

PERPETUAL CARE MINISTRY

REFERENCE GUIDE



The African Methodist Episcopal Church
Second Episcopal District
Perpetual Care Ministry

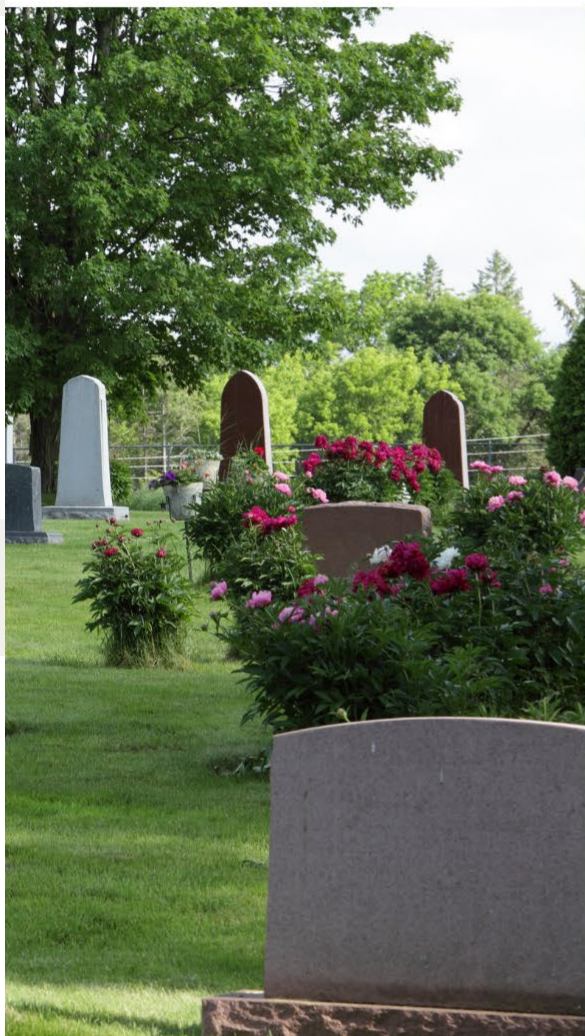
The Right Reverend James L. Davis, Senior Bishop
The Reverend Dr. Jonathan C. Augustine, Co-Coordinator
The Reverend Ricardo Burns, Co-Coordinator
Sister Edna Watson, Co-Coordinator

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Perpetual Care Ministry Reference Guide

I Introduction

The Second Episcopal District Perpetual Care Ministry (PCM) was birthed from necessity. Parties outside the SED recognized a lack of care being given to SED cemeteries and/or burial grounds and highlighted the lack of care in the public domain.

In addressing the necessity, Bishop James Levert Davis acted through the SED's presiding elders and surveyed all SED member congregations to determine which congregations own and/or operate burial grounds. After receiving the survey's results, Bishop Davis empowered the PCM to provide a standard that would be met, with respect to operation and maintenance of burial grounds owned and/or operated by SED member congregations and components, including an annual conference. This Perpetual Care Ministry Reference Manual provides necessary standardization.

A Note on Terminology

In following European customs, it was typically a practice that American churches set aside land for the burial of church members. *Churchyards*, or *church graveyards*, were designed after English churchyards that customarily had a type of church-appointed sexton to maintain them. Churchyards are typically located around, or in proximity to the churches with which they are affiliated. Because of this historic practice, and how the same has been a cultural part of the AME Church, the focus of this Perpetual Care Ministry Reference Guide is *churchyards* and *church graveyards*.

With respect to terminology, the PCM recognizes that different people and/or organizations refer to burial places in different ways. Common usage terms may include burial grounds, cemetery, graveyard, and *churchyard*. In surveying relevant literature to assist the PCM in its initial operation, we reviewed, among other things, David Charles Sloane's *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (John Hopkins Univ. Press, 1995).

The Last Great Necessity notes that, contingent on ownership and/or legal designation, there are different types of burial grounds in the United States, including:

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1. Frontier domestic lands;
2. **Churchyards** or **church graveyards**;
3. Potter's fields;
4. Town or city cemeteries;
5. Rural cemeteries;
6. Lawn parks;
7. Military cemeteries; and
8. Memorial parks



The PCM's focus in producing this Reference Guide, is limited to what we deliberately term *churchyards* or *church graveyards* that are owned and/or operated by SED congregations and, in one case, the Baltimore Annual Conference.

