



BACK TO BASICS:

KNOW YOUR CHURCH

Utilizing the “Full Membership Service” [AMEC Hymnal #800]

to Renew our Understanding of what it means to be AME

and Revitalize our Commitment to the Kingdom of God!



Introductions...

- ▶ Using the “Full Membership Service” [AMEC Hymnal #800] as our Guide to getting... **Back to Basics: Knowing YOUR Church**
- ▶ At the beginning of the “Full Membership Service” your Class Leader calls your name... *You do not stand by yourself!*

On this journey we are NOT by ourselves, this is a journey of COMMUNITY in UNITY!

The Church is...

- God's Household
- The Body of Christ, Christ is the Head
- The goal of the Church is to bring everyone into unity with God and His Church

The Church provides...

- Fellowship and Communion (unity)
- Maintenance of Sound Doctrine
- The “Ordinances” of God’s Power
(“ordinances” comes up later too... will discuss more then!)
- Godly admonition and discipline

The Duty of Each Church Member...

- Promote Peace and Unity
- Bear one another's burdens
- Prevent others from stumbling
- Seek friendships in the society
- Be steadfast in faith and worship
- To pray and sympathize with one another

The Privileges of Church Membership...

- Hearing God's Word and encouragement to live holy
- Sharing in the Christ's ordinances
- Under the care of pastoral ministry
- Enjoyment of the blessings promised in God's Word "to those who are of the household of faith." (Galatians 6:10)

The Baptismal Covenant ...

- **Question #1:** *Do you here in the presence of God and of this congregation renew the solemn promise contained in the Baptismal Covenant, ratifying and confirming the same and acknowledging yourselves bound faithfully to observe and keep that covenant and all things contained therein?*

The Baptismal Covenant is...

- A “renouncement” of
 - *the devil and all his works,*
 - *the vain pomp and glory of the world,*
 - *with all covetous desires of the flesh;*
 - *so that you will not follow, nor be led by them!*

The Baptismal Covenant is...

► A Belief in the Apostle's Creed... *The Shared Faith of all Christians:*

Do you... "Believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord; and that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; and he suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; that he arose again the third day; that he ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; and from thence forth he shall come again at the end of the world to judge the living and the dead? And do you believe in the Holy Ghost, the Church Universal, the communion of the saints, the remission of sin, the resurrection of the body, and everlasting life" ???

The Baptismal Covenant is...

- A willing commitment to
 - obediently keep God's holy will
 - and commandments,
 - and walk in the same
 - all the days of your life!

The Double Blessing!

- **Question #2:** *Have you saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?*
 - *“Saved” from what? [Romans 2:5,8; et al.]*
 - *Is “belief” enough to “save” us? [Matthew 25:31-46]*
 - *Does “Saved” mean “Safe”?* [Philippians 2:12-13]
 - *Once Saved, always saved???* ... No!
 - *The Double Blessing: Salvation & Sanctification*



BREAK!

▶ Thank GOD... this guy talks WAY too much!!!



Community: *A Work in Progress*

- **Question #3:** *Do you entertain friendly feelings toward all the members of this Church?*
 - Does the Bible say you have to “like” or “love”?
 - Matthew 22:37-40, et al.
 - What kind of love? Agape vs. Phileo
 - What does “love” look like?
 - John 3:16
 - 1 John 3:14, 4:8 (and v.16), 4:10; 4:19, et al.
 - 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a
 - Galatians 5:22-26
 - So... *Do you???*

Our Doctrines & Beliefs

- **Question #4:** *Do you believe in the Doctrine of Holy Scriptures as set forth in the Articles of Religion of the African Methodist Episcopal Church?*

