

October 2026

Vol. 156

# MFTM

MESSAGE FROM THE MOUNT



MAAFA  
*Reset*

SOUNDS OF SACRED MEMORY

**MAAFA SEASON!**

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**ESTATE PLANNING,  
DEATH AND TAXES**

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[WWW.MTAERYBAPTIST.ORG](http://WWW.MTAERYBAPTIST.ORG)

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Community News**

- **October is Breast Cancer Awareness and Domestic Violence Awareness Month.** Life Essence Transformation, LLC will sponsor, Breaking the Silence, Hope, Healing and Empowerment event on October 17th at 9:30am. Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. Please see Candida Paul for more information.

# BEREAVEMENTS

Keep Bereaved Families  
in Your Prayers

Deacon Charlie Jones lost his aunt, Mildred Potts, in Florida

The Bohannon Family lost Sandra Dunn

Dawn Bass-Ferrell and Paula Breeden lost their uncle/cousin in Waterbury

Mount Pisgah Baptist Church, St. Paul Community Baptist Church and Mount Aery lost Jesse Wooden, Jr. Jesse was the first director of the MAAFA for all of us. He worked with us as we developed our own production

Betty Hill lost her husband, Deacon John Hill



# 2026 CALENDAR

\*Subject to Change

## October

- 10** 10:00 AM | Our next Educational Wealth Building workshop – see page 10
- 13** 6:30 PM | Child Dedication Parent/Godparent meeting  
Forms are available in the Narthex and on our website.
- 17–18** Community Healing Network Weekend
- 25** 9:30 AM | Child Dedication – wear African attire

- 27** 7:00 PM | Pastor William H. Lamar IV, Ancestors: Those Who Bless Us, Curse Us, and Hold Us
- 31** 7:00 PM | MAAFA Presentation Leonard Epps and the Drumming Circle, Youth Ministry, and Rev. Dr. Valerie Bridgeman

