



# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
ELEVENTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

## 2024 Advent Devotional



HOPE • PEACE • JOY • LOVE  
**ADVENT**

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## ADVENT 2024

Advent is a four-week journey towards Bethlehem. During Advent, we prepare for Jesus' coming—represented by the four candles around the Advent wreath. He who brought Light into the darkness brings light into our hearts.

The word “Advent” comes from the Latin word “adventus,” which means “a coming, approach, arrival.” When we expect guests to arrive at our homes, we turn the lights on; we anticipate their arrival and welcome them with joy. In Advent, we prepare our homes and churches as we joyfully anticipate Jesus' arrival, and **the light also becomes brighter as we near Christmas day**, the day on which the Light of the World was born.

### Advent Candles and their Meaning

Week of Advent	Candle Meaning	Candle Color
Advent week 1	Hope: Prophecy Candle	Purple
Advent week 2	Peace: Bethlehem Candle	Purple
Advent week 3	Joy: Shepherd's Candle	Pink
Advent week 4	Love: Angel's Candle	Purple

### Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath is a centuries-old Christian tradition. Potentially overlooked by the candles it holds to light the way for the birth of Jesus, the Advent wreath itself symbolizes many themes and beliefs central to the Christian faith. The circular shape of the Advent wreath symbolizes God's infinite love for us—it is never-ending, just like the true Light of the World, Jesus, who leads us into eternal life with Him.

The materials of the Advent wreath similarly led us to reflect on the everlasting nature of God; traditionally, Advent wreaths have been made of evergreen leaves, such as pine or fir, which maintain their green color beyond the season in which they are collected.

### Advent Devotions 2024

Enclosed are Advent Devotions from Bishop Marvin Clyde Zanders II, Presiding Prelate, 11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and ministry leaders who are an extension of our Bishop's leadership. Many thanks to those who contributed to this Advent Devotional. It is our prayer that these devotions will provide a sense of great expectation for the coming of the Christ child afresh into our hearts.

All scripture references in this Advent 2024 Devotional are from the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible.

**Sunday, December 1, 2024**

**HOPE FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE**

*The days are coming, declares the Lord, 'when I will fulfill the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah. "In those days and at that time. I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line; he will do what is just and right in the land. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which it will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Savior', (Jer 33:14-16 NIV).*

As we enter this Advent season, the prophecy of Jeremiah is a timely message considering the current climate of these United States of America. The elections last month may have left many people in despair and hopeless, but Jeremiah's prophecy prompts us to remember God's promise to restore hope through the Savior.

God spoke through the prophet to people who were no strangers to suffering, exile, and oppression. Jeremiah spoke into the lives of those who learned first, what it means to wait, to endure, and to hold on to hope when everything around them seemed broken. As African Americans, we can relate to this, because our history has taught us resilience through trials, faith, and endurance through hope. We know what it means to trust in a God who declares freedom and justice, even when society makes attempts to deny them both.

The hope put before us by Jeremiah's message is not contingent on the systems or leadership of any people, or those who resides at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, but rather in the Lord, who himself is our righteousness. Just as the promise was fulfilled in Jesus, we can be certain that God's promises of liberation, equality, restoration, and peace shall come to fulfillment. May we be strengthened in the knowledge that our God is a God of justice for the people. Additionally, may this Advent be a time of hopeful anticipation, remembering that God's promises are certain!

**Prayer:** *God, thank You for being faithful to fulfill Your promises. Thank You for the gift of Jesus, who brings justice, righteousness, and salvation. Help us to live with hearts full of hope, preparing for the day when Christ will come. In Jesus Name. Amen!*

**The Reverend Dr. Paula Lake**

Christian Education Director

11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District

African Methodist Episcopal Church

**Monday, December 2, 2024**

**FORETELLING OF THE CHRIST CHILD**

*The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this, (Is 9:2, 6-7).*

The titles/names of the Christ child are so powerful and gives us hope. Wonderful Counselor means we can trust him, Jesus will deliver and guide us into all truths. When the voices of the believer's shout, "Mighty God," it reassures us that Jesus is all-powerful and all knowing. As our Everlasting Father, Jesus will always cover and protect His children to the very end of the world and beyond. Thank You, God, for sending your son Jesus to be our Prince of Peace. Philippians 4:7 says, *Jesus gives us a "peace of God which surpasses all understanding."*

Each name gives us hope, strength, and a desire to do God's will, God's way. Along this spiritual journey, that, even in our darkest moments in life we can trust God through the process. Remember Isaiah 9:6 says, *"The government will be upon his shoulders,"* meaning Jesus came into the world that we would never have to bear our cross alone. During this season of expectancy, let us have a zeal to live a life full of joy, peace, love and kindness.

