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ST. JOHN A.M.E.N. NEWSLETTER



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 17 Issue 1

January 2012

Pastor's Meditation

It's a New Season!



Reverend Patrick D. Clayborn

Praise God! I am overjoyed to be appointed the pastor of St. John A.M.E. Church in Huntsville, Alabama. I give glory to God for this opportunity, and I thank Bishop James L. Davis for giving me the privilege of serving God's people. Furthermore, I thank Reverend and Mrs. McCall for their hospitality, wisdom, and friendship to me and my family. Thanks be to God for the forty years of love they have poured into St. John and the Huntsville community. No pastor could ask for a better foundation than the one that has been laid by the McCalls. St. John family, we – the Clayborns – are so grateful for the gracious ways in which you all have welcomed us. We look forward to growing in faith with each of you. We request your prayers as we begin this venture into a new season.

A new season! It is no coincidence that this appointment was made during Advent. Advent speaks of a new season for several reasons. It is the beginning of the liturgical calendar, and thereby, represents a new liturgical year. Christians throughout history would anticipate the emergence of something new and miraculous each Advent season. Therefore, they would fast, pray, and participate in various spiritual disciplines that would prepare them for a "new birth." More importantly, the primary narrative of Advent – the birth of Christ – symbolizes a new way for humanity to connect with God. For in Christ's birth, we experience Emmanuel – God being with us.

A new season involves certain dynamics. First, God notifies us that the new season has begun just as the angel notified Mary (Luke 1:26-38). We are notified that a significant shift is taking place. It is a *kairos* moment.

Second, new relationships must be formed with familiar people. Mary formed a new bond with her family member Elizabeth. Both of their pregnancies necessitated it (Luke 1:39-56). Since the season has changed, relationships with those we know must be modified.

Third, God blesses us in proportion to our new season. The blessing will be accompanied by trials in addition to triumphs. For Mary was Joseph's blessing; yet, the pregnancy made him reluctant to embrace her (Matthew 1:18-25). In the same way that God reassured Joseph that Mary was his blessing, God reassures us that certain complexities in life (those that God ordains for us) will actually benefit us if we would embrace them.

Fourth, our embracing the blessing of the new season will bring about a new creation. That new creation will place us in new positions with unique associations. By embracing Mary, Joseph witnessed the new creation in Christ. However, the new creation forced him into a stable, next to a manger, with visiting shepherds (Luke 2:1-20). We, too, are pushed into the stables and mangers of life and find ourselves with unlikely people because of the new creation we experience. Yet, those positions and people affirm our new season.

Finally, the new season takes us into new territory. In new territory, there are new spiritual, emotional, cultural, and intellectual domains to encounter. New territory also brings new people and certain dangers. Mary, Joseph, and Jesus experienced this as they sojourned to Egypt.

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Doing Better vs. Being Better

By Karla Reddite

Happy New Year! 2012 is finally here, and for many people, that means "out with the old, in with the new". "New" usually means resolving to join a neighborhood gym to get in shape, get out of debt, or perhaps spend more quality time with family. A new year signifies a new beginning, a new opportunity to "do" better.

However, as we all know these and other resolutions made in January of any new year are usually forgotten (sometimes on purpose) by March.

So, that made me think - since "doing" better seems to be such a hard task for us, maybe "being" better would make it all a bit easier. If we strive to be better Christians, then perhaps some of the other goals on our New Year "to-do" list would become more achievable.

How can you be a better Christian in 2012?

I posed this question to some of our St. John congregation members, and here is what they had to say:



"Come to church more and participate in Bible study. I want to do more of the 'necessaries.' I've already started my goal because I have recently joined the choir."

--Jakeyah York



"Fall more in love with Jesus by attending regular means of grace and reading my Bible and study to show myself approved."

- Dennis DeLoach



"Try to serve better, work more in the community. I already do a lot in church, but wherever I am needed, I'll serve."

- Beverly Hill

"I'm going to read my Bible more." - Jason S. Gilmore

"I will continue to do what I am doing. I visit and call the sick. I give money to seniors, as well as give money to the kids in college just to help them out. I sing with the choir, and I look forward to serving as a deaconess in the A.M.E. Church." - Ernestine Barnes-Ivery

As we become better Christians on the inside, the outside will soon reflect it. The renewed energy and strength that comes from having the joy of the Lord will help us walk (or run) away those extra pounds we put on during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Our debt will soon decrease because when we get out into the community and talk to those who are truly suffering, we will have a better understanding of what things are really worth the money, and what things are not. We will also begin to appreciate God's power even more, and realize that our thoughts are not His thoughts, especially when it comes to life and death. This reality alone will make us treasure the time with our family and friends even more and carve out more time for such special moments. Let us "be" better Christians in 2012, and perhaps some of the other things we want to "do" will eventually fall into place. Enjoy the New Year!

15th Annual Taste Tea Held after Christmas Program

By Bridget Floyd

The Fifteenth Annual Taste Tea was a project of teamwork and extra effort. The AMEN staff and the Adult Praise Dance Ministry co-sponsored the event on Sunday, December 18th. The coordinators would like to express appreciation to the St. John family, many of whom increased their efforts this year.



There were desserts galore, salads, meatballs, vegetable dishes and jambalaya to name a few of the dishes that made an impression on attendees. Ms. Brandy Lockett again coordinated YPD members who helped in serving. Mr. Ray Sconiers and Mr. Earl Fitchard took the lead in setting up tables and many people helped in decorating and displaying the food in an appetizing way. A special thanks to Mrs. Charlie Brooks and Mrs. Mable McGall.



Kudos to Mrs. Eleanor Burnett, the Adult Praise Dance coordinator/representative who exhibited a tremendous effort/commitment in the midst of health challenges. It was a pleasure to have Reverends Patrick and Sheri Clayborn participate in this tradition during the Christmas season.

The coordinators, Mrs. Claire Philadelphia, Mrs. Eleanor Burnett, and Dr. Bridget Floyd, again express appreciation to everyone who contributed in any way.

NOTE: If you have not yet submitted your recipe for publication in the A.M.E. Newsletter in 2012, please submit the recipe via e-mail to Mrs. Cora Speight at coraspeight@gmail.com.

Christ Awards Christmas Program was Great!

By Cheryl Anderson

Bravo! Bravo! The 2011 Christ Awards Christmas Program held on December 18, 2011 was the greatest! If you missed it, you missed a treat! First of all, the program was dedicated to Reverend and Mrs. McCall and the McCall Family for their forty years of service to the St. John Family. Secondly, the program showcased the many great talents amongst the members of St. John. Thirdly, the program welcomed the new pastor, Reverend Patrick Clayborn, and his family.