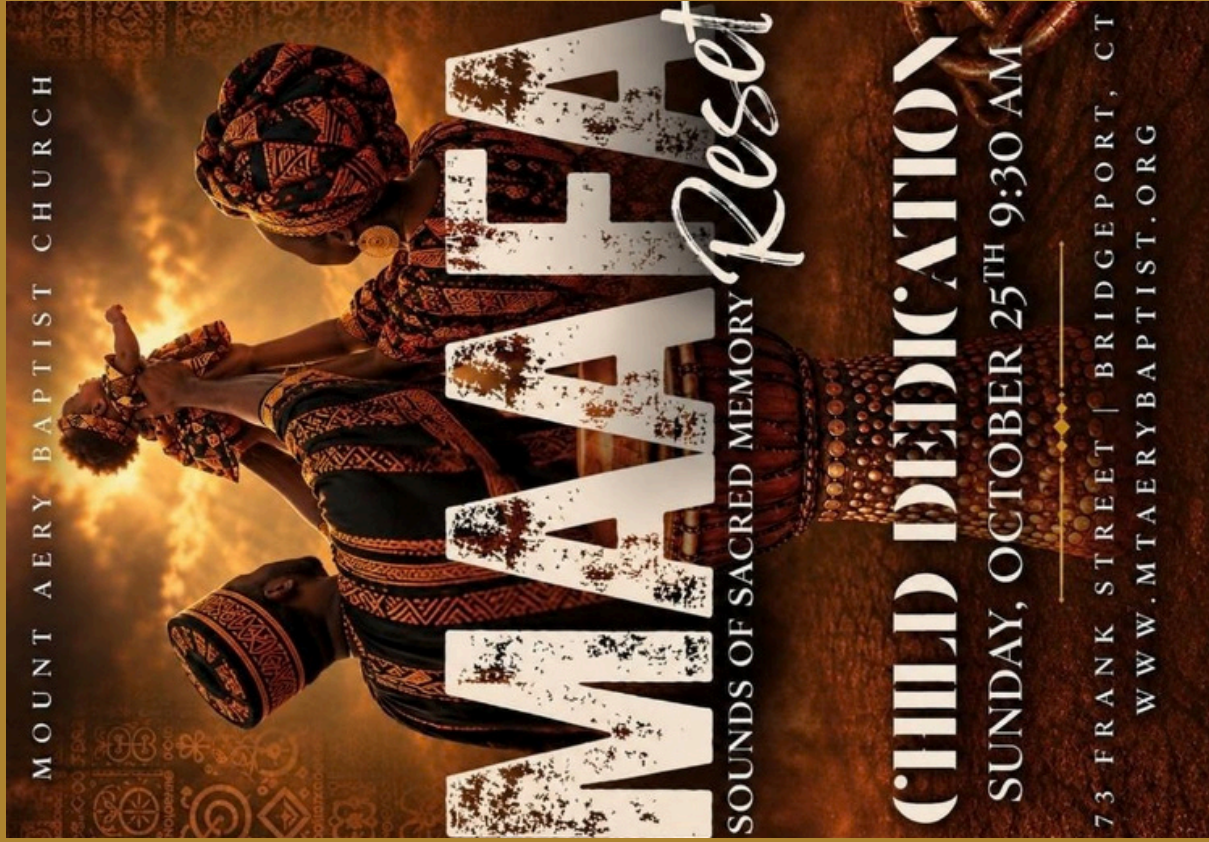
## November

- 01** 7:00 AM | MAAFA Seaside Sendoff at Seaside Park  
9:30 AM | Dr. Daniel Black

## December

- 02** Annual Holy Spirit Discernment Meeting
- 05** 6:00 PM | Missionaries Annual Christmas Gala – more info to follow
- 20** Annual Youth Christmas Party
- 27** Kwanzaa Celebration
- 31** Watchnight

MOUNT AERY BAPTIST CHURCH



# WAAFA

SOUNDS OF SACRED MEMORY

## CHILD DEDICATION

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25<sup>TH</sup> 9:30 AM

73 FRANK STREET | BRIDGEPORT, CT  
[WWW.MTAERYBAPTIST.ORG](http://WWW.MTAERYBAPTIST.ORG)

MOUNT AERY BAPTIST CHURCH



# WAAFA

*Reset*

SOUNDS OF SACRED MEMORY

10.31.2026

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# BLACK HISTORY MOMENT



Photo credits: Revolt TV, Britannica Kids, The New York Times, Artsy

## Did you know...

- Black Wall Street was a 35-block neighborhood in Tulsa, Oklahoma that was home to over 100 Black-owned and operated businesses of banks, hotels, restaurants, theaters and medical facilities. It was one of the most affluent African American communities in the country during the early 20th century. Because of "fake news" it was completely burned down to the ground by caucasians.
- Norma Merrick Sklarek was the first African American woman to become a licensed architect in the states of New York and California, as well as the first Black woman to become a member of the American Institute of Architects. She was educated at Columbia University and Barnard College. She has been called the "Rosa Parks of architecture."
- Marva Collins, born Marva Delores Knight on August 31, 1936 in Monroeville, Alabama, was a teacher and reformer who founded the Westside Preparatory School in Chicago to give low-income and underserved children a rigorous, classical education. She studied secretarial science at Clark College in Atlanta and taught in Alabama before moving to Chicago in 1959.
- Alma Thomas was the first fine arts graduate of Howard University and, at the age of 80 in 1972, the first Black woman to hold a solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

**Wow! Did you know this? There is so much more information! Find out for yourself!**

# MAAFA SEASON!

By Pastor Paulette Higgins

As we enter this season of MAAFA, my spirit is full. This is a deeply personal time for me – a dedicated space to pause, remember, and honor the legacy of our ancestors.

Over the years, the celebration has woven itself into the very fabric of who I am. Today, I keep hearing the voices of our children chanting “Tell me, tell me, tell me your story.”

Hearing that call makes me wonder; how many of us are preparing an answer? Have you considered writing your own story, but felt unsure of how and where to start?

To help us begin, I’ve compiled a series of reflective prompts – a guide I will be using alongside of you. I invite you to sit with these questions over time. Let them breathe! Notice what rises to the surface and pay attention to the patterns that emerge.

## Prompts for reflection

Turning Points:

Every life has a few pivotal moments. What events in your journey would help someone truly understand who you are?

