

51st Quadrennial Session
of the
GENERAL CONFERENCE
on
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Opening Worship Service



Bishop E. Anne Henning Byfield,
President, Council of Bishops

Bishop Adam Jefferson Richardson, Jr.
Senior and Host Bishop

Bishop John Franklin White
Chair, General Conference Commission

Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie
Program Chair



Opening Worship Service

**IN OBSERVANCE OF
The Fifty-first Quadrennial Session
of the
General Conference
African Methodist Episcopal Church**

**Orange County Convention Center
Orlando, Florida**

**Cape Town International Convention Center
Cape Town, South Africa**

**Tuesday, The Sixth Day of July
Two Thousand Twenty-One
8:00 am – 11:00 am EDT 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm SAST**

The Order of Service

Bishop Adam Jefferson Richardson, Jr.
Worship Leader

The Moments of Praise

The MCAM Ensemble

The Proclamation *(from the rear of the Hall)*

Bishop Adam J. Richardson, Jr.
Senior Bishop and Host

The Fanfare Of Trumpets And Cymbals

Instrumental Ensemble

The Great Procession

Dancers, Connectional Officers, Judicial Council,
General Officers, Bishops

All Hail the Power of Jesus Name

AME Hymnal No. 5, Diadem

All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall, Let angels prostrate fall.
Bring forth the royal diadem,

*And crown Him, crown Him, crown Him, crown Him,
Crown Him, crown Him, crown Him
And crown Him Lord of all.*

Let every kindred, every tribe,
On this terrestrial ball, On this terrestrial ball,
To Him all majesty ascribe,

O that with yonder sacred throng
We at His feet may fall, We at His feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song,

The Doxology

Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow

AME Hymnal No. 647

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, the Heavenly host, Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The Call To Worship

Bishop Gregory G. M. Ingram

Bishop: I was glad when they said unto me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!" Our feet shall stand within Thy gates, O Jerusalem!

People: **For a day in Thy court is better than a thousand, I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.**

Bishop: Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek Thy good.

People: **Those that dwell in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.**

Bishop: Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, Lord, I have loved Thy habitation, the place where Thy honor dwelleth.

People: **For the Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him.**

Bishop: Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

People: **O sing unto the Lord a new song, for He has done marvelous things! Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth, and sing His praises.**

The Opening Hymn

Bishop Jeffrey N. Leath

And Are We Yet Alive

AME Hymnal No. 304

And are we yet alive, And see each other's face?
Glory and praise to Jesus give For His redeeming grace.

Preserve by power divine, To full salvation here,
Again, in Jesus praise we join, And in His sight appear.

What troubles have we seen, What conflicts have we passed,
Fightings without and fears within Since we assembled last.

But out of all the Lord, Hath brought us by His love.
And still, He doth His help afford, And hides our life above.

Then let us make our boast, Of His redeeming power,
Which saves us to the uttermost, Till we can sin no more.

Let us take up the cross Till we the crown obtain.
And gladly reckon all things loss, So we may Jesus gain.

The Invocation

Bishop Wilfred J. Messiah

The Choral Response

Let It Breathe on Me

AME Hymnal No. 295

*Let it breathe on me, Let it breathe on me.
Let the breath of God now breathe on me.
Let it breathe on me, Let it breathe on me,
Let the breath of God now breathe on me.*

The Anthem

Hallelujah Soulful Messiah

Eleventh District Choir

The Scripture Lessons

Old Testament

Isaiah 40:28-31 (NRSV)

Bishop Julius McAllister Sr.

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the

young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Epistle *II Timothy 2:11-15 (NRSV)* **Bishop Stafford J. N. Wicker**

The saying is sure: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself. Remind them of this, and warn them before God that they are to avoid wrangling over words, which does no good but only ruins those who are listening. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth.

Gospel *John 13:22-27 (NRSV)* **Bishop Paul J. M. Kawimbe**

The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking. One of his disciples—the one whom Jesus loved—was reclining next to him; Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. So, while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, “Lord, who is it?” Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.” So, when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “Do quickly what you are going to do.”

The Choral Preface To The Decalogue *From all that Dwell* **Bishop James L. Davis**
AME Hymnal No. 69

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

The Summary Of The Decalogue **Bishop James L. Davis**

Hear what Christ Our Savior saith, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And the second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.

The Gloria Patri *Glory Be to the Father*
AME Hymnal No. 626

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

The Gospel Selection *Total Praise* **Eleventh District Choir**

The Bicentennial Litany **Bishop E. Anne Henning Byfield**

Bishop: From the earliest points in our history, we declared at every Connectional meeting, “And are we yet alive to see each other’s face?” The answer always requires our faith to rise above reason, routine, and legacy.

People: **God has been more than enough through the tough and the rough; the fears and the failures, and the laudable and the incredible. Our answer is certain, our witness**

is sure, and our faith is indisputable. We are alive. We are not just alive; we are yet alive! Our spirits sing with the Savior's joy, we give glory and praise to Jesus for his redeeming grace.

Bishop: The Church has been preserved by God's keeping power to proclaim our theme: "From Legacy to Mission: A Call to Prophetic, Educational and Social Engagement." God's preservation led us through the sadness of life, the challenges of our faith, and the assault of the enemy.

People: **We confronted the pandemics of Covid-19; a frontal assault and murder of the lives of African Americans and people of the Diaspora; the crisis of demonic governmental leadership rising in all parts of the world, and a crisis of faith in God, and institutions. Even so, AME Schools received national acknowledgment, restoration of accreditation, new students, greater finances, and innovative programs. We built a new Sunday School Union, published the AME Discipline in Spanish, and saw expansions beyond our imaginations because we are preserved by power divine.**

Bishop: We assemble with joy, some with unjoy; some in strength, others in un-strength delighted to be in the presence of God and with each other. Seeing faces we thought we would never see again, and missing faces we will greet on the other side. We have faced schisms, denominational confusion, digital divide, doctrinal discord, and global crisis. But fightings without and fears within did not win for the AME brand was manifested in creative ways by the resilience of local congregations and the leadership of the Church.