**Prayer:** *Dear Heavenly Creator. Thank You for being wonderful, mighty, eternal, and peaceful. Lord, God, I trust You with my whole heart knowing You are there for me when I am not there for myself. Thank You for sending Your son Jesus that we would have life and have it more abundantly. My hope is in You, In Jesus name, Amen.*

**The Reverend Dr. Rhella P. Murdaugh**

Curriculum Chair

Christian Education Department

11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District | AME Church

Lead Pastor

Mt. Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church

Ocala, Florida

**Tuesday, December 3, 2024**

**HOPE IN GOD DESPITE TRIALS**

*In you, LORD my God, I put my trust. I trust in you; do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me. No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame, but shame will come on those who are treacherous without cause. Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. (Ps 25:1-5).*

David prays for guidance and for deliverance. We live in a world where so many have lost hope, and many others need deliverance. We live in a world where there are political leaders that specialize in tearing people down instead of building people up or helping them through tough times. Christians often are discouraging instead of encouraging.

David reminds us that no matter what we might be experiencing in life, we can hope in God. There are times when we are frustrated because opposition is on every side, and we do not understand why or how long before things will be resolved. There are times when the enemy will try to intimidate or try to distract us. However, we know that God can strengthen and protect us. Trust God, who will lead us and teach us. As you wait on the Lord this Advent season, remember to always hope in Him.

**Prayer:** *Our Father and our God, thank You for reminding us to always hope in You. When we are discounted, or disrespected, we will hope in You. Lord, since You have saved us from sin that stains and stifles, we will hope in You. In Jesus Name I pray. Amen.*

**The Reverend Dr. Roy Jones, Jr.**

Christian Education Director

Central Annual Conference

11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District | AME Church

Lead Pastor

Saint James African Methodist Episcopal Church

Titusville, Florida

Wednesday, December 4, 2024

## ROOTS OF HOPE: A LEGACY OF FAITH

*And again, Isaiah says, “The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; in him the Gentiles will hope.” May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit, (Rom 15:12-13).*

Reflecting on Romans 15:12-13, we find a profound proclamation of hope rooted in Christ, “There shall be a root of Jesse,” signifying a Savior who brings joy and peace to all who believe. This passage calls me to remember our founder, Richard Allen, who, over 200 years ago, founded the African Methodist Episcopal Church. His vision was a haven for African Americans seeking spiritual nourishment and community. The AME Church is more than a denomination; it is a testament to our ancestors’ enduring hope in God’s promise of liberation and equality.

Amid oppression, our ancestors’ faith flourished like a mighty tree. Their songs, prayers, and steadfast belief in God inspired unity and empowerment in a community facing systemic barriers. The prayer meetings, worship services, and gatherings within AME churches reflected a hope that, despite trials, were anchored in a divine purpose.

As we embark on this Advent season, let us honor the roots of our faith that Richard Allen nurtured and the community that rose from it. May this time be a heartfelt reminder of the joy and peace we find in believing, filled with the hope our ancestors valiantly passed down.

**Prayer:** *Abba Father, we thank You for the rich legacy of faith established by our ancestors and leaders like Richard Allen. As we remember their struggles and triumphs, may we draw strength from their hope in You. Fill our hearts with joy and peace through the Holy Spirit, guiding us as we continue their faith, empowerment, and love mission. Let us honor their memory by sharing hope with others and embodying the love of Christ in our communities. In Jesus Christ of Nazareth’s Name, we pray. Amen.*

**The Reverend Reginald Johnson**

Superintendent

Church School/Bible Discovery Hour

11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District | AME Church

Lead Pastor

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church

DeLand, Florida

Thursday, December 5, 2024

## HOPE IN FAITH RESTORED

*How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith. Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones, (1 Thes 3:9-13).*

During the last two quarters of the 2024 presidential election campaign season, I dared to allow myself to hope. Admittedly, it was a big hope. I had hoped that America would press pass its long-held bigotries and prejudices. I had hoped that America would set aside the deep seeded racism that is as old as her birth. And, I had hoped that America would move pass the anti-immigrant and misogynistic rhetoric and attitude that has become the centerpiece of its cultural fabric. But hope, always the elusive creature, once again, evaded me. In the aftermath of this hard-fought Presidential campaign, some of us may be feeling like Paul. There is a sense of dread and hopelessness. For others, their faith shaken giving rise to the return of despair. There is buyers' remorse as the realization set in that some voted against their own best interest and for the illusion of proximity to power and whiteness.

In the face of hopelessness and despair, regret and trepidation, the season of Advent --- the season of Holy Expectation serves as a reminder that we are to hope in the intangible. The themes of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love cause us to focus on something beyond ourselves and our despair. The flame of the hope candle serves to remind us of the power of the light of Jesus that each of us carry within ourselves. It is this burning flame that will burn bright against the coming dark days leading us to hope.

Beloved, I strongly encourage each of us to take hold of these words of the Apostle Paul to the church at Thessalonica. Use them as balm to help heal a hurting nation and world in the abyss of our expectant waiting. It is Paul's hope for the world, and it can be our hope in faith restored as well.