Independence:

When in your life did you feel genuinely on your own, forging your own path?

Resilience:

Describe a challenge or tough season of your life that you’ve navigated over the last year or two.

Influences:

What are the five greatest influences that have shaped the person you are today?

Present truths:

- How satisfied do you feel with your life right now?
- What are you doing that you shouldn’t do?
- What aren’t you doing that you should be doing?
- What are you experiencing today that you once dreamed of but never thought it would happen?

Let’s begin to write our story!!!

May this MAAFA Season bring an abundance of peace and blessings your way!

# MONDAY MATTERS

by Denise Hanks "Coach D"



*"You can't just sit and wait for people to give you that golden dream. You've got to get out there and make it happen for yourself."*

– Diana Ross, Singer and Actress

## #2 THE CALL FRAMEWORK– Step One

See last month's issue for the inspiration for "Monday Matters." In short, after we participate in worship on Sunday, it's what we do on Monday that matters. I shared that we are never alone. God is always with us and He has plans for us to prosper. Now I want to share more about those abundant plans Jeremiah mentioned and how you can make them a reality. Do you want abundant life?

First, let's make sure we're on the same page. We do not get to decide whether we will create a year of life. If we keep breathing for another 365 days, we will have created a year of life. Agreed? The question to ask yourself, "Will it be out of design that really invigorates me, or will I just let life happen to me?" Most people choose the latter, but only because they are not aware that they can choose differently.

I'm developing something new, The CALL Framework: Answering, "What's Next"? The journey looks like this: **Consider → Align → Lean In → Live It.**

Let's start with step one, Consider. Pause and honestly examine where you are, what you've created and what feels unfinished. In essence, we are honoring our longings and our discontents. I call these the "More Signals." Those recurring feelings that something more is possible or being asked of you; signals to explore rather than something to suppress, dismiss, or explain away. Have you ever asked yourself, "Why am I dissatisfied when I should be grateful?" Well, maybe this isn't dissatisfaction. Maybe it's just information. You can be grateful AND want more.

If you had an idea to build a grand structure of some kind, you would go to a master builder and learn how to use the appropriate tools to build a basic structure first. Then little by little, by practicing one thing after the other, you would understand the tools enough to master whatever your idea was and how to create it in the world. It is the same with building an invigorating life. The first tool is learning how to honor your longings and discontents. Pay attention to when you feel you're being called for more or when you feel hemmed in, shut down, struggling, and you're tired of the struggle. Maybe you are frustrated with experiencing discontent. It could be related to your health, your relationships, what you do with your time and talent, or how much money and time freedom you experience.

For now, just pay attention and consider. Listen to your heart. Hear what it's saying. The Bible says, "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it springs the issues of life." Proverbs 4:23. It's the control center, representing your inner self including your thoughts, choices, and desires. Search it. Then, ask yourself, "If I am feeling discontent, what would answer it? If I am feeling dissatisfied over here, what would fulfillment look like over there?"

That's it for now, we're starting with the basics. Honor your discontent, pay attention to what it is, and what ideas would answer that discontent. What would the opposite look like? Feel free to make a list in a notebook and let's see where we end up.

To your journey!



Leonard Epps received his bachelor's in secondary education from the University's College of Education, Nursing and Health Professions in 1990, followed later by master's degrees in secondary education in 1999 and in educational leadership in 2008, both from Central Connecticut State University. He has had a long career in education, which started upon graduation from UHart teaching at Weaver High School. He taught for 18 years before becoming an administrator and served as a dean of students, principal-in-residence, and for the last five years, principal. His leadership vision for his school is based on the core values of discipline, respect, unity, and maturity to develop a path of communication and social action on a more global level.

In addition to his work, Leonard is a life-time member of the Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Incorporated; is the founder of Young Men's Leadership Programs; and has participated in Harvard University's National Institute for Urban School Leaders and in the Education Policy Fellowship Program. He was also a Fulbright-Hays Scholar in Ghana in West Africa. Leonard has been recognized for his many contributions to the community and was named an outstanding role model and leader by local groups such as the Artist Collective and Committed Adult to Children in Hartford. In 2016, the University of Hartford's Alumni Association honored him with the Distinguished Alumni Award for his exceptional impact on his profession and the community.