There was storytelling, praise dancing, recitations, commercial breaks and lots of entertainment. Oh, and let us not forget the presence of Baby Jesus.

Ronald McIntosh, with his great booming voice, announced the start of the show after the entrance of Mary, Joseph, Baby Jesus and the three Wisemen followed by Reverend and Mrs. McCall. Mary, Joseph and the Wisemen were portrayed by Daisha Rembert, Xavier Rembert, Daniel Haygood, Brandon Moore, and Ladon Moore.



Pamela Whitehead reads to the children.

The opening prayer was fittingly and eloquently given by Josiah Gullatte and the scripture was read by Kaitlyn McClung. Pamela Whitehead, with great animation, read "Twas the Night Before the Birth of Jesus" to the children as they listened quietly. Ernestine Barnes-Ivery provided the spiritual meaning of the Twelve Days of Christmas.

The show hosts Karla Reddite, Jannette Smith and Jason Gilmore provided introductions and entertainment to keep the show moving and on track. They were amazing.

Recitations were given by Anthony Harbin, Jessica Harbin, Blake Johnson, Brittney Lockett, Rodrick Lockett, Anthony and Jayla Mack, and Zaria Yoik. Ronald Lockett melodiously sang "Shalom" and Kimberly Whitehead sweetly sang "This Little Light of Mine".

Michael Clark gave a piano solo to the tune of "Jolly

Old St. Nicholas".

Commercial breaks for The Joy Phone, Where's the Faith, Happy Birthday Jesus, Jesus Will Save Yo Soul and Alpha & Omega Insurance were provided not only for entertainment but as a reminder that Jesus IS the reason for the season. The commercial participants were Kennedy Harris, Alicia Brownlow, Ashley Lewis, Mariah Gullatte, Wallace Parham, Channing Ransom, Cambridge Wilson, David Wells and the St. John Youth along with parental assistance from Erica Harbin and Yvette Cooper-Clark.

All award shows have celebrity performances and the 2011 Christ Awards was no different. The St. J-5s plus 2 (Christian Daniels, Michael Clark, Rodrick Lockett, Ronald Lockett, Josiah Gullatte, Anthony Harbin, and Eddie Whitehead, Jr.), with guitars and a keyboard, performed "Santa Claus is Coming to Town." The St. McCall Staple Singers (Earl "Pop" Griffiths, Cheryl Anderson, Karen Minor, Mary Powers, and Lula Rochelle) performed "Joy to the World". Dennis Hathaway (Dennis DeLoach), son of the late great Donnie Hathaway, performed "This Christmas". The biggest performance and the greatest surprise were The Saintations (Michael Clark, Lars Avery, Ray Sconiers, Wilbert Brownlow, and Karl Gullatte) who performed "Silent Night".

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Christ Awards Christmas Program was Great!

By Cheryl Anderson

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The St. McCall Staple Singers!

Who knew Michael and Karl could sing like that? They stole the show. Just ask the groupies.

The praise dance performances included the St. John Children's Praise Dance Team who performed to 'Who Would Imagine a King', Kalon Anderson to 'O Holy Night', and the St. John Youth and Young Adult Praise Dance Team to 'I'll Trust You'.

Music for the program was provided by Lawrence Souffrant on piano, Talbert Cox on percussion and Willie Sandifer in the sound booth.

"Trophy Girls" Chelsea Carter and Yvonne Barbour looked beautiful as they handed the awards to the presenters as they announced the winners of the 2011 Christ Awards. The award presenters and winners were as follows:

<u>Presenter</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>Christ Award Winner</u>
Karmen Latimore	Soldier for Jesus	Dennis DeLoach
Daishy Joseph	Heavenly Chef	Charles Brooks
David Wells	Community Service	Tommy Anderson
Alicia Brownlow	Service to Youth	Brandy Lockett
Nathan Brownlow	Youth of the Year	Daisha Rembert
Shayla Wilson	Living Legend	Sally Fitchard
Lillie Rivers	Single Parent of the Year	Laticia Mack and Guy Ginn
Kourtney Burwell	Joyful Voice	Jannette Smith and Dennis DeLoach
Mariah Gullatte	Heavy Award	Reverend Patrick Clayborn
Nina Johnson	Lifetime Achievement	Reverend and Mrs. Homer L. McCall

Congratulations to all the award winners.

The show ended with a song performed by the St. John Youth and Young Adult Choir, and Reverend McCall's favorite saying, "The Best Is Yet to Come".

The 2011 Christ Awards Christmas Program was written by Donna and Karl Gullatte with assistance from program participants, special helpers and the program committee consisting of Cheryl Anderson, Mariah Gullatte, Erica Harbin and Pam Whitehead.

Congratulations everyone on a job well done!



Nina Johnson presented the award to Reverend and Mrs. McCall.

"Leave the Skunks Behind"

By Karla Reddite

How did you ring in the New Year? Some people chose to celebrate with family and friends at a party. Others simply curled up on the couch and watched the ball drop in New York City on television. However, many Christians (mainly African American) gathered in a place that is considered one of their most popular "hot spots" - church.

They met for an annual tradition called "Watch Night Service". This type of service is deeply rooted in the African American community. It can be traced back to December 31, 1862, when many of our ancestors met the night before the Emancipation Proclamation officially became law. However, for Methodists, Watch Night "roots" run deeper. John Wesley believed that Methodists should reaffirm their covenant with God every year in response to His grace. Wesley called it a "covenant service", and the first one was supposedly held December 31, 1755.

St. John members gathered on December 31, 2011 (256 years later) to renew their covenants with God and to thank Him for bringing them out of one year and into the next. The evening was filled with prayer, songs of praise, and worship. St. John's Music Ministry added to the celebration with selections like "High and Lifted Up" and "He is Wonderful". Praise dance member/choreographer Dr. Jennifer Patterson ministered in dance with "Fill My Cup/I Need Thee".



However, what is a Watch Night service without a divine message to carry you into the new year? Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn (St. John's "first lady") served as the messenger for the evening, and her message was simple- "Leave the Skunks Behind". The supporting scripture came from Matthew 4: 18-20.

Reverend Clayborn told the story of a mother who called her children to come to her. They did not answer. So, she went into their room to see what was wrong. She found them all sitting on the floor, playing with skunks! Of course, the mother could not believe what she was seeing, and ordered her children to follow her. They did, with their skunks in their arms.

The Scripture says that Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee one day, and saw two fishermen- brothers Peter and Andrew. They were on the water, casting their nets. Jesus said, "Come follow me", and they immediately dropped their nets and followed him.

Did you notice that these fishermen did not carry their nets with them when Jesus called- nets that they had probably been carrying around for years?

