

The Society

Quarterly Newsletter of the Virginia Conference Branch Women's Missionary



Second Episcopal District

Virginia Conference Branch

Women's Missionary Society

*Bishop James LeVert Davis, Servant Bishop
Second Episcopal District*

Mother Arelis Beevers Davis, Episcopal Supervisor

Dr. Deborah Taylor-King, International WMS President

Ms. Selerya Moore, District WMS President

Ms. Rita H. Willis, Virginia Conference WMS President

*Ms. Miranda M. Rountree, Virginia Conference YPD
Director*

From the desk of Our President

During this Lenten season, there is much to reflect on as the conference year comes to a close. The power in all that we do to serve God and one another is through deepening our relationship with Him and with one another, thus we can better care and serve others. Each of us is a witness to this throughout our individual lives as Christians.



I extend my gratitude and admiration to the missionaries and associates across the Virginia Conference for the monstrous jobs, that you do selflessly, both individually and collectively – our Local Society Foot Soldiers, officers and members; our WMS Area Chairpersons and YPD Directors, officers and members; our Virginia Conference Branch officers and members; our SED officers; our Life Members and SCR Lifetime Warriors; our appointed officers and our Male Associates. Your relationships with one another and your use of your God given gifts have made our conference worthy of God's attention, and He is pleased.

In closing, it has been an honor to serve as the President of the Virginia Conference Branch Women's Missionary Society. When initially approached, I did so reluctantly, but three years have made all the difference - working with, on behalf of and alongside amazing disciples of Christ committed to winning souls, health, economic, peace and justice issues. May God continue to bless each of you.

In service with gladness,

Rita H. Willis



Greetings Virginia Conference WMS, YPD,
Lay, and Clergy,



From the bottom of my heart I want to say...**Thank you**. Thank you for the prayers, the encouragement, and support since I stepped in as Interim Conference YPD Director after the transition of our beloved, the Great, Mary Becker.

Thank you for your continued support for all you do for the Virginia Conference YPD. Because of you, we were able to be a light in a sometimes dark world. Although the conference year is ending we will continue to live according to Matthew 5:16, Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven.

We are standing on God's word and will continue GROW, GLOW, and GOD for CHRIST. May God continue to bless and keep you.

Your humble servant,

Miranda Rountree

Virginia Conference YPD Director

Life Members Recognition

(Interviewed by Sis. Geraline Cox)



Esther D. White

Life Member, Esther White is a lifelong member of St. Paul AMEC, Portsmouth, Va and its local society, Katie Washington-Dorothy Goodman WMS of the Clara L. K. Bailey Area WMS (CLKB). She became a Life Member in 2002 and currently serves as treasurer for our VA Conference Life Members.

Sister Esther has served as Area Chair of CLKB, as treasurer and currently serves as its Worship Director. In a recent outreach to Parkview Elementary School, Sister Ester led in providing a gift at Christmas for EACH child enrolled in the school!!

She is active with the Senior Station of Portsmouth Parks & Recreation (where she is when many of us try to reach her by phone) and is also a RED Hatter in Portsmouth.

Sis Esther enjoys family time, her six grandchildren and six great grandchildren. She loves to travel and is often on the go. Although she does not have a driver's license, she is always able to get where she needs to go, even walking to short distances.

She is mother to Associate Willie White, JR & local WMS president, Cassandra W. Andrews & a deceased son, Rev. Alan White.

We proudly salute Life Member Esther White as she continues to let her "light shine for missions", as she'd often state in reporting her work as chair or in her remarks.


--Interviewed by Life Member Geraline H. Cox

Women's History Month

**Let's Never
Forget
WE
ARE APART OF
HISTORY**



DEBRA Y. WHITE, 1ST VICE PRESIDENT ~ RITA H. WILLIS, PRESIDENT

An abstract painting with a rich, textured surface. The colors are vibrant and layered, featuring deep purple in the upper left, bright white in the upper right, a large green section in the center, and a mix of red and yellow in the lower half. The brushstrokes are visible, creating a sense of movement and depth.

**In Celebration
of
Women's History Month
we recognize the
Women who our
Areas are named.**

Roxie L. Arnold

Mrs. Roxie L. Arnold was born and reared in Salem, Virginia. Her wonderful parents were Rev. and Mrs. Issac Dyer. Her mother was one of the Founders of Missions in Virginia in 1897.

