

# The First Episcopal District

Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

*"The Birthplace of Christian Methodism"*

Marvin Frank Thomas, Sr., Presiding Prelate

## The Episcopal Notes-Fall 2023

(A publication of the 1<sup>st</sup> Episcopal District-CME Church)



### Greetings:

It always brings me great joy to extend greetings to the members of the First Episcopal District of the CME Church. We have been an engaged Episcopal District in so many ways, including education at every level, providing housing for seniors, the unsheltered, low- and moderate-income persons, health fairs/expos, monthly highlights, symposiums, and intentional awareness, the justice engaged, and support of local and connectional efforts. Our engagement is because we endeavor to minister to the whole person. My beloved First Episcopal District, let us keep striving and serving as the Lord directs. I cannot tell how excited it makes me to see all the ways the districts and congregation in the First District are being creative in our witness.

### 2023 Fall Gatherings:

You may not know this, but for me, fall is made for Fall Gatherings across the First Episcopal. I am excited about the opportunity to see many of you over the course of the next few months as I travel across the First to share time, fellowship, and to engage with you as we wrestle with our theme: ***"Boldly Embracing Now: Congregations Seeking Balance in an Unbalanced World."*** If last Saturday's Fall Gathering on the East District is an indication of what the rest of the Gatherings will be like, we are in for a most exciting, engaging, challenging, and inspiring time together. As a part of our Fall Gathering agenda is time devoted the Strategic Plan of the CME Church. More will be said at the Gatherings and following. Not trying to start anything, but Elder White and the East District came out the gate in full blast. To the East TN and West TN Regions, all I can say is you may want to bring your A-Game (IJS). **Note: The color scheme for October's Gatherings is Pink and Purple and the color scheme for the November Gatherings is any combination of Blue, Purple, or Pink colors. Casual dress is cool.**



**Real Churches Read 2023:** I find little to be disappointed with the First District about. However, I must say to you how disappointed I am in the approach taken by presiding elders, pastors, Christian Education leaders, and congregations in regard to our district-wide **Real Churches Read Day**. The number of churches that did not read

and indicated the reasoning to be there were no children present is symptomatic of a larger part.

### Episcopal Housing:

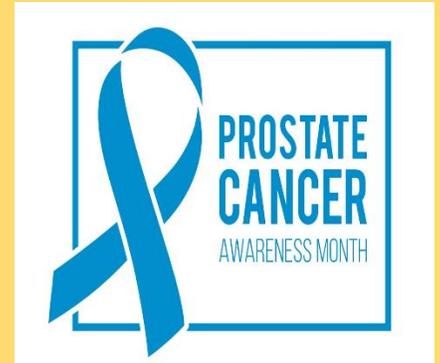
There is nothing to report in the area of Episcopal Housing other than the plan is to continue with the monthly housing until otherwise advised. Thank you.

4466 Elvis Presley Boulevard  
Memphis, TN 38116

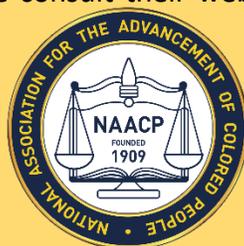


**Operation Vaccinations:** I am sure you are aware of the recent rise in COVID related illnesses and hospitalizations that are happening across the board, especially among healthy, young, and mostly unboosted Americans, according to the CDC. In addition, we are in a season wherein vaccinations to address numerous viruses are now available. In response to the upsurge and the availability of various vaccines, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church is in the process of launching **CME's Operation Vaccinations Campaign**. We anticipate this to begin next month and run for a period of sixty-days. More information is forthcoming in the next several days. Please help us be each other's keepers.

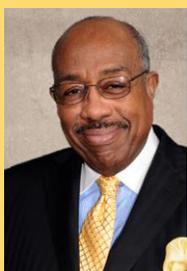
**Prostate Cancer Awareness Month:** September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. We in the First Episcopal District will be using the month to bring awareness to this disease that disproportionately affect African-American Men. It is my hope that each congregation will set aside some time during the month to share some information on this disease to the persons in attendance during morning worship. I am excited to see the event that has been planned Men's Ministry of the West Tennessee Region, which is scheduled for Saturday, September 23, 2023, 8:30 AM -12:00 PM at the Trinity CME Church, 1096 Thomas Street, Memphis, TN 38103. I am also excited to hear of the other related events and activities being planned across the First District. I am asking and encouraging all congregations in the First to participate in **Blue Out Sunday, September 24, 2023, during the morning worship service. I am also asking congregations to share pictures on their Facebook pages.**



**Tennessee State NAACP Conference:** The Tennessee State NAACP will hold its 77<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention in Memphis, TN, September 21-23, 2023. Thursday's activities will take place at the Mt. Olive Cathedral CME Church, 538 Dr. ML King, Jr Blvd, from 11:30 AM -8:30 PM. There will be a Mass Meeting & Memorial Service at Mt. Olive beginning at 6:30 PM on Thursday evening, September 21<sup>st</sup>. I have been invited to serve as the preacher for the worship service. I am asking for the prayers, presence, and support of the First District during the meeting of the State Convention. Please consult their website for additional information regarding the convention.