II Recommended Initial Steps

(A) Identification of Allies and Collaboration Partners

Churchyards maintenance can be expensive, especially if the churchyard has been neglected for a significant period of time. If a congregation or annual conference is just beginning the process of churchyard maintenance, there are several initial steps recommended for consideration. Prior to addressing those recommended steps, however, it is prudent to think about allies who may want or be able to assist in the restoration and maintenance process, and obviously defer associated cost(s). Consider the following potential allies, as network possibilities, along with other organizations that are similarly situation:

1. Boy Scouts and/or Girl Scout troops looking to complete badge requirements, schools that require community service of students, or other similar organizations, looking to meet community service hours;
2. Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and American Legion lodges;
3. Elks, Lions, Moose, and masonic lodges, *etc.*
4. State and local mortuary associations;
5. State agencies that are legally charged with the responsibility of assisting with the maintenance of burial grounds. In the SED, state agencies include:
 - a. **The Maryland Office of Cemetery Oversight** (located within the state Department of Labor): <https://www.dllr.state.md.us/license/cem>; as well as the **Coalition to Protect Burial Sites**: <https://cpmbms.org>.
 - b. **The District of Columbia Department of Burial Assistance** (located within the DC Department of Human Services): <https://dhs.dc.gov/service/burial-assistance>.

- c. **The Commonwealth of Virginia Cemetery Board** (located within the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation):
<https://www.dpor.virginia.gov/Boards/Cemetery>.
 - d. **The North Carolina Cemetery Commission:** <http://nccemetery.org>.
6. State penal institutions, with minimum security inmates, may provide clean-up services at reduced or no costs. As a matter of good practice, however, we highly recommend that if prisoners are engaged, provisions be made through coordination with the penal authorities, to deposit credits, gifts, and/or tokens of appreciation into their respective accounts.

(B) The Survey Process

Before beginning any work toward conservation and preservation of churchyards, it is imperative to survey the property's initial condition. For safety reasons, the initial survey should look for the following:

- Uneven terrain, sunken areas, and holes;
- Broken gravestones, protruding tree roots, broken fence posts, and other sharp objects;
- Unstable gravestones/markers and hidden hazards that might initially appear stable;
- Poison ivy or poison oak;
- Snakes, ants, mosquitoes, spiders, bees, wasps, and other harmful pests;
- Vagrants, the homeless, and individuals with criminal intent.

It is also recommended that the survey process include meticulous documentation, specifically photographs and/or videos, to preserve records of the state of affairs prior to beginning any work toward conservation and/or restoration of churchyards. Churchyards can be very important historical and social repositories. Accordingly, detailed recordation of features, artifacts, and conditions can provide a point of reference for future generations. As photographic documentation is being made, it is also recommended that a contemporaneous written log be kept, specifying dates and conditions.

(C) Site Mapping

The goal of mapping is to create a uniform point of reference that documents not only who is buried at the specific churchyard, but what features and special artifacts are at the churchyard, too. Burial sites (and presumably SED churchyards or church graveyards) are generally laid out in rows that may be either uniform, in facing a particular direction, classically facing the east, or they can follow the contour of the land, typically in a garden-style layout.

Site mapping should include not only identifiable graves and suspected graves, but should also include site features, such as roads/roadways, pathways, utilities, gardens/planned vegetation, and any specific features that might be unique to the specific churchyard at issue. While mapping,

we urge awareness of prior recordings/documentation of the site that might provide key references. Consistency is key in successfully creating a tool that will prove valuable for future generations. A potential partner and resource for the site mapping process might be the **Association for Gravestone Studies**: <https://www.gravestonestudies.org>. It publishes a pamphlet on rudimentary mapping.

III The Churchyard Maintenance Care Plan

After site mapping, each SED congregation that owns a churchyard, as well the Baltimore Annual Conference, must have a Maintenance Care Plan (MCP) that covers routine churchyard maintenance. The respective MCPs should include recommendations and guidelines for:

1. Lawn Care;
2. Plant Care;
3. Tree pruning;
4. Invasive vegetation control;
5. Seasonal work projects such as snow removal/plowing, weeding and special planting;
6. Replacement of trees and plants;
7. Procedures for minor repairs to landscape features;
8. Procedures for minor repairs to markers and resetting fallen markers;
9. Spot roadway maintenance;
10. Trash removal; and
11. Fencing repairs (if applicable)

The MCP should also include persons responsible (presumably members of the local Board of Trustees), as well as an estimated annual cost. This cost should be a part of the church's budget to insure the routine and perpetual care of the cemetery.

IV The Funding Process (for additional information, please see "Appendix A")

As previously indicated, churchyard restoration and preservation can be costly, especially in cases where neglect has caused severe deterioration. In some cases, if it has not already been done, we recommend including a line item in the local congregation's budget to address the need. In other cases, although the line item may exist, generating revenue to meet the associated annual expense is another matter. The PCM offers suggestions that might be of assistance.

