

# Sixth District Epistle Newsletter



## 6<sup>th</sup> EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Bishop Thomas L. Brown, Sr., Presiding Prelate  
Dr. Louise Baker Brown, First Lady & Advisor

**QUADRENNIAL THEME: BE BOLD: FACE NOW – EMBRACE NEXT – SEE NEW**

### A WORD FROM THE BISHOP'S DESK "A Way Out of No Way"

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This popular expression is mainly attributed to the African American experience. It is an inspirational saying that lifts courage, creativity, agency, and resolve, as demonstrated in the personal stories of the African American community. As African Americans found themselves challenged by American and European racial, economic, and class systems employed to thwart the dreams and hopes of enslaved people, they coined a faith slogan that could be shared as a means of mutual encouragement and empowerment.

However, we have come to a time when many feel that just the opposite is true — there is no way out. Facing the destructive actions and concerted efforts by our new presidential administration to continue to divide, disenfranchise, and decenter people who strive towards freedom, equality, and justice, coupled with Russia's ongoing slaughter of Ukraine, Israel's brutal bombing of Gaza, the devastating fires that have decimated homes, families and areas in Southern California, plane crashes, and the trauma so many are feeling in response to threats to the security of their governmental employment, there is a growing mood of despair cascading over our nation and world.

This mood is becoming more pervasive among clergy and laity who question God's faithfulness. In her reflection on the scripture from the Revised Common Lectionary, Cycle C for January/February 2025, Celeste Kennel-Shank proposes that the biblical record affirms that there is "a way out of no way." "When hope is in short supply," we need both the testimony of the Book, and the stories of our ancestors corroborated with our experiences. In a nutshell, I hear Celeste Kennel-Shank proposing that we may be despaired and hopeless because we have forgotten that our crisis is not just with politicians and government but our neglected theology.

