Among her personal gifts, was that of educator, scholar, mentor, and role model, in the full meaning of these positions.

Deaconess Shepherd lovingly and in dedicated commitment gave of her time, talents, and resources. She lived to the age of 101. Her presence is truly missed.

**WASHINGTON ANNUAL CONFERENCE DELEGATE'S REPORT**

The 61<sup>st</sup> session of the Washington Annual Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church was held April 25-30, 2011, under the leadership of the Right Reverend Adam Jefferson Richardson. The Potomac District hosted the conference at Ebenezer A.M.E. Church, Fort Washington, Maryland, and the Rev. Dr. Ronald E. Braxton was conference coordinator.

I am honored to have served as Metropolitan's Delegate to the Washington Annual Conference, as I have done the last ten years. Though the conference follows a scripted format, surprising activities frequently may occur and this year was no exception. I am always pleased to see many of our members at the conference.

Some Metropolitan members sing in the Conference Choir under the awesome leadership of Mrs. Susan Todd Edwards. I find that I am always touched at the opening, ordination, and closing services, which are enhanced by the musical services of the Conference Choir. The music this year was electrifying.

Brother Everett P. Williams' performance on the organ took us to new heights in worship. The processional hymn for the closing, "All hail the power of Jesus Name," was a spiritual high moment of praise for me. What an absolutely inspiring time of worship. Sister Edwards and Brother Williams form a dynamic musically talented team.

On Monday, April 25, 2011, the Washington Conference Branch of the Women's Missionary Society (WMS) held its annual convention at Martin's Crosswinds, Greenbelt, Maryland. The daylong convention included worship service, workshops, annual luncheon, and election of Washington Conference Branch, Women's Missionary Society officers.

The evening WMS worship service was held at Ebenezer A.M.E. Church, Ft. Washington, Maryland. Mrs. Shirley Cason Reed, first lady of

## DELEGATE from P. 11

Ward Memorial A.M.E. Church and a former first lady of Metropolitan, was the featured speaker for the "Night in White" annual worship and capping ceremony of new missionaries and pinning of new associates (male missionary members). Mrs. Reed is a candidate for president of the Connectional WMS. This election will be held at the WMS Quadrennial in Orlando, Florida, July 2011.

The Reverend Dr. Samuel E. Heyward, III, pastor, Hemingway Memorial A.M.E. Church, District Heights, Maryland, preached the sermon for the opening worship service on Tuesday, April 26, 2011. The final order of the day was the Bishop's Roll Call of all ordained elders, deacons, and delegates of the Washington Annual Conference.

The first of 80 pastors reports from the Potomac and Capitol Districts were presented on Wednesday, April 27. In his report, Pastor Ronald E. Braxton highlighted the church's restoration efforts and the visit of U.S. President Barack and First Lady Michelle Obama and their daughters, Mahlia and Sasha, to worship with the Metropolitan A.M.E. Church family.

Rev. Dr. Jasper W. Williams, Jr., senior pastor, Salem Bible Church, Atlanta, Georgia, preached the sermon for the Ecumenical Service. In his message, Rev. Williams noted that the biblical peaks of Mt. Moriah, Mt. Nebo, and Mt. Sinai were grand and lofty; however, it was an humble hill called Calvary, that changed the world. His mighty message seemed to uplift those in attendance.

The afternoon business session was the election of clergy and lay delegates to the 2012 A.M.E. General Conference in Nashville, Tennessee. Metropolitan's Brother Darwin Curry was elected a lay delegate; he also facilitated the lay election.

The Sons of Allen Men's Night Celebration featured the Rev. Alan Gould, Sr., pastor, Allen Chapel, Silver Spring, Maryland, as preacher. Another highlight of this service was the recognition of each church's Adult and Young Man of the Year. Representing Metropolitan was Brothers Darwin Curry and Robert McQueen as

Adult Man and Young Man of the Year, respectively.