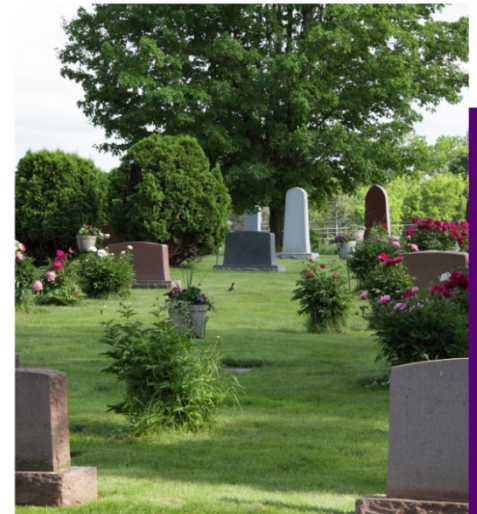
It is prudent to determine what groups are represented, within the churchyard, as a means of building relations to assist in funding. For example, if several gravestones show masonic symbols or American Legion symbols, it is probably that a contingent of the local masonic and American Legion lodge members are buried within the congregation's churchyard. Such organizations should be interested to contributing to efforts to preserve the legacy of their deceased members.

Congregations might also consider applying for grants. Grants are financial assistance given for specific purposes that fall into two major categories. There are: (1) public grants; and (2) private grants, which include corporate or private foundations, as well as foundations associated with nonprofit groups. The PCM recommends looking to groups that have awarded similar funding in the same geographic area where the churchyard is located. ***As a matter of course, some foundations will not award grants to organizations that have not secured 501(c)(3) status, under Title 26 of the United States Code.***

V Cemetery/Churchyard Policy Plan

Each SEB congregation that owns a churchyard, along with the Baltimore Annual Conference, should have a Cemetery/Churchyard Policy Plan (CPP). The CPP should include an analysis of existing planning documents, rules, and/or regulations that are specific to the jurisdiction wherein the churchyard is located. The following items should be included in each CPP:

1. Manager;
2. Person(s) responsible for recordation;
3. Regulating visitation and special event use;
4. Visitor conduct;
5. Funerals;
6. Private work activities on cemetery/churchyard lots;
7. Security, including visitor safety and vandalism and theft control;
8. Parking areas, and visitor amenities;
9. Signage;
10. Funding cemetery administrative and maintenance needs, *etc.*;
11. Number of graves;
12. Number of plots;
13. Who (church members only, public *etc.*) may be buried;
14. Where are records kept, and by whom;
15. Associated cost(s) (*i.e.*, for members, non-members, *etc.*)



Appendix B—Potential Grants Appendix

NATIONAL GRANTS

African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund

<https://forum.savingplaces.org/build/funding/grant-seekers/specialprograms/aachactionfund>

- A Letter of Intent (LOI) must be submitted using the National Trust’s online grant application system. The LOI form will capture basic information about your organization and your project. When completing the forum, you may need the following items:
 - An IRS letter of determination (nonprofit applicants)
 - A list of major donors to your organization or project
 - Up to three photos of your site, if applicable
 - Grants from the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund are designed to advance ongoing preservation activities for historic places representing African American cultural heritage, such as sites, museums, theaters, sports venues, churches, schools, universities, and landscapes. Grant awards may be made for activities and projects in the following categories: Capital Projects, Organizational Capacity Building, Project Planning Programming and Interpretation
- While this is not an exhaustive list, there are several themes we are particularly interested in: Activism and Protest Movements, Achievement and Innovation Architecture and Black Architects Arts, Culture, and Creative Expression, Cemeteries and Burial Grounds
-

Preserving Black Churches

<https://savingplaces.org/black-churches>

- For this grant, eligible applicants are entities representing Historic Black Churches. Historic Black Churches. Religious historic buildings built and erected by Black congregations and continuously occupied by active Black congregations.
- **Historic Black Churches** with active and non-active congregations. Active congregations are those which hold regular worship services and public programming in historic religious buildings.
- **501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations** stewarding non-active Historic Black Church buildings reused and repurposed for community..... churches
- The African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund are investing in a \$20 million initiative to help historic Black churches and congregations reimagine, redesign,



and redeploy historic preservation to address the institutions' needs and the cultural assets and stories they steward.

- Grants from Preserving Black Churches are intended to preserve historic Black houses of worship (with either active or non-active congregations) and advance ongoing preservation activities. With grants ranging from \$50,000 to \$200,000.
- 501(c)(3), and other (federally designated) nonprofit organizations: A broad-range of 501(c)(3) organizations are eligible to apply, including state and local preservation organizations, churches, accredited private colleges or universities, historic sites, museums, historical societies, and genealogical associations.
- The minimum grant amount is \$50,000. The maximum amount depends on the project category (See below, under Eligible Activities and Expenses). Requests below the minimum amount will not be reviewed.

