

*Celebrating The Daughters of*

THE REVEREND JARENA LEE  
AND

**200+ YEARS**  
*of Women Answering  
the Call to Preach in the  
African Methodist Episcopal Church*

And why should it be thought impossible, heterodox, or improper for a woman to preach? Seeing the Saviour died for him, why not the woman? died for the woman as well as the man. If the man may preach, because the Saviour seeing he died for her also. Is he not whole Saviour, instead of half one?"

- Jarena Lee

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2020 @ 3PM EST**

Presented By:

Rev. Erika D. Crawford, DMin  
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Presented For:

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# ABOUT WOMEN IN MINISTRY



African Methodist Episcopal Women in Ministry (AME/WIM) is the official professional organization for women pursuing excellence in ministry in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church.

AME/WIM is an international organization serving the 20 Episcopal Districts of the AME Church in the United States, Canada, the Caribbean and the continents of Africa, Asia, South America and Europe.

AME/WIM is led by an Executive Board elected by the active membership - women preachers from across the Connectional AME Church.

AME/WIM currently serves supports and provides encouragement to more than four thousand women serving in ministerial capacities at every level throughout the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Today, 200 years after Jarena Lee was licensed, we are proud to say that the AME Church boasts of more than 4000 women serving in a ministerial capacity.

# ABOUT WOMEN IN MINISTRY AND THE AME CHURCH

- **1787** Founding of the AME Church, "The Great Walk Out" at St. Georges, Philadelphia, PA
  - The AME Church is and has been the home of Christian women for more than 200 years. Some, served the Lord faithfully from the pews since the 1787 walk out at 6<sup>th</sup> and Lombard; while others have stood behind sacred desks since 1819.
- **1783** Jarena Lee, The first preaching woman in the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church, was born February to free parents in Cape May, New Jersey.
- **1804** Jarena Lee is converted after hearing Rev. Richard Allen preach, and joins Bethel Church, Philadelphia, PA
- **1808/1809** Jarena Lee tells Rev. Richard Allen about her call to preach and is told the Methodist Discipline did not allow for women preachers, so she said she suppressed "...the holy energy which burned within me, as a fire..." for over eight years during while exhorting and holding prayer meetings in private homes
- **1811** Jarena Lee marries Rev. Joseph Lee and moves to Mt Pisgah AMEC in Snow Hill (Lawnside), NJ where he pastored the church but suffers physically and spiritually from suppressing her call to preach.



- **1817** Rev. Joseph Lee dies, and Jarena Lee returns to Philadelphia with her two children
- **1818** Jarena Lee is permitted to exhort and hold prayers meetings in her home.

Richard Allen publicly acknowledges Jarena Lee's call to preach after Rev. Richard Williams falters in his sermon and she stands and expounds on his text (Jonah 2:9).

- **1819** Jarena Lee is officially licensed to preach, becoming the first woman preacher in the AME Church.

Though initially reluctant to receive her call, Bishop Richard Allen proved to be a genuine and strong ally. Her journal records that during a period when she was tempted to withdraw from the AME Church because of hostile opposition from male clergy, she was sustained by God's love and Allen's support.

- **1820** Jarena Lee was truly an itinerant preacher, traveling through Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Detroit, Canada and even to the slave states of Maryland and Delaware preaching to whites, coloreds and Indians – to people of all religious persuasions - to rich and poor – to free and enslaved – to the powerful and the powerless.

She preached in homes, meeting houses, schoolhouses, court houses, camp meetings, by the roadside, in barns and on slave plantations.

She went alone, with female companions, with her children, and with male preachers. She went by foot (walking an average of 27 miles a day), by boat, sleigh, stagecoach, and railway. In one 14-month period she traveled approximately 2,800 miles. She often preached several times a day – sometimes into the early morning – and in one year alone she preached 692 sermons.

- **1833** She began writing her autobiography "Life and Religious Experience of Jarena Lee" She sold more than 2000 copies of the original and the revised version.
- **18??** Jarena Lee dies, however, there is no record of the date of her death. She is buried at Mt. Pisgah AMEC Lawnside (formerly Snow Hill), New Jersey, where her husband formerly served as Pastor



**1844** A lithograph of **Juliann Jane Tillman** is produced. She was a preacher in the AME Church although very little is known about her, she was apparently popular enough to warrant a lithograph of her done in 1844 in Philadelphia, which was reproduced many times.

**1848** Ordination of women comes before the General Conference for consideration in the form of a petition by the Daughters of Zion. The General Conference rejects the idea of ordination but grants permission for women to preach in churches and receive licenses.

- **1852** Ordination of women comes before the General Conference for the second time, it is again rejected.
- **1856** Ordination of women comes before the General Conference for the third time, it is again rejected.
- **1868** Ordination of women comes before the General Conference for the fourth time, and as a compromise (or to pacify women yearning for ministry) the General Conference creates the office of Stewardess, female evangelist, and deaconess.
- **1882 Sarah (Sallie) Ann Copeland Hughes** a license woman preacher is given her first church in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

As a second appointment, she is assigned to St. Stephens AME Church, Wilmington, North Carolina where her ministry is successful, and she rebuilds the church.