Our 25 Articles of Religion

As set forth in the Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church

- I. The Holy Trinity
- II. The Incarnation Of Christ
- III. The Resurrection Of Christ
- IV. The Holy Spirit
- V. The Holy Scriptures
- VI. The Old Testament
- VII. Original Sin
- VIII. Free Will
- IX. The Justification Of Man
- X. Good Works
- XI. Works Of Supererogation
- XII. Sin After Justification
- XIII. The Church
- XIV. Purgatory
- XV. Familiar Speech
- XVI. The Sacraments
- XVII. Baptism
- XVIII. The Lord's Supper
- XIX. Communion In Both Kinds
- XX. The Sacrifice Of Christ
- XXI. The Marriage Of Ministers
- XXII. Rites And Ceremonies Of The Church
- XXIII. The Government Of The United States
- XXIV. Christian Men's Goods
- XXV. A Christian Man's Oath

Our core beliefs, originally adapted from the 24 Articles which John Wesley extracted from the 39 Articles of the Church of England; Each article is BIBLICALLY BASED and states clearly our distinct interpretation of scripture on specific issues or topics.

Our 25 Articles of Religion

- ***Some articles are stated to declare our protestant nature:***
 - Article 14 – Of Purgatory
 - Article 15 – Of Speaking in the Congregation in Such a Tongue as the People Understand
 - Article 16 – Of the Sacraments
 - Article 18 – Of the Lord's Supper
 - Article 19 – Of Both Kinds
 - Article 21 – Of the Marriage of Ministers

Our 25 Articles of Religion

- ▶ ***Some articles classify us as a “main-line” Christian Denomination:***
 - ▶ Article 1 – Of Faith in the Holy Trinity
 - ▶ Article 17 – Of Baptism

Our 25 Articles of Religion

- ***Some articles declare our distinct Methodist perspectives and Anglican roots:***
 - Article 9 – Of the Justification of Man
 - Article 24 – Of Christian Men's Goods

Our 25 Articles of Religion

- ***Some articles made clear our stance on issues that separated or divided other Christian perspectives:***
 - Article 5 – Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation
 - Article 6 – Of the Old Testament
 - Article 25 – Of a Christian Man's Oath

Our 25 Articles of Religion

- ***Lastly, one article was added out of the political and historical happenings of the day:***
 - Article 23 – Of the Rulers of the United States of America

Other Sources of our Doctrine

➤ ***Catechism of Faith***

- NOT the little blue book we grew up with... Our Catechism is found in our “Doctrine and Discipline of the AMEC”, Part II, Section IV - 95 Questions and Answers, set forth in 4 parts, that argue our Methodist perspectives on salvation by justification, the relationship between God and the Human Race and the power of Faith.

➤ ***Turner’s Polity***

- A practical, simple, questions and answers catechism of Methodist beliefs, perspectives, and early structure & organization adopted in 1888 by the General Conference; originally called, “The Genius and Theory of Methodist Polity, or The Machinery of Methodism” written by Bishop H. M. Turner

➤ ***Position Papers & Resolutions***

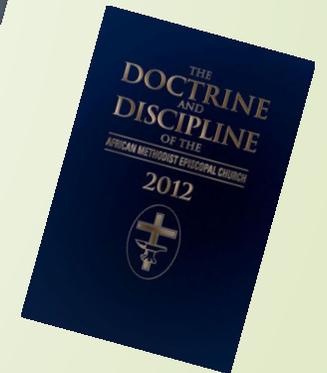
- From the General Conference, voted on Quadrennially

Our Discipline, the Ordinances of God, the Welfare of Others, and Advancing the Kingdom ...

