

First In Touch

First Episcopal District Newsletter

WORDS FROM OUR PRESIDENT

I am thankful to Almighty God for His many, many blessings and I am grateful to each and every one of you for all you do for African Methodism and the Lay Organization. We had an absolutely wonderful Mid-Year Meeting in Stamford, CT. We thank Sister Linda Gant, New Conference Lay President, Sister Nicol Ayers, NE Conference DOLA and all the laity of the NE Annual Conference Lay Organization for hosting us in such a fine manner. We also thank host church, Bethel AME Church, Stamford, CT, host pastor, Rev. Robert Jackson and host lay president, Sister Cynthia King for all they did to help in this effort. The hospitality from the NEConference Lay Organization was top notch. We also thank the First District DOLA, Sister Josephine Fulcher-Anderson for having such wonderful workshops to keep us engaged and to give us more knowledge in our lay journey. We had a grand time.



We also continued to take care of our bodies by rising early for 30 minutes of morning fitness. While I led the fitness group on Friday, with the funeral of our former Connectional Lay President, Sister Valerie Gary Bell on Saturday, I thank Brother Irvin Hopewell for leading the group on Saturday morning. Our Friday night service was a blessing with special thanks to our preacher, Presiding Elder, Jocelyn Hart-Lovelace. She truly blessed us as we knew she would. Thanks also to Brother Lovelace, an active lay member who is always at our meetings and in always in support of his wife.

As we prepare for our Annual Meeting at the end of July, with the coronavirus upon us, we have to do things differently. By the time July comes around, more cities and localities may have opened up, but we cannot take a chance in putting any of our members in danger so we are meeting virtually. It will be different but we will get it done. We ask for your patience as we head into these uncharted territories.

Thank you to all each of you do to make the First District Lay Organization something we can be proud of. I appreciate each of you and thank you for all you have done. Together we will continue to build our lay ministry. Special thanks to the seven conference presidents, our elected officers and committee chairpersons, our advisors and each of you. Our team is actually the best team in any Episcopal District. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart. "We can do all things through Christ who gives us strength". Philippians 4:13

Table of Contents

Cover	Words from the President
Page 2-7.....	2020 Mid Year Meeting
Page 8	Bermuda Conference Lay Organization
Page 9 -10.....	Delaware Conference Lay Organization
Page 11-12	Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization
Page 13-16.....	Words of Job Well Done by President Hopewell

First Episcopal District Lay Mid-Year Meeting

African Methodist Episcopal Church

Submitted by: Sister Cynthia King

First Episcopal District Lay Historiographer

The First Episcopal District Lay Organization held its 2020 Mid-Year Meeting under the leadership of our First Episcopal District Lay President, Sister Cheryl Hammond Hopewell. The meeting was held at the Stamford Sheraton Hotel, 700 East Main Street, Stamford, CT from February 20-22, 2020. The host conference was the New England Conference under the leadership of Sister Linda Gant, Conference President. We would like to thank Rev. Jocelyn K. Hart-Lovelace, Host Presiding Elder, Rev. Robert A. Jackson, Jr., Host Pastor, Bethel AME Stamford Lay Organization and the members of the New England Conference Lay Organization for an awesome experience.

Thursday evening, February 20, 2020 everyone was invited to attend dinner at Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church, Stamford, CT. We received a great meal, had a quiz, received welcome bags and were treated to great music by Master Drummer Henry Jones of Infinite Roots. He shared information about the West African Drums, the bells, the Mbira, the Pan Flute, the Shell Shekere and allowed us to interact with him. We received hugs, smiles and great hospitality. As members returned to the hotel, some assisted with preparing the meeting kits and President Cheryl met with the Executive Board and the Frank C. Cummings Scholarship Committee.

As the sun rose on Friday morning, February 21, 2020 President Cheryl and some of the lay members began the morning with an exercise class.



This is a daily ritual to run, walk or exercise with the president, so make sure you bring your workout gear with you. The Connectional Lay Theme is "Laity Walking Humbly with God to do Justice and To Love Kindness", Micah 6:8. Morning devotion began with the return of our Chaplain Sister Terri Fisher. To God be the Glory for the great things he has done in her life. Her theme was "Jesus healed me too" Luke 8:43-48. We thank Sister Kitty Combs-Smith for stepping in for the Chaplain during her absence.