## GUEST SPEAKERS

The Rev. Valerie Bridgeman, Ph.D. is the founder, president, and CEO of WomanPreach! Inc. She is the Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs at the Methodist Theological School in Ohio after serving one year as Interim Dean. She also is Associate Professor of Homiletics and Hebrew Bible since 2015, after having served as Visiting Professor for a year and a half. She is an alumna of Austin Presbyterian Seminary (MDiv), and received their Distinguished Alumna Award in 2018. She holds a Doctorate of Philosophy in Biblical Studies, with a concentration in Hebrew Bible, from Baylor University.

Dr. Bridgeman has taught preaching/homiletics, liturgy, and Biblical Studies for over twenty years. Licensed in 1977 and ordained in 1985, she is a dedicated preacher, Biblical scholar, visionary, and artist. Her experience includes decades of preaching, pastoring, leading workshops, mentoring, writing, and creating art that has inspired generations of clergy, community leaders, and artists.



William H. Lamar IV is pastor of Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church in Washington, DC. Ordained as an itinerant elder in 2000 at the Florida Annual Conference of the AME Church, Lamar has also served congregations in Monticello, Florida; Orlando, Florida; Jacksonville, Florida; and Hyattsville, Maryland.

A 1996 magna cum laude graduate of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, Lamar earned the Bachelor of Science degree in Public Management with a minor in Philosophy and Religion and a certificate in Human Resource Management. In 1999, he earned the Master of Divinity degree from Duke University. Lamar is currently a doctoral student in the inaugural cohort of Christian Theological Seminary's Ph.D. program in African-American Preaching and Sacred Rhetoric. An avid reader and writer, Lamar has published articles in outlets such as Christian Century, The Christian Recorder, Divinity Magazine, "FaithandLeadership.com," The Anvil, "TheUndefeated.com," and the "Huffington Post." He has also been featured in The Washington Post and the Afro-American and on "The Takeaway," the "Huffington Post Live," and PBS "News Hour."

Lamar is honored to serve Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church, where he seeks daily to extend the cathedral of African Methodism's nearly two centuries-long legacy of bearing witness to and ushering into this world the reign of the living God.

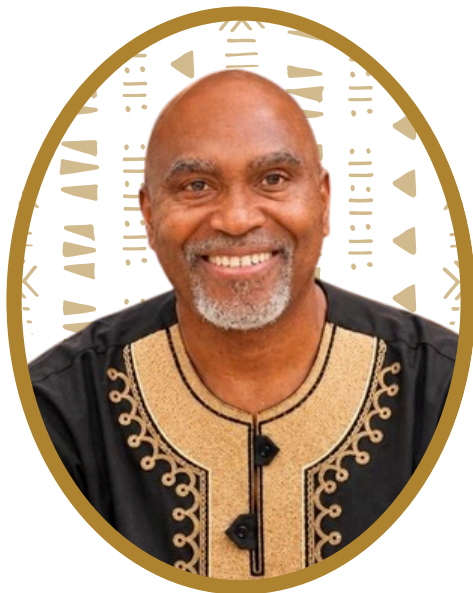


## GUEST SPEAKERS

Dr. Daniel Black is a nationally renowned, award-winning novelist. His works are inspired by African American life, history, and heritage in the South—encompassing themes of race, religion, and sexuality. In addition to his writing, he has spoken widely about being both Black and gay in the United States.

Upon graduation from Clark College (now Clark Atlanta University) in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1988, he was awarded a full fellowship to Temple University, where he earned a master's in 1990 and a doctorate in 1992, both in African-American studies. Black also earned the prestigious Oxford Modern British Studies fellowship, leading him to study at Oxford University in 1987. He studied under Sonia Sanchez, who many consider to be the poet laureate of the Black Arts Movement.

Black, who lives in Atlanta, is a professor of African American studies and English at his alma mater Clark Atlanta University and at Morehouse College, where he has mentored burgeoning writers and scholars since 1993. Black is also the founder of the Ndugu and Nzinga Rites of Passage Nation, a mentoring society that teaches character and the principles to African-American youth.



