



The Woke Express

**BIG BETHEL SOCIAL
ACTION COMMISSION**

Happy New Year!

It is an honor to serve as the President of the Big Bethel AME Church Social Action Commission (BBSAC). Our work is supported by the unwavering leadership of our Pastor, Dr. John Foster, and the dedicated members of the Steward and Trustee Boards. At the heart of BBSAC's mission is our incredible team—an engine that powers our efforts—and the support of the Big Bethel congregation, whose participation and generosity make everything we do possible. I want to take this moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you. Your contributions, whether big or small, play a vital role in advancing social justice.

As we step into 2025, BBSAC is ready to move our mission forward with renewed energy. Our January membership drive is a call to action for anyone with talents, ideas, and a passion for making a difference. We believe in harnessing the momentum sparked by the George Floyd protests of 2020—a movement, not just a moment—to advocate for justice and equal protection under the law.

Our goals for 2025 include supporting the passage of the **John Lewis Voting Rights Act**, opposing regressive measures like those proposed in Project 2025, and shining a light on the troubling undercurrent of Christian Nationalism. We recognize Christian Nationalism as a distortion of faith, aligning with historical injustices like the Atlantic Slave Trade and Jim Crow laws, and as a force that perpetuates white nationalism and undermines diverse cultures.

To be clear, BBSAC is not aligned with any political party. We remain steadfast in our commitment to pray for all leaders. We pray for President-Elect Donald Trump to lead with wisdom and to ensure the safety of our service members. We also express our gratitude to President Biden and Vice President Harris for their dedicated service over the past four years.

As President of BBSAC, my greatest hope is that we embody the love of Christ in all that we do. Let us have the courage to stand for justice, the integrity to serve joyfully, and the commitment to act with love and grace in every endeavor.

I invite you to join BBSAC and find a committee where your unique skills and passions can contribute to our shared mission. Thank you for your time, consideration, and for being part of this movement for positive change.

Together, let's make 2025 a year of impact.

Editor in Chief

Cyril H. Mayes

**GEORGIA
POOR PEOPLE'S
CAMPAIGN PRESENTS**

GEORGIA BUDGET 101

**Budgets are moral documents.
What are our state's moral
priorities?**



HOW DOES IT IMPACT YOU?

LET'S LEARN TOGETHER ...

- WHERE STATE FUNDING COMES FROM
- WHO DECIDES HOW FUNDS ARE SPENT
- HOW STATE SPENDING IMPACTS YOU
- HOW YOU CAN SPEAK UP ABOUT IT



**JOIN US,
THE GEORGIA BUDGET & POLICY
INSTITUTE,**



AND



INDIVISIBLE GEORGIA

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16TH, 7PM

VIA ZOOM

REGISTER AT:

<https://bit.ly/3ZWvpaH>



2025

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
**BELOVED COMMUNITY
COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE**

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

REV. DR. WILLIAM J. BARBER II

CO-CHAIR OF THE POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN:
A NATIONAL CALL FOR MORAL REVIVAL

MONDAY, JANUARY 20, 2025
9:00 AM EST

EBENEZER BAPTIST CHURCH
NEW HORIZON SANCTUARY
ATLANTA, GA

STREAMED LIVE



WWW.THEKINGCENTER.ORG



January Health Awareness

National Blood Donor Month

People have observed National Blood Donor Month since January 1970, as winter is one of the most difficult seasons to collect blood. It is a drive to increase blood donations and recognize the work of donors.

Organizations such as the American Red Cross and America's Blood Centers come together to celebrate National Blood Donor Month, encouraging people to donate. Locate a local blood donation center and give today!

National Birth Defects Prevention Month

This is a campaign to educate people on preventing birth defects, or congenital disabilities.

The National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN) have developed materials and resources to educate and inform medical professionals and the public. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have also produced guidelines and advice. Email nbdpn@nbdpn.org for more information.

