

**Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts  
Worcester African Community (WAC) Ministry  
Rev. John Edgar Freeman, Missioner  
2019 Annual Report**

This is the third and final year of the Genesis Grant which has funded the WAC Ministry. I thank the diocese for the opportunity to serve as Missioner for the life of the grant. I am grateful to St. Matthew's Parish, Worcester, for housing the ministry, the Rev. Mother Nancy B. Strong, Rector (retired), Rev. Deacon Jane Griesbach and the Rev. Mother Judith Lee, Interim Priest for their encouragement and support. I would also like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to St. Matthew's Vestry and parishioners, who so warmly received me and the WAC Ministry and allowed me to be part of their community. I would also like to thank the members of the WAC Advisory Committee for their participation and support.

As Missioner (half-time), my work was to find Anglicans in the Worcester African Diaspora Community and invite them to church. Many do not know that the Episcopal Church is a branch of the Anglican Communion. In my work I visited barber shops, beauty salons, stores and restaurants and other gathering places inviting people to church. Some have come to St. Matthew's and made it their church home. I also invited everyone that I encountered as I traveled around Worcester to come to church as well, Anglican or not!

I hosted monthly meetings of the Worcester Liberian Pastors at St. Matthew's. I was asked by the Pentecostal Pastors for assistance in planning funerals, weddings, etc. I gave them copies of Nelson's Minister's Manual" and explained many of the sections to them. We called for an African community-wide three-day fast to pray for the number of sudden and unexplained deaths in the Liberian Community. In the Worcester African Community, I participated in a number of events:

- Wake Keepings and Funerals
- Prayers and blessings before travel
- Pastoral visits to the sick in hospitals and in their homes
- Blessings of newborns

The WAC Ministry sponsored its Second Annual Bible Quiz (April), Second Annual Essay Contest (June) and with St. Matthew's, the Annual Multicultural Festival (July).

Since last year's annual report, meetings or groups I participated in are:

- Monthly ECoW meetings, convened by the Rev. Dave Woessner
- All Saint's African Diaspora Guild
- Worcester Corridor Clericus Meetings
- Diocesan Clergy Days and Clergy Retreats
- St. Matthew's monthly Men's Breakfast

On a personal note, in January Debbie (my wife) and I participated in a pilgrimage to Israel, then traveled to Lebanon to visit our grandson. In March I participated in the memorial service in Las Vegas of my spiritual mother, Mrs. Marilyn Robertson. Marilyn and her late husband, Rev. Edgar Bolling Robertson, were missionaries in Liberia. He baptized me, gave me the name Edgar and prayed that I would become a priest in this church. In July I traveled to Liberia accompanied by Emmanuel Freeman (son), Christian Hines (grandson) and Rev. Dave Woessner (friend).

From February through May (2019) I supplied at Trinity Church, Shrewsbury. This led to my being called as Priest in Charge (half-time) in August. I will continue to meeting with the Worcester Liberian Pastors.

It has been a blessing to serve God, God's church and God's people.