

AME Church elects new leadership and begins LGBTQ+ discernment process at 2021 General Conference

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://www.einpresswire.com/) -- The 51st Quadrennial Session of the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church met from July 6-10, 2021, at the West Concourse of the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida. Over 1600 delegates met as the church's supreme governance body to review and change the denomination's laws and policies, receive reports from its agencies, and elect denominational leadership.

Due to restrictions from the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly 200 delegates representing countries on the continent of Africa were unable to travel to the United States and were to participate via a satellite location in Cape Town, South Africa. After the South African government restricted in-person gatherings due to public health concerns, a virtual platform was created to allow these delegates to participate in the deliberations virtually.

"The 2021 General Conference was truly a test of the denomination's resilience and capacity to adapt," stated Dr. Jeffery B. Cooper, General Secretary of the AME Church. "In spite of the last-minute difficulties, we were able to ensure that all members of our family were able to share in this important aspect of the life of our Church. I am proud of our planning team and grateful to the AME Church leadership and delegates for their patience and understanding as we made this shift."

In addition to the business of the General Conference, greetings were received from the President and Vice President of the United States. AME Church member Congresswoman Val Demings of Florida delivered a keynote address to the assembly as well. Demings exclaimed that



Logo of the 51st General Conference

the role of the Church is to ensure that no one is left behind and that the most vulnerable among us are protected. Representative Demings called the Church to collective action, “The urgency is now.”

Among the legislation approved by the AME Church General Conference was an “AME Sexual Ethics Discernment Committee” designed to begin a three-year process to bring back recommendations to the 2024 General Conference. The committee is designed to “develop and propose legislation that propose legislation that undergirds the evangelical responsibility of the church “to minister to the social, spiritual, and physical development of all people” – including people of sexual orientations and gender identities.”

At the General Conference new Bishops, General Officers (Department Executives), and members of the Judicial Council were elected. The five incumbent General Officers were retained. New persons elected to leadership in the AME Church include:

Bishops

The Right Reverend Silvester Beaman, 139th Elected & Consecrated Bishop (Pastor of Bethel AME Church, Wilmington, Delaware).

The Reight Reverend Marvin C. Zanders, II, 140th Elected & Consecrated Bishop (Pastor of St. Paul AME Church, Jacksonville, Florida)

The Right Reverend Francine A. Brookins, 141st Elected & Consecrated Bishop (Pastor of Bethel AME Church, Fontana, California)

The Right Reverend Frederick A. Wright, Sr., 142nd Elected & Consecrated Bishop (Pastor of Quinn Chapel AME Church, Cincinnati, Ohio).

General Officers

Mr. Marcus Henderson, Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer of the AME Church

Rev. Dr. Marcellus A. Norris, Executive Director, Department of Church Growth and Development

Rev. Dr. John Green, Executive Director, Global Witness and Ministry

Rev. Dr. James Miller, Executive Director, Department of Retirement Services

Judicial Council Members

Rev. Dr. Jonathan C. Augustine, Judicial Council – Clergy

Rev. Dr. O. Jerome Green, Judicial Council— Clergy

Advocate Thabile Ngubeni, Judicial Council – Lay

Mrs. Monice Crawford—Lay Alternate

These elections marked several significant milestones. As a South African, Advocate Ngubeni became the first African lay person elected to the General Conference to serve in the AME Church in any capacity. Bishop Beaman delivered the benediction for the inauguration of President Joseph Biden. Bishop Zanders is the first Morehouse College graduate elected as a

Bishop in the AME Church. Bishop Francine A. Brookins is the fifth woman elected as a Bishop and is the daughter of the late Bishop Hamel Hartford Brookins. Bishop Wright is the first Bishop elected from Ohio since 1948 and the son of the first AME female Presiding Elder, Reverend Cordelia Wright.

The AME Church General Conference will next meet in July 2024 in Cincinnati, Ohio
“The 51st Session of the General Conference had ended with its joys and sorrows, challenges, and accomplishments and through it all we saw the hand of God. To God, be the Glory!” stated Bishop Anne Henning Byfield, President of the Council of Bishops.

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