

**Are We There Yet?**  
A Founders' Day Litany  
Bishop Adam J. Richardson, Jr., 115

Leader: I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:14, NKJV)

“Are We There Yet?” It is the appeal of children displaying routine impatience with the journey, a lament from the back seat of the car, the back seat of the church. “We have miles to go before we rest.”

**People: We join the forward march of those who have preceded us, insisting that ‘our lives matter.’  
We press toward the mark; it’s a high calling!**

Leader: And some inquisitive child who had survived the Yellow Fever epidemic in Philadelphia, seeing the cornerstone laid in place on a brand-new edifice called *Mother Bethel*, having completed a course of study at the school organized by Richard Allen, a preacher and businessman, known to have bought his own freedom and that of his brother, asked him, “Are we there yet?”

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Leader: In a proverbial sense, it was asked of Bishop Daniel Alexander Payne, after the founding of Wilberforce University (and 21 other colleges founded by the AME Church), and of President Booker T. Washington, after the founding of Tuskegee University, and of President Mary McLeod Bethune, after the founding of Bethune-Cookman University, and of W. E. B. DuBois, the first African American to earn a doctorate degree from Harvard, and George Washington Carver, scientist, and of Thurgood Marshall, first black Supreme Court Justice, and of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. after receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, and after the election of President Barack Hussein Obama, “Are we there yet?”

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Leader: As Sir Galahad would learn in his quest for the Holy Grail; as Paul surmised about the “prize of the high calling of God” — the meaning is discovered in the journey. The relevance is in the quest. The purpose is discovered in the pursuit, the adventures, the experiences, the victories achieved, the challenges overcome, the lessons learned, the wisdom gleaned, the collective resolve to journey on that makes arriving at an elusive destination even more worthwhile.

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Leader: Then a small voice that matched the size of the supplicant asked the genius poets and authors and playwrights and composers and bandleaders and starlets, and showmen of the Harlem Renaissance, “Are we there yet?”

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Leader: Then a small girl sidled up beside Deaconess Rosa Parks, sitting as dignified and defiant as she might at the front of the bus, and asked, “Are we there yet?”

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Leader: Then some youthful voice, from the colored section of the ball park in 1947, yelled above the raucous cheers of spectators in the direction of Jackie Robinson as he rounded third base towards home-plate; just as his older brother had asked of Jesse Owens after winning four gold medals in the Berlin Olympics in 1936, and his younger sister asked after Henry 'Hank' Aaron broke Babe Ruth's homerun record in 1974, "Are we there yet?"

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Leader: Then some youthful lad made a crisp military salute in the direction of uniformed pilots as they lifted their planes into the "wild blue yonder" from an airfield in Tuskegee, wondering aloud as he considered their skill and heroism; just as we asked of Dr. Mae Jemison, NASA's first black woman astronaut; and of Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie, the first female bishop of the AME Church, "Are we there yet?"

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Leader: It is God in Christ Jesus who beckons us forward and upward; "Follow Me, He says." It is His call — towards salvation and liberation — and discovering along the journey grace and mercy and peace that surpasses all understanding, and complete forgiveness and love and joy and Life Abundant, here and now, and Life Everlasting! And the next generation will ask of us, "Are we there yet?"

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