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THE WORLD’S FOREMOST FEMALE THEOLOGIAN TO PRESIDE OVER ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA’S ECUMENICAL SERVICE

Chicago, Illinois – April 27, 2010 - A dynamic quartet of the world’s leading female religious leaders will come together to present a powerful faith-inspired church service when Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority hosts its Ecumenical Service on Sunday, July 11 during the Sorority’s convention in St. Louis. As members of Alpha Kappa Alpha, each of these female religious giants is bound by their shared commitment to the Sorority’s core mission: “to provide service to all mankind.”

The four dynamos, who will deliver a combined message of inspiration, are: The Rev. Cynthia L. Hale, the Rev. D. Margaret Elaine M. Flake, the Rev. Mignonne E.M. Snipes and the Rev. Leslie Dowdell Cannon.

Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Hale is the founding and senior pastor of the Ray of Hope Christian Church in Decatur, Georgia. The Church boasts an active membership of 5,000 and an average of 1,500 Sunday morning worshippers. The church was honored by the 700 Club and was cited in highly-acclaimed religious references for being among the 300 excellent Protestant congregations nationwide. A 30-year member of the ministry, Rev. Hale is revered as a visionary whose leadership, integrity and compassion have propelled her to international renown. Committed to the development of the pastoral community, she established the Elah Pastoral Ministries for that purpose. She serves on numerous boards, and has been given high-profile assignments including giving the opening invocation at the 2008 Democratic National Convention. She served as co-chair for “Women in Ministry for Obama” and was featured in CNN’s documentary “Black in America 2.” She is the recipient of countless honors.

Rev. Dr. Margaret Elaine M. Flake is hailed as a “powerful preacher, teacher and role model with a gift for reaching worshippers of all ages.” She works alongside her husband, the legendary Rev. Floyd H. Flake, pastor of The Greater Allen A.M.E. Cathedral in New York. Passionately committed to promoting Christian education, the couple co-founded the Allen Christian School, which provides a competitive education and special curriculum for young Christians in the pre-kindergarten through 8th grade. Rev. Elaine, as she is affectionately called, was a guiding force behind the establishment of the Allen’s Resource Center, a haven for victims of domestic violence. She is also involved with the Allen Prison Ministry, serves as an advisor to the church’s Missionary Department and is an advisor/coordinator of the Allen’s Women’s Ministry Department. A charismatic theologian, she annually attracts over 1,000 women worldwide to retreats she hosts.

The Rev. Mignonne E.M. Snipes is an ordained elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church She is also the proud daughter of the Rev. Johnnie Snipes, III and the Rev. Dr. Gloria M. Snipes. Rev. Snipes is a member of the Philadelphia/Baltimore Conference and is a personal assistant to her mother. She is Professor for Religious Studies at Livingstone College and recently completed the Summer Institute for Women in Higher Education Administration at Bryn Mawr College. A graduate of Tuskegee University, she made a considerable impact there by serving in a wide array of leadership positions. Among her involvements was as co-founder of the First Collegiate Chapter of National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc. She was also appointed by the president of Tuskegee to serve as Ombudsperson. Her motto captures what she works to achieve daily: “One must strive for excellence in all that you do and God will see you through.”

The Reverend Leslie Dowdell Cannon has served as the Senior Associate Minister at Peoples Congregational United Church of Christ of Washington DC for over ten years. Her wide-ranging responsibilities cross the entire religious spectrum and include worship, preaching, administration, fine arts and Women’s ministries. Overall, her mission is to “sustain the mission and purpose of the church of Jesus Christ.” Her broad-based experience includes a stint at the Congregational Church of Park Manor in Chicago where she received the call to the ministry and was inspired to begin her seminary training. By applying her experience as program associate for the Churches in Community Unit of the Community Renewal Society to her theological work, she was able to bring a new dimension to her religious stewardship. She has contributed to several publications including “What Can Happen When We Pray” and “Reparations,” a study guide for local congregations developed by the Justice and Witness ministries of the United Church of Christ.

Alpha Kappa Alpha’s International President Barbara A. McKinzie mused that the stellar group of religious leaders will deliver a rousing message that will set an inspiring tone as the organization’s convention gets underway. She also said the caliber of women participating dramatically underscores the richness of religious leaders within Alpha Kappa Alpha’s membership ranks.

“These theologians and the mission they are bound to are testimony to their devotion to the service credo that they committed to when they joined Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority,” said McKinzie. “It is to the nation’s credit that they bring this same sense of resolve to their church and communities.”

The Ecumenical Service is one of a host of activities that will take place during the Sorority’s annual convention that takes place July 9-16 in St. Louis. For more information on the convention, log on to www.aka1908.com.

Headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, Alpha Kappa Alpha boasts a nucleus of more than 250,000 women in 958 chapters in the United States, the Caribbean, Canada, Germany, Korea, Japan and in the continent of Africa who are dedicated to service. Barbara A. McKinzie is the 27th International President.

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