- **Question #5:** *Will you cheerfully be governed by the Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, hold sacred the ordinances of God, and endeavor as much as in you lies to promote the welfare of fellow members and the advancement of the Kingdom of God?*

Our Three Books

- *The Holy Bible*
- *The AMEC Hymnal*
- The LATEST EDITION of the *Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church*



The Doctrine and Discipline of the AME

Church... *Our Book of Beliefs, Church Laws & Rules, and Liturgy*

➤ ***Our Primary Doctrine Source, stating our distinct perspective on God and His Word.***

- Mission & Purpose of the Church (Part II)
- 25 Articles of Religion (Part II)
- Catechism of Faith (Part II)
- General Rules (Part II)
- Stewardship Tithes and Offerings (Part II)
- Church Membership (Part IV)
- Ministry (Part V)

The Doctrine and Discipline of the AME

Church... *Our Book of Beliefs, Church Laws & Rules, and Liturgy*

- **Our Primary Discipline Source, laying down our organizational foundation and structure, rules and regulations.**
 - *Incorporation and Church Property (Part III)*
 - *Governmental Divisions and Authority (Part VI)*
 - *The General Board, Connectional Departments and Commissions (Part VII)*
 - *Judicial Administration (Part XI)*
 - *Connectional Societies and Organizations (Part XII)*

The Doctrine and Discipline of the AME

Church... *Our Book of Beliefs, Church Laws & Rules, and Liturgy*

- **Our Primary Manual of Order and Tradition.**
 - *Conferences and Conventions (Part VIII)*
 - *Public Worship and Ritual (Part XIII)*
 - *Glossary (Part XVI)*

The Doctrine and Discipline of the AME

Church... *Our Book of Beliefs, Church Laws & Rules, and Liturgy*

➤ **Our Primary Record of our Dynamic History and Decisions.**

- *Episcopal Salutation (Part I)*
- *Historical Statement (Part I)*
- *World Wide Mission (Part I)*
- *Church Finance (Part IX)*
- *Global Development (Part X)*
- *Organization of the AME Church (Part XIV)*
- *Budget (Part XV)*
- *Appendices (Part XVII)*

Our AME Church History

- ▶ AMEC Founding Father: Richard Allen
- ▶ AMEC Founding Mother: Sarah Allen
- ▶ Part of the Methodist Family, founded by John Wesley
- ▶ Founded in 1787, with walkout at St. George's ME Church in Philadelphia, PA, and with the formation of the Free African Society
- ▶ Organized in 1816, with the first General Conference and the formation of several African Methodist congregations into the African Methodist Episcopal Church
- ▶ Today the AME Church is established in 39 Countries on 5 Continents, and the work is administered by 21 Active Bishops and 9 General Officers.

Understanding our Geographical Designations

- **The AME Church is Connected & Connectional...**
 - ***A World-Wide Community of Saints!*** – Governed primarily by the Council of Bishop and the General Board
 - ***Episcopal Districts*** – Governed by a Presiding Bishop
 - Appointed Quadrennially by the General Conference
 - ***Presiding Elder Districts*** – Governed by a Presiding Elder
 - Appointed Annually by the Bishop
 - ***Local Churches & Missions*** – Governed by a Pastor
 - Appointed Annually by the Bishop

Understanding our 5 Conferences

Connected & Connectional

► **The General Conference**

- Meets every 4 years, defines our Laws, Episcopal Leadership & Connectional Ministries

► **The Annual Conference**

- Meets Annually, led by the Bishop, defines the policies, budgets and ministries of the Conference, and Pastors are assigned

► **The District Conference**

- Meets Annually, led by the Presiding Elder, defines the recommendations of the PE District to the Annual Conference

► **The Quarterly Conference**

- Led by the Presiding Elder, monitors the work and ministry of the Pastor and the local congregation and reports that work to the Bishop on a Quarterly basis.

► **The Church Conference**

- Meets at the call of the Pastor, led by the Pastor, brings together the entire local membership to discuss and/or vote on leadership, events, property matters, and other critical issues.