Thursday, April 28, the focus was continuation of the pastors' reports, committees' reports, administrative adjudications, and the conduct of other conference business. The Rev. Wanda London, pastor of Payne Memorial A.M.E. Church, preached the noon day sermon.

The Lieutenant Governor of Maryland, Anthony G. Brown (D) delivered an inspiring message at the Annual Lay Witness Service. The Conference Lay Organization, led by President Matthew Douglas, with assistance of vice presidents, Brother Darwin Curry and Sister Maria Wallace, is diligently working for the church.

Friday began with the Memorial Service and Necrology Report, followed by the Service of Ordination. The Right Rev. McKinley Young, Presiding Prelate, Eleventh Episcopal District, A.M.E. Church, was the preacher. He assisted Bishop Richardson in the ordination service. Additional committee reports were given in the afternoon.

The Youth Night Service was the closing activity on Friday evening. The inspirational message by Rev. Kendra Smith, Hunter Memorial A.M.E. Church, was not just directed to the youth but rather her sentiments were meaningful to all.

On Saturday, Bishop Richardson preached the sermon for the closing service. This service was followed by the reading of remaining reports, presentation of resolutions and Commissioning Service. Bishop Richardson then made pastoral appointments. Rev. Ronald E. Braxton was reassigned to Metropolitan A.M.E. Church for another conference year.

Organization of the Annual Conference system was the foresight of our founding fathers and after these many years this system still fulfills its purpose. The 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the Washington Annual Conference is scheduled for April 2012 and will be hosted by the Capitol District at Reid Temple A.M.E. Church, Glenn Dale, Maryland.

## METROPOLITAN'S MINISTRIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

### THE MARRIED COUPLES MINISTRY

*(Each edition of the Metropolitan Spirit will feature one of the many Metropolitan ministries, clubs, and organizations and describe its service to the church and/or community)*

Reaching out to Christian couples trying to become better spouses, companions, friends, and parents and enjoying the fellowship of other like minded couples while praying for one another. If this is what you are looking for, then the Metropolitan Married Couples Ministry is your answer.

The Married Couples Ministry (MCM) was established in 1989 under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. (now Bishop) William P. DeVeaux. The ministry's goal is to nurture and strengthen marriage and family relations and to continuously pray for the health and well-being of all.

MCM meets once a month from September through June, on the fourth Saturday. The meetings begin with devotions led by the chaplains, Marvin and Carolyn Long and Al and Jeanette Spicer. All devotions are scripturally based and usually involve a reading and/or prayer that may stimulate discussion, testimonies, and the sharing of experiences.

The devotional period is followed by a short business session and then a guest presenter/speaker. Educational presentations have been given on a variety of topics that are of interest to the group – from the serious to the practical to the light-hearted. Normally, a pot-luck fellowship closes the meeting.

On Sunday, June 26, 2011, the Married Couples Ministry celebrated its Annual Day. This was MCM's opportunity to come before the congregation to highlight many of its outreach and fundraising activities. These events include providing donations and support to: Metropolitan's Sarah Allen Missionary Society (S.A.M.S.) Food Bank; Christ House, located in the Adams Morgan area of Washington, DC, a residential facility for homeless patients; Bishop

John T. Walker School for Boys in Anacostia (DC); and Komen Race for the Cure. MCM's major fundraiser is the *Men Who Cook*, normally held in the fall of the year. However, this fundraiser has been on hiatus for the last two years because of the church's restoration work.

In addition to holding monthly meetings, MCM conducts retreats, where couples get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life and take time to focus entirely on their relationship. These couples also have the opportunity to enjoy the sights and sounds of the retreat facility. Usually the MCM retreats have been held at varied retreat locations not further than a 2 hour drive from Washington, DC. An exception to this has been a cruise to the Bahamas taken for the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ministry. In 2014, for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the organization of this ministry, planning is underway for a trip to the Mediterranean.