**PRAYER:** *God of the whole of our lives; there are days when the burdens we carry chafe our spirits and weigh us down; when the road seems dreary and endless, the skies gray and threatening; when our lives have no music in them, and our hearts are lonely, and our souls have lost their courage. On days like these, flood our path with light, turn our eyes to where the skies are full of promise; tune our hearts to brave music; give us a sense of comradeship with the saints and heroes of every age; quicken our spirits that we may be able to encourage the souls of all who journey with us on the road of life, to Your honor and glory—attributed to Augustine*

**The Reverend Dr. Missiouri L. McPhee**

Connectional Director of Boy Scouts

Association of African Methodist Episcopal Scouts (AAMES)

Department of Christian Education

African Methodist Episcopal Church

Secretary | Board of Christian Education

11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District | AME Church

**Friday, December 6, 2024**

## **HOPE TO ESCAPE THE WRATH TO COME**

*There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time, they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” He told them this parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near. “Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.*

*“Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man, (Lk 21:25-36).*

In today’s text, Jesus teaches a message of hope to his disciples and followers, and no one else. As 21<sup>st</sup> century believers, we must adhere to Jesus’ teaching as well. Jesus says, no one knows the time of His second coming, therefore, we must be careful of those who come in His name, proclaiming the time is near.

Jesus said, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, famines, and pestilences in various places... On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken.” These events are happening now. I hope we are prepared by trusting, believing, learning and following Jesus.

Hopeful warning signs are occurring all around us. We must not be so preoccupied in what we are doing that we miss opportunities to be a part of what God is doing and fall prey to the evil one. The warning signs of what is coming are contained in scripture and played out in real time in our midst. The prophet Isaiah warns Hezekiah to get his house in order, and we must do likewise. Our time under God is now, and now is the time for all believers to live in hope according to God’s Word, avoid wrath, and experience God’s kingdom on earth in our generation and in the generations to come.

**Prayer:** *Lord God, in this season of hope, give us the blessed assurance and strength to rebuke the evil one in all its forms. Allow us to hold fast to the truth of Your Word to be able to stand tall, with our heads held high, and walk upright, because your redemption is drawing near. In Jesus Name we pray. Amen.*

**Dr. Donnell J. Moore**

Christian Education Director

Daytona Beach District | Central Annual Conference

11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District | AME Church



**Saturday, December 7, 2024**

**FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS**

*In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene— during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: “A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. And all people will see God’s salvation, (Lk 3:1-6).*

During a powerful political time, John the Baptist, the son of Zechariah, a Jewish temple priest and Elizabeth, a descendant of Aaron, was summoned by the Lord. The call was during a time of major corruption and moral degradation of the Roman Empire, especially in the distant provinces like Judea. Luke, the author begins in chapter 3:1 explaining who these leaders were. He identifies some of the high priests who were more into the power of politics than the power of God. However, as soon as he was done informing us about these leaders, he shifts us from polluted politics to showing us what it looks like to live out our purpose during a time of corrupted chaos. John the Baptist who lived in the wilderness, wore clothes made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and ate locusts and wild honey was chosen to live out the prophecy that was spoken by the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 40:3-5. Yes, he was different, but his main mission was to prepare the way for Jesus by calling people to repent and turn to God.

Just like John the Baptist, God has an assignment for each of us during these uncertain times. You may feel like you are in a strange place in your life right now, but it is from that strange place that God is going to call you out. It is in your wilderness that you are going to discover your Kingdom Assignment. Let God meet you where you are and lead you to where he has purposed you to be.

**Prayer:** *Holy Spirit, in these times that I am living, lead and guide me into my kingdom assignment. I want to live on purpose and not just exist. In Jesus Name! Amen.*

**The Reverend L. Octavius Smith**  
Superintendent  
Church School/Bible Discovery Hour  
Central Annual Conference  
11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District | AME Church

**Sunday, December 8, 2024**

**PEACE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD**

*I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years, (Mal 3:1-4).*

I invite you to reflect on the profound promise found in Malachi 3:1-4 during this Advent season. These verses remind us of the coming of the Lord, and a messenger who will prepare the way before Him. Amid your busy life and the noise of the world, you can find peace by recognizing His presence around you. As you meditate on the implication of each verse below, you will find peace:

**Verse One:** Just as a messenger prepares the way, we are called to prepare our hearts. This Advent, take time for introspection and prayer. Create a space in your life for God's presence. It is in this stillness that you will find true peace.

**Verse Two:** Malachi speaks of the Lord as a refiner's fire. While refining can be uncomfortable, it is ultimately for our good. Trust that God's work is leading to purity and strength. In God's presence, you are transformed, and your burdens are lightened.

**Verse Three:** The promise of God's coming brings hope. Rest in God's faithfulness, knowing that God will fulfill God's promises. This Advent, reflect on the ways God has been present in your life and find comfort in God's unwavering love.

**Verse Four:** As you experience peace in His presence, share that peace with others, allow your joy and tranquility to serve as a light in the lives of those around you, and reach out to friends and family offering kindness, hope, and encouragement.