Reverend Clayborn reminded worshippers that when Jesus calls you into a new season, you must leave old habits behind. The "net" would have held Peter and Andrew back from the new thing Jesus wanted them to learn. Even though the brothers were comfortable in that position, Jesus was calling them to another level that did not depend on skill alone. He wanted to show them a new way to do, think, and be. The net would have been in the way.

Many of us have "net issues" or "skunk issues"- things that we want to hold on to, even though we can feel Jesus moving us into a completely different direction. Many times, the "skunks" are not all bad. They can be a comfortable job with a sweet salary or even a decent relationship. However, when Jesus is calling you to "come follow Me", you must surrender to Him because you do not want anything or anyone to "stink up" your impending blessing.

The only way to get rid of the "skunks" in your life is to seek God and eliminate "stinking thinking".

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Soup Kitchen

Charlsie Brooks, Coordinator

Loving God, your Spirit makes us more than we are on our own. You have given us a new year a new chance to pour out your love to all around us. Thank you for this New Year and this new chance. What a wonderful gift you have given us, O God! Thank you. Amen.

Welcome St. John members to a new year of opportunity to share in our monthly "Soup Kitchen". December we welcomed a mother and her two teenagers, as well as several gentlemen. What an honor to serve them a hot meal. In addition, we also send hot soup to our members and fellowship and commune with all who stop by.

Special thanks to Mrs. Maeola Peoples and Mrs. Zelda Goggans for December soups, to Mrs. Myhand for crackers, and a neighboring Dr.'s office for denoting delicious Christmas cookies. Whether it is soup or special containers, Mrs. Kathleen Delaney contributions can always be expected. Thanks to Mrs. Vanona Walton, Mr. Bill Williams and Dr. Lee Williams, II for their monthly support. If you haven't been contacted to help, please contact me or any Stewardess or Missionary to contribute.

Pastor's Meditation

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The wise men found this when they followed the star into Bethlehem. All were warned in dreams to avoid the evil traps of King Herod (Matthew 2:1-23). In each case, danger was undermined by God's deliverance. Therefore, have no fear of any obstacles that may come in this new season. For God is able to deliver us from them all!

So, let us enter this new season rejoicing! Let us rejoice for the forty year foundation that has been established. Let us rejoice for the promise that lies before us in this transition. Let us rejoice in advance for the potential growth: the miracles yet to be seen, the healings yet to be felt, the mending of relationships yet to be witnessed, the wisdom yet to be imparted, the courage and honor yet to be utilized, the faith yet to be walked in, the hope yet to be realized, and the love yet to be given. This is a new season! Let us enter it expecting God's best.

"Leave the Skunks Behind"

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Reverend Clayborn suggested that we can start by leaving behind "tipping" for "tithing", and leaving behind "gossip" for the "gospel". The Word shows us that Jesus left behind many skunks, so no situation is too "stink" for Him to handle. Listen for His call in your life. Once you put down your "nets" or "skunks" and follow Him, you will feel the true "newness" of the new year, and you will serve as an example which will draw others to Christ and experience the same "newness" as well.



After the message, the congregation took the first step to getting rid of its "skunks" through prayer. Members formed circles of about 3-4 people, and talked about the things for which they were the most thankful, and the things they wanted to see happen in the new year. They prayed for themselves and for others. Then, around 11:50 p.m., they all met at the altar as a congregation as Reverend Patrick Clayborn prayed their way into a new year.

It was a beautiful service to remind us of our covenant with God and to arm us with a new goal heading into 2012. John Wesley would have been proud.

Happy New Year!

Remembering Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with a National Memorial

By Reverend Charles Glover



With much anticipated fanfare and excitement, especially among the brothers of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated, the dedication of the new MLK Jr. Memorial opened to the public on August 22, 2011 in Washington, DC. The actual dedication ceremony had to be rescheduled to Sunday, October 16, 2011, due to Hurricane Irene and the occurrence of an unexpected earthquake. October 16, 2011 is already a historic date as it also marks the 16th anniversary of the Million Man March on Washington. Irene swept through the Washington area, dumping excessive and heavy rain on the nation's capital, which significantly disrupted travel plans for many of those who had planned to attend at the local, regional, and national levels. Mother Nature delayed the occasion, but the God-given destiny of this historic event would not be denied.

This dedication was one for all people, a multifaith celebration. Representatives of all cultures, believers and unbelievers alike, came together in reverence. The original dedication date of August 28, 2011 was built up among planners and crowds anticipated in excess of 250,000. While final attendance tallies vary according to the media venue queried, attendance greatly exceeded expectation with approximately 100,000-150,000 present.

The ceremony was headlined by appearances from President Barack Obama who delivered an arousing and thought provoking address, Reverend Jesse Jackson, Dan Rather, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, and Poet Nikki Giovanni. Actual participants in the program included current Alpha General President Herman "Skip" Mason, and the 31st General President and current CEO of the

Washington, DC, MLK Jr. National Memorial Project Foundation, Harry E. Johnson, Sr. Aretha Franklin thrilled the crowd with a stirring rendition of the old gospel hymn, "Precious Lord, Take My Hand", which was one of the hymns of the church Dr. King revered and often had sung at various occasions.

President Obama in his speech highlighted the strength and resolve of this ceremony as a testimony of the courage of those who laid the foundation of this cause of democracy. Persons such as the late Rev. Dr. Fred Shuttlesworth, Dorothy Height, Reverend Doctor Joseph Lowry, Rosa Parks, and others who were instrumental in cementing this course of history. He stressed that we should draw strength from our history. Change has never been easy and it takes dedication to stay the course of reversing inequalities. His key statement was that Dr. King maintained a focus on the "IS-NESS" of today with a focus on the "OUGHT-NESS" of tomorrow. Focusing on not what presently is, but what ought to be for all. We are tied to a single garment of destiny. God resides in each of us, the oppressed and the oppressor. We must allow His Will to so dominate the inner heart of man that a metamorphosis occurs. Peace without justice is no peace at all. Love and mutuality are the factors of change. Change will come, if you do not give up. Dr. King saw what we might become, despite our traumatic history as a nation.

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Remembering Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with a National Memorial

By Reverend Charles Glover

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The memorial stands bold as a thirty foot sculpture of MLK Jr., his arms crossed, gazing out over the National Mall. This prolific preacher and spokesman for justice appears to emerge from a stone extracted from a mountain. The design was inspired by a line from the famous 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech, "Out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope". Situated between the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials, the MLK Jr. Memorial is the first monument on the National Mall honoring a Black Leader.

