

THE FOURTEENTH SESSION OF THE
NINTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Southwest Alabama Annual Conference

THE OPENING WORSHIP SERVICE | WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2023 | 10:30 AM



THEME:

A Call for Prophetic Visions

MICAH 6:8

HOST CHURCH AND PASTOR
BETHEL AME CHURCH, MOBILE
THE REVEREND TREVOR E. WOOLRIDGE – PASTOR

THE REVEREND CHARLES A. LEWIS - HOST PRESIDING ELDER
MOBILE DISTRICT
THE REVEREND ANTONIO THOMAS - ASSOCIATE PRESIDING ELDER
CAMDEN DISTRICT

BISHOP HARRY L. SEAWRIGHT
PRESIDING PRELATE

REVEREND SHERITA MOON SEAWRIGHT
EPISCOPAL SUPERVISOR

Opening Worship Service
Preacher



Reverend Dr. G. Dianne Lewis

The Opening Worship Service

Wednesday, October 18, 2023

10:30 a.m.

**The Reverend Charles A. Lewis, Worship Leader
Presiding Elder of the Mobile District**

THE MOMENT OF REVERENCE THE PROCESSIONAL

"Glad to Be in the Service"
Glad to be in the service,
Glad to be in the service,
Glad to be in the service one more time.
He didn't have to let me live,
He didn't have to let me live,
Live to be in the service one more time.

THE DOXOLOGY

Choir and Congregation

Hymn #647 [Tune: Old 100]

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host, Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

THE CALL TO WORSHIP

The Reverend Trevor E. Woolridge

Minister: I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord, our feet shall stand within Your gates, O Jerusalem.

People: **For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand, I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.**

Minister: Because of the house of the Lord, our God, I will seek Your good.

People: **Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God.**

Minister: Blessed are they that dwell in Your house Lord, I have loved Your habitation, the place where Your honor dwells.

People: **For the Lord is in His Holy Temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him.**

Minister: Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight. O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.

People: **O sing unto the Lord a new song for He has done marvelous things.
Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth and sing praises.**

THE OPENING PRAISE

The Reverend Kimberly Martin

Hymn #304 [Tune: ST. THOMAS SM]

“And Are We Yet Alive”

And are we yet alive, and see each other’s face?
Glory and praise to Jesus give, for His redeeming grace!

Preserved by power divine; to full salvation here,
Again in Jesus’ praise we join; and in His sight appear.

What troubles have we seen, what conflicts have we passed,
Fightings without, and fears within, since we assembled last.

But out of all the Lord, hath brought us by His love;
And still He doth His help afford, and hides our life above.

Then let us make our boast, of His redeeming power,
Which saves us to the uttermost, till we can sin no more.

Let us take up the cross, till we the crown obtain;
And gladly reckon all things loss, so we may Jesus gain.

THE INVOCATION

The Reverend James Harris

THE CHORAL RESPONSE

Choir and Congregation

Hymn # 307

“Sweet Hour of Prayer”

Sweet hour of prayer! Sweet hour of prayer!
That calls me from a world of care,
And bids me at my Father’s throne
Make all my wants and wishes known;
In seasons of distress and grief,
My soul has often found relief,
And oft escaped the tempter’s snare
By thy return, sweet hour of prayer!

THE WORSHIP THROUGH MUSIC

Conference Choir

THE SCRIPTURE READING

The Reverend Vernon McLeod

THE PREFACE TO THE DECALOGUE

Hymn #69 [Tune: Woodworth] "From All That Dwell"

From all that dwell below the skies, let the Creator's praise arise;
Let the Redeemer's name be sung, Through every land by every tongue.

THE DECALOGUE (SUMMARY)

The Reverend Charles Reeves

Hear what Christ our Savior says, "You shall love the Lord Your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. The second is like unto it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

THE GLORIA PATRI

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen, Amen.

THE LITANY

The Reverend Emma F. Constant

14th Session of the Southwest Alabama Annual Conference Litany

*Written by The Reverend Trevor E. Woolridge
Pastor, Bethel AME Church, Mobile, Alabama*

LEADER: Today the **Southwest Annual Conference** of the African Methodist Episcopal Church of the 9th Episcopal District give thanks to Almighty God for the opportunity to sing "And Are We Yet Alive" in this 14th Session of our Annual Conference.

PEOPLE: We give thanks to God for still being in the land of the living.

LEADER: Since the founding and organizing of the AME Church, including the election of Bishop Richard Allen, there has always been orderly transition of our leadership.

PEOPLE: We give thanks to God for the historical orderly change of leadership in the AME Church.

LEADER: We thank God for Bishop Harry L. Seawright, his example of prayerful Christian leadership, generosity, and commitment to the work of Christ. We further thank God for the "Modern day lesson of Lazarus" in Bishop Seawright's life as demonstrated in 2016.

PEOPLE: We give thanks to God for the preservation of life and miracles we have seen for ourselves.

LEADER: We thank God for Reverend Sherita Moon Seawright, her kindness and love. For her Christian example that taught us how to laugh, not to take ourselves so seriously, but to make Christ the center of our lives while enduring all that life throws at us.

PEOPLE: We thank God for examples of Christianity that mold and make us better than we were.

LEADER: We reaffirm our commitment to the Word of God, the Discipline of the AME Church and general behavior that glorifies God.

PEOPLE: We thank God for the joy of praise, worship and celebration of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

LEADER: We lift up the names of the sages of our Conference, Presiding Elders Bryant and Rouse, their spouses in petition to God to continue to preserve and bless them

PEOPLE: We thank God for all that serve faithfully.

