



**152<sup>nd</sup> Session of the  
Pittsburgh - West Virginia  
Annual Conference of the  
African Methodist Episcopal Church  
September 17, 2019 – September 21, 2019**

**Social Action and Community Development**

**To: The Pittsburgh – West Virginia Annual Conference**

To: The Right Reverend Frank Madison Reid, III, *Presiding Prelate*

Mrs. Marlaa Hall Reid, *Episcopal Supervisor of Missions*

The Reverend Dr. Eric L. Brown, Host Presiding Elder, *The Allegheny-Scranton District*

The Reverend Alton B. Dillard, Co-Host Presiding Elder, *The West Virginia District*

The Reverend Dr. James H. McLemore, Co-Host Presiding Elder, *The Pittsburgh District*

The Reverend Dr. James H. Harris, Sr., *Host Pastor*

Mrs. Marsha Washington and Mr. Andre Nelson, *Conference Co-Chairpersons*

From: Revs. Dale B. Snyder, Hazel Kelly, Cheryl Ruffin, John Sylvia, and Buena Paschall. Lay Persons Stacy Williams, Yvonne Murphy, Sonya Holman, and Sharon Banks

One of the most overlooked stories of the 2016 election was the decline in turnout among African Americans. According to the Census Bureau, 66.6 percent of African Americans voted in 2012, bringing their turnout ahead of white voters for the first time (only 64.1 percent of whites voted). But in 2016, African American turnout declined to 59.6 percent, while white turnout rose to 65.3 percent. Low voter turnout has allowed new elected officials the last several decades. The result has been an attack on equal rights, increases in white nationalism, increasing hate crimes against black and brown people, the defunding of federal programs that protected voting rights, human rights, reversal of consent decrees that forced police reform around the country, an increase in police killing unarmed black men, women and children. The solution to many of these problems is within our reach if we, as the church, are willing to do the work of Jesus and help the voiceless have a voice with their vote.

The General Board in June 2018 reaffirmed the longstanding commitment of the African Methodist Episcopal Church to make Voter Registration, Education and Mobilization a priority. As stated by the Council of Bishops, “it is our legacy.”

This toolkit has proven to provide guidance for mobilizing voter turnout in the communities where many of our churches provide ministry and service. Working together is always our preference, so we offer to you this opportunity to join the

combined efforts of churches across the USA who will use the AME V-Alert Toolkit to organize, register, educate and mobilize for the election on November 6, 2019.

Along with the updated AME V-Alert 2018 Toolkit, our website ([www.amev-alert.org](http://www.amev-alert.org)) will include the AMMLC VESSELS tools, the Lawyers and Collars Toolkit, materials of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and links to numerous resources for rapid response to grassroots issues. Combined, these resources prepare you to engage effectively to make a difference.

We want to acknowledge our partners/collaborators/resources here.

African American Ministers Leadership Council, NAACP Legal Defense Fund  
Lawyers and Collars Sentencing Project. NAACP PICO

***We submit the following recommendations:***

Each church is to develop a movement/plan to increase voter education, mobilization and registration by using the following toolkit – AME Voter Alert (V-ALERT)

<http://www.ame-sac.com> provided by the A.M.E. Church.

**A Church plan will have these main components as part of their overall plan.**

1. Members volunteer to canvas neighborhoods and events to register persons at football games, department stores, Malls, Grocery stores, Barber or Beauty Salons and join other coalitions to register voters. Visit nursing home and senior center to help them register for early voting and to assist with early voting.
2. Youth and young adults church members to start social media conversations about voter registration and voter turnout through Election Day.
3. Add responsive readings, special litany, poems and scriptures to Sunday worship service and announcements about voter education, registration and mobilizations.