The First District Lay Director of Lay Activities, Sister Josephine Fulcher-Anderson gave us warm greetings and instructions about the day's activities. Our First Timers Workshop is a very big hit. If you have never attended a Mid-year or Annual Meeting, then you are a First Timer. Sister Robin Batson, First District Lay 3rd Vice President was the presenter for this workshop. Sister Robin presented the first timers with a great overview of the AME Church and the Lay Organization. She presents facts that we should know as members of the Lay Organization, members of the AME Church and other valuable information. The class was a hit with 10 in attendance. President Hopewell always stops in, gives them a special welcome, answers any questions and takes a picture with them.

Our First Episcopal District Lay President Sister Cheryl thanks everyone for his or her dedication to the lay organization. She welcomed and thanks all of the clergy who attended and for their support of the Lay Organization. The first workshop of the day was "Think Like A Fish". The facilitator was the Rev. Dr. Iona Smith Nze, Pastor of Bethel Bridgeport, CT. She began by telling us that you can lead horses to water but you can't make him drink.

However, we will not be talking about horses today but fish. She spoke about the how important it is for the members of the lay to remind people about the goodness of Jesus and his love. Her goal was to help the lay to learn more about Evangelism in the church across all levels. She explained that it is our responsibility to step outside the box to help to build a healthy church. J. Maxwell Dill explains in his book that Evangelism is defined as teaching or preaching with your arms open to convert others. When you talk to others on a daily basis you should tell others about the goodness of Jesus and what he has done for you.

It is our responsibility as Christians to win souls for Christ. The word Evangelist means a person who seeks to convert others to the Christian faith, especially by public preaching. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were known as Evangelists as they spread the word in the Bible. She focused on Luke 5:4-10 and how it tells us that if we do as God has instructed, our net will overflow. Malachi, 3:10 tells us "Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house". And God tells us to put him to the test. He will open the windows of heaven for you and pour a blessing until there is no more need. As Christians, if you are faithful in tithing 10%, then your storehouse will overflow.

Simon and Peter had fished all night and had not caught any fish. Jesus told them that he would make them fishers of men. They left their boat and followed Jesus. We have been led to believe that our churches are dead. If you have a pond, a stream or a river for a church, then you have a perfect environment for growing your church. God's provision is for man to produce more fish like him. She encouraged us to read the book "Think Like A Fish" by Dr. Virgil Woods, an AME minister. He writes about the different types of fish in our congregations and how to attract and keep new fish. This was a very productive and informative workshop.

The second workshop was "Healing Beyond Survival - Finding Healing & Liberation Through Our Faith". The facilitator was Brother Marcus Burnett, First Episcopal Lay VAR. He talked about our faith and how we have always had a since of hope in our faith. However, we feels that we have arrived in this society but we really haven't. Our children attend better schools but not learning anything. They are teaching them that slavery was a choice. He asked Sister Combs-Smith to read Mark 5:4 about how God healed the woman with the issue of blood and made her whole. Beware of the people around you and seek help when you need it. Millennials will not seek help by going to a psychologist or marriage counsel.

As African American, we need to seek help sometimes and not ashamed to do so. He spoke about the new saying PTSS "Post Trauma Slave Syndrome" described as behavior, beliefs to be multi-generational trauma experienced by African Americans not limited to undiagnosed and untreated stress disorder from their descendants. This was referring to a book by Dr. Joy DeGruy.

He reminded us that our faith is made whole and we should look to Jesus who is the author and finisher of our faith. In order for us to arrive, we must return to God and his teachings. When you pray it does not have to be a long pray. God already knows what you need. God wants you to talk to him.

The third workshop was "Connected-ness of The Connectional AME Church" facilitator was the Rev. Kevin T. Taylor, Pastor of Allen Chapel, Hartford, CT. Rev. Taylor asked that each of us bring a photo of our family member as homework. This was a dramatic workshop. He began with several questions: Who is in the picture? Who is missing? What are the names of your parents, grandparents, siblings, children, grandchildren? What are some of the similarities of the people and how often do you come together as family? The questions worked well with helping us understand how the AME Church functions. His aim was to show our relationship with other denominations, the history and structure of the AME church, all levels of the AME Church and encourage us to get actively involved in our local churches and to empower us to fulfill our responsibilities as a member. He informed us that there are 3 major religions: Islam, Christianity and Judaism and we are Christians.

