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TUESDAY'S THOUGHT FOR THE DAY IS EXPANDING

Welcome to Tuesday Thoughts with Rev. Tonikia L. Steans! On the first Tuesday of every month, we'll be exploring the world of mindfulness meditation. Mindfulness is a state of being where you are fully present in the moment, aware of your thoughts and feelings without judgment. Through meditation, we can cultivate this state of mindfulness and find peace and clarity in our lives. (Check it out on our 4th District Women in Ministry Facebook page).

Rev. Tonikia L. Steans is a seasoned meditation teacher and spiritual leader who has helped countless individuals find inner peace through mindfulness practices. In these Tuesday Thoughts posts, she will be sharing tips, tricks, and insights on how to cultivate a daily mindfulness meditation practice.

Whether you're new to meditation or a seasoned practitioner, join us on the first Tuesday of every month for Tuesday Thoughts with Rev. Tonikia L. Steans. Let's explore the transformative power of mindfulness meditation together!

Rev. Tonikia Steans
Indiana Conference

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

All Sisters have a story to tell. Some of us have the gift of storytelling and have no difficulty sharing the fabric of their lives. Others are women of few words. Many of us fall somewhere in between. Our life journeys are important; they continuously shape who we are in the here and now. And they impact our current interactions with other people including family, friends, and church affiliations. Sharing our stories can be personally healthy, even cathartic at times. And for the readers/hearers, they can become the ties that bind us. As we continue our effort to expand the Sisterhood here in this geographically vast 4th District, women have been invited to share impactful things that matter to them, and probably to others who are quietly dealing with similar concerns, sometimes in isolation. Sisters, we're in this thing together. Life is easier and more enjoyable when we stay connected. Long ago the question was asked, "Am I my sisters' keeper?" God's answer was revealed in his unending loving kindness towards each of us.

Rev. Jan



Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised! The Executive Board is pleased to report that our very first Rev. Dr. Ida James (*pictured to the left*) scholarship award was presented this month. The recipient is the Rev. Kenesha Blake-Newell, Pastor of Grant Memorial AME Church in Toronto. Many thanks to the members of the Applicant Review Committee for your thorough work and recommendation.

Please know that we are grateful for every financial donation to the Scholarship Fund that was received to date. Contributions to the fund are ongoing and may be made by check payable to WIM and mailed to:

4th District AME WIM
C/O Rev. Shawnda Damole
1370 Stanley Blvd.
Calumet City, IL 60409

OCTOBER
Breast Cancer
AWARENESS MONTH



MY JOURNEY

The 140th session of the Chicago Annual Conference closed on Friday September 30, 2022 and on Monday October 3rd, at 8:03 in the morning I received a call from my primary care physician that confirmed that I had invasive stage 1 breast cancer. I had my annual mammogram in August which showed something suspicious, a second mammogram, ultra sound and biopsy in early September. I was shaken for a minute, but I knew the Lord was with me because all of the test that I had, had at this point had been painless (including the biopsy). Within two hours of the call from my doctor I had an appointment with my surgeon, oncologist and radiation specialist. I had a partial mastectomy on Nov. 8th, I began radiation in January and completed radiation on January 24th, my 73rd birthday, and I have been declared cancer free.

My advice to all of my sisters is get your yearly mammogram early detection is the key! Fear will paralyze you, but your faith and trust in the Lord will guide you through. Knowing that God will provide you with the support of family and as in my case a praying congregation and great friends who are willing to be with you every step of the way.

Pastor Sharon E. Staples, M. Div.
Chicago Conference

2023
Congratulations

Congratulations to all the
4th District 2023 ordinands!
Reverend Sisters, please email us and
let us know where and how you are
now serving as clergywoman.

Email: 4thamewim@gmail.com

CAREGIVER FOR MY SPOUSE

We've had a good life! We are having a good life! We will continue to have a good life! I recently shared this mantra with my husband, Richard H. Johnson, to remind and encourage us as we are entering into a new phase of our journey with me being a caregiver for him and for myself. Every caregiver's situation is different. In my case, I am caring for my husband of forty years who has vascular dementia.