**Prayer:** *Most Gracious Holy One, as we await the celebration of Jesus' birth, bless us to lean into the promise of Malachi. As we await, reminds us that in His presence, we find peace that surpasses all understanding. Lord, prepare our hearts for the joy of His coming. Our prayer is that this Advent season be filled with hope, reflection, and the comforting assurance of His gracious love. Amen.*

**The Reverend Dr. Vaseal V. Montgomery**

Christian Education Director

East Annual Conference

11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District | AME Church

**Monday, December 9, 2024**

**PREPARE, PEACE AND PARDON**

*Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken, (Is 40:1-5).*

Isaiah's name means "Yahweh saves or the Salvation of the Lord," and he was commissioned by God to speak to God's people a message of hope and peace during exile. They were exiled because of their disobedience toward God. In chapters 1-39, Isaiah explains the consequences of disobedience which causes sin, destruction, suffering, pain and exile. As a result of their sin, God invoked consequences which caused grief, hurt, suffering, and disillusion. However, just as there are consequences for sin, there is forgiveness of sin. In chapter 40: 1-5, God's love, assurance, and forgiveness is revealed as God tells Isaiah to speak to his people tenderly, comforting them and letting them know that God still care.

We have experienced the impact of COVID 19, and recently the devastation of hurricanes Helene and Milton, and many have suffered. When we face difficulty, trying times and discouragement, God still reigns and is still our God. Even when we walk away from God, God's arms are stretch wide allowing us to repent, be pardon, and reconciled. In God, there is peace, hope, and love. Through Jesus, peace is established and secured because He paid the price for our redemption. Therefore, we can be comforted because in Jesus, there is strength for the journey, deliverance from sin, a double blessing, calmness in chaos, unity in division, love replacing hate, equality in one sidedness, and pardoning of sin. Remember, the words of Luke 2:14, "Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth "peace" among those whom God favors!" Be blessed and prepare to receive Jesus by saying, "yes" to him daily and receive the glory of the Lord through peace.

**Prayer:** *Lord, God, during this Advent season, pour into us your peace, love, forgiveness and reconciliation as we accept Jesus into our lives again and again. In Jesus the Christ Name we pray. Amen.*

**The Reverend Mandella P. Smith**

Superintendent

Church School/Bible Discovery Hour

East Annual Conference

11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District | AME Church

**Tuesday, December 10, 2024**

**JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY**

*And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace”, (Lk 1:76-79).*

“Walk in the Light” is a standard hymn of the Black church. The lyrics are reflective of the prophecy of Zecharia and the fulfillment of that prophetic promise by Jesus. The refrain says, “Walk in the light, beautiful light; come where the dewdrops of mercy shine bright; shine all around us by day and by night, Jesus the light of the world.”

As believers, we are called to “come” where the dewdrops of mercy shine bright. To walk in the light is to walk in the fulfillment of the promised Messiah. We are told that John was not the light, but he bore witness to the light, and prepared God’s people for Jesus’ arrival.

John grew up in the desert and called Jews out of a Judaic system to “come” to the desert in preparation of the Messiah. What is interesting is the parallel. John was called to prepare the way for the promised Messiah, and his ministry would also be the forerunner to the establishment of the Christian church. John called the Jews living under Roman authority to come to the desert to prepare by growing in the knowledge of the One who was to come. The Christian church, the *ecclesia* or the “called out ones” was established on the premise of believers being called out and set apart for service unto the Lord. John prepared the way for Jesus to save us, and we too must prepare the way for those who know not Jesus in the pardoning of their sin so they too can be saved.

**Prayer:** *O Lord, in the season of Advent You call us out to come and receive a peace that passes all understanding. We pray the light of peace that shines within us drive out the darkness that is all around us. In Jesus Name. Amen.*

**Dr. Donnell J. Moore**

Christian Education Director

Daytona Beach District | Central Annual Conference

11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District | AME Church

**Wednesday, December 11, 2024**

**ENCOURAGEMENT TO LIVE IN PEACE**

*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to the God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus, (Phil 4:4-7).*

Have you ever experienced a situation that disrupted your life and disturbed your peace? Has life been “lifing” in your context? Has the enemy’s attack left you broken and dismayed? As believers in Christ, we are not exempt from experiencing life's challenges. However, we can decide how we respond to tests, trials, and tribulations. It is easy to rejoice and be at peace when life is going well, but it is quite different when life presents challenges. As believers, we must decide that our inner attitude will not reflect our outward circumstances.

The Apostle Paul wrote this scripture while he was in prison. It seems strange that a person in prison would write a letter encouraging others to rejoice and live a life of peace. Paul challenges the believers to be anxious about nothing but to turn their pity party into a praise party while making their requests known to the Lord. We worry about our families, situations on our jobs, homes, finances, health, and other areas of life, but Paul encourages us to turn those worries into prayer. Do you want to worry less, then pray more. Whenever you start worrying, stop and pray.

God’s peace is different from the world’s peace. A life without challenges will not provide true peace. True peace comes from knowing that God is in control, you are a kingdom citizen, your destiny is set, and we can be victorious over sin and circumstances; it gives us peace. Let God's peace guard your heart and mind no matter your situation.

**Prayer:** *Dear God, thank You for reminding us that life is not always easy, but You give us the faith and peace to make it through our difficult moments. Therefore, when life happens, we will rejoice, knowing we do not have to be anxious about anything. Thank You, God, for giving us a peace that transcends all understanding. In the Name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.*

**The Reverend Marque D. Woodard**

Assistant Coordinator

Sons of Allen

11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District | AME Church

Thursday, December 12<sup>th</sup>

## COMPLETION OF A GOOD WORK ALREADY BEGUN

*I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God, (Phil 1:3-11).*

In Philippians 1, Paul expresses deep gratitude for the Philippians believers, and his words resonate with a profound sense of peace. He begins by thanking God for their partnership in the Gospel, illustrating how community can be a source of comfort and joy. This passage invites us to reflect on how our relationships contribute to our spiritual peace.

