March 31, 2017

Letter of Reflections

It is with great confidence and pride that I write this letter of reflection for Mrs. Valerie Gary Bell. I have observed her on the connectional level and now as her Bishop. She has leadership qualities, experience and the right mindset to lead. I have learned over the years the following about great leaders. Great leaders stay positive even in the worst situations; great leaders exhibit confidence everywhere they go; great leaders have a sense of humor; great leaders know how and when to delegate; great leaders help people to grow; great leaders take responsibility and do not blame others; great leaders make decisions by applying lessons learned in the past; and, great leaders lead by example. These characteristics describe Mrs. Bell very well.

Mrs. Bell’s consistency, drive, and concern for lay ministry and the AME Church has forged a model for laity and clergy partnerships that should be duplicated across the connection. We need lay leaders like Mrs. Bell who has the integrity to lead us into the future. She is not afraid to stand for right, stand with a cause, fight through the misconceptions of our Christian walk and plow through the challenges and barriers we face as a nation and as a denomination. Mrs. Bell has a vision, a plan and the confidence in “seeking first his kingdom and his righteousness”, and knowing without a doubt that all things will work together for good for those who love the Lord.

As a faithful and longtime member of First AME Manassas, Mrs. Bell continues to serve on the Steward Board and has been active in the lay organization for over ten years. In the Second District, she has planned bi-annual Lay conventions, has empowered lay members to be committed to fulfilling the Great Commission, as written in the Gospel of Matthew Chapter 28: 19-20; and has encouraged laity and clergy to continue working in the Kingdom.

Mrs. Bell is a great leader, but most of all she is compassionate, trustworthy and dependable. She is a member in good and regular standing in the Second Episcopal District. With all these and other reasons, I endorse Mrs. Valerie Gary Bell for the candidacy of President of the Connectional Lay Organization.

In the Spirit of Restoring Hope,

James L. Davis
Servant Bishop