The current presidents, Carlos and Marsha Botts, have been members of MCM since its inception. The Botts have led MCM for over a year and have been faithful in their participation to ensure growth in the ministry and have been blessed with opportunities for their personal enrichment over the past twenty-two years.

Carlos stated that he has learned that a marriage is not just about a husband and wife; but that Christ must be at the center if the marriage is to be successful. This lesson is not being taught in many pre-marital counseling sessions. Marsha added that she has found MCM to be a very caring group of people who look out for one another and check on one another – more like family. The co-presidents' goals and focus for the ministry are to conduct

retreats more frequently, at least biennially; and to increase the ministry's treasury so that the organization is able to provide more outreach efforts and more programs. Surely, this is a goal that the organization's treasurers, Jerome and Janet Oakley Huggins, would like to see come to fruition as well.

Often in this world we feel that we are alone and are the only ones experiencing the harsh blows that life can bring. This can also be said about marriage. Why is my husband so inconsiderate? Why is my wife so demanding? Why can't we get through these difficult times? One of the printed resources used in MCM's devotion is a book entitled, "Praying for our Marriage." A quote from this publication: "*If God has the power to create and sustain the universe, He is more than able to sustain your marriage and your ministry, your faith and your finances, your hope and your health.*"

Come, be a part of a ministry in which you are not alone. Come, be a part of a ministry that believes in the sanctity of marriage and family. Come, and enjoy the fellowship of other Christian couples. As co-president Carlos Botts stated on MCM's Annual Day in June 2011, the only perquisite is that you be a married couple.

*Ellen H. Figer*

## PROUD TO BE AN A.M.E.

If you did not attend the Washington Annual Conference in April 2011, then you missed the opportunity to see Darwin Curry being honored as the Adult Man of the Year from Metropolitan A.M.E. Church. When asked how he felt about being chosen for such an honor, Darwin stated "I was humbled."

How does a man earn the distinction of being recognized and then awarded the honor as his church's Man of the Year? You can surmise that it starts with being a devout, dependable, and committed member and volunteer worker in

the church and community.

For Darwin, that work has been primarily focused on the Lay Organization, where he serves locally as Director of Lay Activities for the Robert R. and Ora B. Kelly Lay Organization at Metropolitan. In addition to his local Lay participation, it's difficult to overlook Darwin's many accomplishments at the Conference level. He has been elected and served three terms as 3<sup>rd</sup> vice president and is presently serving as 2<sup>nd</sup> vice president of the Washington Conference Lay Organization (WCLO).

When asked about the Lay Organization, Curry describes it as being one of the most important organizations in the A.M.E. Church. "It is the teaching and training arm of the church," he explains.

"There are different topics discussed every month," he says. Topics that all A.M.E. members may very well wish to explore. Some areas recently addressed: *What makes a good steward? Why should you tithe? What is a class leader?*

While some of us might ponder the answers to these questions, Darwin Curry readily knows the answers and a myriad of facts about the A.M.E. Church. Darwin has been a member of the organized Lay for more than thirty years. At Metropolitan, Darwin is a member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Board of Stewards for the last five years, Leader of Class #107, and member of the Usher Board for fifteen years. Darwin has been very involved in the work of the A.M.E. Church.

From his study and experiences, Darwin has something to teach us all. Add to all of this the fact that Darwin is a loyal member of the Adult Sunday Church School Class only helps to burnish his A.M.E. résumé.

For this sixth generation A.M.E., this participation in church activities started well before his coming to Metropolitan nearly twenty years ago. It began back in Uniontown, Pennsylvania at his ancestral St. Paul A.M.E. Church. From Uniontown, a very young Darwin and his family moved to Detroit, Michigan. As a

member of Ebenezer A.M.E. Church in the Motor City, a fellow church member ignited the spark that began his lifelong devotion to the Lay Organization and that devotion has continued and deepened here in Washington, DC.

