
ARNETT CHAPEL A.M.E.C.

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Know Your Church

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Let's Talk Church

Terminology

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Material taken from:

- The 2012 Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church

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Accession

The act of a person who unites with a congregation after meeting all the requirements necessary for full membership.

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Affiliated Member

Members of a local church, residing elsewhere for an extended period, may upon application be enrolled as “Affiliated Members” of the African Methodist Episcopal Church located in the vicinity of their current residence. Such membership shall entitle them to the privileges of that church: its pastoral oversight, participation in all active services, and the right to hold office. Membership, however, of these persons shall be counted and reported, however, only in the membership of their home church.

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Appointment

Designation to an office, e.g., church, government, committee, etc. A term frequently applied to the position or charge to which the minister is assigned by the bishop.

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Associate Member

A member of a missionary society, institute, etc., without full status or privileges.

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Baptism

One of the two sacraments. It is a sign of new life through Jesus Christ and unites the one baptized with Christ and his people as members of the church. The act is administered in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The three modes are effusion (pouring of), aspersion (sprinkling with), and immersion (dipping in) water. In no case shall any person be re-baptized.

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Benediction

An invocation (prayer) of divine blessing, usually at the end of a service.

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Bishop

- The A.M.E. Church is a centralized form of government, largely clerical (clergy). The centralized legislative authority resides in the General Conference, with the Bishops' Council, General Board and General Board of Education.
- The bishops are its chief administrative and executive heads. Their authority is given them by the General Conference and may be taken away by the same body or by its appropriate interim agency.
- Their responsibilities are:
- To oversee the spiritual and temporal affairs of the church which include:
 - Presiding over annual conferences
 - Making pastoral appointments
 - Ordaining deacons and elders
 - Organizing missions
 - Promoting the interest of the denomination

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Class Leader

The members of every local congregation are divided into small groups called classes. Each class has a leader whose business it is to look after his members and report to the Official Board concerning the status, and also the needs of each member, both spiritually and otherwise. Each class leader should keep an accurate record of his members and see that each member is dutiful in his support of the work of the church. Class leaders are appointed by the pastor.

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Church

- (1) “Congregation of faithful persons, in which the pure Word of God is preached and the sacraments duly administered according to God’s ordinance.” (Article 13).
- (2) The visible “faith-community” of those who are baptized in Christ and share in His ministry through witness and service in His world.
- (3) Often refers to a building where the people of God gather for worship and disperse for service.

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Convert

A person who confesses that he or she is a sinner and accepts the grace of God by faith to his or her soul's redemption.

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Deacon

The local church through the Quarterly Conference may license a person to preach. The District Conference may further examine this individual, and if it finds them qualified, may recommend them for admission to the Annual Conference. The Annual Conference examines them and if they are admitted, they remain on trial for two years. If in this period they meet the specified requirements, the Annual Conference may elect them to the office of a deacon.

They must satisfy the disciplinary requirements. Their duties after election are to preach the word of God, assist the Elder in distributing the communion, and in the absence of the elder, administer the Sacrament of Baptism and perform marriages.

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Deaconess

A selected woman who has been consecrated by the Bishop. Her duties are similar to those of a stewardess, but are more intense and specialized.

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General Officers - Connectional Officers

The work of administration and promotion of the Connectional program of the AME Church is the duty of General Officers elected by the General Conference. They are the executive heads of the departments and divisions which provide the various services necessary to the work of local churches and the connectional church.

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Pastor

An ordained or licensed person who is the spiritual leader, appointed by the bishop as the official head of a local station, circuit, or mission church, who is responsible for the total program of the charge to which he or she is appointed.

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Presiding Elder

The official of the A.M.E. Connection charged with the responsibility of seeing that each local church under his supervision understands and complies with the policies and programs of the connection.

They preside over the Quarterly Conference sessions at which time he gets all the information necessary to inform them that the local congregation is operating in harmony with the laws of the A.M.E. Connection, and meeting all of its obligations to the connection. The Presiding Elder is appointed by the Bishop.

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Stewards

Stewards are responsible for assisting the pastor in keeping the membership on a high and sound spiritual level. Stewards are nominated by the pastor and confirmed by the Quarterly Conference.

Their major concern is with:

- Regular church record of all members
- Record of baptisms
- Record of marriages
- Record of deaths
- Record of transfer of members
- The support of the pastor and presiding elder
- The welfare of the sick and poor
- The preparation of the Lord's supper
- The collection and payment of connectional claims

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Stewardesses

They are women who are appointed by the pastor to serve as special assistance to the stewards in looking after the physical arrangements for the pulpit, the Lord's supper, baptism, the sick, the poor, and being useful in other ways. Stewardesses are nominated by the pastor and confirmed by the stewards.