The four acre site on the northern corner of the Tidal basin, adjacent to the Roosevelt Memorial is designed to create a visual "line of leadership" from the Lincoln Memorial to the Jefferson Memorial. It was carved by Chinese artist Lei Yixin. The memorial was initially proposed in the early 1980s and endorsed and pushed by Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated, of which MLK Jr. was an active member. Ms. Coretta King, his life-mate and spouse, joined the push for the memorial and approved it in 1998. The memorial address is 1964 Independence Avenue, a reference to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Members of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated, along with numerous other fraternities, sororities, and other organizations and agencies, championed fundraising efforts to assist in the development of this memorial.

MLK Jr.'s willingness to sacrifice himself for our country, to fight for a dream he believed in, like justice and equality, provided a foundation for President Obama to become the first African American to become President of the United States. In closing with attendees holding hands, it was clear that this event renewed the vision for new found fighters for social and economic justice.

As Pastor of an Alabama Church, MLK Jr. led the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955-56 that led to the Supreme Court decision that declared unconstitutional laws requiring segregation on buses. MLK Jr. was then elected President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) which provided leadership to a growing Civil Rights Movement. Additionally, MLK led massive Civil Rights protests in Birmingham, Alabama, and wrote the infamous "Letter from the Birmingham Jail", while incarcerated there. In 1963, he directed a peaceful

Civil Rights March by 250,000 people in Washington DC where he delivered the famous "I Have A Dream" speech. The following year, Congress passed the landmark Civil Rights Act and at age 35, he became the youngest man to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. He was assassinated in 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee, where he was supporting a strike by sanitation workers.

January 18, 2012 will mark the 28th anniversary of the MLK Jr. federal holiday. Legislation was signed in 1983 creating a federal holiday marking the birthday of MLK Jr. The first holiday was observed in 1986.

Saint John AME Church members of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated include: Brother-Rev. Dr. Homer L. McCall, Saint John Former Pastor, Brother James Heyward (dedication ceremony attendee), Brother Mingo Clark, Brother Jerry Baldwin, Brother Talbert Cox, Brother Terry Speight, Brother William Bell, Brother Bill Williams, Brother Cleophus Haygood, and Brother (Rev.) Charles Glover.



St. John members of Alpha Phi Alpha pictured above are Talbert Cox, James Heyward, Charles Glover and Jerry Baldwin.

Parent Wisdom

By Reverend Vanessa Glover

2012

Happy New Year! Our words matter! Moving forward in 2012 without looking back is a challenge for a lifetime. Yet, a New Year, new beginnings, transitions, changes, and uncertainties in our lives are just a few of life's pressures that tempt us to take matters into our own hands. As Parents, we all struggle with the difficulties of letting go of the old in order to grasp the new. God understands; letting go of the familiar is hard—our children, grandchildren, family, relationships, co-workers, and even our culture seem hard to release to

God for wisdom and guidance. Nevertheless, with all the wisdom as Parents, there is still great trouble. In fact, sometimes it may be wise to let things go, but often the wise action is doing the hard thing confronting a/the difficult situation with love, kindness, and compassion with the intent to build up rather than tear down.

Instead of asking God to "fix this" we can ask God what it would look like to love in this situation. What would it look like to be kind and compassionate in this situation? Love looks different in different situations; it requires WISDOM! And yes, godly wisdom, wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. (James 3:17) There is nothing hidden from God, He knows our very thoughts and the intent of our heart. God's Word encourages us as Parents in this New Year; TRUST in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy path. (Proverbs 3:5-6) Learn to TRUST God in moving forward in 2012 without looking back-- whether it be prayer or loving confrontation, whether it be wise counsel or Godly wisdom from the Word of God with a tender or compassionate heart--In all thy ways acknowledge God—Begin, continue, and end every situation, every purpose, and every plan, with God. Earnestly pray for His direction at the beginning; look for His continual support in the progress; Praise Him for His mighty acts/deliverance that all circumstances are for His glory.



Jeremiah's Life-changing Truth
(Jeremiah 31:31-34)

"The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares

the LORD. "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people. 'No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Wisdom for Daily Living: Did you know that King Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years? Thirty-one words in one verse sum up the essence of his entire life: "He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and walked in all the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or to the left." Amazing! 2 Kings 22:1-2

As a Thoughtful Parent: Let it be said, abridged—(Parent) did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, not turning aside to the right or to the left! Stay on course. Keep in step with the Spirit. Walk the path of righteousness without swerving.

Church School Lesson Overview – February 2012

February lesson reviews were written by Kenneth Parham.

February 5, 2012

Lesson Title: Justified by Faith in Christ

Lesson Scripture: Galatians 1:1 - 2:21

Print: Galatians 2:15-21

Key Verse: I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:19-20

This lesson displays the conflict between the Jews and Gentiles during the early establishment of Christianity. Jewish custom versus faith was a divisive point that kept Jews and Gentiles seeking guidance from the leaders. It is noted that on the Jewish side of the argument and supported by James (Jesus' brother), all were in favor of the Gentiles to practice the Torah (Jewish scripture). This group thought that this would preserve unity amongst the Jewish/Gentile believers and enhance their purity of the Law. However, Paul on the other hand, made a case that there was more to being righteous than maintaining purity (Jewish) laws. Paul was convinced that God was not concerned with making Gentiles into Jews but rather God was all about making Gentiles into Christians (one in Christ). Paul expressed the view that those who responded to the Gospel through faith would be fulfilling the law and that no outward religious ritual could achieve what God's Word and Spirit could achieve. Paul spoke of salvation by faith rather than salvation by works.

February 12, 2012

Lesson Title: Freed from Law through Christ

Lesson Scripture: Galatians 3:1-14

Print: Same

Key Verse: Christ Jesus redeemed us in order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Galatians 3:13-14

The controversy noted in last Sunday's lesson

continues. There were Jewish believers (Judaizers of Galatia) who believed that the Jews were God's only chosen people and did not share the same views as Paul. Their attitudes were that there was not room for practicing Christianity only by believing by faith; one had to demonstrate through laws and rituals. This position seemed to have touched a nerve with Paul. Paul responded back by insisting that to return to the old tradition after experiencing salvation through faith of Jesus Christ would deny the effectiveness of Christ's death and resurrection. The Sunday School lesson summary indicates that Paul's emotions flared as he called the Galatians "foolish" and "bewitched". He could not believe that the Galatians were embracing beliefs that would enslave. Paul wondered if the Galatians would do a reversal on the concept of Christianity; Paul noted that Galatians had received the Spirit by trusting in Jesus Christ. He wondered if the Galatians received the Spirit in vain. Paul goes on to express his opinion that without God's Spirit, rules and laws could be neither meaningful nor adhered to consistently. Paul said that those who live in faith are blessed along with Abraham, while those who rely on observing the Law are under a curse.