**Bishop William H. Graves Highway Dedication:** A number of persons have contacted me seeking an update on the dedication of I-40 near Haywood County in honor of Senior Bishop William H. Graves, Sr. I recently received some suggested dates and times, however, none of the dates work for some of the NACCP leaders nor myself. I will keep you posted.



*In Loving Memory*  
*Bishop William H. Graves, Sr*

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### Monthly Prayer Calls:

*This is just a reminder that our Monthly Prayer Calls are scheduled for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursdays in each month. Please join us.*

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**Connectional Lay Ministries Day:** The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in October I am encouraging all congregations to observe this day by engaging the laity in the leadership of the worship service and in other ways the congregation deems fitting.



**Lane College Homecoming:** Lane College's Annual Homecoming game is scheduled for Saturday, October 21, 2023, in Jackson, TN. There is something about Homecoming in the HBCU communities and Lane College community is no exception. Please come and celebrate with our beloved Lane College community.

**Lane College Graduation:** I have to confess; I did not seek permission to share this but it is too exciting not to share. On November 2, 2023, Lane College will hold its graduation ceremony at the Northwest Correctional Complex. I hope this news excites you as it does me. Congratulations Drs. Hampton, Coleman, and the Lane College faculty and staff. Thank you for counting people in and not counting people out.

### NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCH CHRISTIAN UNITY GATHERING

OCT 9-12, 2023

EMBASSY SUITES NASHVILLE AIRPORT

The First Episcopal District will serve as a sponsoring organization for the Gathering. Presiding Elder Ronald Powe will coordinate our participation. Visit <https://nationalcouncilofchurches.us/> for more information.

### HOUSING MINISTRY

I am asking for the prayers of the district as we seek funding to help us complete the required upgrades to most of the housing complexes operated by the First Episcopal District. We are optimistic that we should be able to secure the needed funding in the coming months. Just want to keep you in the loop.

### Conference of National Black Churches

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN FOR THE CONFERENCE OF NATIONAL BLACK CHURCHES 2023 NATIONAL CONSULTATION, WHICH WILL BE HELD IN ORLANDO, FLORIDA, DECEMBER 12-14, 2023. THE REGISTRATION COST IS \$150.00 FOR EITHER IN-PERSON OR VIRTUAL. PLEASE VISIT CNBC'S WEBSITE AT [WWW.THECNBC.ORG](http://WWW.THECNBC.ORG) FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION FORMS.



**Breast Cancer and Domestic Abuse Focus:** During the month of October 2023, the First Episcopal District will be bringing awareness to Breast Cancer and Domestic Abuse. I am aware of events being planned across the First Episcopal District. More details will be made available in the coming weeks.



**Advent/Founders' Day Instrumental Concert:** The CME Church will celebrate our 153<sup>rd</sup> Founders' Day on December 16, 2023. I am excited that our 2023 CME Church Anniversary will take place on Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup> with a Hybrid Concert featuring one of the sons of the First Episcopal District Dr. George Carpten IV. Dr. Carpten is currently serving as an Assistant Professor of Trumpet at Ohio University, Athens, OH. We are expecting a couple of additional guest performers for this Advent/Founder's Day Instrumental Concert. The admission will be free for both in person and virtual. However, we are asking each congregation to support this concert with a gift of

**\$153.00.** The presiding elders and joint board chairs will give more details in the coming weeks. We need the support of all to make this successful concert and homecoming performance for our own Dr. Carpten.

**It is About Us Fund:** The presiding elders, joint board chairs, treasurers, and I are in conversation about developing ways to secure additional funds to offset the 11% increase the First Episcopal District incurred from the 2022 General Conference. Once we have worked out the details, we will unveil it.

## Closing Thoughts

As I close this communication, I am still rejoicing over the great things the Lord is doing in the First Episcopal District. I leave us with the words of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians, ***“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”(Galatians 6:9)*** I hope to see you in the coming weeks at the East or West Tennessee Regions' Fall Gatherings.