A soft-spoken and a gentle man of selected words, Darwin really gets talkative when discussing the A.M.E. Church. If you have questions about the A.M.E. Church and you want the correct answer, Darwin Curry is a person to contact. Do you know the name of the first president of the Connectional Lay Organization or of Metropolitan's Lay Organization? Who are the bishops who served the Second Episcopal District of the A.M.E. Church? Where are those bishops who most recently served the Second District? Darwin says, "I guess you can say that A.M.E. history is a hobby of mine."

Of course, Darwin intends to attend the Lay Biennial in his hometown, Detroit, in August 2011. This will be his fifth consecutive attendance at a Lay Biennial. And in 2012, as a Washington Conference delegate, Darwin will travel to the A.M.E. General Conference in Nashville, Tennessee. This will be his third time serving as a delegate to the General Conference.

Darwin's advice for those who may wish to be a delegate is that you might want to become an active member of the Lay Organization. "Although not all delegates are members of the organization, most of them are," he says. And being a devoted as well as a dedicated church worker as is Darwin, surely cannot hurt your efforts.

When Darwin was asked if there was anything more he wanted to say, a peaceful kindness seemed to pour over him. Then with humble gratitude he added, "I love the A.M.E. Church, Metropolitan, the pastor, his wife, and the members. Everyone has been so nice."

Devoted, Dedicated, and Dutiful, is Darwin Curry, a genuine jewel in the Metropolitan A.M.E. crown.

*Pat Rosier*

## WE'VE COME THIS FAR BY FAITH

### God's Gift of Restoration for Building His Kingdom: Past, Present, and Future

*Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far has the LORD helped us." (1 Samuel 7:12 NIV)*

From generation to generation, we can see God's benevolence and know unequivocally that He has helped Metropolitan in a mighty way. Albert A. Goodson's famous hymn, "We've Come This Far by Faith," captures the essence of Metropolitan's relationship with God on its continuous journey of faith, hope, love, spirituality, and service through the ages.

Beginning with its founding in 1838, by slaves and freed blacks, and laying of Metropolitan's original cornerstone in 1881, to its periodic improvements and recent restoration, the church has given faithful service. At nearly every turn, Metropolitan has confronted challenges, both structural and financial; but with faith in God, our help and our hope for tomorrow, Metropolitan has overcome every obstacle and moved forward with building God's kingdom.

Since its inception, Metropolitan has opened its doors as a welcoming center. In a segregated metropolis, the sanctuary, with a seating capacity of 2,500 provided the largest meeting facility to an integrated audience and accommodated graduations, concerts, and other important events. Before African Americans in Washington had access to education in public schools, Metropolitan's Church School provided academic and religious instruction.

The church has touched countless lives as an advocate in the struggle for civil and human rights, justice, and equality for all. Over the years, Metropolitan's faithful congregation has rallied around the resolution of many issues of local, national, and global significance for God's people. Movements to abolish slavery, to

## RESTORATION from P. 15

remove racial separation and discrimination, to ban colonial rule in Africa, and to protest genocide in Darfur have all been promoted in Metropolitan's sacred sanctuary.

God has been "our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, our shelter from the stormy blast and our eternal home." (Isaac Watts, 1706). By God's saving grace, Metropolitan has withstood the structural wear and tear of 125 years and has recovered from impacts that threatened the integrity and stability of this historic landmark.