Our Theocratic Leadership

Connected & Connectional

- Christ: The Head
- Bishops
- Presiding Elders
- Pastors & Ordained Clergy
- Licensed Ministers
- Lay Leadership

The Local Church

➤ *The Board of Stewards*

- *Nominated Annually by the Pastor, Confirmed by the Quarterly Conference*
- *Manages the Spiritual & Financial happenings of the local church*
- *Cares for the needs of the Pastor*
- *In charge of the administrative affairs in the absence of the Pastor*

➤ *The Board of Trustees*

- *Nominated by the Pastor Annually, Elected by the Church Conference*
- *Manage the Local Church Property IN-TRUST for the AME Church*
- *Manages maintenance of physical property, makes recommendations to the Church Conference for improvements*

➤ *Class Leaders*

- *Appointed by the Pastor Annually*
- *The Pastor's "under shepherds" that help keep the members connected to the church body*

➤ *The Official Board*

- *Chaired by the Pastor, and made up of the Stewards, Trustees, Class Leaders, Exhorters, Deaconesses, Stewardesses, Presidents of all Organizations, and Junior Church Officers.*
- *Manages the day-to-day business affairs; receives the monthly reports of each organization and ministries; reviews the financial happenings of the church, including the church budget; reviews the calendar of events; deals with membership matters such as those who are sick, walking disorderly, or left the church; can over-rule the Pastor with a 2/3 vote of its members.*

Discipleship: *Our 3 Rules for Christian Living*

Found in our Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church; established by John & Charles Wesley; otherwise known as, the General Rules.

- **#1:** Do no harm, avoid evil of every kind
 - *Personal Accountability*
- **#2:** Do good; of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to everyone
 - *Actively being a blessing to OTHERS*
- **#3:** “By attending upon all the ordinances of God”
 - ...

The “Ordinances” of God

Ordinances is a fancy word for “Rules” and “Decrees”, but essentially they are “the biblically-based things that keep us connected to God”

- **The public worship of God**
 - 1 Corinthians 14:26; Hebrews 10:25; 1 Timothy 4:13
- **The ministry of the Word, either read or expounded**
 - Acts 6:4; 2 Timothy 4:2 ; 1 Timothy 4:13
- **The Supper of the Lord**
 - Luke 22:17-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
- **Family and private prayer**
 - Acts 2:42-47; Matthew 6:5-8
- **Searching the Scriptures**
 - John 5:39; 2 Timothy 3:16
- **Fasting and abstinence**
 - Matthew 6:16-18

Promote the Welfare of Fellow Members...

- ***Teaching Ministries***
- ***Benevolence Ministries***
- ***Fellowship Events***
- ***Pastoral Care***
- ***Care for the “Head & Tail”***
... ***Youth & Seniors-Focused Ministries***

Advancing the Kingdom of God...

- ***Evangelism: Personal & Corporate***
- ***Outreach & Benevolence***
- ***Community & Campus Care***
- ***Sharing & Fellowship***
- ***The Public Square***
- ***...***

Stewardship, Ministry & Commitment

- **Question #6:** *Will you give of your time, talents and treasure, according to your ability, for the support of the Gospel, Church, poor, and the various ministries of the Church?*

Stewardship, Ministry & Commitment

Your Personal Discipleship Commitment

► **Time...**

Giving time to God (devotions and worship), His Church (ministries and fellowship), and His People (the human race)

► **Talent...**

Using your gifts and abilities and ideas!

