



Re Imagining Ministry Serving This Present Age

"Therefore, seeing we have this ministry..." II Corinthians 4:1a (KJV)

First Episcopal District 2020-2021 Resource Guide

Bishop Gregory G.M. Ingram, Presiding Prelate

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In the past six months our Zion, our District and the world have had to contend with unimaginable challenges from without and within that have necessitated unprecedented changes to the way we live and breathe. The COVID-19 pandemic has been devastating. This insidious plague has resulted in a loss of equilibrium brought on by heartbreaking deaths, unspeakable destruction and excruciating pain. It has plunged countless people throughout the global community into depression, destitution and fear of what's to come. It has tested our faith in ways that we could never have imagined. Make no mistake about it, *"(We) have not passed this way before"* (Joshua 3:4).

“ReImagining Ministry to Serve the Present Age” is our District’s theme for the 2020-2021 Conference Year. It means precisely what it says. For the next few months, we will be developing new ways of addressing the needs of God’s people in the midst of a public-health crisis that has turned society upside down. Our new theme challenges us to get our creative juices flowing so that we might brainstorm new ways of doing church and transforming lives. Our goal is for clergy and lay to engage in meaningful dialogue that will set the stage for the creation of new ministry models that can function effectively and efficiently in both a virtual **AND** socially distanced environment.

There is a poem entitled, *“The Church of the Warm Heart”* by John Milton Moore, which I have used for many years that one of my sons in ministry, Rev. Dr. Julius H. McAllister, Jr., and I have revised and written anew. Using some themes, concepts, and phrases of mine and those of other pastors he was mentored by, some of whom are now bishops, we have written a new poem entitled, *“Reimagine the Church of My Dreams.”*

Reimagine and Dream of a Church

Rev Dr. Julius McAllister & Bishop Gregory G.M. Ingram

WHERE WE WILL,

- Not forsake the doctrines of the past,
- But a church that builds on the foundations of the historicity of yesterday while
- Making new pathways that will bring us closer to the kingdom of God here on earth and in heaven.

A CHURCH THAT HAS MOVED BEYOND THE FOUR WALLS OF THE SANCTUARY,

- Where Homiliticians, Heralds, and Handlers of the Holy, Prelates, Prophets, Proclaimers, and Preachers of the gospel, may be seen through platforms such as Zoom, Facebook Live, You Tube, Instagram, Periscope, Brightcove, and Free Conference Call,
- Sharing the good news of Jesus the Christ and telling the world that our Savior is still sovereign during times of peace or a global pandemic.

LET US REIMAGINE A NEW CHURCH,

- A church that accepts and affirms the ideas from Generations X, Y, and Z,
- A church that looks for guidance and direction from baby boomers one and two,
- A church where there are no big I's or little you's,
- A church where no one is frowned upon or made to feel inconsequential,
- A church where protest, sociopolitical movement, and diverse rhetoric are not only welcomed but encouraged.
- A church where its PR doesn't go before its production.

REIMAGINE THE CHURCH OF MY DREAMS,

- A church that believes in the sanctity of life,
- Where All Lives Matter and particularly where Black Lives Matter,
- A church where eternal things do happen,
- A church that reminds us that God has a work for us to do, that no one can do quite like you, don't let God down and surely, He won't let you down.

REIMAGINE A NEW CHURCH,

- A church that is not monolithic in thought, but at the same time knows there is a commonality within our humanity that makes us the same,
- Which is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forevermore,
- A church where the work is all divine,
- A church where Love makes the difference,
- A church with a shepherd's heart,
- A church that strives to be more like Christ,
- A church where there is a place for everyone.

REIMAGINE A NEW CHURCH,

- A worshipping church,
- A Spirit-Filled church,
- A Bible-Based church,
- A soul winning church,
- A caring church,
- A loving church,
- A tithing church,
- A strong Christian education church,
- A community conscious church,
- A politically aware and active church,
- A church with a global vision.

REIMAGINE A NEW CHURCH,

- A church that really believes the best is yet to come.
- A church that has been Called to Make a Difference but more importantly,
- A church where it is easy to find God and hard to forget Him.
- This is the church of my dreams.