LEADER: Now Lord, at the conclusion of this Conference, we will receive our assignments, Episcopal Leadership, Clergy and Lay alike, to "Go, preach my gospel, saith the Lord, bid the whole earth My grace receive, explain to them My sacred Word; bid them believe, obey, and live.

PEOPLE: We thank God for His instructions and ask for His guidance and strength to be obedient. Hallelujah! Amen.

THE MISSION OFFERING

THE WORSHIP THROUGH MUSIC

THE PRESENTATION OF THE BISHOP

The Reverend Antonio Thomas
*Presiding Elder,
Camden District*

THE PRESENTATION OF THE PREACHER

Bishop Harry L. Seawright
*Presiding Prelate of the
9th Episcopal District*

THE SERMONIC HYMN

The Reverend Rosalind Amos

Hymn #361

*"There Are Some Things"
(Yes, God Is Real)*

There are some things I may not know,
There are some places I can't go,
But I am sure of this one thing that God is real
For I can feel Him deep within.

Refrain
Yes, God is real, real in my soul,
Yes, God is real for He has a washed
and made me whole; His love for me
is like pure gold, Yes, God is real
for I can feel Him in my soul.

Some folks may doubt, some folks may scorn,
All can desert and leave me alone.
But as for me I'll take God's part,
For God is real and I can feel
Him in my heart.
Refrain

I cannot tell just how you felt
When Jesus took your sins away,
But since that day, yes, since that hour
God has been real for I can feel
His holy power.
Refrain

THE ANNUAL SERMON

The Reverend Dr. G. Dianne Lewis
*Pastor, Wilson Chapel
African Methodist Episcopal Church,
Camden, AL
Connectional President of the
AME Chaplain Corps and
President of the Henry McNeal Turner
Chaplains Association*

THE INVITATION TO CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

The Reverend John Dees

Hymn #355
African American Heritage Hymnal
"We Offer Christ"
We offer Christ to you, oh, my brother,
We offer Christ to you, oh, my sister.
He will give you brand new life through life abundantly;
Oh come, come on to Christ.

THE WORSHIP THROUGH GIVING

THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS

Bishop Harry L. Seawright

THE ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Reverend Trevor E. Woolridge

THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

The Reverend Samantha Lightner

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only son our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead; and buried. The third day he arose from the dead, he ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Church Universal, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE BENEDICTION

The Reverend Dr. G. Dianne Lewis





The Reverend Dr. G. Dianne Lewis
Pastor, Wilson Chapel
African Methodist Episcopal Church,
Camden, AL
Connectional President of the
AME Chaplain Corps and
President of the Henry McNeal Turner
Chaplains Association

Rev. Dr. G. Dianne Lewis, D. Min., BCC is a native of Delaware. She is an endorsed federal Chaplain of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC). She serves as the Connectional President of the AME Chaplain Corps and President of the Henry McNeal Turner Chaplains Association (HMTCA). Her membership affords her the opportunity to be selected as a member of the General Conference Commission on Chaplains. Presently, she serves as the pastor of Wilson Chapel AME Church in Camden, Alabama. The Reverend Dr. Lewis is an aspirant for Bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 2024. Her theme is “*CARES Enough to Make a Difference*,” as a Compassionate, Accountable, Responsible, Effective, Servant-leader for the AME Church. She is an advocate and activist for the good of all people.

Her connectional service in the AME Church also includes the President of the International Alumni Association of Turner Theological Seminary based at the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) in Atlanta, Georgia. She has presided over several congregations in the First Episcopal District AME Church, the Sixth Episcopal District AME Church, and the Ninth Episcopal District for over 30 years. Dr. Lewis has functioned in several leadership capacities within her denomination since entering ministry: WIM President, Conference Secretary, Conference Treasurer, Conference Trustee, and has served on the Ministerial Efficiency Committee, Judicial Committee, and the Board of Examiners.

She earned the Master of Divinity Degree from Turner Theological Seminary at ITC, Atlanta Georgia with a concentration in Psychology of Religion and Pastoral Care, with additional studies in Theology and Homiletics. Her leadership during her enrollment at ITC led to many honorable accomplishments including President of Student Government; Senior Class President (ITC-'97); The Josephus R. Coan Award for Academic Honors (ITC), and she is a member of The National Honor Society of Theta Phi.

Dr. Lewis is a 2012 graduate of the Doctor of Ministry degree program from Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC where her concentration was Practical Theology for Pastors, Chaplains, and Clinicians. Her dissertation, “*Identifying Shame-based Issues in African American Adolescent Males: A Source for Ministry*,” has elicited much attention from community leaders.

Dr. Lewis is the Executive Chief Chaplain of spiritual and religious care for over 3,000 personnel and 1,000 patients at the Veterans Affairs Augusta Health Care System in Augusta, Georgia. Her leadership has earned her the *Gold Standard of Excellence In Leadership* award for seven consecutive

years. Currently, she serves as Chief of Chaplain Service at the Veterans Affairs Health Care System in Augusta, Georgia. Previously, she has served as staff Chaplain at the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center, and at the Carl Vinson VA Medical Center, in Dublin Georgia, respectfully. She is the first recipient of the *“2013-14 Charlie Norwood VA CPE Resident of the Year for Academic Excellence, Professionalism and Collegiality among Staff and Fellow Residents.”* She is a Board-Certified Chaplain with the National Association of Veteran Affairs (NAVAC) Chaplains, and a member of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education.

Dr. Lewis is married to the Presiding Elder Charles A. Lewis, of the Mobile District. She has two sons Bradley and Isaac, and she is the proud ‘Mom-mom’ of Jaden. Her theological disposition is *“Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward and that the Master you serve is Christ.”* Colossians 3:23, 24 NIV