February 19, 2012

Lesson Title: Heirs to the Promise

Lesson Scripture: Galatians 3:15-29; 4:1 - 5:1

Print: Galatians 3:15-18; 3:1-7

Key Verse: So you are no longer a slave, but a child, and if a child then also an heir through God. Galatians 4:7

A summary for this week's lesson is Paul's explanation of how we, as Christians, are heirs of Abraham. Even though we as Gentiles are not descendants of Abraham, Paul indicates that we as Christians claim the inheritance through the promise made between God and Abraham and not through the Law.

The Matthew Henry Commentary indicates that the covenant God made with Abraham, was not done away by the giving of the law to Moses. The covenant was made with Abraham and his Seed. It is still in force; Christ lives forever in those who are His by faith. By this we learn the

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Church School Lesson Overview – February 2012

(Continued from page 11)

difference between the promises of the law and those of the gospel. The promises of the law are made to the person of every man; the promises of the gospel are first made to Christ, then by Him to those who have faith in Him. To divide the word of truth, a great difference must be put between the promise and the law. When the promise is mingled with the law, it is made nothing but the law.

The commentary also indicates that Galatians 4:1-7 notes the wonders of divine love and mercy, particularly of God the Father, in sending his Son into the world to redeem and save us; of the Son of God, in submitting so low, and suffering so much for us; and of the Holy Spirit, in condescending to dwell in the hearts of believers, for such gracious purposes. And also, the advantages that Christians enjoy under the gospel.

February 26, 2012

Lesson Title: Fruit of Redemption
Lesson Scripture: Galatians 5:2 - 6:18
Print: Galatians 5:22 - 6:10

Key Verse: The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. Galatians 5:22-23

As Christians strive to be Christ-like in their daily lives, the lesson scriptures indicate that they should adopt the fruit of the Spirit. Also, Christians should allow the Spirit to guide them. In so doing, one can demonstrate Christian love for all brothers and sisters as Christ demonstrated during His short time with on earth. As noted in the lesson scriptures, if believers adopt the fruit of the Spirit, they may have insight of their own inner awareness and limitations. The better one knows their own heart and ways, the less they will despise others, and they will be more disposed to help others under infirmities and afflictions. However in helping others, one should take heed to avoid temptation.

Secondly, Christians must also set themselves in earnest to deny the deeds of the body, and to walk in newness of life. Not being

desirous of vain-glory, or unduly wishing for the esteem and applause of men, not provoking or envying one another, but seeking to bring forth more abundantly those good fruits, which are, through Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God.

Lastly, one cannot deceive God. Take care to do good and make this the business of ones life. Those under the guidance and influences of the Holy Spirit live a life of faith in Christ. Believers are abound in Christian graces and shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. People are all very apt to tire in duty, particularly in doing good. However, if believers remain faithful, and faint not, they are sure to reap in due season.

Church School Book Club

January 2012

Discussion Date: 21 January 2012

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

My Father's House, Dijon Moss, 2008

February 2012

Discussion Date: 18 February 2012

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Faithful, Kimberly Cash Tate, 2010

Faithful is about three women whose belief in God's faithfulness is being tested. Cyd is single and turning 40 on the day her younger sister is getting married. When the best man sweeps her off her feet, Cyd is torn between impulses and waiting for the man she knows is right for her. Meanwhile her friend Dana discovers her husband is having an affair. Though he apologizes and says he wants their marriage to work, she must decide whether or not to trust him. At the same time Phyllis' husband is antagonistic towards her faith, and when she meets a man who loves God and treats her well, she has to decide where her heart should be.



February 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 5:00 p.m. Steward Board Mtg. 6:30 p.m. Prayer Service Bible Class	2  choir practice 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	3	4 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 10:00 a.m. Officers Meeting
5 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship AMEN DEADLINE	6 9:30 a.m. Fifty-Plus Meeting	7 6:00 p.m. Sons of Allen Meeting	8 6:30 p.m. Prayer Service Bible Class	9  choir practice 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	10  choir practice 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	11 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 10:30 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
12 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship FOUNDER'S DAY	13 6:00 p.m. Single Adult Ministry	14	15 6:30 p.m. Prayer Service Bible Class	16	17  choir practice 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	18 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
19 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	20 6:00 p.m. Single Adult Ministry	21 SOUP KITCHEN 11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m.	22 6:30 p.m. Ask Wednesday Service	23  choir practice 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	24  choir practice 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	25 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal Ministry Ministry
26 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	27  choir practice 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal 6:00 p.m. Single Adult Ministry	28	29 6:30 p.m. Prayer Service Bible Class			

St. John AME Church
229 Church Street
Huntsville, Alabama 35801
(256) 534-3265
(256) 534-6828 Fax

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Mrs. Arelis B. Davis, Episcopal Supervisor

Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

Reverend Dr. Patrick Clayborn, Pastor

Important Dates to Remember



- | | |
|---------------|--|
| January 20 | Family Fun Night, 8:00 pm, sponsored by the Church School |
| January 25-28 | WMS Executive Board Meeting, Birmingham, Alabama |
| January 29 | 5th Sunday Service, 10:00 a.m.
NWAC Quarterly Lay Meeting |
| February 12 | Founder's Day, General Officer Clement Fugh, Guest Preacher,
8:00 am and 10:50 am |
| February 19 | Welcome Reception for Reverend Patrick D. Clayborn and Family |
| February 22 | Ash Wednesday Service, 6:30 pm |

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart
that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9

Thought for the Month –

"I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give
you a future with hope." - Jeremiah 29:11 (NRSV)

ST. JOHN A.M.E.N. NEWSLETTER



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 17 Issue 2

February 2012

Pastor's Meditation

Remembering the Worship of God in Black History Month

Rev. Patrick D. Clayborn, Ph.D.



Rev. Patrick D. Clayborn

Remembering the Civil Rights Movement during Black History Month is a normal activity. Bringing back to mind the marches, the sit-ins, the protest songs, the freedom rides, the NAACP, the SCLC, SNCC, CORE, the angry mobs, the police, the dogs, the fire hoses, the violence, the seemingly small victories of love over violence, and the nation's reaction to these events being televised is part and parcel to this recollection. For many, recounting the role of the Black Church is most crucial. Out of this institution came many of the leaders of the movement. The Black Church was the meeting place for strategy sessions, planning meetings, rallies, and so much more. It was the fulcrum of the freedom fight.