There are different names for Protestants but they all still all Protestants. There are different types of Methodist: United Methodist, African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion and Christian Methodist Episcopal but all Methodists. There are 20 Episcopal Districts and we are all The First District which began in Philadelphia. There are 21 Bishops and 7,000 congregations and 3,817 Pastors. There have been 138 Elected and Concreted Bishops. The 1st elected Bishop was David Croker, but he did not serve. Bishop Richard Allen was the first Elected and Consecrated Bishop of the AME Church. Bishop Gregory G.M. Ingram is the 118th Elected and Consecrated Bishop and serves in the First Episcopal District. There are 7 Annual Conferences in the First Episcopal District: New England, New Jersey, New York, Western New York, Delaware, Philadelphia and Bermuda. This was an extraordinary and informative presentation.

Our fourth workshop was "In Conversation with The First District Lay President, Sister Cheryl Hammond Hopewell, moderated by Sister Josephine Fulcher Anderson. Sister Cheryl was asked several questions that she answered openly and honestly. Sister Cheryl was asked how she got involved in the Lay and different questions about dealing with people and leadership as a whole. She Cheryl commented about always going to God before she does anything and how important is it to work with everyone. She informed us that people need to know you love them and care about them. Communication is key.

Questions then came from the audience and Sister Cheryl was asked how she met her husband. That was an interesting story. Sister Cheryl reported that they worked together and Brother Irvin wanted to date her. She told him she didn't date people she worked with. Brother Irv quit his job and asked her out again. She then told him that she doesn't date people without a job. He then got a job that he served in for 35 years and the rest is history; love ever after. Sister Cheryl was also asked if she plans to run for Connectional President.

The reply was well if not President, at least one of the Vice Presidents. When Sister Cheryl was asked about a pressing issue for her, she stated that we need to be on the front line of Social Action. Make sure that you VOTE in the 2020 elections. Not voting is a yes vote for the other side. She thanked everyone for coming and there and committing to the Lay Organization. She explained that she, Brother Marcus and Brother Earl would be leaving early in the morning to attend the Homegoing Celebration for the Connectional Lay President, Sister Valerie Gary Bell. Bishop Ingram and Rev. Jessica sent their regrets for not attending for our lay meeting but they would also be attending the service for Sister Bell. Sister Wanda Duckett, First District Lay, 2nd Vice President will be conducting the Saturday meeting.

Our Friday evening worship took place at 7:00 pm. Sister Linda Gant, New England Conference Lay President was the worship leader. Brother Marcus Burnett introduced President Cheryl. He gave a quote about a burning desire and that Sister Cheryl has that burning desire that Lucy A. Campbell speaks about with Jesus within her. Sister Cheryl had the pleasure of introducing Presiding Elder Jocelyn K. Hart Lovelace, of the Boston-Hartford District of the New England Annual Conference. PE Lovelace thanked Sister Hopewell for the great introduction and she recognized PE Winton K. Hill and PE Herbert Eddy who served for 33 years as PE of the New England Annual Conference.

She recognized Brother Eddie Lovelace and all of the Pastors in attendance. Her scripture from Jude verse 22 (KJV), and she preached on the subject, "Making a Difference Right Where You Are". When we open our eyes, we are met with challenges all around us hard pressed. However, we serve a God who will pour out his spirit upon those who are willing to receive God's Spirit. He is a God of order setting things in motion. You can make a difference right in your own conference. You don't have to be an officer, president or chair of a committee, but make a difference right where you are. PE Lovelace referenced how the Article of Impeachment against President Trump was carried from the House of Representative to the Senate by a Black woman, Ms. Johnson. Ms. Johnson had worked various positions and has a law degree.

She checks the records and rolls each day. But on this day, the time came for her to be the leader and she made history. So keep working and you will never know when God will tap you on the shoulder and move you to the front of the line. PE Lovelace called for the First Episcopal Lay to make a difference in your conferences, churches, and communities. Jude verses 24-25 wrapped up his letter with "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever". Amen. Awesome Worship!

Saturday, February 22, 2020 began with Brother Irvin Hopewell leading the exercise in the absence of President Cheryl. Great work Irvin for a job well done. Morning session began with devotion and Bible Study led by Chaplain Terri Fisher. After Bible Study, 2nd Vice President Wanda Duckett conducted the business. We heard the Biennial Reports. The Nominating Report was given with all positions unopposed but one. The Young Adult Representative has two persons running for that position.

