

Connectional Lay Council
The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
CONNECTIONAL LAY SUNDAY PROGRAM DETAILS FOR
October 18, 2026



Connectional Lay Council Quadrennial Theme

The A.M.E. Zion Church: Serving This Present Age:

Committing to Our Mission

Being Creative in Our Methods

Concentrating on Our Ministries

Connecting Through Our Membership

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Note: *Please make adjustments to suit the Order of Worship to which your church is accustomed, as well as the recommendations of the Pastor in Charge. All hymns in this document are numbered from the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Bicentennial Hymnal.*

Instrumental Prelude

***The Processional – #438 “Am I a Soldier of the Cross”**

***The Call to Worship:**

O God, you are our God. Earnestly we seek you. Our souls thirst for you in a dry and weary land where there is no water. Our hearts faint for your presence. We have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and your glory. Because your steadfast love is better than life, our lips will praise you. We will bless you as long as we live, lifting up our hands in your Holy name. Our souls are satisfied as with a rich feast. Our mouths praise you with joyful lips when we remember you through the watches of the night. Amen.

The Invocation (Congregation in Unison)

Almighty and Gracious God, we thank you and gather today in search of community, peace, and truth. Let our hearts be open to one another, our minds be open to wisdom, and our spirits be renewed. May our time together in this worship experience strengthen our connection and inspire us to walk in love and service. We ask for your continued wisdom and strength as we look to the future. Keep our hearts tender towards those we serve and keep our purpose clear and true. In the matchless and marvelous name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

The Choral Response

***The Hymn of Praise - #29 “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing”**

***The Responsive Reading (May utilize Responsive Readings for the Christian Calendar Year)**

***The Gloria Patri - #702, #703 or #704**

***The Apostles' Creed or the Affirmation of Laity**

The Scripture Lessons (*Note: Scriptures can be selected by the Pastor in Charge or in consultation with the Lay Day Speaker*)

Old Testament

New Testament

The Prayer Hymn - #508 "Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus"

The Morning Prayer

The Choral Response

The Choral Selection (*Note: Choral Selection(s) may also appear in other places by recommendation from the Pastor in Charge or the Minister of Music/Director of Choirs, etc.*)

The Ministry of Kindness

The Announcements

The Introduction of the Speaker (*The Minister; or Lay Representative is recommended*)

The Hymn of Preparation - #501 "Amazing Grace How Sweet the Sound" or C.L.C. Theme Hymn: "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah"

The Lay Sunday Speaker (*The Minister; or Lay Speaker is recommended*)

***The Invitation to Christian Discipleship (*Pastor in Charge or Ministerial Designee*)**

Altar Prayer/Altar Call (*Pastor in Charge; may also happen during the Morning Prayer*)

***Litany for Rededication of Laity**

The Offering Appeal (*Include the Lay Sunday Offering Script in this document*)

The Tithes and Offerings

***Recessional Hymn – #680 "Onward Christian Laity"**

Lay Council Closing Prayer (*Written by Mildred R. Faulkner; New York Conference*)

"Oh God, our Father, pour out your steadfast love upon us and keep us in your care, now and forevermore." Amen

The Benediction and the Choral Benedictory (*Minister of Music/Director of Choirs Selection*)

***THE CONGREGATION STANDING**

The Affirmation of Laity (*Written by Alean Rush; Western New York Conference*)

We the Active Members of the Connectional Lay Council do solemnly believe, and firmly advocate, and admirably support the following affirmation of Lay Operation.

- **We endorse and need an articulate self-purpose.**
- **We endorse and need open minds, a faith in Christian religion.**
- **We endorse and need people who understand all sides to questions, for herein is wisdom.**
- **We endorse and need human decency, good manners, humor, and compassion, for each must be considered as blessed as we.**
- **We endorse and need openness, truthfulness, and honesty.**
- **We endorse and need courage to stand for each creedal, it is our rock of affirmation.**
- **Our mission thus remains as stated: that of actively involving more people for peace, justice, Christian teaching and living for the Brotherhood of Man, under the Fatherhood of God, and the Leadership of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.**

The Processional - #438 "Am I a Soldier of the Cross"

- 1. Am I a soldier of the cross, a follower of the Lamb,
And shall I fear to own His cause, or blush to speak His name?**

2. Must I be carried to the skies, on flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize, and sailed thro' bloody seas?
3. Are there no foes for me to face? Must I not stem the flood?
Is this vile world a friend to grace, to help me on to God?
4. Sure I must fight, if I would reign: increase my courage, Lord;
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain, supported by Thy word.
5. Thy saints in all this glorious war shall conquer, though they die;
They see the triumph from afar, by faith they bring it nigh.
6. When all that illustrious day shall rise, and all Thy armies shine,
In robes of victory through the skies, Thy glory shall be Thine. *Amen.*