(This poem is an excellent reminder of who we are and our potential as a church.
It could be used a litany or a call worship.)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Our 2020-2021 Episcopal District theme is based on these three scriptures:

- ❖ Therefore, seeing we have this ministry..." ~II Corinthians 4:1a (KJV)
- ❖ "...and (He) gave gifts unto His people..." ~Ephesians 4:8d (NLT)
- ❖ "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" ~Ephesians 4:12 (KJV)

REIMAGINING MINISTRY 2020-2021

THE KEY POINTS FOR THIS YEAR ARE:

I. THE WORK OF JUSTICE

II. THE WOUNDED HEALERS

III. THE RE-IMAGINED MINISTRY

IV. THE VIRTUAL CHURCH

V. THE CHURCH UNDER CONSTRUCTION

OUR PLAN OF IMPLEMENTATION

This is a time that calls for a focus on healing—not just of physical bodies ravaged by disease, but for political and economic systems ravaged by racism and corruption; institutions which have been ravaged, according to the Christian historian Jaroslav Pelikan, not by tradition (“the living faith of the dead”) but by traditionalism (“the dead faith of the living”); and the healing of hearts, minds, and relationships that are worn and frayed by current and past crises. Our goal is for clergy and lay to engage in meaningful dialogue that will set the stage for the creation of new ministry models that can function effectively and efficiently in a virtual or socially distanced environment. Together we must reimagine God’s Church, the AME Church, and ourselves as agents of God’s healing for ourselves, our nations, and all the nations of the earth.

Join us as we look at the following:

- **First Quarter (August-October 2020) – Healing the Nation**
- **Second Quarter (November 2020-January 2021) – Healing the Disrupted Church**
- **Third Quarter (February 2021-April 2021) – Healing the Wounded Healers**
- **Fourth Quarter (May 2021-July 2021) – Healing Sin-Sick Souls and Societies**

THE WORK OF JUSTICE

The key points for the Work:

❖ The Pastor, The Pew, and Politics

The word politics is from the Greek (*Πολιτικά, politiká*) and means, "affairs of the cities." Politics are all activities around decision making in and about groups regarding power and resources. Other people decide our political reality. Systemic racism is administered, governed, and maintained by the very politicians who seek our votes. Pastoring is not only guiding and caring; it is also protecting and advocating. Wolves are in our political system in sheep's clothing. The Black pastor must be politically savvy to leverage and exercise the authority and influence God has granted us for the liberation of our people.

❖ Rev. Dr. Charles Boyer

❖ The Church, The Census and Voter Registration

LET'S M.O.V.E. = Mobilize, Organize, Vote and Engage

❖ The Commission on Social Action

❖ Racism, Policing and Public Safety

During the quarantine and shutdown, the Black community in cities throughout the First Episcopal District have endured competing pandemics. In addition to the disproportionate ways in which COVID-19 has impacted Black bodies, we have also witnessed a sharp increase in shootings and homicides. One solution to this nightmare is to try something that is counter-intuitive: defund the police. Some will say that in the face of rising numbers of victims and perpetrators, we need more police officers not less....

❖ Rev. Mark Tyler

THE WOUNDED HEALERS

The key points for this work:

❖ The Healing of The Nation

- ❖ The pandemic is not going away soon—despite the denial of some political leaders and conspiracy theorists. The virus is not impressed, and the death toll tell the story. The economic fallout is not going away soon—just look at the latest figures on Gross Domestic Product and unemployment rates. And the justice questions are just beginning—the battles with legislatures, city councils, a President, governors, mayors, and police unions has only just begun. There's a census that isn't going very well; a national election that is already deeply contentious; and a pandemic that may return with a vengeance when the weather gets colder.

❖ Rev. Ray Hammond, MD

❖ The Church as a Therapeutic Center – Caregivers

The black church has been the most pervasive social, economic, and cultural institution in the black community spare none. No other institution has stood in the gap and been in the forefront of any movement to provide leadership and promote change for the souls and care of black and people of color like the black church. The importance of them and the disinherited are of particular importance and interest to the church because many of them have been impacted by COVID-19, are living with tremendous health issues, and struggling to find resources to meet the high cost of medical services. Thus, the church must become a therapeutic center for those who need help....

❖ Rev. Lisa Williamson, MD, MPH

❖ Health and Wellness

The Black Church has entered its "kairos" moment, its opportune time to become a proponent in the health care of its members and community at large. The Church must fulfill the teachings of the ministry of Jesus Christ to take care of the sick, the widow, the orphan, the marginalize, and the oppressed.

❖ Rev. Miriam Burnett, MD

THE RE-IMAGINED MINISTRY

The key points for the Work:

❖ Preaching Under Modern Conditions

❖ Bishop Gregory G. M. Ingram

Audiences of any kind are always affected by two things. The first is the setting of the preacher, and the second is the personality of the preacher. Each is important and both have their place. In the secular world theatrical people have long since been aware of the importance of the former. Ever so much attention is given to the stage setting, costumes, lighting, and scenery.