Our final workshop was given by facilitator, Bro. Anthony G. Copeman, a financial advisor, on "4 Ways To Live More Abundantly Through Financial Freedom". Brother Anthony spoke about reimagining our relationship with our money and creating goals that align with the vision we have for our lives. We should open an online only savings account. Your savings account should always be separate from your checking account. He gave several types of savings accounts to open online. He told us to pay off our credit card debt and to learn about retirement investments and invest beyond retirement. Create an estate plan, confront your expenses and create a spending plan. Tap into your gifts and keep your systems in place. A great workshop was given by Brother Copeman.

"Bonding Exercise Activities" facilitated by Sister Josephine Fulcher Anderson was next. She had us to stand up and partner with someone whom we did not know. She read from a speech by Episcopal Supervisor Dr. Patricia Russell McCloud. The speech informed us to tell our partner that you will have their back no matter what they're going through. With God's help we can make it.

With that, it was time to end the 2020 Mid-Year. The New England Conference Lay wished everyone safe travels with more goodies and prays. Our total count for Mid-year 2020 registration was 264 with 217 in attendance and 167 in our closing circle. To God Be The Glory!

BERMUDA CONFERENCE LAY ORGANIZATION

On Friday, January 31 st and Saturday, February 1 st 2020 we held our Annual Meeting the host church was Bethel AME. Sis. Leslie Robinson is Local Lay President. We held an Opening Service were the preacher was Presiding Elder West District, Rev. Dr. Larry Dixon. His message was based on our Local Theme: Unity and Maturity in the Body of Christ" Ephesians 4:3-4. We also had workshops by Presenters Sis. Donna-Lee Chandler-Smith (First Timers) and Dr. Crystal Clay (Leadership).

We were happy to have in attendance our Episcopal District Lay President, Mrs. Cheryl Hammond Hopewell. Everyone in attendance received a blessing. Congratulations to the Bermuda Conference Lay for a very successful meeting. On Thursday, March 5, 2020 we held our Annual Lay Witness Night during the 134 th Session of the Bermuda Annual Conference.

We had a very upbeat and powerful service. Our participants were from various local Lay organizations and all were eager to take part. We had the Mt. Zion AME Praise Team give to Uplifting musical selections. Our Guest Speaker was Sis. Leslie L. Clarke Robinson, J.P. She is the Local Lay President at Bethel AME Church she gave a very thought provoking message about her up bring in the church and the Lay Organization.

Once again our Episcopal District Lay President, Mrs. Cheryl Hammond Hopewell supporting us.



DELAWARE CONFERENCE

Delaware Conference Lay Celebrates Annual Recognition Banquet

On Saturday, February 15, 2020, the Delaware Annual Conference hosted its Annual Recognition Banquet at the Modern Maturity Center in Dover, DE.

This year it was decided by our Ways and Means Committee to celebrate and recognize Ministers of Music and Church Musicians in our local churches. With almost 700 persons in attendance it was one of the largest luncheons ever hosted by the Lay Organization. It was a wonderful time and a blessing to be in the place with all that talent.

Our illustrious Mistress of Ceremony was none other than our Conference President, Sister Sharon Drew! She did a marvelous job. There were over 20 honorees present and the oldest honoree was 93 years old! Also, the Delaware Conference is blessed to have several young adult musicians.

God has truly anointed these persons hands and granted them the skills and talent for their ministry.

2020 Honorees:

- Antioch AME Frankford, DE-Brother Lenny S. Brittingham
- Asbury AME Chester, PA-Elder Ronald Kinsey
- Bethel AME Milford, DE-Licentiate Devon Brooks
- Bethel AME Milton, DE-Evangelist Martha Piper
- Bethel AME Smyrna, DE-Brother Larry Friend Sr.
- Bethel AME Wilmington, DE-Sister Gloria Hart Oakley
- Byrd's AME Clayton, DE-Brother Tyrin Darrius Williams
- Burton Chapel AME Milton, DE-Sister Shuna Harmon
- Emmanuel AME Hartley, DE-Sister Michel'le Brown
- John Wesley AME Dover, DE-Charles William Moore III
- Macedonia AME Seaford, DE-Sister Edwina Pleshette Barnes
- Mt. Friendship AME Smyrna, DE-Brother Joseph H. Glasco
- Mt. Hebron AME Linwood, PA-Sister Sarah Frazier Finley
- Mt. Pisgah AME Laurel, DE-Evangelist Geraldine Hunt Horsey