# SPOTLIGHT ON MINISTRIES: SISTERS AT THE WELL WOMEN'S WEEKEND 2026

*By Magnolia Barnes*

***Sacred Self-Care: Wonderfully Made  
and Worthy of Joy  
– Psalm 139:13–14***



The weekend was a sacred opportunity to pause, worship, fellowship, laugh, reflect, and be reminded that we are wonderfully made, deeply loved by God, and worthy of His joy.

More than 45 women gathered on Saturday for worship with Rev. Cami King, who delivered an inspiring and powerful sermon that set the tone for the weekend. The blessings continued at a luncheon at the Boathouse Restaurant in Westport, where more than 60 women gathered for an afternoon filled with love, laughter, fellowship, and sisterhood. As the sisters entered the dining area, they were welcomed by the beautiful sounds of harpist Jane Minnis, creating a peaceful and inviting atmosphere. The afternoon continued with an original spoken-word presentation by Sister Michelle Black Smith, followed by a joyful performance from local comedian Micha Jean.

The luncheon provided an opportunity for the women to reflect on the weekend's message of "Sacred Self-Care: Radical Permission to Choose Me," based on Luke 10:38–42. The teaching encouraged women to recognize that self-care is not selfish. Rather, it is a conscious and sacred practice of tending to the needs of the mind, body, and soul, while honoring ourselves as women beautifully and wonderfully created by God. One of the meaningful moments of the luncheon was the Sisters at the Well Sisterhood Pledge, which called the women to intentionally walk together in unity, love, respect, truth, encouragement, and support. The pledge reminded the sisters to understand and respect their similarities and differences, value one another's individuality, encourage and uplift one another, hear and honor one another's cries, and order their steps in God's Word, will, and way.

The celebration continued Sunday, where the congregation was blessed by the gifts and callings of women across generations. Young sister Alana Luciano shared an original liturgical dance, offering a beautiful expression of worship through movement. Nanette Malone followed with a moving spoken-word presentation that touched the hearts of those gathered. The weekend concluded with a powerful message from Rev. Dr. Barbara Headley, who preached on Sacred Self-Care and Celebrating Joy. Her message reminded the women of the importance of caring for themselves, embracing their God-given worth, and intentionally making room for joy in their lives.

A heartfelt appreciation goes to the dedicated Sisters at the Well facilitators: Karen Whittington, Tamiko Collier, Sheila Irby Miller, Stephanie McKelvie, Josie Adams, Latavia Crowder, Mercedes McKelvie, and Natachia Parker. Their service helped create an environment where women could worship, learn, laugh, fellowship, reflect, renew, and reconnect with themselves, with God, and with one another.

Next month we will partner with the Men's Fellowship Ministry on the hat and scarf drive. Watch out for when you can make your donation.

Join us for an

# Estate Planning, Death and Taxes

## Educational Wealth Building Event



### Presenters:

Attorney Olatokunbo Green,  
and Brenda Burton Seldon,  
Enrolled Agent



Saturday,  
October 10, 2026  
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.



At Mount Aery  
Baptist Church.  
73 Frank St  
Bridgeport, CT 06604  
Phone: (203) 334-2757

*The event is **FREE***

Historically, African Americans have been reluctant to talk about Estate Planning.

The term “estate plan” refers to the set of legal documents that anticipate and arrange for the handling of your assets during incapacity and after your death. Your estate is the net worth of your assets including bank accounts, real property, life insurance, and more.