She attended the Public Schools of Roanoke County. She studied at Norfolk Mission College, Norfolk Virginia and graduated from Kittrell College in North Carolina with honors in 1907. Mrs. Arnold taught school in North Hampton, Wytheville, Roanoke, and Salem, Virginia.

In 1911, she married Fester C. Arnold in Salem, Virginia. She was the beautiful mother of two sons, L. A. and O.W. Arnold and the grandmother to two. She joined Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church, Roanoke, Virginia in 1911 under the pastorate of Rev. J.W. Sanders.

She worked faithfully for many years as an Adult Bible Teacher, Missionary, Steward, Stewardess, Secretary of Official Board, General Secretary of Quarterly Conference and member of the Sewing Circle, Gospel Union, and the National Council of Church Women. She served in the State Women's Missionary Society of Virginia for 35 years (1927-1957). Elected delegate to the Quadrennial Convention in 1938, Baltimore, MD; Chicago 1939; New Orleans 1949 and Memphis, Tennessee, 1951.

She was very active in Civic work and any organization that was uplifting to mankind, teaching the Bible in the Y.M.C.A and Chairman of Religious Education in the Church.

Mrs. Arnold inspired others every where she went with her sweet soft voice and most usual talent of teaching God's Holy word. Her life exemplified her teaching.

The Roxie L. Arnold Area Missionary Society lives today in her memory. Her dedication to God, her family and Church is a legend.

She passed the same year she became a Life Member of the Roanoke District and State. She lived a long life of missions and departed this life in August, 1975.

In our Garden of precious memories, we say Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors and their works do follow them. - Rev: 14:13

Clara L.K. Bailey

CLARA LOUISE KELLOG BAILEY WAS BORN ON MARCH 6, 1877, TO JOHN AND LYDIA BAILEY IN PORTSMOUTH, VIRGINIA. SHE ATTENDED THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND FURTHERED HER EDUCATION AT HARTSHORN MEMORIAL COLLEGE WHICH JOINED WITH VIRGINIA UNION UNIVERSITY.

MRS. BAILEY TAUGHT IN THE PORTSMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND RETIRED AFTER 50 YEARS. SHE ORGANIZED THE FIRST PARENT-TEACHER LEAGUE IN VIRGINIA IN 1927 & SERVED AS ITS PRESIDENT FOR FOURTEEN YEARS. THE LEAGUE WAS LATER KNOWN AS THE PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA). SHE WAS ELECTED EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ON THE STATE LEVEL.

MRS. CLARA L. K. BAILEY WAS A MEMBER OF THE EMANUEL AME CHURCH FOR MORE THAN SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS WHERE SHE TAUGHT THE BEGINNERS' CLASS; WAS A MEMBER OF THE WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY AT ALL LEVELS; SERVED AS SECRETARY, COMMITTEE CHAIR & OTHER OFFICES.

LONG BEFORE THE CONNECTIONAL WMS ORGANIZED THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S AND CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT, MRS. BAILEY ORGANIZED A GIRL'S AID SOCIETY AT EMANUEL. WITH THESE YOUNG GIRLS, SHE AIDED IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE SICK AND SHUT INS & THOSE IN NEED.

MRS. BAILEY LED IN PURCHASING PULPIT FURNITURE AND A CHINA HUTCH FOR THE STEWARD-ESS MINISTRY TO STORE COMMUNION UTENSILS.

WHEN THE GENERAL CONFERENCE VOTED TO HAVE WOMEN ON THE VARIOUS BOARDS OF THE CHURCH, MRS. BAILEY WAS ELECTED AS THE FIRST FEMALE TRUSTEE IN EMANUEL AND SERVED UNTIL HER DEMISE.

EARLIER IN LIFE, MRS. BAILEY MARRIED WALTER DOUGLAS, BUT AFTER A DIVORCE, SHE RESUMED HER MAIDEN NAME. "MISS BAILEY" AS SHE WAS AFFECTIONALLY KNOWN, LOVED THE HYMN, "GIVE OF THE BEST TO THE MASTER". SHE TRANSITIONED THIS LIFE ON DECEMBER 3, 1953. THE EULOGIST TITLED HER EULOGY, "SHE GAVE OF HER BEST".