- Mt. Plymouth AME Felton, DE-Sister Lisa Powell
- Mt. Zion AME Dover, DE-Brother Vonzell J. Starnes
- Murphy AME Chester, PA-Brother Victor David Valentine Sr.
- New Beginnings AME Frederica, DE-Brother David Bernard Brown
- New Elizabeth AME Newark, DE-Brother Herbert "BJ" Owens
- Ringgold Chapel AME Middletown, DE-Sister Bernice K. Saunders
- St. Paul AME Harrington, DE-Brother Raphael A. Young
- Trinity AME Middletown, DE-Aaron Andrew Lee Ford



President Hopewell and Sister Sharon Drew Delaware Conference Lay Organization President

Congratulations to all our honorees. Thank you for all that you do for your local Church's and for the Conference.

"The Lord is there to save us. We shall play our music in the house of the Lord all the days of our lives" Isaiah 38:20

"Shout to the Lord, all the earth; break into song, sing praise" Psalm 98:4

Philadelphia Conference

PCLO VPs STAY HOME AND GO 2020 WITH ZOOM

By Connie Williams, PCLO Director of Public Relations

Staying Home, Social Distancing and Wearing Masks became a way of life in March 2020 as COVID 19, a deadly virus, covered the earth in pandemic proportions. Meetings, gatherings, and worship services were canceled or postponed by the AME Church and state government.

By the beginning of April, social isolation had become part of the collective consciousness of the members of the Philadelphia Conference Lay Organization. The required social, physical, and spiritual isolation meant that members were missing the fellowship, information input and workshops acquired at Monthly Meetings.

Sister Starsha Frierson, First Vice President, Brother Shawn Lee, Second Vice President and Sister Cynthia Douse, Third Vice President, perceived a need to connect and reach out to members so when they put their heads together and received the blessing of President Andree A. Turner, Sr., the first PCLO "Prayer and Encouragement Conference Call" via ZOOM was launched. On April 18, 2020 at 12 noon, the conference call happened with some participants visible on Zoom and others audible on the phone. The sign on Song of Praise was "I Am Still Standing" By Bishop Paul Morton which was very uplifting and encouraging for all.

Brother Shawn offered the opening prayer of thanks to God noting that we are the Church and that the Church is within us and not confined to a building. Sister Cynthia Douse read Psalm 46 reminding us that God is our refuge and we must know that He is God, even during a pandemic. Sister Starsha Frierson, Licentiate, provided the Meditation which she titled "Who Will You Choose?"

She proclaimed that we are in the world, but we are not to be of the world. Our praise, service and actions as God's remnants are to reflect God and we must give Him "His Due"! It is difficult but, to do this, we must meditate on His Word, strive to do His will, not ours and do the work He has given us to do. Repeat the Word until it is committed to your heart. We are to give Him ten percent of everything, not just the financial tithe but our time and talents.

God is looking for us to serve willingly in obedience and with purpose. She provided several scriptures for reference that were a basis for her meditation: Psalms 119:11; Isaiah 56:11; Psalms 98:1; Psalm 90:12; Isaiah 12:1; Psalms 24:1.

Sister Starsha summarized by giving the answer to "Who Will You Choose?" which should be Jesus, not the world. Following the Meditation, President Turner thanked the Vice Presidents for the prayer and encouragement service and the message. Announcements were shared and Sister Juanita Bryant, PCLO Chaplain, delivered the Closing Prayer. The ZOOM gathering ended with The Lay Benediction.



Since the first ZOOM Prayer and Encouragement session was so well received, the second session was held on Saturday, May 16, 2020 at 12 noon. Brother Shawn Lee served as the moderator and the Song of Praise was "Jesus Can Work It Out", followed by Prayer offered by Sister Starsha Frierson.

Sister Shirley Moore-Harris, former PCLO Director of Lay Activities, provided the Meditation titled "Having A Firm Foundation". Her supporting scripture was Luke 6:46-49. If we do not have a firm foundation in good times and especially in times of trouble and stress we might turn to alcohol, drugs, and other harmful forces.