MARYLAND GRANTS

African American Heritage Preservation Program https://mht.maryland.gov/grants_africanamerican.shtml

- The African American Heritage Preservation Program (AAHPP) provides grants to assist in the preservation of buildings, sites, or communities of historical and cultural importance to the African American experience in Maryland.
- *Applications for the AAHPP are typically available in early April and due July 1, with decisions made by December every year.*
- The AAHPP provides capital grants to nonprofits (state and federal government entities may apply as nonprofits), local governments, businesses and individuals for eligible projects.
- All projects must be related to African American history, culture, or heritage in Maryland. Applicants may apply for grants of up to \$100,000 for the following types of projects: acquisition, rehabilitation / capital improvements, new construction, predevelopment costs such as studies, surveys, plans and specifications, and architectural, engineering, or other special services directly related to pre-construction work for a capital project
- To be eligible for funding, either the property itself or the proposed use must have associations with African American heritage.
- **Cemeteries** may be eligible for assistance; the applicant must demonstrate clear property ownership.
- Documentation of the organization's active tax-exempt status under § 501(c)3 of the United States Internal Revenue Tax Code.

Trader Foundation for Maryland Burial Sites Grant
<https://cpmbs.org/trader-foundation/>

- The Trader Foundation for Maryland Burial Sites provides financial assistance for worthy projects to rejuvenate endangered historic Maryland cemeteries. The Foundation invites applications for grants up to \$2,000 to qualified parties. Application deadlines are **January 1 and July 1** of each year.
- The project or program must benefit a specific burial ground within the State of Maryland.
- Absent unusual circumstances, if the applicant does not own the cemetery which will benefit from the proposed activities, then the application must include a letter from the owner endorsing the project and confirming that the applicant has been granted access to the cemetery to conduct the project.
- Grant funds must be matched 100% by the grantee. At least one-third of the match must be in cash; the remaining two-thirds may be in-kind materials or services.
- Grant funds will be disbursed in two halves, the first upon approval of the application and signing of the agreement. The second disbursement will occur upon completion of the project and submission of a final report, with a record of expenditures and the match.
- Examples of eligible projects include gravestone conservation or restoration, protection of burial site from desecration by nature or by man, rescue of endangered site, documentation, cemetery clean-up, and planning for restoration.
- The application consists of the cover page, proposal narrative, and a maximum of 3 attachments.



VIRGINIA GRANTS

Virginia Historical African American Cemetery and Graves Fund

Website: dhr.virginia.gov/grants/

- At the beginning of each state fiscal year (July 1), DHR announces the availability of funds for the care and maintenance of historical African American cemeteries and graves, defined as “a cemetery that was established prior to January 1, 1948 for the interment of African Americans.” The deadline for grant applications for the current state fiscal year (“SFY”) is **May 30, 2023**.
- Cemetery Name and location
- Number of eligible graves
- Cemetery owner; copy of the deed confirming ownership of the cemetery
- Briefly describe the cemetery, its physical condition, types of markers, memorials, and monuments, and describe the scope of work for this state-funded project by answering the following questions.
- Documentation of the organization’s active tax-exempt status under § 501(c)3 of the United States Internal Revenue Tax Code.
- A qualified organization is defined as “a charitable corporation, charitable association, or charitable trust that has been granted tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and whose primary purpose is the preservation of historical cemeteries and graves or any person or locality that owns a historical African American cemetery.”
- Estimated budget
- Proof of current registration with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs pursuant to Virginia’s Charitable Solicitation of Contributions Law, or proof of exemption from the registration requirements.



Appendix C—(version 1—8.29.22)
An Initial Resource for Funding

As referenced in Part IV, churches should contact local civic and/or volunteer groups that might be interested in deferring costs associated with churchyard restoration and maintenance. We also suggest searching the Internet for city and county websites for cemetery preservation, African American and historic burial grounds, as well as agricultural, waterways, and railway cemeteries. As an initial listing of resources, the PCM provides the following suggestions:

- 1. Historic Preservation Capital Grant Program**
African American Heritage Preservation Program
Website: mht.maryland.gov
- 2. Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS)**
Public Safety Works - Landscaping Program
- 3. Maryland Department of Labor**
Office of Cemetery Oversight (Deborah Rappazzo)
- 4. Virginia Department of Historic Resources**
Website: dhr.virginia.gov/grants/
- 5. HISTORIC CEMETERY PRESERVATION CAPITAL GRANT PROGRAM**
Website: dahp.wa.gov
- 6. CSX Community Service Grants**
Website: www.csx.com
- 7. The World Monuments Fund**
Website: <https://www.wmf.org>
- 8. The National Trust for Historic Preservation**
African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund
Website: savingplaces.org