National Glaucoma Awareness Month

Supported by the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) and the National Eye Institute (NEI), this campaign highlights the dangers of glaucoma, for which there is currently no cure. For information on glaucoma, dilated eye examinations, and financial assistance available for eye care, visit www.nei.nih.gov/learn-about-eye-health/eye-conditions-and-diseases/glaucoma.

Thyroid Awareness Month

Statement and Call to Action from the Council of Bishops regarding the November 5th United States Election

On November 5th, the United States voted to return Donald Trump to the White House as the 47th President of the United States. The results of this election have caused alarm across the nation and the world. Trump has stated publicly that if elected, he will take the following actions: deport immigrants, both legal and illegal; seek retribution against his political enemies, who he describes as “enemies from within”; and authorize the military against American protesters. His allies, many of whom served in his previous term, have developed a plan called “Project 2025,” which would change America as we know it. This radical blueprint proposes to end civil rights and diversity, equity, and inclusion programs; implement a complete ban on abortions without exceptions; terminate the Affordable Care Act; eliminate unions and worker protection programs; deny Muslims from entering the United States; end African American Studies and teachings on slavery; end birthright citizenship, eliminate the Department of Education and much more.

We know that Donald Trump is a convicted felon 34 times over and has four pending indictments against him. He also has civil judgments requiring him to pay millions of dollars. With his election, his pending indictments will be dropped, his convictions erased, and his civil judgments probably dismissed. It will be as if nothing happened.

How did America make this perilous choice? We are alarmed by the fact that twenty percent of African Americans and forty percent of Latinos voted for Trump despite his past and current history of denigrating and maligning people of color. There is a developing trend in the United States where younger Blacks and Latinos are voting more for Republicans and becoming more conservative. More importantly, they argue that “we had more money in our pockets when Trump was in office.” In addition, most white women voted for Donald Trump. This election is the second time white women have failed to support a female candidate for president despite Trump’s sexist rhetoric and war on reproductive rights. The demons of sexism and racism are alive in the United States and weighed Vice President Kamala Harris’s efforts down like a millstone.

We also acknowledge the Democratic Party’s messaging as ineffective and irrelevant. Exit polls tell us that the failure to communicate the hard-fought achievements of the Biden-Harris Administration led many to believe the perception of the Democratic Party as the “party of the elites.” Trump’s rhetoric, while laced with venom and hatred, spoke directly to the needs and desires of the voters. It is telling that despite all that Trump has said about Blacks and people of color, his margins with those voters increased. Why haven’t Democrats—who have controlled the White House for twelve of the last sixteen years and both chambers of Congress for six of those years—passed immigration legislation?

Why were plans not presented for Black and Latino men until the last ten days of the campaign?

Why did the Democrats wait until the end of the campaign to present plans to improve

economics, housing, and quality of life for working and middle-class Americans? To his credit, Sen. Bernie Sanders has been calling in vain for these for the last twelve years.

These are troubling times. The nation is in crisis. Trump and the far right will control the White House, at least one chamber of Congress, and the federal Judiciary. There will be no accountability or check on his power.

What do we do? Despite our fear and trauma, the Council of Bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church calls upon our membership to remain faithful and never cease praying. God does still have the last word. But God will not do for us that we can do for ourselves. Let us now not do like the Israelites and cry to God with a spirit of powerlessness. As God said to Moses and the people of Israel, He asks us, "What's in your hand?" We have got to use what's in our hands. Our efforts in this election were not futile. For now, we must stop and seek God's direction. God may be using this election and our foes to force us to turn back to Him, repent, and think. We must ask for divine intervention to order our steps in this tumultuous season through prayer. As the hymn writer states, "Father, we stretch our hands to thee, no other help we know."