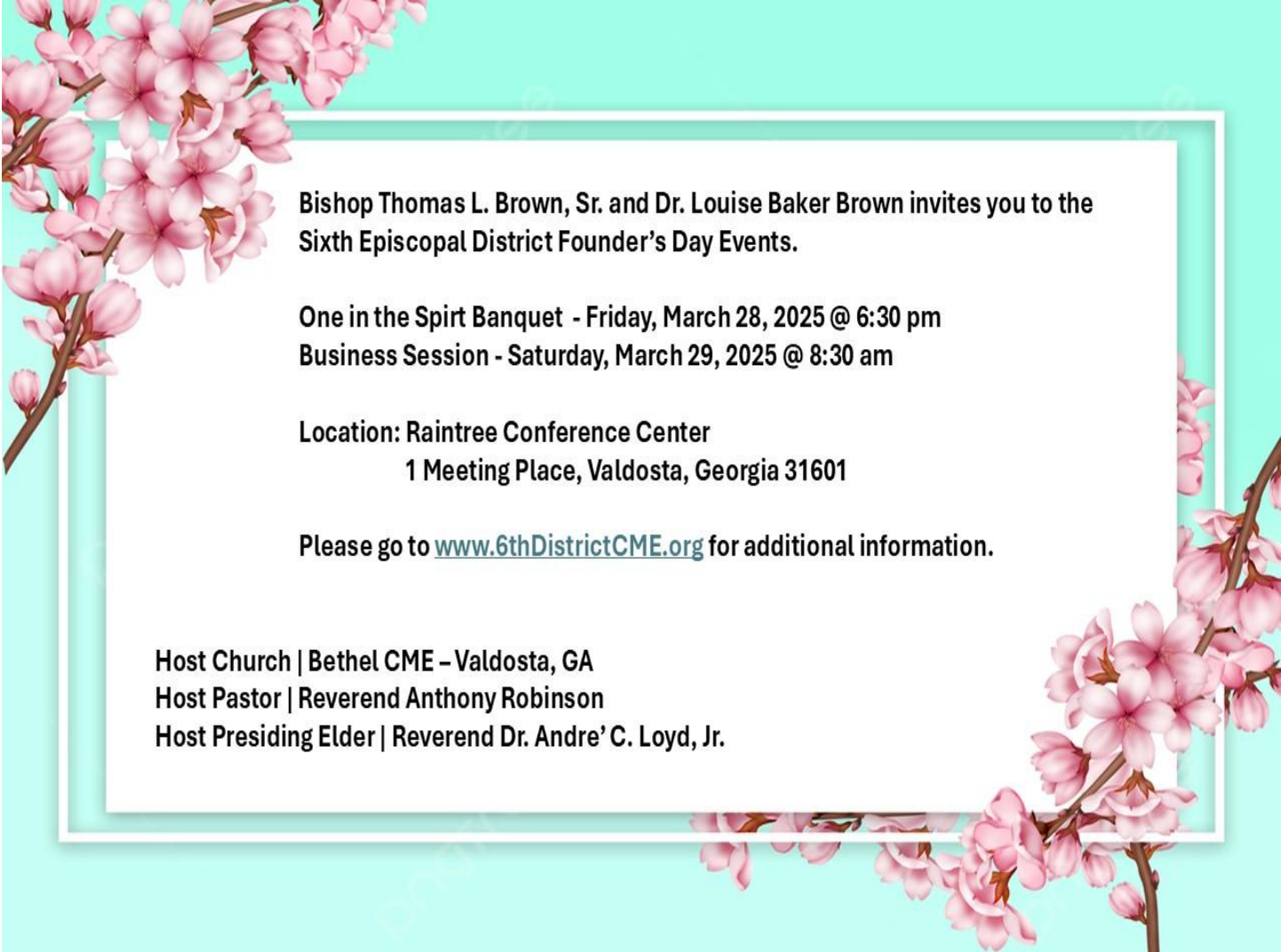
As we journey from Epiphany to Ash Wednesday, let us remind ourselves that the journey between despair, disaster, and the consequences is propelled by our conviction that there is "a way out of no way." These are times when the church needs to recover the transformative disciplines of constant watchfulness and prayer, devoted reading and study of the holy Scriptures, intentional worship that engages the dangers of presidential worship and takes us away from overdosing with current news while also inviting each other into the sacred dialogue of our faith with current events. Beyonce's inevitable winning the Album of the Year for Cowboy Carter offers reasons to believe hope is not just fantasy.

The February 2025 edition of Time Magazine highlights what it calls "The Closers: 25 Black Leaders Working to End Racial Inequality," which presents us with a host of witnesses who, from varied perspectives and engagements, are convinced that freedom, justice, equality, and rights are always worth investing ourselves in continually. It is said that a young man was complaining to his mother about his troubles and how he might make his way through. His mother led him to the kitchen and filled three pots with water, placing carrots in the first, eggs in the second, and coffee in the third. After bringing the pots to boil, the mother removed the contents of each pot. The carrots softened, the eggs became solidly complex, and the coffee beans remained the same while turning the water into coffee. May God, in this crisis-filled time, help us to become like coffee beans, changing the aroma of our contexts into experiences of freedom, justice, and equality.

Your Episcopal servant,  
*Thomas Louis Brown, Sr.*

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## 6<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District Spring Gathering



**Bishop Thomas L. Brown, Sr. and Dr. Louise Baker Brown invites you to the Sixth Episcopal District Founder's Day Events.**

**One in the Spirit Banquet - Friday, March 28, 2025 @ 6:30 pm**  
**Business Session - Saturday, March 29, 2025 @ 8:30 am**

**Location: Raintree Conference Center**  
**1 Meeting Place, Valdosta, Georgia 31601**

Please go to [www.6thDistrictCME.org](http://www.6thDistrictCME.org) for additional information.

**Host Church | Bethel CME – Valdosta, GA**  
**Host Pastor | Reverend Anthony Robinson**  
**Host Presiding Elder | Reverend Dr. Andre' C. Loyd, Jr.**

## **BOLD STEPS: Strategies Towards Implementing Vibrant Church Initiative in Georgia**

The Spring 2024 Christian Training Institute of the 6th Episcopal District will be held simultaneously across all districts on Saturday, March 1, 2025. The training will focus on the Vibrant Church Initiative. See the information below regarding training location by district and registration instructions.

