

# ALLEN CHAPEL A.M.E. CHURCH POLICY

**Subject:** Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church Membership

**Control Point:** Co-Vice Chairpersons, Steward Board

**Approval Authority:** Pastor, Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church

**Effective Date:** March 15, 2011

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Michael F. Bell Sr.*

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## GENERAL

Purpose	To define and establish guidelines for the classification of membership at Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church, along with the privileges and responsibilities associated with such membership. This policy is based on the requirements defined in <i>The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church</i> .
Scope	This policy applies to all members of the Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church.
Reference	<i>The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church</i> , 2008.

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## POLICY

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### MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATIONS

	Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church reserves the right to establish the conditions for membership in the church based on the requirements defined in The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The following will determine the membership classification of individuals who seek to become members and the expectations to maintain full membership.
Probationary Membership	<p>All individuals coming to the church with a desire to flee from the wrath to come, but not exercising saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, may be received on probation for a period of 90 days.</p> <p>While on probation, the individual will be assigned to a class leader and instructed in the Bible and current edition of The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.</p> <p>At the expiration of the probation time, the individual may be considered for membership based upon the person's profession of his or her covenant relationship with God through our Lord Jesus Christ and on the recommendation of the class leader.</p>

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Preparatory Membership	<p>Children who have been baptized and are under the care of the church until they have become full members. The terms preparatory or probationary may be used interchangeably for adults while receiving instruction for membership in the church.</p>
Full Membership	<p>All individuals coming to the African American Episcopal church on profession of saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ during 1) a worship service, 2) prayer meeting, or revival service, who have been baptized and are in good standing.</p> <p>Good standing is an acceptance that one is governed by <i>The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church</i> to regularly attend worship services; to contribute regular financial support; and to give of one's time and talents to the various ministries of the church.</p> <p>Individuals who have been granted full membership are expected to maintain ongoing communications with the church or participate in membership surveys so that the church may be aware of their intent to continue membership.</p> <p>The Pastor may consider special circumstances (e.g., inability for active participation because of an illness or temporary relocation) when determining the status of an individual's membership.</p>
Transferred Membership	<p>All individuals who bear a Certificate of Membership from any local church in the African Methodist Episcopal denomination. Those coming from denominations other than Methodist branches shall be taken through the procedures for admission to full membership.</p>
Terminated Membership	<p>Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church values its members and will take every reasonable measure to validate the membership status of the congregation to ensure its records are accurate. An individual who becomes a member will continue to be recognized as a member until an event occurs that changes the membership status. A temporary or extended absence does not serve as the basis for terminating membership unless the church is unable to validate the individual's intent for continued membership. Membership can be restored, upon request, to any individual who terminates membership or who has been removed from the church's records after an annual membership survey.</p> <p>Membership may be terminated in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Death of the member</li><li>▪ Transfer to another church with notice</li><li>▪ Membership in another church without giving notice</li><li>▪ Disciplinary actions based on violations of <i>The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church</i>.</li></ul>

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An individual whose membership has been verified as a nonresident for three consecutive years will be placed in the church record as of "Left Without Certificate."

An individual who is consistently absent from church may be asked to review his or her vows by the Stewards. If the member refuses, the member shall be recorded in the church records as "Left Without Certificate." The member's termination may be determined by recommendation of the Church Conference and by vote of the Quarterly Conference. Such person may be reinstated to active membership upon application to the Pastor.

Members whose membership has been terminated shall not have right or title to the personal or real property of the local or general church, including church building, parsonage, or other personal property.

### EXPECTATIONS AND PRIVILEGES OF FULL MEMBERSHIP

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#### Membership Responsibilities

#### New Member Orientation

The New Member Orientation provides probationary members with instruction on salvation and Christianity, the history of African Methodist Episcopal denomination, structure of the connectional and local church, stewardship and tithing, and other areas of study as determined by the Lay Organization. Probationary members are expected to participate in the New Membership class sponsored by the Lay Organization. Individuals are encouraged to attend within three months after joining the church.

#### Baptism

New members and the children of members may be baptized upon request. Baptism will be scheduled upon request at the next available date (i.e., usually on the third Sunday of the month).

#### Voting Rights

Members who are 18 years of age or over and in good standing are entitled to vote on matters related to the church at Church conferences.

#### Funeral Privileges

Members who are in good standing may be eulogized at Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church based on the availability of the sanctuary on the requested date and subject to the funeral service guidelines of Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church. (See Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church Funeral Policy).

#### Membership in Ministries, Officer Positions

Members who are 18 years of age or over and in good standing may hold any office in the church and are eligible to serve as a Trustee, Steward, Class Leader, Church School Superintendent or any other officer position based on the provisions for selection as defined in The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church or bylaws of the ministry.

# ALLEN CHAPEL A.M.E. CHURCH POLICY

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY GUIDELINES

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Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church officers and employees shall use membership information solely for the purpose of performing services as an officer or employee, and may not disclose or sell nonpublic information to individuals and entities that do not have a legitimate need for such information.

Officers and employees must exercise good judgment and care at all times and maintain physical, electronic and procedural safeguards to avoid unauthorized or improper disclosure. Information should not be left in public places within or outside of the church.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MEMBERSHIP ADMINISTRATION

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| Pastor                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Evaluate and approve exceptions to an individual's membership status based on special circumstances when the Stewards are conducting the annual membership survey or at any point when the membership status is under scrutiny.</li></ul>   |
| Co-Vice Chairs, Steward Board            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Ensure a process is in place to register conversions, accessions, baptisms, marriages, births and deaths in the church membership database.</li></ul>   |
| Team 1 Leader, Steward Board             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Conduct a church membership survey in the third quarter of each conference year (i.e., October to December) to evaluate financial contributions of membership, attendance and support of varied church activities and ministries to support the church's financial and spiritual needs.</li><li>▪ Ensure membership database is updated throughout the year and validated annually based on the annual membership survey and through other means that may be used to validate membership.</li></ul> |
| Team 2 Leader, Steward Board             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Record baptisms in the membership database.</li></ul>   |
| Member Contribution Database Facilitator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Record financial contributions and reconcile discrepancies with members.</li><li>▪ Coordinate the annual distribution of envelopes assignments.</li><li>▪ Distribute annual statements of financial contributions.</li></ul>  |

## ALLEN CHAPEL A.M.E. CHURCH POLICY

Ministerial Leader,  
Class Leaders

- Ensure members are assigned a class leader through the probationary period.
- Maintain periodic contact with new members through phone calls and personal interaction during church activities.

Church Administrative  
Office

- Update membership database with new member information as individuals join the church.
- Distribute welcome letters to new members within a reasonable timeframe after joining the church

Church Members

- Support the spiritual growth and financial needs of the church body through tithes and offerings, and participation in church services and activities.
- Inform the Pastor or Church Administrative Office of changes to the membership through written notice.
- Provide updated contact information to the Church Administrative Office.
- Participate in membership surveys to validate membership status