The Hymn of Praise - #29 "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

1. Come Thou Fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise;
Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above;
Praise the mount, O fix me on it, mount of God's unchanging love.
2. Here I raise my Ebenezer; hither by Thy help I'm come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home;
Jesus sought me when a stranger, wand'ring from the fold of God;
He, to save my soul from danger, interposed His precious blood.
3. O, to grace how great a debtor, daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace, Lord like a fetter, bind my wand'ring heart to Thee;
Prone to wander, Lord I feel it; prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart; Lord, take and seal it; seal it from Thy courts above. *Amen.*

The Prayer Hymn - #508 "Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus"

1. 'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus, just to take Him at His word;
Just to rest upon His promise; just to know, "Thus saith the Lord."
REFRAIN
2. O how sweet to trust in Jesus, just to trust His cleansing blood;
Just in simple faith to plunge me, neath the healing cleansing flood.
REFRAIN
3. Yes, 'tis sweet to trust in Jesus, just from sin and self to cease;
Just from Jesus simply taking life and rest, and joy and peace.
REFRAIN
4. I'm so glad I learned to trust Thee, precious Jesus, Savior, friend;
And I know that Thou art with me, wilt be with me to the end.
REFRAIN

REFRAIN: *Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him; how I've proved Him o'er and o'er,
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus! O for grace to trust Him more.*

The Hymn of Preparation - #501 "Amazing Grace How Sweet the Sound"

1. Amazing grace! How sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.
2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!

3. Thro' many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come;
"Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
4. The Lord has promised good to me, His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.
5. Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail, and mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the veil, a life of joy and peace.
6. The earth shall soon dissolve like snow, the sun forbear to shine;
But God, who called me here below, will be forever mine.
7. When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun. *Amen.*

Theme Song: Onward Christian Laity (Lyrics by Charlotte Riggins, New Jersey Conference; to the tune of "Onward Christian Soldiers")

Onward Christian Laity; Working side by side,
Pray God's blessings on us, and our feet to guide.
Love our neighbor and forgive; lend a helping hand,
Never be too proud to serve God and our fellowman.

Onward Christian Laity; Working hard for God,
We must tread the same path that Our Savior trod.
We must bear our crosses, but continue on,
Knowing at the judgment, we'll receive our crown.

REFRAIN

Onward Christian Laity; Working side by side,
Pray God's blessings on us, and our feet to guide.

Litany for Rededication of Laity; African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (Adapted from the Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church by Katherine S. Burrell and Dr. Yvonne A. Tracey)

LAY LEADER: As Laity of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, we **REDEDICATE OURSELVES** to serve God, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and humanity.

LAITY: *By deepening our Spiritual Life.*

LAY LEADER: As Laity of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, we **REDEDICATE OURSELVES** to disseminate information.

LAITY: *By gathering and sharing information about our heritage, traditions, and the mission of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.*

LAY LEADER: As Laity of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, we **REDEDICATE OURSELVES** to be true to God and our denomination.

LAITY: *By cultivating our loyalty to God and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.*

LAY LEADER: As Laity of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, we **REDEDICATE OURSELVES** to expand our denomination.

LAITY: *We are committed to expanding our denomination through education of ourselves and others, by evangelizing to the unsaved and promoting any other interest of the Kingdom of God.*

LAY LEADER: Today we **REDEDICATE OURSELVES** to the objectives and purpose of the Connectional Lay Council of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

ALL: *Today, we REDEDICATE OURSELVES to be faithful to God, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and to the mission of the Church of Christ universal to make disciples.*

LAY SUNDAY OFFERING APPEAL

The *Connectional Lay Council* of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church look forward always with anticipation, to celebrating Connectional Lay Day, the third Sunday in October, also the anniversary of the denomination. As we prepare to launch these celebrations across the spectrum of our beloved Zion, we offer thanks to our Pastors in charge, for the distinct opportunities given to laity, to provide leadership during the Connectional Lay Sunday Worship experience. On October 18, 2026, it is our hope that the laity will be active participants as part of the Lay Sunday Worship Services. The Connectional Lay Council leadership of our denomination, the “Freedom Church,” commends our Lay Council constituency on all levels for nobility of purpose in rendering service, building high points of efficiency, and setting high standards for operating effective Lay Councils. The primary role of the laity is to be an advocate and witness for Christ, and continually be involved in learning about the church and community to fulfill our mission. The Executive Board of the Connectional Lay Council and staff strongly supports our motto of “*Come with Us to Christ*,” which is the impetus for implementing ministries that are positive in transforming people’s lives spiritually, socially, and economically.