The training will take place at the following locations:

<p><b>Atlanta/Rome District</b>                      Presiding Elder Frederick Bradford                      Location: West Side Community CME Church                      2114 Martin Luther King Junior Drive Southwest                      Atlanta, GA</p>	<p><b>Augusta/Sparta District</b>                      Presiding Elder Curtis L. West, Jr.                      Location: Jenkins Memorial CME Church                      4218 Windsor Spring Road, Hephzibah, GA</p>
<p><b>Elberton/Gainesville District</b>                      Presiding Elder Carlton Taylor                      Location: Trinity CME Church                      241 West Franklin Street, Toccoa, GA</p>	<p><b>Albany/Thomasville District</b>                      Presiding Elder Tawanna Harris                      Location: Cray Chapel CME Church                      1918 Oakhaven Drive, Albany, GA</p>
<p><b>Fort Valley/Savannah District</b>                      Presiding Elder Jane E. Thomas                      Location: St. Paul CME Church                      1601 Barnard St, Savannah, GA</p>	<p><b>Moultrie/McRae/Brunswick District</b>                      Presiding Elder Andre Loyd                      Location: Williams Tabernacle Church                      316 3rd Street Northwest, Moultrie, GA</p>
<p><b>Macon/Barnesville District</b>                      Presiding Elder Lindsey P. Napier, Sr.                      Location: Faith Memorial CME Church                      4800 Hwy 1 S, Wadley, GA</p>	<p><b>North Columbus/LaGrange District</b>                      Presiding Elder Lavisha Williams  <b>South Columbus/Cordele District</b>                      Presiding Elder Christopher Waller                      Location: Holsey Monumental CME Church                      6028 Buena Vista Road, Columbus, GA</p>

Registration is now **OPEN**. We encourage all pastors, ministers on trial, and laity to pre-register. Children and Youth are invited to attend the session at no cost but must register. **NOTE:** Online registration closes on Friday, February 28, 2025, at Noon. On-Site Registration is \$30.00.

To register, click on [www.6thDistrictCME.org](http://www.6thDistrictCME.org) Scroll down to the Christian Training Institute information on the webpage. Locate your district and click the button to access the registration details.



## **BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

The 2025 Black History Month theme is "African Americans and Labor," chosen by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. This theme serves as a powerful reminder that Black labor has always been about more than employment, it has been about agency, resistance, and building a more just society. From enslaved laborers to union organizers, Black people have fought tirelessly to define the value of their work and ensure that future generations inherit a more equitable labor landscape.

As we reflect on this year's theme, let us honor the Black workers—both past and present—who have made contributions to labor rights, economic justice, and social welfare. Their work continues to shape the Black experience.



The banner information: 1) Mary McLeod Bethune, 2) Nannie Helen Burroughs, 3) A. Philip Randolph, 4) Bayard Rustin, 5) Anna Arnold Hedgeman, 6) Dorothy Bolden, 7) Addie L. Wyatt, 8) Hattie Canty, 9) Clara Day and 10) Christian Smalls.

As we look towards the future, we must advocate for policies that protect Black workers, recognize the economic contributions of Black communities, and ensure access to education and professional opportunities. The fight for labor rights is ongoing, and the lessons from historical figures remind us of the power of perseverance, organization, and collective action. Black labor is not only an essential part of history but a key force in shaping the possibilities for generations to come.

During this month and throughout the year, let us share our stories about labor justice and protest as well as teach others about the labor movement and activist (including those reflected in the banner) who used their platform for social justice.  
(Excerpts taken from [asalh.org/black-history-themes/](https://asalh.org/black-history-themes/))

## WOMEN HISTORY MONTH



March is Women's History Month.

For 2025, the National Women's History Alliance (NWHHA) proudly presents the theme "Moving Forward Together! Women Educating & Inspiring Generations."