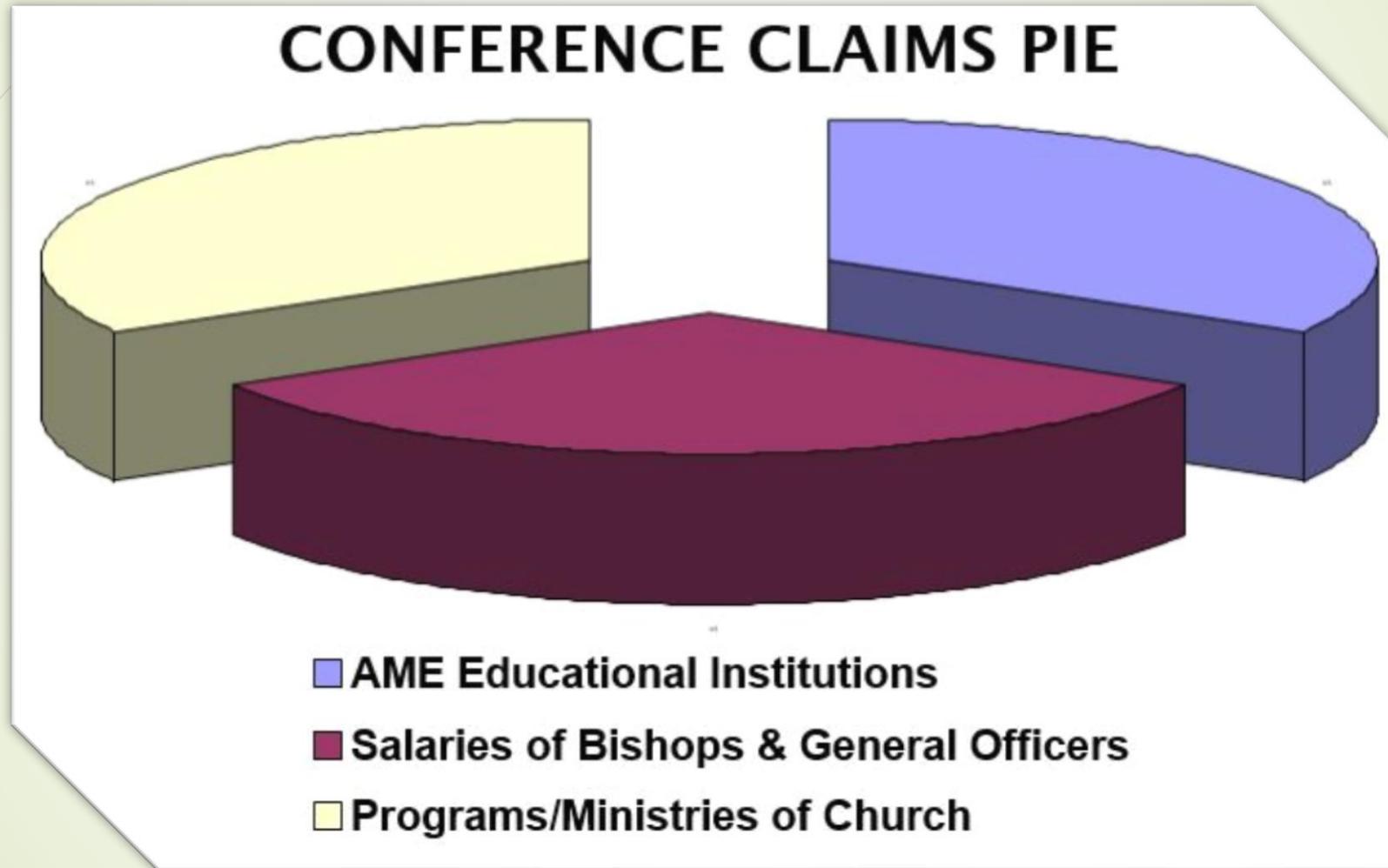
► **Treasure...**

Tithes, Offerings, Conference Claims, etc.

Concerning Conference Claims

- Conference Claims are assessments paid by our local churches; monies which are used to support the Administration, Programs and Ministries of our Church.
- The Church isn't just local, it's global, and that requires administration and resources.
- We (the members of the local societies) pay them because we are the financial resource of the Church, both local and connectional. Whether it's paying the energy bills, caring for the Pastor, or supporting the Bishop, those monies have always come from the people... and it's been this way since the beginning of the Church (**Acts 4:32-37; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3**).
- Conference Claims are Ministry Support.

Concerning Conference Claims





In Conclusion: *A renewal of our
“wedding/covenant” vows...*

- The Right Hand of Fellowship (**Galatians 2:9**)
 - The Church Militant (*those on earth*)
 - The Church Triumphant! (*those in heaven*)



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