



13<sup>TH</sup> EPISCOPAL DISTRICT  
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
TENNESSEE AND KENTUCKY

## 2020 Annual Conference

# Old Landmarks -UNCHARTED TIMES

*So that this may be a sign among you. When your children  
ask in time to come, "What do those stones mean to you?"*  
Joshua 4:6



153rd Session of the  
Tennessee Annual Conference  
**Opening Worship**

October 23, 2020  
7:00 pm

**Jeffrey N. Leath**  
Presiding Bishop

**Susan J. Leath, MD**  
Supervisor, Women's Missionary Society

**The Reverend Troy Merritt**  
Host Presiding Elder, Nashville District

**The Reverend Sidney Bryant**  
Associate Presiding Elder, South District

**The Reverend Alexander Gatson**  
Associate Presiding Elder, North District

**Payne Chapel AME Church, Nashville**  
Host Church

**The Reverend Dr. W. Antoni Sinkfield**  
Host Pastor



**153<sup>rd</sup> SESSION**  
**THE TENNESSEE ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

Friday, 23 October 2020

**OPENING WORSHIP**

Presiding Elder Troy Merritt, Jr.  
Worship Leader

**The Greeting**

Host Presiding Elder Merritt

**The Doxology**

*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** Dr. W. Antoni Sinkfield & Sis. Nakeisha W. Ruth

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.

**Response: 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: We come to give an account of our discipleship. We praise God for a testimony of faithful service.

**Response: We visited the sick. We were present with those who mourned. We celebrated with those who rejoiced.**

Leader: We heard the cry of the poor and the oppressed. We ministered with benevolence as we called for justice.

**Response: We praise God as we come to another Annual Conference. We seek justice at our door and around the world. We thank God for our service and our deliverance.**

**ALL: Praise God for old landmarks in these uncharted times. May we be empowered to cry for justice; fearless to serve in crisis; motivated to vote as moral citizens; and respectful of God's creation and creatures. Praise the Lord!**

*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 Rev. Randall Webster

Almighty and Eternal God, Our Creator! We invite your presence into this Annual Conference. Remind us of our purpose in you. Help us to be faithful disciples of Jesus. Draw us close to you through our personal devotion. Expand our fellowship as we tell the love of Jesus. Give us wisdom and courage to stand for justice and truth.

Anoint us with Your Holy Spirit! Illumine the path of holiness. Make us mindful of those who are suffering loss. Give us hope as we receive your grace and mercy. All honor and glory belong to you. Amen.

**The Old Testament Reading**

Brother Darwin Eldridge

*Deuteronomy 4:20-23*

*But the Lord has taken you and brought you out of the iron-smelter, out of Egypt, to become a people of his very own possession, as you are now. The Lord was angry with me because of you, and he vowed that I should not cross the Jordan and that I should not enter the good land that the Lord your God is giving for your possession. For I am going to die in this land without crossing over the Jordan, but you are going to*

cross over to take possession of that good land. So be careful not to forget the covenant that the Lord your God made with you, and not to make for yourselves an idol in the form of anything that the Lord your God has forbidden you.

### The New Testament Reading

Sister MaKayla Patton

2 Peter 1:12-15

*Therefore I intend to keep on reminding you of these things, though you know them already and are established in the truth that has come to you. I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to refresh your memory, since I know that my death will come soon, as indeed our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.*

### The Introit

#### **Bless the Lord, O My Soul**

*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name. (repeat) He has done great things, He has done great things, He has done great things, bless His holy name.*

### The Decalogue

Dr. Kenneth & Dr. Roberta Hill

(An Affirmation of God's Law)

Leader: Let us express our commitment to keep God's law.

**Response: God of our salvation, only You are God. We will make no idols.**

**We will not invoke with malice your name, O God.**

**We will remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy.**

**We will honor our father and our mother. We will not commit murder.**

**We will not commit adultery. We will not steal. We will not be a false witness.**

**We will not covet anything that belongs to our neighbor.**

Leader: Jesus said: "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."

**People: Jesus also challenged us with a second commandment which is like the first: We shall love our neighbor as ourselves! On these two**

**commandments depend 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 Selection**

Payne Chapel Choir

**The Prayer**

The Reverend Ben Sanderfur

**The Sermonic Selection**

Payne Chapel Choir

**The Annual Sermon**

The Reverend Dr. Ralph Johnson  
*Back Down Memory Lane*

**The Invitation to Discipleship**

**The Announcements & The Bishop's Word**

**The Benediction**

## The Annual Conference Preacher



### **The Reverend Dr. Ralph Johnson**

Saint Peter AME Church  
Clarksville, Tennessee

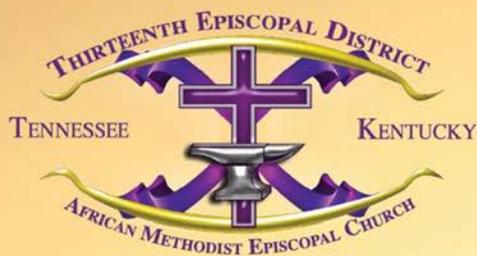
*"And Jesus went about all the cities and villages,  
teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel  
of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and  
every disease among the people."*

*Matthew 9:35 (KJV)*

**The Reverend Dr. Ralph Edward Johnson**, a son of the parsonage, has been in the African Methodist Episcopal Church all his life. He is the first graduate of the Fisk-Vanderbilt Universities' Dual-Degree Program, with a Bachelor of Arts in Physics from Fisk University, and a Bachelor of Engineering in Electrical Engineering from Vanderbilt. He has obtained a Masters in Christian Studies from Union University, and a Doctorate of Ministry in pastoral counseling from Andersonville Theological Seminary.

He retired after 28 years as an electrical engineer from the Tennessee Valley Authority. He was also employed as a teacher with the Sumner County School System in Tennessee for ten years. He is a life-member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., and a member of Freemont Lodge #270 of Free and Accepted Masons, and the NAACP.

Approximately one year after being licensed to preach he was sent out to be the under-shepherd of various congregations. He was ordained Itinerant Elder in 1986 and was appointed a presiding elder in 2004. He is presently the pastor of St. Peter's African Methodist Episcopal Church, Clarksville, Tennessee.



13th Episcopal District  
African Methodist Episcopal Church

413 Veritas Street  
Nashville, TN 37211  
615-242-6814  
office@ame13.org  
www.ame13.org

Mailing Address

P.O. Box 40987  
Nashville, TN 37204