Needed structural repairs that were intensified by a fallen ceiling tile in 2009 have culminated in the elevation of God's house and the elimination of all identified safety and life-threatening issues. After two years, Phase I of the church-wide project to restore our edifice has come to a close. God's gift of restoration is now visible in the following improvements:

- ❖ new sanctuary ceiling
- ❖ upgraded sanctuary lighting and re-setting of existing chandeliers
- ❖ new lead-free sanctuary walls
- ❖ restored Episcopacy stained glass window
- ❖ refurbished and relocated organ pipes
- ❖ rebuilt choir loft
- ❖ old radiators in sanctuary replaced
- ❖ new attic insulation
- ❖ existing restrooms on first floor level remodeled and two new restrooms installed in the Douglass Hall area
- ❖ new sprinkler system installed throughout the church
- ❖ new health room
- ❖ new pantry
- ❖ refurbished doors
- ❖ repair of all floors on the first floor level
- ❖ Pruitt Board Room renovations
- ❖ remodeled Douglass Hall, including new hardwood floors and classroom dividers
- ❖ new outside lights
- ❖ major roof repair
- ❖ major brick repair and masonry re-pointed
- ❖ new metal trims, gutters, downspouts, and flashings
- ❖ refurbished steeples
- ❖ concrete entryway repaired
- ❖ new fire alarm system
- ❖ new HV AC System
- ❖ new mechanical wiring and emergency lighting

The congregation and the joint church boards will recommend what work will be done in the next phase of restoration. That phase may entail work to: restore the remaining stained glass windows in the sanctuary, with consideration given first to the front windows facing M Street, which are affected by vibrations from traffic; refurbish the pews and replace the sanctuary floor and carpeting; replace the windows in Douglass Hall; and remodel the kitchen.

Future work will be predicated on raising the needed funds. The church is currently paying the loan (which has converted from a construction loan to a mortgage loan) for the work that was completed in Phase I. As in the past, we must trust God to be with us in the next phase of restoration, helping us meet any new challenges and overcome any obstacles.

Through God's gift of restoration, the newly and beautifully-restored Metropolitan is now positioned to revitalize its long-standing traditions of community service and religious commitment and to identify new ministries and enhance its existing ministries. These ministries: will provide support to families, youth, the needy, the elderly, recently incarcerated persons and their families; will provide health, educational, cultural, and enrichment programs; and will provide a forum, through the revival of Metropolitan's distinguished Bethel Literary Society, for holding dialogues on civic, educational, social, political, and religious issues affecting local communities, the nation, and the world.

Our pastor has envisioned that in humble submission to the will of God, our restored

## RESTORATION from P. 16

church will use its collective resources to minister to the surrounding communities. Opportunities to do the work of the Lord are being evaluated currently by the New Ministries Task Force, a unit of Metropolitan members who answered Pastor Braxton's call to "rebuild the Temple in wholeness and holiness." The scripture states, *"This Temple is going to end up far better than it started out, a glorious beginning but an even more glorious finish: a place in which I will hand out wholeness and holiness."* (Haggai 2:9, The Message Bible)

On the 173<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church, God has blessed this church mightily with a rich heritage and a restored house in which to serve Him for countless years to come. May we glorify Him by using His church to serve His people and thereby serve Him.

*Janet Oakley Huggins*

**References:** Restoration information provided by Trustee Gwendolyn Kimbrough, Restoration Chairperson.

## DELEGATE from P. 12

This is to be the last Washington Annual Conference conducted by Bishop Adam J. Richardson. His eight year tenure as the presiding prelate of the Second Episcopal District of the A.M.E. Church ends at the 2012 A.M.E. General Conference.

*James F. Robinson*

*Metropolitan A.M.E. Church*

*"A Season of Thanksgiving  
And Recognition in  
Kingdom Building"*

## THE CIRCLES OF TWELVE

*Auxiliary organization created to assist and supplement the financial goals and spiritual visions of Metropolitan A.M.E. Church*

In March of 2010, several women of Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church met at The Madison Hotel to discuss ways to support the church's financial, spiritual, and cultural initiatives for its present existence and future legacy in being a historic emblem of religious sanctity which nourishes the needs of its' membership and the Washington Metropolitan area it seeks to serve. The specific focus of the group is to assist in raising funds for the church's restoration program and to broaden the church's invitation of welcome to all spectrums of the community.