People: **Life brought struggle, anguish, and conflict. We were pained at the deaths of AME leaders and African American leadership. Our rage erupted in response to daily murders of African Americans. Our hearts were burdened with continual media and social media assaults on our communities and churches. The quest for justice united us, COVID-19 deaths equalized us, depression and isolation fused our hearts in search for healing, and the yearning for in place worship bonded us. Alive we prayed and worked together in spirit and in truth.**

Bishop: Yet out of all God has brought us by Divine love; and still our God still help and hides our life above.

People: **God did a new thing, a new way. We were the church of Allen away from the buildings yet still together, still alive. Technology moved from being criticized to complimented. We accomplished many things we thought would never be done. Young adults emerged. Online conferences connected the Connection, natural disasters galvanized us, injustices motivated us to fight once again. Our spiritual roots compelled us to be the Church not at the church to address disparities and serve the needs of the Black, Brown and underserved communities disproportionately impacted by poverty, hunger, sickness, and the need for coronavirus vaccines.**

Bishop: By God's love we are here, never giving up, never turning around. We are here to boast of God's redeeming power and to take up the cross till we the crown obtain. We are here; and yet alive.

People: Sing unto the Lord a new song for God has done marvelous things. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth, sing praises. Release the praise, shout the victory. With masks and social distancing declare it strongly, we are alive. We are here. Delay is not denial. We are in the 51st Session of the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church

Bishop: And the people said:
ALL: AMEN! AMEN! AMEN!

The Offering For Missions

Bishop David Rwhynica Daniels

The Choral Response

We give Thee but Thine Own
AME Hymnal No. 645

We give Thee but Thine own, whate'er the gift may be.
All that we have is Thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from Thee.

The Presentation Of The Preacher

Bishop John R. Bryant

The Sermonic Selection

"For Every Mountain"

Crystal Akin, Guest Soloist

The Quadrennial Sermon

Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie

The Invitation To Christian Discipleship

The Offertory

Bishop Samuel L. Green Sr.

The Offertory Response

All Things Come of Thee
AME Hymnal No. 644

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

The Announcements

Bishop Ronnie E. Brailsford, Sr.

THE TRANSFER OF THE PRESIDENTIAL MEDALLION LITANY

The Presentation

Bishop Michael L. Mitchell

The Medallion of office like Elijah's Mantle: It is useful only when it is hallowed with service. It is sacred only when it attaches to a cause beyond itself. The Medallion of office like the mantle of Elijah, is larger and greater than any one person or any one time. It is to be passed on, handed down from generation to generation, growing lustrous from use, and rendering illustrious to its user. So, with this Medallion, we had down the history of God's people in their endeavor to liberate and reconcile all humanity through the African Methodist Episcopal Church. This Medallion represents how far we have come and how far we have yet to go.

The Response**Bishop E. Anne Henning Byfield**

I receive this Medallion, mindful of the responsibilities and trust encroached with my accepting it.

The Charge**Bishop Adam Jefferson Richardson Jr.***Senior Bishop*

My sister, I has pleased Almighty God to permit you to become by succession, the presiding officer among chief pastors in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Your fellow bishops, along with the people of the church, do here solemnly confirm your presidency. You surely know who weighty an obligation and how great a trust is laid upon you. Will you, as President of the Council, pattern your life after that of our Lord Jesus Christ, who came not to be served but to serve? Will you strive to demonstrate leadership that will keep our Church in the vanguard of love, liberation, and reconciliation of all the family of God?

The Response**Bishop E. Anne Henning Byfield**

I will endeavor to fulfill my obligation as President and manifest a faith that will demonstrate total commitment to love, liberation, and reconciliation.

The Covenant**Bishops E. Anne Henning Byfield,
Ronnie E. Brailsford & Stafford J. N. Wicker**

As officers of the Council of Bishops, we do here renew our pledge to uphold the highest in Christian leadership and to continue unbroken the tradition of liberation, love, and reconciliation as we live our motto: "God our Father, Christ our Redeemer, the Holy Spirit our Comforter, Humankind our Family."

The Response *(All standing)*

Bishops: We have this charge of leadership as a legacy from our fathers and mothers. We shall honor and guard it with our lives, being faithful to our Lord, and to the mandate of the people who elevated us from their ranks to this opportunity of service.

People: **We have a heart, mind, soul, and willingness to follow. Lead us and lead us well that all might walk in love, liberation, and reconciliation, enabling us to be a visible manifestation of our Christian faith and works.**

The Prayer**Bishop Harry Lee Seawright****The Prayer Response***O Come Give Thanks (Byfield)***MCAM Ensemble****The Investiture Response****Bishop E. Anne Henning Byfield****The Doxology***Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow*

AME Hymnal No. 647

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, the Heavenly host, Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The Benediction**Bishop E. Earl McCloud, Jr.**

The Recessional

Siyahamba "We are Marching in the Light of God."

Bishop Frank M. Reid III

Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos',
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos',
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos',
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwen-,
Khanyen' kwenkhos',
Siyahamba, hamba,
Siyahamba, hamba,
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwen-,
Khanyen' kwenkhos'.
Siyahamba, hamba,
Siyahamba, hamba,
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'.

We are marching in the light of God,
We are marching in the light of God,
We are marching in the light of God,
We are marching in the light of,
The light of God,
We are marching, marching,
We are marching, marching,
We are marching in the light of,
The light of God,
We are marching, marching,
We are marching, marching,
We are marching in the light of God.