Paul's confidence that God will carry His good work to completion speaks to the peace we find in trusting God's plan. In a world filled with uncertainty, knowing that God is actively involved in our growth can bring immense reassurance. It reminds us that our progress in faith is not solely our responsibility; it is rooted in His faithfulness.

As Paul prays for the Philippians, he emphasizes a love that abounds in knowledge. This love nurtures our relationships, fostering harmony and understanding. When we approach one another with a spirit of love, we create an environment where peace can thrive. Consider the relationships in your life. Are there conflicts or tensions that need addressing? The season of Advent is the perfect time to do it. Paul's call to love encourages us to seek resolution, bringing God's peace into those situations.

During this season of expectation, commit to prayerfully lifting each other up, asking for God's peace to envelop our hearts and minds. As we embrace the unity that comes from shared faith, may we reflect the peace of Christ in our lives, shining His light in a world that desperately needs it. In trusting God's completed work, we not only find peace for ourselves, but the ability to extend that peace to others.

**Prayer:** Holy God, as we journey through this Advent season, fill our hearts with Your peace amid the busyness and anticipation. Help us to reflect Your calm and love to those around us, creating a sanctuary of hope and joy. Amen.

**The Reverend Lynnette R. Daughtry**

Christian Education Director

West Coast Annual Conference

11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District | AME Church

Lead Pastor

Payne Chapel AME Church

Sarasota, Florida

**Friday, December 13, 2024**

**BEING KEPT IN PERFECT PEACE**

*You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you, (Is 26:3).*

Advent is a season of great anticipation and expectation of the coming of Christ. This week, our focus has been on peace. Isaiah 26:3 is the pinnacle of the peace that Christ has to offer to us. Perfect is synonymous with complete, so in essence, this verse speaks to the complete peace that can be found only in Christ. When the world that we live in seems to be devoid of peace, and in fact produces a “peacelessness” that troubles our soul and causes turbulence in our spirit, we have a blessed assurance that if we put our trust in the Lord, He gives us peace that surpasses all understanding.

Buddha, Confucius nor anything else we may make our idol god can give us the peace that comes from trusting the Lord. When we trust Christ with our life and He becomes our provider and sustainer, peace will be realized in Him. When we need peace that flows like a river, we can find it in Christ. No matter what atrocities life may throw our way, with Christ, we can boldly say “It is well (It is well) with my soul (with my soul), It is well, it is well with my soul.”

**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, as we are tossed on the restless seas of time and as we experience the ups and downs of life, help us to remember in this Advent season that we can stand on Your promises. You said in Your Word, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you...Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Please lead us and guide us so that we experience peace even in our trials and tribulations. Help us to wait patiently for Your return so that we might experience eternal peace that can only be found in your presence. In the Name of Jesus we pray, Amen.*

**The Reverend Kirk R. Bogen**

Superintendent

Church School/Bible Discover Hour

West Coast Annual Conference

11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District | AME Church

Lead Pastor

St. Luke AME Church

Tampa, Florida

**Saturday, December 14, 2024**

**LET PEACE RULE YOUR HEART**

*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful, (Col 3:15).*

These days, the world is full of people in and outside the church that love to operate on their own agendas, excising their gifts for wrong doings. In the season of Advent, Paul encourages us to act as one body in peace and unity. The love of Christ must be the foundation of our unity. It is not enough for us to simply be in the same place, at the same time, doing the same work. We must be deeply connected by the love of Christ that compels us to care for one another, to listen to one another, and to walk side by side in this journey of life and ministry. God's love, and unity exhibits the peace of Christ that can help rule in us this season. So, let us continue this journey together in peace and unity, bound by love, and empowered by the Spirit.

**Prayer:** *God, Your peace helps to rule this world, which overrules the chaos in this world. Amen.*

**Sister Raven Gainous**

President

Richard Allen Young Adult Council

11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District | AME Church



**Sunday, December 15, 2024**

**JESUS RESTORES WITH JOY**

*Sing, Daughter Zion; shout aloud, Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, Daughter Jerusalem! The LORD has taken away your punishment, he has turned back your enemy. The LORD, the King of Israel, is with you; never again will you fear any harm. On that day they will say to Jerusalem, "Do not fear, Zion; do not let your hands hang limp. The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you but will rejoice over you with singing." "I will remove from you all who mourn over the loss of your appointed festivals, which is a burden and reproach for you. At that time, I will deal with all who oppressed you. I will rescue the lame; I will gather the exiles. I will give them praise and honor in every land where they have suffered shame. At that time, I will gather you; at that time, I will bring you home. I will give you honor and praise among all the peoples of the earth when I restore your fortunes before your very eyes," says the LORD, (Zep 3:14-20).*

Sometimes in life, especially during this holiday season, we may feel alone, broken, defeated and abandoned by all who love us both near and far. The loneliness is so deep and disheartening that you simply want to give up. But wait! There is a solution that will remove all the loneliness, lack of energy, and or desire to put one foot in front of the other to keep on going. Yes, there is.