Yet, in the midst of all of these memories, many forget a question that was raised during the Civil Rights Movement. Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman questioned the use of the church as the center for Civil Rights. He asked if this fight for freedom was primary in the church's mission or if the use of the church was a result of segregation (i.e. the Black Church was the only place where Blacks could gather freely). Though this question brought Dr. Thurman great criticism, his effort was not without merit. In raising this critique, Dr. Thurman highlighted a growing imbalance in the Civil Rights Movement. While there was great emphasis on social justice via mass efforts, the movement – in Dr. Thurman's opinion – did less to encourage the individual responsibility. In his autobiography, he states, "There are times when guidance as to techniques and strategy is urgent, when counsel, support, and collective direct action are mandatory. But there can never be a substitute for taking *personal responsibility* for social change. The word 'personal' applies both to the individual and the organization – in this instance, the church."

Dr. Thurman did not raise this issue to denigrate the movement; rather, he asked the question to put the outward fight for freedom in proper perspective. For Dr. Thurman, the primary role of the church is to provide a space for one to encounter God. Out of that person's encounter will ensue an imperative for her or him to tear down all that holds others back from encountering God. Dr. Thurman believed that after a person encountered God, she or he will hunger for another encounter. In order for that second encounter to occur, the person must remove (or at least make the attempt of removing) the spiritual barriers of her or his neighbors. Therefore, the Civil Rights Movement – for Dr. Thurman – was an act that flowed out of an encounter with God. The outward fight for freedom is secondary; the encounter with God is primary. To remain vigilant in the effort of liberation, one must continue to seek and have the encounter with God. The person must also make liberation a personal lifestyle – that goes beyond mass movements. Then, the mass movement for justice takes on a new tone and tenor.

Essentially, Dr. Thurman's thought suggests that the Black Church's quest for social justice is a byproduct of its worship. In worship, the Black Church encounters God. The encounter with God brings revelation, transformation, a testimony, and a hunger for a deeper encounter. This was not a new phenomenon at the inception of the Black Church. For the worship of the Black Church has a three-fold heritage: the history of worship in Christianity, Judaism, and traditional African religions. In all three religious contexts, there is one true God, and the encounter with that God is radically transformative.² The worship of the Black Church results in a transformed mindset for the African slave – a mindset of freedom. The acts of freedom that follow – the Underground Railroad; slave rebellions; fighting for the north in the Civil War; founding colleges, banks, and other business; and numerous protests against Jim Crow segregation – were the results of its worship. Further, it was the church's effort to revitalize its worship. In freeing themselves, they sought to free their oppressors – to remove the spiritual barriers from those who physically oppressed them.

(Continued on page 9)

Officers Appointed and Elected for Conference Year

Pastor Clayborn appointed the following persons to serve as Stewards for this conference year.

James O. Heyward
 Abbiegail Hugine
 Jeanette Jones
 Nedra McDaniel
 Clifton Miller
 Otha Owens
 Clifton Pears on
 Adrienne P-K Washington
 Willie Sandifer
 Eddie Sherrod
 Martha Smith
 Vanona Walton
 Hodges Washington

These Stewards will be confirmed by the Quarterly Conference.

The following officers were elected at a Church Conference on January 9, 2012.

Trustees:

Tommy Anderson
 Lincoln Brisker
 Bridget Floyd
 Earl Griffis
 Karl Gullatte
 Cliff Hammond
 Erica Harbin
 Beverly Hill
 Carl Lewis
 Randy Love
 Pearlean Myhand
 Glenn Pippen
 Lula Rochelle
 Eva Smith
 Maeola Snell-Peoples
 Terry Speight
 Gerald Teague
 Bill Williams
 Lee Williams II

Secretary: James O. Heyward
 Treasurer: Nedra L. McDaniel
 Financial Secretary: Cora H. Speight

Upcoming Preaching Engagements

Reverend Sheri to preach at Lowe's Chapel

On Sunday, February 26, 2012 at 3:00 PM, the women of Lowe's Chapel will present a service entitled "100 Women in Black: A Black History Month Finale". The guest speaker for the service will be the Reverend Sheri Clayborn, First Lady at St. John AME Church. All women attending this service are asked to wear black.

Lowe's Chapel United Methodist Church is located at 480 Sanderson Street, Huntsville, Alabama 35805. The Reverend Waymond K. Smith is the pastor.

The Clayborns to Preach at Grady-Madison

Grady-Madison AME Church in Madison, Alabama will celebrate their Church Anniversary on Sunday, March 11, 2012.

The Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn will be the preacher for the 11:00 AM Anniversary Service and the Reverend Patrick Clayborn will be the preacher for the 3:00 PM service. The St. John Choir will render music at the afternoon service and the ushers will serve.

St. John members are encouraged to support the Clayborns with their prayers and attendance on March 11th.

The Reverend Debra Ballard is the pastor of Grady-Madison.



February 22, 2012

Children's Bible Study (CBS)

By Mary Rankin



Children's Bible Study (CBS) at St. John is "on fire" for Christ! This ministry is dedicated to enhancing the spiritual growth of our children through a fun-filled intensive bible-based instruction.

Each lesson is child-centered, engaging and unique, creating a thirst in each child to want to learn more about God's Holy Word. Enhancing each lesson are review questions, music, memory verses, videos and loads of fun activities. Snacks, which are a "hit" with the children, are also provided.

We look forward to having your child join us every Wednesday, from 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. for "CBS"!!!



49th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference

*Exalting Christ
to Impact the World*

June 2nd - July 7, 2012

Gaylord Oprland Resort and Convention Center, Nashville, Tennessee

The St. John Lay Organization will sponsor a chartered bus to the Sunday morning worship service at the AME Church's General Conference in Nashville, Tennessee. This will be a wonderful experience for members of the local church to join in a Holy Communion Service with thousands of AMEs from around the world on July 1, 2012.

There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board for persons to sign if they are interested in attending. The cost for the bus is \$20 per person. The bus will depart the church at 7:30 am on July 1st.

Contact Cassandra Ingram or Hodges Washington for more information about the trip.

Visit www.ame-church.com for more information on General Conference.

Dr. Watley to Lead Stewardship Seminar



Dr. William D. Watley will lead a seminar on Stewardship and Tithing for the officers and members of St. John. The seminar will be held March 14-16 at 6:30 pm, nightly. St. John has been blessed by the spirit-filled preaching of Dr. Watley during past revivals. Do not miss this opportunity for spiritual growth

through the teaching of Dr. Watley.

The Reverend William D. Watley, Ph. D. is the Senior Pastor at St. Phillip African Methodist Episcopal Church in Decatur, Georgia. A preacher par excellence, Dr. Watley's homiletical ability is both nationally and internationally recognized. He has the distinction of being the Conference Preacher for the Hampton University Minister's Conference for two consecutive years as well as a Conference Lecturer. At the invitation of the Church of God in Christ, Inc., Dr. Watley preached to over 20,000 people at their annual International Holy Convocation. He was a lecturer for the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church's Pastor's Conference held at Philips School of Theology. Dr. Watley has preached at the Potter's House in Dallas, Texas, as well as Bishop T.D. Jakes' *Men Are Builders Conference*. Moreover, Dr. Watley has preached on the continents of Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and South America in addition to the island nations of Cuba, Barbados, Bermuda, and Trinidad. A prolific author, Dr. Watley has written and edited over twenty books.

