

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. 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 the Agape Luncheon that was established as a fundraiser for the Second Mile Project.

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.

In order to increase her knowledge of the work of missions and to enhance her qualifications, she was enrolled in mission study classes at Elmhurst College in Illinois.

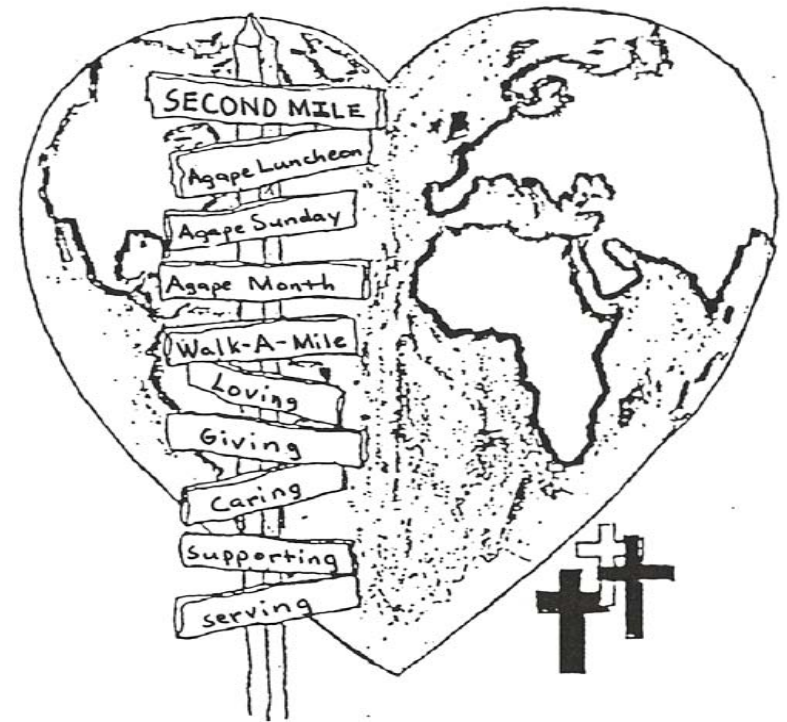
Ecumenical in her philosophy and outlook, she served as a member of the Woman's Auxiliary of the Salvation Army and was a Vice President of the Illinois Council of Churches (1971-1972). A zealous member of Church Women United, she served as First Vice President of CWU in Illinois (1968-1970). She was 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.

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

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

**Mary Gaither Meeks
Agape Luncheon**



February 2010

Second Mile Anniversary

Quadrennial Theme: 2007-2011

**“Victorious Living, Prayer and Fasting, Praise and
Worship, Purpose and Power”**

Mary Gaither Meeks Agape Luncheon

The Call to Worship:

The Leader: O give thanks unto the Lord for He is good: for His mercy endureth forever.

The People: Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, who He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;

All: For He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

The Invocation:

Our Father, we come to thee today seeking to be filled with the blessings of your lovingkindness. Please forgive us all that is past and grant that we may ever hereafter, serve and please Thee and Thee alone. Enter now into our hearts and minds that we may receive those blessings with pure hearts. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

*The Litany of Purpose:

The Leader: Gracious Lord, help us to love and worship you fully as we are confronted with the various opportunities and blessings which are designed to challenge our faith.

The People: For we know all things work together for good to those who love the Lord and are called according to His purpose. Amen!

The Leader: Guide us as we seek to please you in all of our acts of service to our community, our church as well as to our country.

The People: For we know all things work together for good to those who love the Lord and are called according to His purpose.

The Leader: Protect us as we move into places we have never gone before and as we embrace ministries, which we have never done before.

All: For we know all things work together for good to those who love the Lord and are called according to His purpose. Continue to hear us and lead us as we strive for the building of your kingdom. Amen! Amen! Amen!

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

The Meditation:

The Hymn: "O How I Love Jesus" #266

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.



*Source: 26th Quadrennial Convention Worship Book

Offerings are to be sent by the District President to:
Mrs. Rosetta Dunham, Executive Secretary for the benefit of home and overseas missions. Your assistance is needed in these efforts.

Program prepared by:

Gloria G. Williams, First Vice President

Dr. Barbara L. Shaw, General President

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