Our Lord and Savior is waiting for us to confess our sins unto him. He wants us to reverence him and be faithful unto him. He will provide a safe haven for us. A place where we can be restored and protected from the evils of this society. Simply call on his name and confess with your mouth that He is Lord, and you will be rescued from your loneliness and defeat. Your life will be blessed with songs of joy and happiness. All that you may have lost in this time of trouble will be restored, according to His riches and glory in heaven.

**Prayer:** *Father in heaven, I come to You at this moment in my life for restoration, Oh God. I come to You to receive and hear my earnest cry of deliverance from loneliness, hurt, and pain. I confess to You, Oh Lord, any sin I may have committed through word, thought, or deed. Forgive me, Oh Lord, and bless me, today. In Jesus Name, I pray. Amen.*

**Sister Novella Jones**

Commissioner

Christian Debutante Master Commission

11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District | AME Church

**Monday, December 16, 2024**

**GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY**

*And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests, (Lk 2:8-14).*

As we reflect on this Advent season and the angel’s message of “great joy,” it is hard to ignore the challenges we face in today’s world. Economic struggles, uncertainty about the future, and the ongoing need for peace and justice are all real concerns. Yet, this season reminds us that joy does not depend on circumstances—it is God’s gift to us, even amid hard times.

The shepherds, who were marginalized and overlooked, received this joyful news first, highlighting that God’s love reaches everyone, especially in difficult moments. Today, this message rings true as we seek joy in the face of challenges. Like those shepherds, we are invited to hear God’s Good News, to lift our heads, and to carry joy that is not tied to earthly conditions but anchored in Christ’s birth.

Let us use this season to bring light to others who may feel weighed down. Amid the chaos, we can embody God’s peace and joy, sharing the hope we have with neighbors, and communities who need it most. Our witness in these trying times speaks volumes, testifying to a joy that only Christ can give.

**Prayer:** *Lord, thank you for Your gift of joy, a joy that is not based on circumstances but on Your unchanging love. Help us to live as beacons of this joy and to bring hope to those around us, especially in times of difficulty. May Your presence sustain us and renew our hearts this Advent. Amen.*

**The Reverend Michael Clark**  
Christian Education Director  
South Annual Conference  
11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District | AME Church

**Tuesday, December 17, 2024**

**THE JOY OF GOD'S PEOPLE UPON HIS COMING**

*The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy, (Is 35:1-2).*

These verses remind us of the transformative power of God's presence. Just as a barren desert springs to life with flowers and joy upon receiving rain, so too will our hearts overflow with joy when we recognize the coming of the Lord.

In a world often overshadowed by despair and uncertainty, the promise of God's coming brings hope. This joy is not merely a fleeting emotion; it is a deep-seated assurance that God is actively working in our lives. When we anticipate His arrival, our spirits awaken to the beauty of His creation and the abundance of His blessings.

As God's people, we are called to cultivate this joy within us. It challenges us to look beyond our circumstances and focus on the goodness of God. The joy we experience is a testimony to others, inviting them to seek the source of our hope.

Let us take a moment to reflect on the joy that comes with the knowledge of God's presence in our lives. May we be like the blossoming crocus; vibrant, and full of life, as we await His coming.

**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, thank You for the promise of Your coming and the joy that it brings. Help us to cultivate a heart of gladness and to share this joy with those around us. May we always remember that in Your presence, our spirits can thrive like a blooming desert. Strengthen our faith and fill us with hope as we wait for You. In Jesus Name, we pray. Amen.*

**The Reverend George Hardy**

Coordinator

Sons of Allen

11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District | AME Church

**Wednesday, December 18, 2024**

**EXPERIENCING A LIFE OF JOY**

*You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand, (Ps 16:11).*

God is our “Joy!” He is the joy of our salvation. When we study the Bible as a part of our daily faith tradition, we discover several inspiring points about the experience of joy. Part of the reason why many of us struggle to find or experience joy, is because we confuse joy with “feeling good.” The truth is that no amount of materialistic things or comforts can compensate for the lack of joy many experience in the depths of their souls.

The source of our joy is not what we have. It lies in Emmanuel, the name which means “God is with us” (Mt 1:23). Another feature of joy in the Bible is that it comes about through God’s saving work. God’s presence among His people is not static. When God’s people experience being born again (Salvation) joy flows in abundance. We see this with people like Hannah who exhorts in Yahweh ... “for I rejoice in your deliverance” (1 Sam 2:1) and great things for me, (Lk 1:47, 49).