### *Learning Objectives:*

- Basic difference between an estate and a trust
- Setting up an Entity
- Why should you set up a Trust
- A Fiduciary's responsibilities
- Tax Filing requirements for an Estate
- Tax Deductions for an Estate



PLAN TODAY • PROTECT TOMORROW • BUILD WEALTH

*Rev Dr. Anthony Bennett*

PASTOR

# REMINDERS

- **All submissions for Message from the Mount** should be sent to [mftm@mtaerybaptist.org](mailto:mftm@mtaerybaptist.org) by the Wednesday after second Sunday of each month to be considered for the next issue.
- **If you are not feeling well**, we encourage you to stay home and watch online. But if you come to church, please wear a mask.
- **If you have an announcement for Pastor**, send to [admin@mtaerybaptist.org](mailto:admin@mtaerybaptist.org) by Wednesday, not Sunday morning.
- **Go to [www.mtaerybaptist.org](http://www.mtaerybaptist.org)**
  - To join this ministry
  - To get updated information
- **Thank you for trusting God with your finances. You can request a contribution statement at any time in person, for pickup, via email at [finance@mtaerybaptist.org](mailto:finance@mtaerybaptist.org) or call and we will mail it out to you as well.**
  - Ways to give – Church/Ministry Donations only:
    - Mail in checks and money orders – 73 Frank Street, Bpt. CT 06604
    - Website and click on “give online” to give through Pushpay or download the app
    - Cash App – \$MountAery
    - Zelle – [finance@mtaerybaptist.org](mailto:finance@mtaerybaptist.org)
    - Apple Pay
    - Offering baskets at the door before or after worship, tithing box in the front or bring to the church office

**ANNOUNCEMENTS, WHICH ARE ALWAYS SUBJECT TO CHANGE, ARE AVAILABLE IN THE NARTHEX AND ON SOCIAL MEDIA THROUGH OUR WEBSITE, FACEBOOK PAGE AND INSTAGRAM.**



# OCTOBER PRAYER CALENDAR

**OCTOBER 2026 ~ GROUNDING IN FAITH & ANCESTRAL REMEMBRANCE - HEBREWS 12:1-2**

Organized Prayer is 7:00am to 1:00am beginning 10/1/2026 through 10/31/2026. Conference Dial-In Number: 716.427.1336, Participant Access Code: 111933#. See Rev. Alicia Tyson-Sherwood for more information. To playback prayer: 716.427.1343, access code is 111933#. This is not a toll free call. Long Distances Charges May Apply. Note: Do not announce yourself if you call after 6:58am. Please mute your phone so that prayer will not be disturbed. Habakkuk 2:2-3 NIV.

| SUN                           | MON                                              | TUE                    | WED                 | THU                          | FRI                   | SAT                         |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
|                               |                                                  |                        |                     | 1<br>Pastor Bennett          | 2<br>Sis. Barnes-Ward | 3<br>Elder Deborah Whitaker |
|                               | SUSTAINING THE CALL - GALATIANS 6:9              |                        |                     |                              |                       |                             |
| 4<br>Rev. Tucker              | 5<br>Sis. Thompson-Bennett                       | 6<br>Rev. Dr. Sherwood | 7<br>Deacon Gardner | 8<br>Sis. Smith              | 9<br>Sis. Simmons     | 10<br>Deacon Hurst          |
|                               | RELATIONAL WISDOM & FELLOWSHIP - COLOSSIANS 3:14 |                        |                     |                              |                       |                             |
| 11<br>Rev. Simmons            | 12<br>Deacon April Gist                          | 13<br>Bro. Cummings    | 14<br>Deacon Smith  | 15<br>Elder Deborah Whitaker | 16<br>Dr. Morris      | 17<br>Sis. Alston           |
|                               | SACRED SERVICE & THE CHURCH - MATTHEW 25:35-40   |                        |                     |                              |                       |                             |
| 18<br>Pastor Kingwood-Smallis | 19<br>Pastor Boissiere                           | 20<br>Sis. S. Jackson  | 21<br>Bro. Easley   | 22<br>Deacon Vermont         | 23<br>Bro. White      | 24<br>Sis. Ellis            |
|                               | SPIRITUAL DISCIPLESHIP & TRAINING - PROVERBS 4:7 |                        |                     |                              |                       |                             |
| 25<br>Sis. Newton-Foster      | 26<br>Deacon Hurst                               | 27<br>Bro. Newton      | 28<br>Min. Langley  | 29<br>Bro. Cummings          | 30<br>Rev. King       | 31<br>Deacon A. Febres      |

MAAFA: REMEMBRANCE & RESILIENCE - EXODUS 3:7-8; ISAIAH 61:1-3