We must not forget that we can depend on the ever-present firm foundation of Jesus Christ. We cannot count on friends, our jobs, our bank account, and other worldly things. Our foundation needs to be spiritual and anchored in Christ. In these troubled times we will be safe and have power to stand strong if we have that Firm Foundation.

After updates and reminders, PCLO Chaplain Juanita Bryant provided the Closing Prayer. We are thankful to God that our Vice Presidents had minds and hearts to gather us on ZOOM for prayer and encouragement.





Josephine Fulcher-Anderson, Child of God

Josephine Fulcher-Anderson has the gifts of encouragement, teaching and administration. Her desire is to live life practicing the Fruit of the Spirit daily. She also enjoys gardening, traveling, reading, and helping others. She is a loving mother, doting grandmother, and enjoys time with family and friends.

Sis. Josephine is an active member in good and regular standing at Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Norwalk Connecticut, where the Rev. Dr. Richard Wesley Clarke serves as Pastor. She has served and presently serves in many roles in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Local Level

- Present: Steward, Licensed Evangelist, Lay Organization President, Class Leaders Council Coordinator, Book & Authors Luncheon Chair
- Former: Annual Conference Chair, Church Anniversary Committees Chair
Church School Superintendent, Church School Teacher

Conference Level

- Present: New England Conference Boston-Hartford District- Church School Superintendent, Facilitator and Teacher, Planner and Organizer. Concerns Committee Chair
- Former: New England Conference--Director of Lay Activities

District Level

- Present: First District Lay Activities Director, Workshop Facilitator

Connectional Level

- Present: "First Timer's" Seminar Connectional Lay Organization Presenter, "Lay Person of the Year" Contest Judge for the Biennial, Workshop Convener

Education: Master's Degree: Information and Library Science; Bachelor's Degree: Sociology, minor Psychology; Associates Degrees: Human Services & Library Science; Business Certificate for non-profit organizations; Certified Biblical Storyteller

Employment: Ferguson Library South End Branch and Bookmobile - Librarian/Supervisor

Community Involvement: NAACP member; Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) Facilitator, African American Affairs Commission for the State of CT; Stamford Kwanzaa Association Founder, General and Connectional Lay Conferences Delegate, Association of Black Storytellers, Black Caucus American Library Association Member

On behalf of the First Episcopal District Lay Organization, I want to thank Sister Josephine for serving 8 years as our Director of Lay Activities. Sister Josephine is the best example of a Christian woman that I have ever come across. She has the sweetest personality, the brightest smile and genuinely displays love, care and concern for others. She is a role model for the young and old alike. She never has a harsh word to say, she is so through and thoughtful in her duties and she is truly a joy to work with. Sister Josephine has served with grace and elegance and is someone we all admire.

THANK YOU FOR A JOB WELL DONE!

With gratitude,

Cheryl Hammond Hopewell



Cynthia S. King

Favorite Bible Verse: "Delight yourself in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart". Psalm 37:4

A native of Alabama where I began my life, I joined Macedonia Baptist Church at the age of 6 and was baptized. I relocated to Stamford, Connecticut at an early age and began attending Bethel Stamford African Methodist Episcopal Church. I joined Bethel in 1981 under the leadership of Rev. Elliot J. Mayfield. Under the leadership of Rev. Winton Hill in 1991, he appointed me to the Mary Green Stewardess Board and the Lucy Hugh Stewardess Board at the same time. I also served on the trustee board from 2003 to 2019 and was the Church Secretary. I am currently, serving as President & Secretary of the Katherina Reddick Roebuck Lay Organization. I am also a member of the Lillian B. Crawford Missionary Society and a Advisory with our YPD. I am finishing my term as 1st Episcopal District Lay Organization Historiographer for the past 8 years. I serviced as a Lay Delegate to the Connectional Lay Organization Biennial in 2013, 2016 and 2019.

In my community, I have been Secretary of the West Glenn Crossing Condo Association, Inc. since 1993. I currently, serve on the Board of Stamford Hospital Patience & Family Advisory Council and the Stamford NAACP. I am a member of Dorcas Chapter #14 O.E.S. P.H.G. C of Stamford, CT. I served as Worthy Matron of Dorcas Chapter No. 14 from 2009-2011. I served as Past Most Ancient Grand Matron Heroine of Jericho for the State of Connecticut from 2018-2019, Arabic Court #95 Daughters of Isis, Circle of Perfection. I was Past Royal Commandress of Miriam Court #1 Order of Cyrene.