AS AN ARDENT WORKER IN THE CHURCH, A MISSIONARY SERVANT, A LOVER OF PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY CHILDREN, IT IS ONLY FITTING THAT OUR WMS AREA SHOULD BE THE CLARA L. K. BAILEY AREA WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

MAY WE ALWAYS LET THE LIGHT OF MISSIONS SHINE IN THE WORK OF THE CLARA L. K. BAILEY AREA WMS.

.....EDITED & REVISED BY Life Member GERALINE H. COX

Esther L. Beckett

Cordy Lavinia Drummond was born on June 22, 1899 to John E. and Cordelia Ewell Drummond. Lavinia had one brother—Fred D. Drummond, who married Margaret Watson and they had 11 children. She had two sisters—Sadie Drummond who married George Watson and had 7 children; and Elizabeth Drummond who married Fred Turner and had no children.

Lavinia Drummond married Ernest P. Beckett, son of Rev. William Beckett who was a minister of St. Luke A.M.E. Church. They had one adopted son, Charles E. Beckett who was a musician at St. Luke.

For two years, Aunt Lue (as she was affectionately called) taught at the public schools of Accomack County. She was a Sunday School Teacher at St. Luke for several years.

Lavinia Beckett moved to Chicago, Ill., and live there until her husband retired from the postal system. She moved back to the Eastern Shore of Accomack County and renewed her member with the family church, St. Luke. She represented this church very well by attending conferences and sharing information we needed.

Lavinia worked very hard for her church doing fundraisers to help keep the church functioning and a comfortable place for everyone to come and worship and service the Lord. She started the Willing Workers Improvement Club and was the president until her health began to fail. Her favorite fundraiser was the Fifty States Queen Contest. The ladies were taught how to be young ladies.

Aunt Lue was a role model for all. She encouraged everyone to do their best and strive for the moon. We were somebody and not let the color of our skin hold us back. Slavery was no longer accepted and we could reach our goals if we tried and be the best that God gave us. The white man could no longer hold us back if we were educated or have a trade and willing to fight for what was right.

Lavinia Beckett was a respected woman on the Eastern Shore. Her effect culminated in her being recognized as an Outstanding Laymen of the Second Episcopal District twice. The Award was given to her by Bishop George W. Baber.

Mary Ward Sanders

Mrs. Mary Ward Sanders for whom this great Area is named was a dedicated member of historic St. John's African Methodist Episcopal Church located in Norfolk, Virginia. She was the wife of the late Reverend Charles R. Sanders who was a Presiding Elder of what was then "The Norfolk District" and the mother of four children. Two of her children, Lafayette Sanders and Helen Sanders Marshall, were also faithful members of St. John's A.M.E. Church. Mrs. Sanders served as President of the Virginia Conference Branch Women's Missionary Society and helped make the Virginia Conference Branch WMS one of the leading Conferences in the Second Episcopal District.

A lady of great faith, she was extremely serious about her missionary work in the A.M.E. Church. She was an educator and an excellent teacher. She was firm but very gentle and kind in her approach.

Mrs. Sanders, along with Mrs. Juliette Shields, wife of the late Rev. H. M. Shields, taught the younger missionaries well, not only at St. John's Church but throughout the Virginia Conference. She was the epitome of a true missionary and lived a life worthy of emulation. The Mary W. Sanders Area is very proud to be named for this great lady of faith who was a dedicated, committed missionary sister.

Nora Belle Taylor

From her early adult life and until her death in 1942, Nora Belle Taylor was known and respected as an outstanding teacher, a very active church worker, an able orator, a community activist, and a strong family supporter. Mrs. Taylor was the widow of Dr. George C. Taylor, who at the time of his death August 1927, was the pastor of St. Paul A.M.E. Church, Newport News.

Mrs. Taylor was born in Kendall Grove, VA in 188 and graduated from the public schools of that community. She journeyed to the Peninsula and enrolled in Hampton Institute, Hampton, VA, graduating in 1898. She worked closely with her husband, Dr. Taylor, and congregations in Roanoke, Franktown, Oceana, and Newport News, among others.

The Taylors moved to Newport News in 1923. Dr. Taylor completed a five-year pastorate in Roanoke and was assigned to St. Paul. Mrs. Taylor joined the Newport News Public School system and taught history until her death at Paul Lawrence Dunbar Elementary School. She was very active in classroom circles and in the community. She was in demand as a speaker for women's groups, conferences, and PTA meetings. She was often teased about her favorite saying which was sure to be in all of speeches "Under the canopy of a bright blue sky..."