I find it easy to forget about my own needs thus, I often experience high stress levels, depression and other health problems. A great reminder for me is that "self-care is not selfish." My husband has been my best supporter throughout our marriage so when he was diagnosed with dementia and especially as the disease has progressed, I was ready to drop everything and devote all of my time and energy to him.

I am finding that as we experience the different stages, more and more of my time is needed to care for him, therefore, I tend to neglect exercise, healthy eating, sleep, and taking time for activities that I enjoy. I need to keep up my energy and stay well to care for him. My faith has been my life line: being connected to the Vine (John 15), having a supportive biological and faith family we journey onward and upward!

Rev. Dr. Janet Johnson
Chicago Conference

SISTERHOOD

Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.
Romans 12:15

Sisterhood is beautiful, unique, and very much needed. It's wonderful to have that sister-group to do life together. We share our ups and downs, joy and pain, when life is going great and when life be life-ing...

I was going to make my focus verse Galatian 6:2 where we are told to bear one another's burdens. But I didn't want to give the idea that we're ALL going through ALL the time. That narrative wearies me. Truth is we've had some good days - lots of them!

So remember to rejoice when your sister rejoices. A new baby or the last child gets his own place? Rejoice! A new promotion or she quits and starts her own business? Rejoice! A new relationship, boo, or husbae? Rejoice! An "I'm done", it's over, thank you next, or conscious uncoupling? If she's rejoicing, rejoice with her!

And now for the mourning. Life does get hard. Sometimes, we need a moment (or two or three) to get ourselves together. Sometimes we need a good cry or even a good scream. It's during those times that we mourn **with** our sister. We hold space for her grief, hand her tissues for her eyes, and LISTEN to her heart.

And when the good times start rolling again, we roll with them!

Sometimes sisterhoods can get rocky but my newfound philosophy is this:

**There are 8 billion people in the world.
Don't go it alone.
Find your tribe (your sisterhood)
And be a good neighbor (sister).**

Blessings,

Rev. Adrian L. Johnson
Illinois Conference

GREETINGS FROM THE 4TH DIST WIM EXECUTIVE BOARD



Rev. Janice
Brazil Cummings



Rev. Shawnda
Damole



Rev. Dr. Elaine
Gordon



Rev. Sheila
Nuness



Rev. Deborah
Scott



Rev. Dr. Debra
Thompson



Presiding Elder
Lenore Williams



Rev. Sheila
Wilson-Freelon, Esq.

Headlines across the nation announce interest, movements and actions toward reparations. What is this all about?

REPARATIONS DEFINED

Darity and Mullen define reparations as “a program of acknowledgement, redress, and closure for a grievous injustice. Where African Americans are concerned, the grievous injustices that make the case for reparations include slavery, legal segregation (Jim Crow), and ongoing discrimination and stigmatization.”¹

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING REPARATIONS?

Responsibility for reparations falls on many agencies and entities, particularly on those who created and upheld laws and policies to support the continued mistreatment. This includes federal and state government and religious bodies.

The church falls into this discussion because of its complicity in enforcing and upholding the harm and failure to live out their self-proclaimed faith of the Gospel that says that God is on the side of the poor, the oppressed and the needy (see Isaiah 58:6).

WHAT IS HAPPENING ACROSS THE NATION IN THE REPARATION MOVEMENT?

Secularly, city governments are developing reparation actions and some have begun to implement their commitment to repair the harm.

Sacredly, faith based universities and colleges, denominations and faith based organizations have begun to plan how they too, will begin to repair the harm caused by racism and theft of opportunity, land and labor.

WHAT IS THE HOPE FOR THE END RESULT?

Effective reparations would be “an improved position for blacks is associated with sharp and enduring reductions in racial disparities, particularly economic disparities like racial wealth inequality, and corresponding sharp and enduring improvements in black well-being.”²

WHAT IS THE INTENT OF THIS ARTICLE?

With the ongoing discussion of reparations, Black churches and communities need to be at the table. Reparations cannot be defined by the oppressor and can only be defined by those harmed by oppressive acts. This is an invitation to come to the table for this discussion and to define what reparations should look like and how it should be carried out. Let's talk.

Rev. Pamela Ngunjiri is an Itinerant Elder in the St. Paul/Minneapolis District, Chicago Conference, 4th District of the African Methodist Church and she is Co-Director for Racial Justice at the Minnesota Council of Churches, where she partners with colleagues to develop truth-telling, education and reparation.