**Prayer:** *Heaven Father, Thank You for the greatest gift of all, Jesus the Christ. Thank You for grace and mercy. Thank You for all in one. Thank You for the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Thank You for Christmas and a new day! Amen!*

**The Reverend Olivett Johnson, Th.D.**

Superintendent

Church School/Bible Discovery Hour

South Annual Conference

11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District | AME Church

**Thursday, December 19, 2024**

**STEADFAST REJOICING THROUGH THE STORMS**

*Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I say rejoice, (Phil 4:4)!*

Can you imagine a world where we all get along in harmony and peace? Such a world would be heavenly. Unfortunately, this does not describe the world in which we live nor the world to which the Apostle Paul wrote the words of Philippians 4:4. The world in which we live gives us a reason to lock doors and set alarms—not just at home or in the workplace. Even in what we consider to be religious or sacred spaces, we often find ourselves approaching one another with caution; locking spiritual doors and setting spiritual alarms to guard our minds and hearts from not knowing which of us is in no mood for the fruit of the Spirit. Yet. Here we are in the year of our LORD, 2024, commemorating and raising awareness of another Advent Season. A season that directs us toward self-reflection.

In the self-reflection of our contributions to kingdom building on this journey we call life, we as Christians, are being called to rejoice. This is despite the storms of life appearing to have no end. Our calling is not to focus on the many challenges and difficulties we face on a good and regular basis. But instead, our call and challenge from God, through the Apostle Paul and the church at Philippi is for us to focus on the relationship we have with the true and living God. To focus on the goodness of God and all that God is doing in us and through us. Therefore, as often as we think on these things we rejoice, and again we rejoice.

**Prayer:** *Lord, help us to be steadfast in our rejoicing over who we are in You.*

**The Reverend Willie Merrick**  
Christian Education Director  
Florida Annual Conference  
11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District | AME Church

**Friday, December 20, 2024**

**JOY IN THE WELLS OF SALVATION**

*In that day you will say: "I will praise you, LORD. Although you were angry with me, your anger has turned away and you have comforted me. Surely God is my salvation. I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD himself, is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation." With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. In that day you will say: "Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you, (Is 12:1-6).*

Isaiah uses this song of praise and thanksgiving to describe the joyfulness that believers will experience at the coming of Jesus Christ. He employs "the wells of salvation" metaphor to provide hope and encouragement. The phrase symbolizes the abundance of spiritual resources available to believers. Drinking from these wells continuously, according to Isaiah, will result in salvation being an on-going versus a one-time experience. From the day one first believes to the present, and ultimately to the day of Jesus' return, salvation should be continuous. Advent provides innumerable opportunities to find and drink from the wells of salvation. Let us commit ourselves to seeking true joy that is reflective of the gladness and exuberance that our initial encounters with Jesus Christ evoked in us.

**Prayer:** *Father God, thank You for Your faithfulness and the joy the wells of salvation provide. Please forgive our sins and bless us to be ready for Jesus' return. In His Name, we pray. Amen.*

**Dr. Catherine S. Powell**

Assistant Christian Education Director  
Florida Annual Conference  
11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District | AME Church

**Saturday, December 21, 2024**

**THE JOY OF THE COMING MESSIAH**

*The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them, (Lk 3:15-18).*

When John came onto the scene, the people were excited. Israel had not seen a prophet in more than 400 years. It had been prophesied that the Messiah would come. Because John was preaching and baptizing, they thought that John might be the Messiah. John spoke with urgency and was compelling. John's baptism with water symbolized the washing away of sins. His messages focused on repentance and reformation.

The people wanted to know if John was the Messiah. John in his humiliate said that he himself was unworthy but begin to prepare them for the coming of Jesus. John encouraged the people to submit to God or face consequences. They could be purged and refined or destroyed. Some of the people were willing to be baptized believing this would allow them to escape the coming wrath.

We too, should be excited about Jesus' coming. While we have awaited change in America, we are aware the world's earthly leaders have flaws. Jesus is a perfect leader and Savior. He offers forgiveness, hope, peace, joy, and love to all who believe in Him and are willing to accept Him as Lord and Savior. We can find joy in Jesus if we have been rejected because He will accept us. Every person can have joy upon receiving Him in faith.

**Prayer:** *Lord, no matter what our past has been, we find joy in the coming Messiah. Thank You, Lord, for helping us to see that our expectation is not in vain. Lord, we discovered that Jesus heals and delivers. Lord, we discovered that the joy that Jesus gives opens the door for hope and peace. Thank You, Father for Jesus, who defeat death and the grave. In Jesus Name I pray. Amen!*

**Mr. Gentle Hamilton, III**

Director

Music & Christian Arts Ministry

11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District | AME Church

Sunday, December 22, 2024

## GOD'S LOVE SHOWN TO SMALL TRIBES

*But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times, (Mic 5:2).*

Micah 5:2 is a prophetic word that shows hope and love even in small towns and nations. No matter how small your country maybe, little becomes much when God is in the midst, and He specializes in making possible, that which man thinks is impossible. Our God is the God of all tribes and nations, both large and small, He created them all. His word tells us that when two or three come together, touching, and agreeing in His name, He is there in the midst. So, it does not matter how big or small the gathering for His Holy Spirit to show up, it could be in groups as little as two or three. So, let us hope, trust, and love our God, and He will love us back.

I encourage us today that no matter where we may be, in a large country or a small remote village, God has His all-seeing eye watching us. He promises that no good thing He would withhold from us, His children, if we live according to His word. So, we have this hope that God loves us no matter where we may be, and He can do great and mighty things among us. We are never out of His sight. Thank You, Lord. We may be at the back of the line, however, in His own timing, He will bring us to the front. Great things come in small packages, so wherever we are planted, let us blossom to the honor and glory of God.