I worked for the Metro-North Commuter Railroad for 27 years. During that time I had the pleasure of working in Grand Central Terminal. At the Metro-North railroad, I was the first woman (repairing the train), I was a Ticket Seller, Ticket Vendor Technician (first Black) and the first Black woman Yard Master with 5 Railroads under my command. I also served on the Stamford Democratic Party City Committee 9th District. I ran in the 2020 Primary Party Election but did not win) and I was a delegate in 2016 and 2020 to the Connecticut Democratic Party National Convention.

On behalf of the First District Lay Organization, I would like to congratulate Sister Cynthia for her 8 years as our Historiographer. Cynthia has done amazing work gathering our history and putting up displays whenever we have District Lay Meetings. Her displays are well thought out and always gives those viewing a great history of our lay organization. Sister Cynthia is dedicated and sincere in carrying out all of her duties. She is also a great photographer.

THANK YOU FOR A JOB WELL DONE!

With gratitude,

Cheryl Hammond Hopewell



Mrs. Emma Lee

To President Cheryl Hammond Hopewell,

It has been an honor to serve the First District Lay Organization as the Financial Secretary for eight years and the Assistant Recording Secretary for four years. I have enjoyed the work, because I love the work of the Church and the fellowship of the members of the Lay Organization.

I have been a faithful member of Metropolitan AME Church in Harlem, NY for many years, and have served in many capacities during that time. Currently I serve as Treasurer of the

Church, Member of the Board of Stewards, Class Leader and as Church Clerk. The work is all divine and I feel no ways tired.

"Whoever you are be noble,
Whatever you do, do well.
Whenever you speak, speak gently,
Give Joy wherever you dwell.
Alfred Lord Tennyson

On behalf of the First Episcopal District Lay Organization, I would like to thank Sister Emma for her eight years of service as our Financial Secretary. Emma has been a quiet presence however, very efficient. She takes her work seriously and goes above and beyond to get the job done. Sister Emma will do whatever she is asked to do and she does it without complaining. We will miss Sister Emma in this role but we know she will still be around and looking forward to her giving service in other areas of the First Episcopal District Lay Organization.

THANK YOU FOR A JOB WELL DONE!

With gratitude,

Cheryl Hammond Hopewell

LaSean R. Shelton



The last several years have indeed been a sentiment labor of love and learning. I have met some of the most beautiful people with the biggest hearts and love for Christ here in the Lay Organization!

While serving as your DOPR, I learned a lot about most of you individually. It was pure joy! I also learned a lot about being bold and being brave with journalism and advocacy! The transferrable skills landed me an opportunity on a National level and opportunities to assist celebrities with imagery while coaching busy moms like me in their business endeavors!

I also proudly was voted in as President for our Local Lay Organization, Katherine B. Ross Lay which is named after my beloved triumphant Sorority Sister. Her name carries such ambition and love for God that I cannot HELP but be excited for my members and myself! Our goals are: (RRR) Retention, Reclamation, and Recruitment. We welcomed in and back 18 vibrant and enthusiastic members ready to serve Christ and uplift the community IN and OUT of our Church walls.

My prayers, that the First Episcopal District continues to thrive and leave marks of spectacular valor!!! The leadership is bar far AMAZING and I see nothing but greatness in the years to come. SUCCESS LEAVES CLUES!!!

I love you all,
Sister LaSean R. Shelton
Director of Public Relations

On behalf of the First Episcopal District Lay Organization, I want to thank LaSean R. Shelton for serving 8 years as our Director of Public Relations. Sister LaSean is very technologically savvy and was an innovator with our website and with making sure our sessions were broadcast on Facebook live. It was quite impressive to see all the people who were watching from various places. Sister LaSean also does our newsletter twice a year and loves to get creative in having it look a certain way. Sister LaSean loves people and has been one who is very interactive with capturing, speakers, workshop presenters, business session, whatever. If it happens, LaSean is capturing it on video. I am grateful to Sister LaSean for her work, her dedication and her progressive thinking.

THANK YOU FOR A JOB WELL DONE!

With gratitude,

Cheryl Hammond Hopewell