There is no public images of Sarah (Sallie) Ann Copeland Hughes

- **1885** **Bishop Henry McNeal Turner** ordained **Sarah (Sallie) Ann Copeland Hughes** an itinerant deacon
- **1887** Under the leadership of **Bishop Jabez P. Campbell** The North Carolina Annual Conference entertains a motion to strike Rev. Sarah Hughes to strike her name from the roll as a deacon and votes to rescind the ordination of women
- **1888** The General Conference affirms Bishop Campbell's order and Rev. Hughes' ordination was de-ratified. After 1888, her name disappears from all official AME historical records.



Women are affirmed as Evangelist.

- **1936** **Martha Jane Keys**, a pastor and evangelist from Kentucky, initiated the legal challenge to women's exclusion from ordination introducing a bill at the General Conference calling for the ordination of women. The bill failed.
- **1948** The General Conference authorized the ordination of women as Local Deacons
- **1956** The General Conference authorized the ordination of women as Local Elders
- **1960** The General Conference authorized the ordination of women as Itinerants

**1964 Rev. Carrie Thomas Hooper** of the New York Annual conference becomes the first woman candidate for the Episcopacy

After the 1960 General Conference permitted the ordination of women as Itinerant Elders, Rev. Hooper announced her run for the Episcopacy, at the 1964 General Conference in Cincinnati, OH.

Rev. Hooper offered herself for Episcopal Service five times:

- 1964 General Conference- 11 votes
- 1968 General Conference- 12 votes
- 1972 General Conference- 29 votes
- 1976 General Conference- 54 votes
- 1980 General Conference- 4 votes



**1973** Bishop Frederick H. Talbot appoints **Reverend Dorothy Millicent Stephens Morris** Acting Presiding Elder (16<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District)

**1976 Rev. Jacquelyn Grant** presents a position paper on Women in Ministry to the General Conference

**1977** A delegation of clergy women (including Reverends Grant, Nurjhan Govan, Alyson Browne Johnson, Mary Ann Bellinger, Alice McNair, and Jeane B. Williams), meets with the Council of Bishops in Atlantic City, NJ voicing concerns related to clergy women in the AME Church. An ad hoc committee is established with Rev. Jacquelyn Grant chair, Bishops John Hurst Adams, and Frank Madison Reid, Jr.

**1983** Bishop Vinton R. Anderson appointed **Rev. Cornelia Wright** Presiding Elder, making her the first female Presiding Elder in the United States.

**1988** The Commission on African Methodist Episcopal Women In Ministry established

**1992** The Commission on African Methodist Episcopal Women In Ministry admitted by the General Conference

One of the responsibilities of this commission is to challenge the AME Church to live out its proclamation of justice. AME/WIM does this by remembering the undeniable call of the now, Reverend Jarena Lee and the existential leap of faith Bishop Richard Allen took when he broke with tradition in 1819 to license her the first woman preacher in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

**1996** **Rev. Carrie Thomas Hooper** dies at the age of 102

**1996** A recommendation is made to the General Conference regarding the election of women clergy to the Episcopacy

**1996** **Bishop C Garnett Henning** encourages the General Conference to revisit the AME Church motto, noting that its language was "un-inclusive"

**2000** **Dr. Jayme Coleman Williams**, the first elected female General Officer, presents a Special Resolution in compliance with rule #15 in support of electing a woman to the Episcopacy.

**2000** **Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie** (117<sup>th</sup>) is elected the first woman to the Episcopacy in the AME Church

**2004** **Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry** (122<sup>nd</sup>) and **Bishop Sarah Frances Davis** (126<sup>th</sup>) elected to the Episcopacy in the AME Church

- **2016** **Bishop E. Anne Henning Byfield** (135th) elected Bishop in the AME Church  
July 13, two hundred twelve years after answer the call the African Methodist Episcopal Church reviewed the legacy of **Jarena Lee**, and posthumously affirmed her life and ministry by conferring the ministerial title Itinerant Elder to Reverend Jarena Lee (*Honoris Causa*).  
December, The General Board unanimously adopted a resolution committing the church to the intentional pursuit of Gender Justice and Equality. To track the church's progress in its in intentional pursuit of and commitment to Gender Justice and Equality AME/WIM surveyed its membership -male and female.
- **2019** Presiding Elder Michelle Goodloe becomes President of the Connectional Presiding Elders Council

# 2018-2019 AME/WIM Demographics



Detailed Demographics	
Number of female itinerant preachers reported in the connection	2548
Number of female local preachers reported in the connection	1008
Number of female Evangelist and Exhorters reported in the connection	298
Number of female licentiates reported in the connection	280
Number of female licentiates admitted to the Annual Conference in the connection as reported	110
Number of <u>female</u> superannuates (retired preachers) reported in the connection	270
Total Number of women in ministry reported who have died in the connection this fiscal year	39
General Demographics	
Total Number of Women serving in an active Pastoral capacity reported in the connection	1210
Total Number of Women serving in an Institutional Ministerial capacity reported in the connection	114
Total number of Associate Members (male dues paying members) reported in the connection	122
Total Number of Female Bishops in the connection	3
Total Number of Female (Ordained) General Officers in the connection	1
Total Number of Female (non-Lay) Connectional Officers reported in the connection	16
Total Number of Female Presiding Elders reported in the connection	51
Total number of women receiving a Doctoral Degree as reported to the connection	33
Total number of women receiving a Master of Divinity Degree as reported to the connection	38
Summary	
Total number of women in ministry reported in the connection	4514
Total number of preachers in the connection?	TBD

\*18 out of 20 District participated in the 2019 Statistical Data Report.