Mrs. Taylor, called "Nora Belle" by her friends and associates, was a member of several social church and professional groups, among them several in St. Paul AME, in the AME Conferences, Midlothian Chapter No. 92, Order of the Eastern Star and Armenia Tent No. 104. She was instrumental in organizing and leading the Leisure Hour Club, a group of local professional women.

Mrs. Taylor was very proud to be a part of the legal fight undertaken by Black Newport News teachers and administrators against the City and School Board for equal pay for Black educators. While the legal action was eventually successful, it did lead to retaliation by the Newport News School Board in its firing several Black teachers and administrators, including L.F. Palmer, then longtime principal of Huntington High School.

Mrs. Taylor was survived by three daughters, a son and several grandchildren and great grandchildren. Mrs. Jessie E. Thompson, the youngest daughter, and her husband and son resided with Mrs. Taylor in the family home at the time of her death on Sunday, September 20, 1942.



Scholarship Announcements

The SED WMS Education and Scholarship Committee is proud to announce the Virginia Conference 2024 SED WMS Book Scholarship recipients.

We are very thankful to the SED Leadership Team for increasing the award amounts for the 2024 SED WMS Book Scholarship. A \$1500.00 award was set aside for the 1st Place finisher and a \$500.00 award was set aside for the 2nd Place finisher. The Virginia Conference had 2 scholarship submissions.

1st Place - Ebony Henderson
Third Street Bethel AMEC, Richmond, VA
Rev. Reuben, J. Boyd, Jr, Pastor
College: Jackson State University, Jackson, MS
Class: Sophomore
Major: Criminal Justice
Amount: \$1,500.00

2nd Place - Alisa Davis
St. Paul AMEC, Newport News, VA
Rev. Dr. Oretha P. Cross, Pastor
College: Mary Baldwin University, Staunton, VA
Class: Sophomore
Major: History
Amount: \$500.00

Calendar of Events

**Mar. 15, 2024—Annual Day Registrations due to Area Treasurers
- Written Reports/headshots due to Sis. June-Buckner for “The Branch”**

Mar. 18, 2024—Area Chairpersons Reports are due to Conference President

March 22-24, 2024—Connectional YPD LTI—Denver Colorado

Mar. 23, 2024 – LAST VA. CONFERENCE BRANCH MEETING (Eastern Shore)

April 1, 2024—Red Sand Project Begins

April 3-6, 2024—Baltimore 207th Annual Conference, Empowerment Temple AMEC, Baltimore, MD

April 10-13, 2024—Washington 74th Annual Conference, Kingdom Fellowship AMEC, Calverton, MD

April 13 -14, 2024, at Bethel AMEC, Hampton, Virginia - The PRRD and Virginia Conference Celebrate the Retirement of Presiding Elder Samuel E. Hayward III and Rev. Althea J. Hayward

April 24-27, 2024 – 158th Virginia Annual Conference, Norfolk Waterside Marriott

May 2024—Lupus Awareness & Mental Health Awareness Month

May 5-12, 2024— Fistula Campaign

May 8-11, 2024—North Carolina 155th Annual Conference, Cape Fear Conference B Headquarters, Fayetteville, NC

May 22-26, 2024—Western North Carolina 132nd Annual Conference, Sheraton Imperial Hotel, Durham, NC



*Virginia Conference Branch
Women's Missionary Society
Red Flare Awards Event*

*Third Street Bethel A.M.E. Church
Richmond, Virginia*

12:00 -2:30 pm (Following Business Meeting)

January 20, 2024

Bishop James LeVert Davis, Servant Bishop, Second Episcopal District

Mother Arelis Beevers Davis, Episcopal Supervisor

Dr. Deborah Taylor-King, International WMS President

Ms. Selerya Moore, District WMS President

Ms. Rita H. Willis, Virginia Conference WMS President

Ms. Miranda M. Rountree, Virginia Conference YPD Director

*Rev. Chester W. Morris, Presiding Elder,
Norfolk-Eastern Shore District*

*Rev. Dr. Samuel E. Hayward, III, Presiding Elder,
Portsmouth-Richmond Roanoke District*

~ HONORING ~

2021-23 Local Missionary Presidents

"May The Work I've Done Speak For Me"

II Timothy 4:7-8

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day – and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing." (NIV)

YPDeers that spread love through the church and community

"Love Is On The Way!"

Jude 1:2







































































































Special Appreciation for outstanding photos taken by:

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