Dr. Watley received his Bachelor of Arts in Theology from St. Louis University and a Master of Divinity from the Interdenominational Theological Center. He received a Master of Philosophy and his Doctor of Philosophy in Ethics from Columbia University. He holds a Doctor of Divinity from Payne Theological Seminary, and in addition, completed post-doctoral work at the Ecumenical Institute in Celigny, Switzerland and Harvard's Institute for Education Management.

(Continued on page 9)

Know Your St. John Church Members

By Paulette Bargon



Donnie Thompson

Donnie Thompson was born in Muscle Shoals, Alabama. Both of her parents are deceased. She is the youngest of eleven children.

Donnie graduated from Colbert County High School in 1976. She attended Daniel Payne College from 1976 until the school's closing in 1977. She transferred to Miles College where she graduated with a BA in Sociology. Donnie received her Master's in Social Work from Alabama A&M University in 2000. She is currently "one test away" from receiving her Masters in Elementary Education from Alabama A&M University.

Donnie moved to Huntsville in 1987 to start her career in social services. She has been employed with the Madison County Department of Human Resources as a social worker. She has been with this agency for 23 1/2 years. Donnie is currently a Kinship Care Social Worker. She works with families who take relatives in their homes to prevent foster care placement. Donnie is also an advocate for the families; she serves by partnering with churches, organizations, fraternities, sororities and many others to meet the needs of these families, especially during the holiday season. She is proud to say St. John has been a big help to her.

Donnie has a passion for humanity. She is involved with a number of community projects including her own. She assisted with raising money to send to the Dominican Republic to purchase uniforms and hygiene products for the school children. She plans to continue this project until the next trip in 2013, which is also her projected retirement year. One of Donnie's wishes is to start a scholarship fund for students who attend Miles College and Alabama A&M University. One of her dreams is to start a business. She is currently in the planning stages of opening a group home in the near future D'YAC. (Donnie's Young Adult Center).

Donnie joined St. John, Huntsville, in 1988. She is a member of the Gospel and the Mass Choir, Missionary Society, Stewardess Board and the

(Continued on page 9)



Texting Teen News!

By Mariah L. Gullatte

Feb 2k12

Happy New Year and Valentine's Day to all! Let's make this year a great one!

I'll start off by saying welcome to our new pastor, the Reverend Patrick Clayborn. We are very excited, fortunate, and blessed to have you here. And I am certain Patrick II will fit right in! (He is already my new buddy.)

We recently elected the following new Y.P.D. officers for the conference year:

President- Ashley Lewis
Vice president- Druscilla Fitchard
Secretary- Alicia Brownlow
Treasurer- Xavier Rembert
Chaplain- Daisha Rembert
Parliamentarian- Wallace Parham
Historiographer- Daisha Joseph

Do your job well!

This year the Giants took on the Patriots in Super Bowl XLVI. The Giants took home the winning trophy! And the Lord will continue to do GIANT things in your life too!

That concludes this month's news!

Until next time... TTYL!

This month's Good News text is Matthew 16:15-16

"He saith unto them, but whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."



Radio Interviews

The Reverend Patrick and the Reverend Sheri Clayborn will be interviewed by Mr. Kenny Anderson on WJOU 90.1 FM on Sunday March 18th at 3:00 PM.

St. John's January Soup Kitchen Report

Prosperity & Generosity*

With thanksgiving, we give generously and receive abundantly!

When Jesus was teaching a large crowd and they became restless and hungry, His disciples gathered the food that was available: five loaves of bread and two fish. Jesus blessed the food and began to pass it through the crowd. In the end, there were baskets of food leftover.

Generosity inspires generosity, and giving generates abundance. As we give, we experience a flow of abundance in our lives. We give thanks for our abundance, in advance, just as Jesus did.

*Reference: *Daily Word*

Thank you St. John Soup Ministry supporters for your heart of giving. January soups were donated by Mrs. Carolyn Russ and anonymous. Mrs. Zelda Goggans donated a delicious dessert with sandwiches provided by Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Burks.

We're thankful for the spiritual and enthusiastic support of our new church leadership and the wonderful suggestions for the enhancement of this ministry. Thanks for the usual support and other generous donations from the Williams and the Myhands and others. Praise God, we served over twenty-one meals for the month.

Please consider joining us for the soup-kitchen. Just come! See you March 20, 2012 from 11:30-1:00 p.m.

And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. —Luke 9:16

Let Your ATTITUDE Make The Difference

Submitted by Willie M. Heyward

Attitude is not simply a state of mind... it is also a reflection of what we value.

Attitude is more than just saying you can... it is believing you can!

It requires believing before seeing... seeing is based on circumstances, believing is based on faith.

Attitude is contagious... especially when we allow it to turn our doubts of the past into passions of today and set the stage for our tomorrows.

Our attitude allows us to become more empowering than money... to rise above our failures and to accept others for who they are and what they say.

It is more important than giftedness... and is the forerunner of all skills needed for happiness and success.

Our attitudes can be used to build us up or put us down... the choice is ours.

Life is 10% what happens to us and 90% how we respond to it... and it is with this state of mind that we remain in charge of

OUR ATTITUDES

Always make today your best day
Take pride in a job well done
Treat others with respect
Isolate negative thoughts
Treat every new task as an opportunity
Utilize your talents daily
Do the job right the first time
Expect positive outcomes daily

The 2012 theme for African American History Month is "Black Women in American: Culture and History."

www.africanamericanhistorymonth.gov

You are invited to join the
St. John A.M.E. Church Family
 in a
Welcome Reception
 in honor of our new pastor

Reverend Patrick DeWitt Clayborn, Ph.D.
 and
First Lady Reverend Sheri D. Smith Clayborn
Theme: "Fitting the Description of a Great Spiritual Leader"
 ~ 1st Tim. 3:1-5

Huntsville Board of Realtors
 535 Monroe Street NW
 Huntsville, Alabama 35801

Sunday, February 19, 2012
4:00 to 6:00 PM

Contact the church office for more information.

St. John Participates in WMS Executive Board Meeting



Pictured
 right:

Smith, Edna Owens, Eleanor Burnett, Chailsie Brooks, Lorraine Parham, Donnie Thompson (standing) Ernestine Barnes-Ivery, Brenda Mack, Charlotte Brisker, Karmen Latimore, Sheri Clayborn, Christina Mack, and Monica Dillihunt

from left to
 (seated) Eva

Members of St. John served as hostesses at the Connectional WMS Executive Board Meeting that was hosted by the Ninth Episcopal District at the Sheraton Hotel in Birmingham, Alabama, January 25-28. The hostesses served during the Ninth District's reception that was held prior to the Cultural Event on Thursday evening. Thank you, St. John, for your service.