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Trustees

They are elected by the members of the church to manage all temporal affairs of the church such as heat, light, gas, insurance, mortgages, and to look after the church building and other real estate which the church may own. The trustees do not own the church property, they merely manage it for the congregation. They cannot do any more to the property than the members vote for them to do.

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Exhorter

Any person who has the spiritual and educational qualification for teaching and leading a group of members and explaining and interpreting the scriptures may become an exhorter. They are required to lead the weekly prayer service and may be asked to teach Sunday School and visit the sick.

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Elder

An elder is a full fledged minister in the A.M.E. Church.

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Local Preacher- Local Deacon

The ministry of the A.M.E. Church is divided into to general classes:

- Local
- Traveling

A local preacher, is one who has been granted a license to preach by the Quarterly Conference of his local church.

A local deacon is a local preacher who has been ordained by the Annual Conference upon request of the District Conference of his local church.

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Superannuated Preacher

An ordained preacher who retires from the active ministry because of age or disability.

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Supernumerary Preacher

An ordained preacher for whom there is no appointment available, or who is allowed to be without appointment by request.

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Judicial Council

The judicial council is the Supreme Court of the A.M.E. Church when General Conference is not in session. The General Conference has the authority to modify or reverse any decision of the Judicial Council.

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Decalogue

The Ten Commandments. (Exodus 20: 1-17)

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Doxology

Praise to God, esp. a short hymn sung as part of a Christian worship service.

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Ecumenical Officer

A bishop given a special assignment instead of an episcopal district to represent the AME Church in ecumenical affairs, supervise urban ministry, endorse the chaplains, etc.

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Episcopacy

A system of government or policy of the Church in which bishops are the general superintendents, chief administrative and executive heads.

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Evangelism

The zealous preaching, teaching and spreading of the Gospel in order to lead the unsaved, unchurched, and unconcerned to active participation in the work of the Lord and the church. It involves winning souls for Christ, helping them to grow spiritually and enlisting them to win others. Evangelism, ideally is not addition but multiplication.

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Ex-Officio Officer

Title or recognition given by virtue of one's position, i.e., the pastor is ex-officio officer of all boards and auxiliaries of the AME Church.

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Good and Regular Standing

The terminology full, good, regular, standing, and full communion, used specifically as well as generally, as a qualification or eligibility for holding any office or membership in the AME Church. Inclusive in this terminology is an acceptance that one is to be governed by The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church: to regularly attend worship and the other means of grace; to contribute regularly to the support of the gospel, the church, its benevolent enterprises, the poor; and to give of one's time and talents to the various ministries of the church.

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Itinerancy

The traveling ministry. The system followed by the AME Church by which itinerant ministers are appointed to their charges by the bishop. Itinerant—A traveling deacon or elder.

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Love Feast

The service of preparation which precedes participation in the sacrament of Holy Communion. The elements of the love feast are water, symbolic of our desire for purification; and bread, symbolic of our desire for goodwill with one another. In this service, one forgives all and seeks forgiveness from all in order that one might present oneself acceptable before the Lord at his Table.

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New Member

The membership status of persons joining the AME Church prior to the time they have met the conditions set forth in The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church to be received into full membership.

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Oblation

The act or ceremony of offering something in religious worship. In our tradition, Christ is the one perfect offering to God for sin.

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Preparatory Member

Used in relation to all children who have been baptized and are under the care of the church until they have become full members; refers to adults who are receiving instruction for membership in the church; see also Probationary.

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Probationary

Prior to 2012, this term was used to designate the membership status of persons joining the AME Church before they were received into full membership.

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Sacraments

Acts instituted by Jesus Christ as a means of grace. The two in the AME Church are: the Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

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Stewardship

The practice of systematic and proportionate giving of time, influence, ability, and material possessions based upon the conviction that these are a trust from God, to be used in His service for the benefit of all mankind in grateful acknowledgment of Christ's redeeming love. It is also the use of one's time, treasure, talents, health, relationships, property, and the gospel in a partnership with God.

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Tithing

A biblical mandate governing the individual's support (10% of one's total income) of the mission and ministry of the church symbolizing one's commitment to Christ and his church.

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Triflingly

Lacking in significance or solid worth; culturally or substantively refers to laziness or wasting away time. The term is used in the Preacher's Conduct in Conference, regarding duties and itinerancy.

QUESTIONS