Bishop Silvester Scott Beaman, President, Council of Bishops
Bishop Wilfred Messiah, Senior Bishop
Bishop Marvin Zanders, Secretary, Council of Bishops
Bishop Reginald T. Jackson, Chair Social Action Commission
Sis. Jackie DuPont Walker, Director of Social Action Commission

Source: <https://www.ame-church.com/news/statement-and-call-to-action-from-the-council-of-bishops-regarding-the-november-5th-united-states-election/>

BLACKMEN AGENDA & POLICY SUMMIT

*THE TIME FOR BLACK MEN TO SPEAK CANDIDLY ABOUT OUR DESIRES,
WANTS, AND NEEDS HAS COME, AND COLLECTIVELY MOVE FORWARD
WITH ORGANIZATION, CLARITY AND INTENTIONALITY.*

VOICES AT THE TABLE

ANGELO PINTO
DR. WES BELLAMY
GARY CHAMBERS
MYSONNE LINNEN
PRESIDENT CHRIS REY, JD
RAY SHACKLEFORD, URBAN LEAGUE
REV. JAMAL BRYANT
REV. STEPHEN GREEN



JAN
4TH

ATLANTA
GA

9:00 AM Saturday
January 4, 2025
220 Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

REGISTER AT [JAMALBRYANT.ORG/JHB-MOVEMENT/](https://jamalbryant.org/jhb-movement/)

Do you really believe you're a servant?

1 Corinthians 1:10 (Reimagined for Today)

"I urge you, my brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to come together in harmony. Let there be no divisions among you, but instead, be united in purpose and thought."

A Call to Fellowship and Unity

There are moments when some of us feel uninspired or disconnected from church leadership. This raises a question: *Are we here to serve the pastor, or are we here to serve the Kingdom of God?*

For years, we've cultivated relationships, prayed together, and shared life's highs and lows as a church family. Church is more than a building—it's a community. For some, it's a second family; for others, it's their only family.

Yes, pastors come and go, but the essence of our church remains. I've seen people leave because a beloved pastor moved on. But our faith, our fellowship, and our purpose are not tied to any one leader. I'm still at Bethel because of the relationships I've built and the shared mission we've pursued together from the start.

In a perfect world, we'd have perfect leaders. But this is the real world, and our calling is greater than any one person. We are charged with fellowship, kingdom-building, and living as examples of Christ's love.

Bethel has been a birthplace of ministries and a foundation of service to the community. Our relevance and survival as a church depend on how we treat one another, respect the calling of our clergy, and embody the teachings of Christ.

Church family is a big deal. A lack of love, unity, or respect within the congregation undermines not just our community but our collective relationship with God. We are called to fight the good fight, stand as saints, and serve God and our community faithfully.

Let's remember Christ's command:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the law and prophets hang on these two commandments."

Stay grounded. Stay united.

Go with God,
Keith Burnett
Vice President



“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.” – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day – Monday, January 20, 2025

"He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" - Micah 6:8

"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute." - Proverbs 31:8

"All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had." - Acts 4:32

"All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had." - Acts 4:32

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!" - Psalm 133:1

Heartfelt Thanks from the Social Action Commission

Dear Big Bethel AME Church Family,

On behalf of the Social Action Commission, we extend our deepest gratitude to you for your unwavering support, dedication, and partnership. Your steadfast commitment to making a difference in the lives of others exemplifies the spirit of service and love that binds us together as a community of faith.

Through your generosity and action, we have been able to bring hope and positive change to those in need. Your contributions have not only impacted lives but have also inspired others to join in the mission of social justice and transformation.

Thank you for being a beacon of light and a pillar of strength in our shared mission to serve. May God continue to bless Big Bethel AME Church abundantly as you continue to be a force for good in the world.

With heartfelt appreciation,
Big Bethel Social Action Commission

Visit our website!

www.bbsac.org



Big Bethel Social Action Committee is the local church's ministry that engages with the community at large in the attempt to maintain justice, equality, and righteousness. BBSAC pursues positive change in all aspects of the political, educational, economic, and social ecosystems.



"Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." – Amåos 5:24