From classrooms to boardrooms, grassroots movements to global initiatives, women educators, leaders, and mentors have played a pivotal role in nurturing minds and inspiring transformative action. This theme celebrates the collective strength and influence of those women who have dedicated their lives to education, mentorship, and leadership. Through their efforts, they have served as an inspiration for all generations — both past and present.

During the month of March, let us highlight the women in our congregation and community (past and present) who continue to fight the injustices to bring a change to a generation through education.  
(Excerpts taken from the [nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org](https://nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org))

**Editorial Note:** Google's popular online and mobile calendars no longer include reference to the first day of Black History Month or Women's History Month, among other holidays and events as of February 10, 2025.

## Person of the Quarter

### Paul Allen Davis



Paul Allen Davis was born in Heidelberg, Germany, the son of the late SFC Louis Davis and Fannie Davis. As a child, he grew up in Columbus, Georgia, graduating from Baker High School with honors.

Paul received his post-secondary education degrees from Valdosta State University and Columbus State University. He has an extensive career in teaching. Paul has taught at Muscogee County School District, Talbot County Board of Education, and Georgia Military College.

Paul is a multifaceted professional with extensive experience in dealing with people from various cultures, youth and adults, civilian and military. Paul considers himself a team player who is not afraid of change!

Paul is a life-long and devoted member of Holsey Chapel C.M.E. Church for over 62 years, joining under the pastorate of Reverend E.D. Bryson. He stays extremely busy in his work with the C.M.E. Church. Paul has served as the Youth Advisor and Coordinator, Sunday School Teacher, Vacation Bible School Director, as well as a delegate to the West Georgia Region Annual Conferences and two General Conferences, and Youth Advisor for Leadership Training School and the National Youth and Young Adult Conference.

Paul currently is a member of the Holsey's Steward Board, sings in the choir and serves as the Administrative Assistant to the Pastor. He also serves the Sixth Episcopal District as a member of the Tech Team.



## INSPIRATION & ENCOURAGEMENT FROM A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Rev. Lisa M. Allen-McLaurin, Ph.D.  
Professor of Worship, Music, and Spirituality

The season of Lent is quickly approaching and many of us are considering how we will observe and participate, whether through fasts, special bible studies, or intentional reflections. If we take this season of preparation seriously, engaging in activities to strengthen and renew ourselves, reflecting on our past, present, and future with God, truly repenting (which means “to turn”), and using this season in Jesus’ shoes to confess and seek forgiveness, God can truly use us for ministry! Not ministry that says, “Look at me and how much I am sacrificing and denying myself.” But ministry that says, “Let me look around, at my house, at my family, at my community, and see what God is calling me to do. This is where God is putting me to work, who God is directing me to help and who God is encouraging me to love and liberate. That’s the ministry Lent prepares us for!

## LEANING INTO LENT

Dolores D. Tarver, Ph.D., PC.

Licensed Psychologist & Member of Holsey Chapel CME Church, Columbus, Georgia

Why do we struggle to acknowledge when we are wrong? Why do we value being “right” over having meaningful relationships with others? Why is it hard for us to empathize in areas in which we don’t struggle or with people who may be different than ourselves? Why, even when we “know” better, we still don’t “do” better?

The concept of psychological reactance suggests we do not like perceived threats to our freedom or being told what to do because it makes us feel like we are being parented, criticized, or “less than.” We want to be able to exert our individualism, feel valued, and be held in high regard.

As we approach Lent, this is an excellent time to reflect on habits. Am I choosing to undergo 40 days of sacrifice in an area in which I overindulge to spend more time in communion with God? Is it what I’m “used” to doing (ritual)? Am I trying to avoid a negative consequence (something bad happening, being viewed negatively, not being included, positive impression management)?

If you have difficulty admitting when you are wrong, struggle to acknowledge how your behaviors impact others, tend to hold grudges, enjoy the downfall of people you perceive have slighted you, have difficulty forgiving yourself or others, or exhibit a pattern of conflictual relationships, then I suspect that your approach to Lent may also need an “ego check.” This may be a good time to explore both counseling and bible study to replace that flawed floorplan with a healthier foundation.