LAY SUNDAY OFFERING CAMPAIGN 2026 - 2027:

As part of the *Connectional Lay Day Celebration*, we have an opportunity to give support to the *Lay Sunday Offering Campaign*. These monetary contributions received from Local Churches, Districts, Conferences, and other individual supporters across the Connection are utilized to assist a designated purpose agreed upon by the Executive Board of the Connectional Lay Council. Our contributions towards this annual campaign and divine mission has spiritual importance, because giving is an act of gratitude, obedience, and support for God’s work. Our generous giving can also foster spiritual growth in the giver, commitment and reverence to God, cultivating a generous and spiritual heart. Give more than you have ever given during this campaign in gratitude to God for granting you the glorious gift of grace to give, and to support the work that lies ahead rooted in the Zion heritage. Let us not be too late with too little to enhance the work, and therefore, I urge you to contribute, not grudgingly to this campaign. We will be counting on you to assist with a strong base of support in reaching our goal of \$25,000.00.

Remember beloved, giving creates a symbolic and tangible connection, an act of revering God and expressing thankfulness.

Embraced and trusting in His care, many thanks for your generous support. Peace, power, and blessings now and always, is our prayer.

Connectional Lay Council

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH

Dr. Joseph King Davis, Jr., International President
The Right Reverend Daran H. Mitchell, Chairman, Board of Lay Activities
Presiding Prelate, Mid-West Episcopal District
PRESIDENT, BOARD OF BISHOPS, A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

FROM THE DESK OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

To the Beloved Zion Family of the Freedom Church,

Grace, peace, and steadfast hope be multiplied unto you. As we gather across our global communion of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church for ***Annual Connectional Lay Sunday, October 18, 2026***, we pause to honor the ministry, witness, and indispensable labor of the laity of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. The Lay Council has always stood as a pillar of strength in our denomination, teaching, organizing, advocating, and ensuring that the work of Christ is carried forward with excellence.

Today, I write with both gratitude and urgency. Our Executive Board has set a **Connectional Lay Sunday Offering Campaign Goal of \$25,000**. This is not a symbolic target. It is a ***critical investment*** in a worthy denominational cause that strengthens leadership development, expands discipleship training, and equips laypersons across Zion to serve with greater skill, confidence, and spiritual authority.

We are living in a season where the Church must be bold, strategic, and united. The challenges facing our communities, economic strain, social fragmentation, spiritual fatigue, require a laity that is empowered, educated, and mobilized. Your offering today directly fuels that mission.

I am asking every congregation, every local Lay Council, every Presiding Elder District, and every Annual Conference, and every committed Zionite to give with conviction. Let us demonstrate that the laity of Zion does not shrink in difficult times, we rise, we respond, and we invest in the future of our Church.

While preparing your hearts to give, do so with purpose. let this Lay Sunday Campaign be your moment to stand with us.

Together, we can meet, and exceed, our **\$25,000 goal**. Together, we can strengthen the hands of lay leaders across the denomination. Together, we can ensure that Zion continues to be a Church where the laity leads with power, clarity, and unwavering faith.

With Gratitude and Resolve,

Dr. Joseph King Davis, Jr.
International President
Connectional Lay Council



ALTERNATIVE HYMN SELECTIONS FOR THE WORSHIP SERVICE TEMPLATE:

(Page numbers listed are from the Bicentennial Hymnal of the A.M.E. Zion Church)

Processional:	#227 “God of Grace and God of Glory”
Hymn of Praise:	#21 “O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing” #266 “O How I Love Jesus” #82 or #681 “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah” (CLC Theme Hymn)
Prayer Hymn:	#466 “I Need Thee Every Hour” #446 “Sweet Hour of Prayer” #494 “Father, I Stretch My Hands to Thee”
Hymn of Preparation:	#415 “Just As I Am, Without One Plea” #490 “All to Jesus I Surrender” #82 or #681 “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah” (CLC Theme Hymn)
Recessional:	#438 “Am I a Soldier of the Cross”

LAY SUNDAY OFFERING APPEAL

(An Alternative Shorter Version for the Local Church Worship Service)

Happy Connectional Lay Sunday. Today we celebrate the hands and heartbeat of our Church, the laity who teach, serve, organize, and lead with faith and conviction.

Our ***Connectional Lay Sunday Offering Campaign Goal*** is **\$25,000**, and we need every congregation to participate. This offering strengthens leadership development, discipleship training, and the vital ministries that empower laypersons across Zion.

This is a worthy cause. This is a necessary cause. And this is our moment to show that the laity of our Zion, the “Freedom Church” stands united.

Give boldly. Give joyfully. Give because the future of our African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church depends on strong lay leadership across every level of our denominational structure. You are the lifeblood of Zion. You are the quiet strength behind every victory. You are the reason our Church continues to shine as a beacon of hope.

Let’s meet the goal. Let’s exceed the goal. Let’s make an impact worthy of Zion.

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Dr. Joseph King Davis, Jr., International President