Renata Roy and Gladys Gary Vaughn, having independent concepts of organizing an auxiliary group of women to assist in church objectives, assumed the roles of chairs. The founding members attending these ground-building sessions were: Dorothy Payne Bryan, Edith Buffalow, Willa Rawls Dumas, Sheila Garnett, Lorraine Gillian, Linda Jefferson, Loretta Johnston, DyAnne Horner Little, Brenda M. Nicholson, and Flavia Walton. Maria Wallace and Josie Woodley-Jones joined in January, 2011.

The Circles of Twelve organization's name symbolizes the unbroken circle of fellowship and commitment of members to dedicate their time, energy, talent, and resources toward the Circles' activities. The number "12" is based on the disciples and their willingness to serve as followers of Jesus - the Circles' objectives being service and duty to Metropolitan and each other through prayer and partnership while supporting the goals of the church.

The organization's first event on September 19, 2010, presented former US Department of Agriculture Georgia Director for Rural Development and civil rights activist, Shirley Sherrod, as a guest speaker.

On April 19, 2011, The Women of Defense, the first organization of retired/active African American military group of women and a newly-organized section of the National Council of Negro Women, were honored for Women's History month. The most recent event sponsored by Circles of Twelve was on June 5<sup>th</sup> wherein the Bel Canto Singers of Nassau, Bahamas were featured in concert. These occasions are part of a special series of religious services and cultural events designated as 'Sundays with The MET'. The services and events are designed to highlight Metropolitan's recognition of the relevance that religion, culture, and history play in the African American church and community.

The Circles of Twelve's current project is in partnership with the Anniversary Committee planning and promoting events in commemoration of the church's 173<sup>rd</sup> celebration.

*Brenda M. Nicholson*

## METROPOLITAN'S 2011 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

The Metropolitan A.M.E. Church Scholarship Endowment (Payne Tanner Memorial) is an educational outreach program of the church. The Endowment provides financial assistance and moral support to students who demonstrate scholastic achievement as well as financial need. Over twenty-seven years, each year the Endowment has awarded a minimum of four scholarships of equal amounts.

In 2011, a total amount of \$20,000 in scholarships was awarded to 10 students; each receiving an award of \$2,000. The scholarship can be used for books, tuition, housing, or supplies.

**Bianca Bannerman** will be a senior at Howard University in fall 2011. Her career goal is to become a pediatric psychologist.

**Brittany Christian Bell** will return to Towson University in fall 2011 as a sophomore. Her goal is to become an entertainment lawyer.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

**Shane Hill** will enroll at West Virginia University in fall 2011 as a freshman. His career goal is to become a professional violinist.

**Tkeyah Lake** will be a sophomore at the University of Baltimore in fall 2011. Her career goal is to work in corporate public relations.

**Vashti Little** will be a junior at St. John's University in fall 2011. Her goal is to become an entertainment lawyer.

**Montez Speaks McKnight** will enroll at Prince George's Community College in fall 2011 as a freshman. His career goal is to become a fashion designer.

**Imani Stutely** will enroll at Carnegie Mellon University as a graduate student in fall 2011. Her career goal is to become a public policy analyst.

**Veronica Taylor** will enroll at Montgomery College (Rockville Campus). Her goal is to become an animator.

**Rahnisha Thompson** will be a senior at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Her career goal is to become a special agent for the FBI.

**Shannon Washington** will be a junior at Morgan State University in fall 2011. Her career goal is to become a financial analyst.

*Dr. Imogene Zachery*

## PERSONALITIES

Congratulations to **Robert Anthony McQueen**, Metropolitan's 2011 Young Man of the Year, honored during the Washington Annual Conference. Robert, born and raised in Washington, DC, has been a member of Metropolitan most of his young life. He will be a freshman at Eastern High School, where he wants to be a part of the EMT program. Robert's hobbies include playing sports, helping people, and laughing. He is a very hospitable person, often greeting church members at the front door on Sunday mornings.