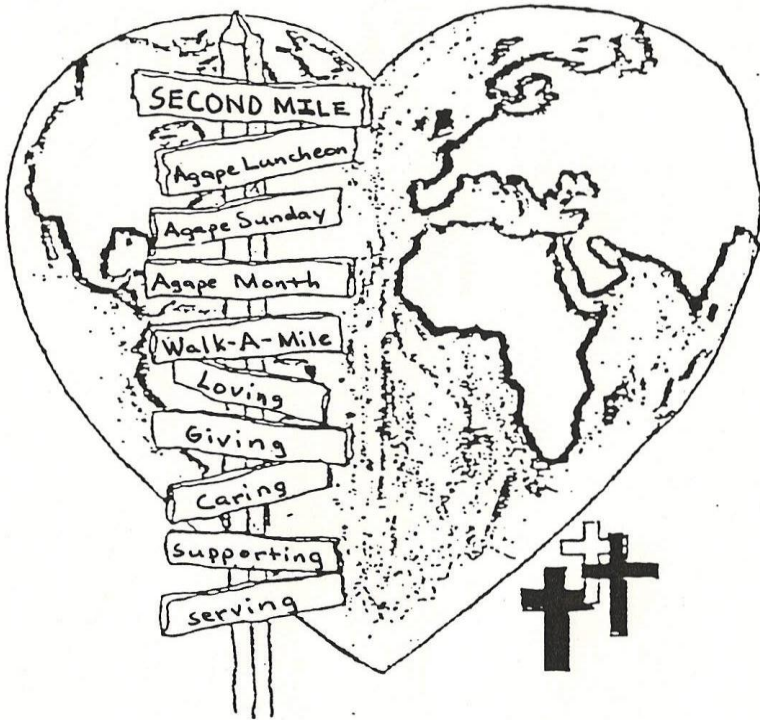


Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

Mary Gaither Meeks Agape Luncheon February 9, 2014



Second Mile Anniversary

Quadrennial Theme: 2011-2015

“Maximizing Our Purpose: Continuing Our Journey
through Mission Education, Christian Living and
Mission Ministry”

Mary Gaither Meeks Agape Luncheon

The Call to Worship:

The Leader: I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

The People: My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.

All: *O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. Amen.*

The Invocation:

O God, by whose mercy we have come to another celebration of love. Grant that we may enter with humble and grateful hearts. We ask for your grace and mercy to walk more closely with you and labor more faithfully in your service, according to the teaching and example of your Son Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Responsive Reading:

The Leader: O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.

The People: Let Israel now say, "His mercy endures forever."

The Leader: Let the house of Aaron now say, His mercy endures forever."

The People: Let those who fear the LORD now say, "His mercy endures forever."

The Leader: I called on the LORD in distress; the LORD answered me and set me in a broad place.

The People: The LORD is on my side: I will not fear. What can man do to me?

The Leader: The LORD is for me among those who help me; therefore I shall see my desire on those who hate me.

The People: It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.

All: It is better to trust in the LORD; than to put confidence in princes.

The Hymn: *"Lord Jesus I Love Thee"* # 272

The Meditation:

The Hymn: *"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"* #274

The Blessing and Sharing of Bread: *(a meager meal is suggested)*

The Sacrificial Offering: (special appeal for second mile offering)

The Remarks:

The Missionary Benediction: "God be merciful unto us and bless us and cause His face to shine upon us and give us peace. Amen."

Offerings are to be sent by the District President to
Mrs. Rosetta Dunham, Executive Secretary.
Your assistance is needed in this effort.

Program prepared by:

Gloria G. Williams, First Vice President
Dr. Sandra L. Gadson, International President

Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society
The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church



Mary Gaither Meeks (Conceived Idea of Agape Luncheon)

Mary Gaither Meeks, daughter of Israel Lee Gaither, Sr. and Carmilla Nichols Gaither was born in Mocksville, North Carolina, May 27, 1911. She received her formal education in the public schools of Mocksville, Price High School and Livingstone College.

At the college, she met and married Norsie Lee Meeks, who was to become a very successful pastor and later Presiding Elder. Two sons, Norris and Donald were born to that harmonious union, which lasted almost fifty years.

Raised in the church and dedicated to its service, Mary Meeks made many selfless contributions through the years. She received her early missionary training under Anna Hauser who was then serving as District President of the Salisbury District, Western North Carolina Conference. In order to increase her knowledge of the work of missions and to enhance her qualifications, she enrolled in mission study classes at Elmhurst College in Illinois.

She was District President of the Akron District of the Ohio Conference (1949-1957) and of the Chicago District of the Michigan Conference (1957-1978). Committed to the preparation and inspiration of youth, she served as District Secretary of the Y's and District Chairman of the Life members Council of the Michigan Conference and as Dean of the Leadership Training Institutes at Clinton Junior College and Lomax Hannon Junior College (1970-1974).

In 1971, she was elected First Vice President of the W. H. & O.M. Society and re-elected in 1975. She brought to that role; a richness of creativity, a wealth of experience and a commitment to excellence. One of her most successful ideas was a resolution she presented to the Executive Board for the Agape Luncheon to be established as a fundraiser for the Second Mile Project in 1973.

Mrs. Meeks worked in her local church as teacher in the Junior Department of the Sunday School and served as Supervisor of the Y Department. As a minister's wife, she devoted a lifetime of support to the ministries of her husband. Her devotion was extended through her energetic contributions to the A. M. E. Zion Minister's Wives and the Interdenominational Alliance of Ministers Wives. As president of that organization, she functioned and contributed much to its effectiveness.

Ecumenical in her philosophy and outlook, she served as a member of the Woman's Auxiliary of the Salvation Army and was a Vice President of the Illinois Council of Churches (1971-1972). A zealous member of Church Women United, she served as First Vice President of CWU in Illinois (1968-1970). She was the first African American to serve as State President (1971-1974) and was also a member of the National Board of Managers of that organization. For many years she was a member of the World Federation of Methodist Women and the National Council of Negro Women.

She died on May 6, 1978, while in office. Her funeral was held at Greater Walters A. M. E. Zion Church, Chicago, Illinois on Wednesday, May 10, 1978. Her quadrennial report to the 1979 Convention was read by President Willa Mae Rice who lifted up Mrs. Meeks' contributions to Second Mile via the promotion of the Agape Luncheon. The delegates to this convention in 1979 voted to name the Agape Luncheon: **The Mary Gaither Meeks Agape Luncheon.**

Source: *Historical Highlights, Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society: Mattie Wilson Taylor*