

# African Methodist Episcopal Church Joint Conference Annual Founder's Day Celebration



*Bishop Richard Allen, Founder*

**Sunday, February 14, 2021**

**3:00 P.M.**

**Host: Midwest Conference**

**Bishop Clement W. Fugh - Presiding Prelate**

**Rev. Fran T. Cary - Presiding Elder, Midwest North District**

**Rev. Benjamin Finnell - Presiding Elder, Midwest South District**

## Order of Worship

*Worship Leader: Rev. Fran T. Cary, Presiding Elder*

The Welcome .....Presiding Elder, Fran T. Cary

The Doxology .....“Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow”

The Call to Worship .....Presiding Elder Teresa Nelson  
Phoenix/Albuquerque District

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

Leader: For a day in thy 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.

Leader: Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good.

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

Leader: Blessed are they that dwell in thy house. Lord, I have loved thy habitation, the place where thy honor dwelleth.

Leader: For the Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him.

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

Leader: 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 Hymn of Praise ..... “Lift Every Voice and Sing”.....Alicia Keys Production

The Prayer . .....Presiding Elder Edmund Lowe  
Missouri Conference, Cape Girardeau District

The Old Testament Lesson .....“Isaiah 54:1-10 MSG”.....Bro. William Pollard III  
Midwest Conference President, Young People’s Department

The New Testament Lesson ..... “St Luke 12:22-32 MSG”.....Presiding Elder Darlene Smith  
Missouri Conference, St. Louis/Columbia District

The Offering.....Rev. Dr. Karla Cooper  
Midwest Conference Finance Vice Chair

The Selection .....The Impossible Dream  
Luther Van Dross & The London Community Choir

The Litany.....Presiding Elder Sheriolyn Curry Lasley  
Desert Mountain Conference, Rocky Mountain District

**Black Lives Matter: A Litany**  
**A Litany by Bishop Adam J. Richardson, Jr.**

- Leader: Today we're wearing black – a reminder of our common roots designed and lifted by the Creator from the soil of Africa, a *Genesis* from which all humanity evolved. Thus, we affirm the value, worth and dignity of all human beings and logically declare that: **Black lives matter!**
- Leader: Today we're wearing black – an almost universal symbol of mourning. It is a simple gesture of uniformly standing in sympathy and solidarity with grieving families in every region of the country where young men died at the hands of police whose purpose it is to "serve and protect." Under these circumstances, it is the one thing we can do to demonstrate that: **Black Lives Matter !**
- Leader: Today we're wearing black – serious dress for serious thought. We have memorized the narrative: Impugn the character of the newly deceased; he deserved what he got; then seduce the public through the media – "It was just an unfortunate tragedy." "There is no intentional assault on black life;" "There is no conspiracy to destroy Black boys." "It was an isolated incident," they say, but not to the grieving families. The frequency of seeing rolling hearses in our neighborhoods seems epidemic. The apparent epidemic is the reason we must announce that: **Black Lives Matter!**
- Leader: Today we're wearing black – a visual witness in the tradition of the prophets. The officials say, "It is only coincidental that the young men *happen* to be Black," but Black families are still marching behind funeral biers to the cemetery. Grand Juries keep disappointing fathers and mothers anticipating justice for their sons, but keep getting "No True Bills." Young men are getting the death penalty for minor offenses. They were all unarmed. Do you actually expect our silence when we really need to say that: **Black Lives Matter!**
- Leader: Today we're wearing black – as a solemn act of protest. The shooting, the chokehold was caught on camera. We saw it. The coroner said it was a homicide. The badge-wearing gunman exacted an extrajudicial death penalty. With a history of racism, we are certain that you understand why we protest. You can understand why we are "fed up;" why we join our voices around the country and around the world to say "Enough is Enough!" Pardon us if we scream: **Black Lives Matter!**
- Leader: Today we're wearing black – So, what gives? Is it our look? Is it our manner of speech? Is it our neighborhood? Are we a threat to you? Pardon us if we protest in defense of our own humanity that: **Black Lives Matter**

Leader: And at this Season, it is the Gospel writer Matthew who remembered the words of the prophet Jeremiah, saying: “A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more.” Today, Rachel is joined by Sisters Sybrina Fulton (mother of Trayvon Martin, 17, Sanford, FL); Lucia McBath (mother of Jordan Davis, 17, Jacksonville, FL); Leslie McSpadden (mother of Michael Brown, 18, Ferguson, (MO); Samaria Rice (mother of 12 year old Tamir Rice, Cleaveland, OH); Tressa Sharrod (mother of John Crawford III, 22, Beavercreek, OH); Syreeta Myers (mother of VonDerritt Myers, 18, St. Louis, MO); Gwen Carr (mother of Eric Garner, 43, Staten Islans, NY); Tritobia Ford (mother of Ezell Ford, 25, Los Angeles, CA); Sylvia Palmer (mother of Akai Gurley, 26, New York); Maria Hamilton (mother of Donte Hamilton, 31, Milwaukee, WI); and the mothers of Rekia Boyd, 22, Chicago, Il; Dante Parker, 36, Victorville, CA; Romain Brisbon, 32, Phoenix, AZ; and Timothy Stansbury, Sean Bell, Oscar Grant, Aaron Campbell, Alonzo Ashley, Wendell Allen, and Jonathan Ferrell. A young man carries a sign in protest, asking an important question, :Am I Next?”

**Leader: At this defining moment in our history, we join with families and foot soldiers  
to lift our voices – with other sacred communions – to shout in the direction of every police  
department, every office of judicial authority that *Black lives matter!***

The Introduction of Bishop ..... Presiding Elder Benjamin Finnell

The Selection .....Sister Regina Sims  
Accompanied by Bro. Paul Sims

The Preached Word .....Bishop Clement W. Fugh  
Presiding Prelate, Fifth Episcopal District

The Invitation .....Presiding Elder Benjamin Finnell  
Midwest South District

The Remarks & Announcements .....Presiding Elder Fran T. Cary

The Doxology & Benediction .....Bishop Clement W. Fugh

## Richard Allen (1760 – 1831)

Richard Allen was born into slavery in Germantown – then a suburb, now a neighborhood – in northwest Philadelphia. From a young age he was a devout worshipper, student, and advocate. After teaching himself to read and write, he attended the local Methodist Society, where he began to evangelize at age 17. His belief and his efforts at the church convinced his owner Stokeley Sturgis, to reconsider the morality of slave ownership. Allen was granted his freedom in 1780.

By 1787, Richard Allen was a locally-lauded parishioner the historic St. George's church. It was there that he led one of the first documented civil rights efforts in the United States. Spawned by the frustrations of persistent injustice, this momentous event sparked the movement that led to the emergence of the African-American churches at the forefront of our religious landscape today.

Over the years, Richard Allen and his colleague Absalom Jones' successful evangelistic leadership in the community drew a large congregation of African-Americans to the church. Because of this shift in congregational demographics, racial tensions flared and an increasingly segregated seating policy for black worshippers compelled Allen and Jones to lead their congregation in a historic walkout.

The walkout resulted in the formation of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas and Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church. The church is among the oldest denominations of independent African-American churches in the United States. Allen and Jones later formed the Free African Society, a non-denominational mutual aid society that assisted fugitive slaves and new migrants to the city. He went on to serve Bethel Church, ordained as the first black Methodist minister and honored for his prolific leadership and preaching. Later he founded and was elected the first bishop at the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the first fully independent black denomination in the United States.

Born Valentine's Day 1760



Bishop Richard Allen