❖ Creative Preaching - Preaching the New and the Now

❖ Presiding Elder Jocelyn Lovelace

"And just like that, we all became televangelists." This meme appeared on Facebook a few weeks into the coronavirus pandemic as we sought ways to adjust to our new reality. ...The past five months have served as a season of reflection, having provided each of us with time to regroup and retool for the new phase of ministry – for the work that lies ahead as we "serve the present age." Charles Wesley's timeless hymn has taken on new meaning: *"To serve the present age, my calling to fulfill, O may it all my powers engage to do my Master's will!"*

THE VIRTUAL CHURCH

The key points for the Work:

❖ The Analog Church In A Digital Age

❖ Rev. Dr. Erika Crawford

“How can we sing songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?” (The Holy Bible: New International Version, 1984, Psalm 137:4) the Psalmist asked. This is the question many Pastors and Faith Leaders ask today as navigate the ugliness of systematic oppression while simultaneously combating an invisible enemy that has forced us to preach to empty pews and computer screens. The short answer is, we must re-imagine ministry to serve this present age. We have to embrace the myriad of unfamiliar but progressive models of ministry so that we can continue to nurture our familiar communities.

❖ The Elevation of Imagination - in the Context of the Virtual Church

❖ Rev Nicholas Genevieve Tweed

Questions relating to the *Church "reimagining" itself or "reimagining ministry,"* perhaps take on greater feelings of urgency in light of the ongoing pandemic, which has forced churches to develop and utilize alternative mediums and platforms for gathering, due to restrictions and prohibitions surrounding physical gatherings. These externally imposed restrictions continue to adversely affect the ability of churches to operate, not just in terms of providing for the spiritual needs of communities, but, as in other sectors of society, also regarding fiscal instability. The economic impact on much needed resources to maintain buildings and meet financial obligations poses potentially catastrophic challenges to many churches.

❖ The Doors of the Virtual Church Are Open

❖ Rev. Steven Green

When God Closes a Church Door, God Opens a Browser Window

THE CHURCH UNDER CONSTRUCTION

The key points for the Work:

❖ **Equipping The Saints for the Work of the Ministry**

As we face the future, we must view leadership in a different context. Leadership, especially in the church, must fall to those who are passionate, driven, and clear on the mission of the Church. When we liberate the leader in everyone, extraordinary things happen.

❖ Bishop Gregory G. M. Ingram

❖ **Adaptive Leadership for the Present Age: Foundational Principles**

Perhaps the greatest threat to leadership in this present age is seen in the apathy and reluctance to mobilize people to engage difficult social issues as they arise. As we embark on the challenge of leading a community of people who have confessed faith in Jesus Christ through an unprecedented era of a deadly pandemic, economic uncertainty, and racial unrest, it is imperative that we take a hard look at our leadership philosophies and practices in an effort to curtail any threats to our ability to lead effectively.

❖ Rev. Dr. Hugh Marriott

❖ **A Work In Progress: The Gift, The Givers and Church Administration**

❖ *The stewardship of giving*

❖ *To Be Announced*

❖ *Reshaping ministry*

❖ *To Be Announced*

❖ *Blueprints and specifications for church administration*

❖ Rev. Dr. Ronald L. Slaughter

John Wesley, the father of Methodism, in a sermon entitled, "Use of Money," presented three profound financial principles. Wesley encouraged persons to "Gain all you can, Save all you can, Give all you can." Wesley's principles on the use of money are just as relevant today as they were in the 1700s. COVID-19 has presented its fair share of challenges for the faith community. Leaders are having to navigate many of these challenges without pre-existing resources. Religious institutions are being forced to adapt and change in numerous ways. One of those areas is stewardship. As a result of the COVID-19 crisis, stewardship is one of the biggest challenges facing the faith community. However, the financial principles of John Wesley can be beneficial to religious institutions navigating this pandemic.



**Thursday, September.
10, 2020 @ 7pm**

- **The Analog Church in a Digital Age**
- **The Church, The Census & Voter Registration**

**Thursday, September
17, 2020 @ 7pm**

- **The Pastor, The Pew and Politics**
- **Racism, Policing and Public Safety**

Special Contributors

- **Rev. Dr. Charles Boyer**
- **Rev. Miriam Burnett, MD**
- **Sis. Donna Lee Chandler Smith**
- **Rev. Dr. Erika D. Crawford**
- **Rev. Steven Green**
- **Rev. Ray Hammond, MD**
- **Presiding Elder Jocelynn Hart Lovelace**
- **Rev. Dr. Hugh Marriott**
- **Rev. Dr. Ronald L. Slaughter**
- **Rev. Nicholas Genevieve Tweed**
- **Rev. Mark Kelly Tyler, PhD**
- **Rev. Lisa Williamson, MD**
- **Rev. Craig Wright**
- **The Commission on Social Action**
- **The Health Commission**
- **.... More to be named**