Let us be honest. We do not like being embarrassed and may feel compelled to “clear our names” and “set the record straight.” However, it is important to assess whether there is a true benefit to addressing someone’s perception of you.

For more wellness information, follow Dr. Tarver @timewithdrtarver on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, or your favorite podcast platforms.



## HEALTH CORNER

### Honoring Black History and Heart Health Awareness Month: Shedding Light on Heart Disease in African Americans

As February unfolds, it is not solely about flowers, chocolate, and romantic dinners. It is also a time to monumentalize Black History Month and American Heart Health Month. While we honor the incredible achievements of African Americans throughout history, it is an essential time to shine a spotlight on an issue close to many of our hearts, heart health (American Foreign Service Protection Association, 2025).

According to data from the CDC and the American Heart Association, Heart disease is the No. 1 killer for all U.S. adults, and stroke is the No. 5 killer and a leading cause of disability. As frightening as those statistics are, the risks of getting those diseases are even higher for Black people. The prevalence of high blood pressure in Black people in the U.S. is among the highest in the world. Heart disease is a leading cause of death in the African American community. Also known as hypertension, high blood pressure increases your risk of heart disease and stroke. It can cause permanent damage to the heart before you even notice any symptoms, that's why it is often referred to as the "silent killer." Not only is high blood pressure more severe in African Americans it also develops earlier in life. Conditions like sickle cell anemia are more prevalent in African American communities and can further exacerbate cardiovascular complications as well as diabetes, high cholesterol, genetics, and obesity.

Prevention is key to combat heart disease. The good news is that most deaths from heart disease are preventable with ongoing education and awareness in communities of color. These are some key actions that people can take to improve their heart health.



1. Check your blood pressure regularly. A normal blood pressure is less than 120/80 mm Hg. If you know your blood pressure is high, keeping track of changes is important. Check it regularly and notify your healthcare professional of changes in case your treatment needs to be adjusted.



2. Make heart-healthy food choices, which include foods with lower amounts of salt and fat



3. Move or exercise regularly



4. Avoid smoking

Together, we can rewrite the narrative on heart health and ensure that everyone has a seat at the table – or should we say the dance floor? So, grab your dancing shoes and join the celebration. Let us use this month to celebrate love, raise awareness, and take meaningful action toward building a healthier, more equitable future for all.

(Information taken from the Balm of Gilead, Inc./ Southeast Diabetes Faith Initiative/Georgia Newsletter/February 2025)

## Gloo Partnership – Why You Need Gloo!

In today's digital age, churches need effective ways to connect with their church leadership, their members, and visitors in order to grow their ministries and membership. The C.M.E. Church in partnership with Gloo offers a free texting platform for churches designed to leverage text communications. The Gloo texting platform provides churches the access to send up to 10,000 text messages per month, for free!

Some benefits of Gloo:

1. **Enhanced Outreach:** Gloo provides churches with the ability to reach out to their church membership maximizing outreach efforts and connections.
2. **Member Engagement:** With Gloo's communication free texting, churches can send personalized messages, prayer requests, event updates, and discipleship resources to their members. This strengthens relationships and keeps the congregation engaged throughout the week, not just on Sundays.
3. **Ministry Growth:** By utilizing Gloo's free texting platform, church leaders can make reach out and inform regarding ministry programs, small groups, outreach initiatives and recruit volunteers.
4. **Connection with New Visitors:** Through Gloo's texting platform, churches can welcome visitors and take steps to integrate them into the congregation.

Gloo empowers churches to communicate, connect, and effectively strengthen their mission and reach more people for Christ. Sign up your church up today for a free Gloo account, for more information, go to: [www.6thdistrictcme.org/gloo](http://www.6thdistrictcme.org/gloo)





## AFRICAN AMERICAN LABOR UNIONS & LEADERS CHALLENGE

Match the event with a name, organization, or city.