¹ William A. Darity, Jr. and A. Kirsten Mullen, *From Here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans in the Twenty-first Century*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2020, p2

² Darity and Mullen, p3 programming for congregations. Feel free to reach out to her to share your thoughts, for more information or for speaking or preaching engagements around this work. She can be reached at pamela.ngunjiri@mnchurches.org.

Suggested Reading

William A. Darity, Jr. and A. Kirsten Mullen, *From Here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans in the Twenty-first Century*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2020

Joseph Evans, *Reconciliation and Reparation: Preaching Economic Justice*, Judson Press, Valley Forge, PA, 2018

James Forman, “The Black Manifesto”, in *Black Manifesto: Religion, Racism, and Reparations*, ed. Robert S. Lecky and H. Elliot Wright, New York: Sheed and Ward, 1969

Duke L. Kwon and Gregory Thompson, *Reparations: A Christian Call for Repentance and Repair*, Brazos Press, Grand Rapids, MI, 2021

MEDITATION

TAKE IT EASY

“Then Jesus said to them, “The Sabbath was made to meet the needs of people, and not people to meet the requirements of the Sabbath.”

Mark 2: 27 (NLT)

The Saints of old were adamant about having a day of rest. Clothes to be worn on Sunday would have to be washed and ironed on Saturday. Sunday dinners were cooked on Saturday. People who washed cars and cut grass on Sunday were considered heretics.

Theologically, we now understand that Saturday rather than Sunday is the Sabbath. But we have mostly abandoned Sabbath rest on either day. In the second chapter of Mark, Jesus teaches the Sabbath is not a legal requirement, but a gift from God for renewal and restoration.

Attaining and maintaining physical, mental, and emotional health requires intentionally designating a time to rest and be in the care of God.

When we designate a time to practice the Sabbath rest, we become healthier and more god-like. I realized the importance of this about fifteen years ago. I was the sole caregiver for my mother who had Alzheimer’s. When someone says that is a 24/7 commitment, that is factual, not hyperbolic. One day a dear friend looked at me and said, “You look horrible, you need a break!” Easier said than done. This friend was a member of a church that worshipped on Sabbath—Saturday. She volunteered to stay with my mother on Sundays so I could get a rest. What a blessing! Some might think I would now start going back to church on Sunday. However, I decided Sunday would be my day of rest to renew my strength. I went to the zoo, explored different restaurants, enjoyed long walks in the park, and whatever else I wanted to do.

I discovered that being intentional about resting made me a healthier person and a better caregiver. My mother is now deceased, but I still maintain the practice of designating a sabbath day for rest. As we remain each other’s keeper, let’s continue to look for ways that we can rest and give rest for each other.

Rev. Almella Y. Starks-Umoja, DMin
St. James AME Church

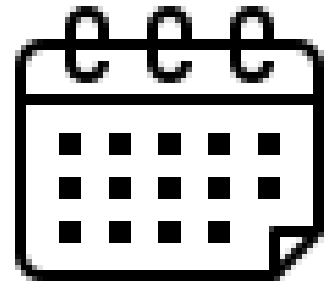


THE HUMOR CORNER

What did the classmate say when asked why they kept walking next to the same person at school?

“I was told I’m supposed to walk by Faith!”

Rev. Dr. Wanda C. Henry-Jenkins
Chicago Conference



2023 UPCOMING EVENTS

AME Church General Conference **August 21-24** in Columbus, Ohio.
Registration is now open.

Fourth District Planning Meeting **October 27-29**

AME Convo **December 13-14**
Columbus, OH

Dept. of Church Growth & Evangelism Seminar **January 16-18**
San Antonio, TX



COME GROW WITH US

BECOME A WIM “SISTER”

As the new annual conference season is upon us, NOW is a great time to join WIM, the professional organization for women who minister in the AMEC. Contact any board member for more details.

ARE YOU CONNECTED?

Sisters, if you are NOT regularly getting information from us, it’s because we do not have your current email address. BUMMER! Let’s fix that right now. There are lots of great things going on and WE WANT YOU in the mix. Please check to make sure that you are current with your dues and send your preferred email address to 4thamewim@gmail.com