**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, Creator of all things big and small. WE give You thanks and praise for where You have us placed. Help us to always give thanks and be grateful, even in our small countries and nations. We know that He who has begun a good work in us will finish it to the day of Jesus Christ. Help us to always be grateful and content with how You bless us. In the Name of Jesus, the Christ. Amen.*

**The Reverend Winifred Gibson Williams**

Christian Education Director

Bahamas Annual Conference

11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District | AME Church



**Monday, December 23, 2024**

**LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS GOD LOVES US**

*Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us, (1 Jn 4:7-12).*

In 1996 Dionne Warwick an American six-time Grammy Award-winning singer sang a popular song entitled, *“What the World Needs Now.”* The lyrics stated, *“What the world needs now is love, sweet love, it's the only thing that there's just too little of, what the world needs now is love, sweet love; no, not just for some, but for everyone.”*

God loves us unconditionally, immeasurably and we are commanded to love each other similarly despite our race, nationalities, ethnicities, genders, social, economic, religious, political, and educational status. At times, we allow prejudices, biases, racism, pride, selfishness, and hatred to stop us from loving one another as God loves us. We can be empowered by God to love, respect, speak courteously, and honor one another, but we must be willing.

Every time we recite the words of our A.M.E. Decalogue we are continuously reminded, commanded, and compelled to love one another as God loves us. I concur, with Dionne Warwick that what our global world needs urgently, critically, desperately is to express and demonstrate “love, sweet love!”

**Prayer:** *Dear Lord, during this Advent season and beyond, may the Holy Spirit empower us to express and demonstrate God's love to everyone. In Jesus Name. Amen.*

**The Reverend Thelma Williamson**  
Superintendent  
Church School/Bible Discovery Hour  
Bahamas Annual Conference  
11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District | AME Church

**Tuesday, December 24, 2024**

## **UNCONDITIONALLY SACRIFICIAL LOVE**

*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us, (Rom 5:8).*

Love is a fundamental characteristic of God as validated in numerous biblical passages. God's portrayal of love described in Romans 5:8 challenges the believer to consider the depth of God's love, and compels us to respond with thankfulness, reverence, and a desire to live according to His will.

God's love is not dependent on our actions or worthiness. Instead, it is pure and selfless; proven through God's ultimate sacrifice of sending His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins. Although we were sinners, God still sent His Son to redeem us. We did not have to be perfect or righteous to receive His love; it was given to us unconditionally. We are expected to accept this love, not because we are perfect, but because we are the much-loved children of God.

Let this verse of scripture inspire you to embrace God's love fully, and to mirror that same love in your interactions with others. Just as God loves us unconditionally, we are to show love and kindness to others without expecting anything in return, even when it is difficult. Express unconditional sacrificial love to others with compassion, forgiveness, and grace, even when it may not be deserved. Unconditional sacrificial love requires us to go out of our way to help those in need, to forgive those who have wronged us, and to show kindness and mercy to all, regardless of their background or circumstances.

**Prayer:** *God, thank You for Your gift of Jesus who saved us from our sins. As we celebrate the season of Advent, awaken in us our responsibility to mirror Your love. AMEN.*

**The Reverend Willie Mae Williams**

Chairperson

Bishop Edward Waters Scholarship Committee

Department of Christian Education

11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District | AME Church

Wednesday, December 25, 2024

## THE BIRTH OF JESUS BRINGS ABOUT A NEW SEASON

*Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men, (Lk 2:8-14)!*

The most significant event in history had just happened. A long-awaited prophecy was being fulfilled. The announcement came to shepherds in a field. Hope had come to a dark world in the form of a baby. Angels encouraged these shepherds to not be afraid. They brought news of joy for all people. The Angels announced that the Savior had been born. This news brought about a celebration and an expectation for a new season.

Amid a divided country, among a chaotic world and broken people, we must recognize that we have a Savior. You can be disappointed about the election, but know we have a Savior. You can be discouraged about the economy but know that we have a Savior. You may face new challenges in the days to come but know that we have a Savior. You may not know or understand why certain things happened the way they happened but know that we have a Savior.

The systems of this world may try to rob us of our children and try to hide our history but do not allow anything to rob you of your faith in the Savior. You can still achieve greatness for your church and your family because we have a Savior. Don't lose your optimism about your future, because we have a Savior.

The birth of Jesus brings about a new season of hope, peace, joy, and love. Eleventh Episcopal District rise up and celebrate Jesus. It is a new season for a fresh anointing that will replace our anger. It is a new season for blessings that will overshadow our burdens. It is a new people of God for change that will replace our last chapter. It is a new season that will move us towards our dreams and goals that will replace our doubts and distractions. It is a new season for excellence that will replace our excuses. It is a new season in which our faith will prevail over our fears.

**Prayer:** *Lord, thank You for a new season that will bring hope, peace, joy and love. Thank You, Lord, that, You will exceed our expectations when we put it all in Your hands. In Jesus Name I pray. Amen. Thank God.*

**Bishop Marvin Clyde Zanders, II**  
Presiding Prelate  
11<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District  
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