- |                                  |                         |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| A) Dorothy Bolden                | I) Addie L. Wyatt       |
| B) Association of Black Caulkers | J) Samuel Ringgold Ward |
| C) Nannie Helen Burroughs        | K) A. Philip Randolph   |
| D) Memphis                       | L) Lonnie L. Johnson    |
| E) Christian Smalls              | M) Las Vegas            |
| F) Michelle V. Agins             | N) Anna Arnold Hegeman  |
| G) Bayard Rustin                 | O) Mary McLeod Bethune  |
| H) William E. Pollard            |                         |

- \_\_\_ 1. Who founded the first major African American national union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters?
- \_\_\_ 2. Named the first president of the American League of Colored Workers?
- \_\_\_ 3. Named the founder of the Coalition of Labor Union Women.
- \_\_\_ 4. Name the first black still photographer admitted to the international Photographers of the Motion Picture and Television Industries union.
- \_\_\_ 5. Who was the first Black national president of the Mail Handler's Union?
- \_\_\_ 6. Launched the National Association of Wage Earners in 1921.
- \_\_\_ 7. Named the organization that was established in July 1858 and became the first Black labor organization on record.
- \_\_\_ 8. During the longest strike in U. S. labor history, name the city where Hattie Canty led the workers through six and a half years of negotiations for better labor standards.
- \_\_\_ 9. Founder and first executive director of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, a Black trade union dedicated to racial and economic justice.
- \_\_\_ 10. Help organize the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom and co-founder of the National Organization for Women in 1966.
- \_\_\_ 11. Who was the first black to head the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) civil rights department in Washington, DC?
- \_\_\_ 12. Founded the National Domestic Workers Union of America in 1968.
- \_\_\_ 13. Co-founder and former president of the Amazon Labor Union.
- \_\_\_ 14. Named the first women president of the American Teachers Association in 1912.
- \_\_\_ 15. In 1968, a 64-day labor conflict occurred due to the deaths of two sanitation workers, racist treatment, and the city's refusal to recognize the workers' union. Name the city.

## It's Happening Around the Sixth Episcopal District

**Youth Fellowship & Game Night  
Williams Chapel CME Church  
Reverend Cindy E. Causey, Pastor**



## The Sixth Episcopal District Calendar of Events



February 23, 2025                      Connectional Social Concerns Sunday



March 1, 2025                              6th Episcopal District Christian Training Institute

March 5, 2025                              Ash Wednesday/Beginning of Lenten Season

March 9, 2025                              Connectional Christian Ministry Sunday

March 27, 2025                              One in The Spirit Banquet  
Raintree Conference Center  
1 Meeting Place, Valdosta, GA

March 29, 2025                              Sixth Episcopal District Spring Gathering  
Raintree Conference Center  
1 Meeting Place, Valdosta, GA



April 2025                                      Earth Day Month

April 13-19, 2025                              Holy Week

April 20, 2025                                Resurrection Sunday | Easter

April 27, 2025                                Ministers' Spouses, Widows and Widowers Day



May 2025                                        Missions Beyond the U.S.A. Sunday Observed any Sunday

May 11, 2025                                 Mother's Day



Did you know the CME Church sends out a weekly New Digest? The News Digest includes announcements, special events, resources and more. It is recommended that all leaders and members sign up for CME Communications. To subscribe, click on the link below and complete the form:

<https://thecmechurch.org/email-list/>

Have you seen the web and Facebook page for the Sixth Episcopal District of the CME Church?

Click on the links and check it out: <https://www.6thdistrictcme.org/> and

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/sixthepiscopaldistrictcme>

When you access the Sixth Episcopal District web page, you will have an opportunity to enter your email to receive the free Epistle's newsletter and to send articles.

Answers to African American Labor Challenge:

1) K, 2) J, 3) I, 4) F, 5) L, 6) C, 7) B, 8) M, 9) G, 10) N, 11) H, 12) A, 13) E, 14) O, 15) D