2012

Pro-

jects Begins Soon

This year's build will be a four bedroom house at 6330 Banks Road for Diane Warren and her family. Dianne is originally from Chicago, but has lived in Tennessee and Alabama most of her life. Diane, her two daughters, Amanda, 25, and Lindsey, 21, two grandchildren, A'shanae, 10 months, and Linden, 8 months will live in the house. Diane is employed with National Copper.

This year the group will again include Church of the Nativity Episcopal, First Christian, St. John, St. Matthew's Episcopal, First Presbyterian, Aldersgate United Methodist, United Church Of Huntsville, and Covenant Presbyterian.

DATE	DAY	ACTIVITY
Feb. 21, 23, 25	Tue, Thur, Sat	Cut lumber & mark plates, build walls in warehouse
Mar. 6, 8, 10	Tue, Thur, Sat	Deliver walls to site, Erect walls and trusses, HOUSE RAISING CEREMONY 9:00 AM Sat
Mar. 13, 15, 17	Tue, Thur, Sat	Apply blueboard to walls, deck roof, install windows, ext. doors, hurricane clips, and deadwood
Mar. 20, 22, 24	Tue, Thur, Sat	Install porch beams, barge rafters, fascia, attic access, electrical rough-in, (plumbing, HVAC rough-in by others)
Mar. 27, 29, 31	Tue, Thur, Sat	Install wall insulation, start vinyl siding, (sheetrock by sub)
Apr. 3, 5, 7	Tue, Thur, Sat	Paint walls, continue vinyl siding, install shutters
Apr. 10, 12, 14	Tue, Thur, Sat	Clean floors and windows, install vinyl tile, landscape
Apr. 17, 19, 21	Tue, Thur, Sat	Install and paint interior doors and trim, install cabinets, (plumbing by others) and electrical fixtures
Apr. 24, 26, 28	Tue, Thur, Sat	Install closet hardware, window blinds, storm doors, Bathroom accessories
May 1, 3, 5	Tue, Thur, Sat	Catch up work, touch up paint, clean and wax floors
May 8, 10, 12	Tue, Thur, Sat	Work punch list, DEDICATION CEREMONY: Sat. 12th

Regular working hours are from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM with a break for lunch around noon.

Lunches are provided on Saturdays only. Bring carpentry tools, a utility knife, gloves, if you have them.

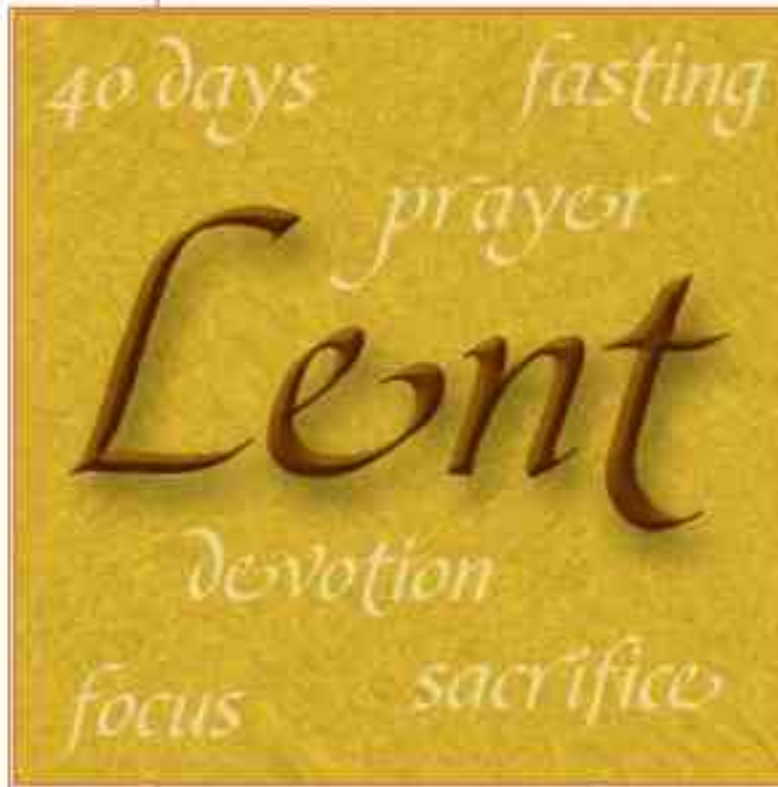
Mr. Eddie Whitehead, Sr. is the Habitat Ministry coordinator for St. John. Contact Mr. Whitehead or the church office for more information on how you can work with this ministry.

Lent—Repentance and Spiritual Renewal

By Reverend Judith A. Gardner

Itinerant Elder/Executive Minister of St. Paul AME Church, Hamilton, Bermuda

(A reprint of the article that was printed in 2007)



For Christians, Lent is a time of self-examination and spiritual preparation. It is traditionally a period of fasting, and reflection on the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and lasts 40 days (not including Sundays).

The first day of Lent is called Ash Wednesday and the last week of Lent is called the Holy week which focuses on the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Long ago on this day, Christians dressed in their old clothes and rubbed ashes on their foreheads as a sign of repentance for the wrong they had committed during the past year. In many churches today, there are still some Christians that have ashes put on their foreheads at church on Ash Wednesday.

During this period of Lent, many will 'give up' a temptation that draws them away from God and others will 'take on' something that draws them closer to God. There are certain types of foods and physical pleasures that are denied during the season of Lent. Some give up smoking. Others give up chewing gum. Still others give up over-eating or cursing. People vow to

give up anything, as long as it prepares them for Easter.

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, "The real aim of Lent is, above all else, to prepare humanity for the celebration of the death and Resurrection of Christ...the better the preparation the more effective the celebration will be. One can effectively relive the mystery only with purified mind and heart. The purpose of Lent is to provide that purification by weaning God's people from sin and selfishness through self-denial and prayer, by creating in them the desire to do God's will and to make His kingdom come by making it come first of all in their hearts."

During Lent, Christians remember how the faith of Jesus was tested for 40 days in the wilderness before He began his mission of teaching and healing. Jesus shows humanity how to deny their selfish desires in order that the purpose of God can be revealed and fulfilled in their lives. It is recorded in Matthew 4, how; Jesus was driven by the Holy Spirit to face the dilemma of every human being, and that is, 'temptation.' He was tempted by Satan three times and Jesus denied each temptation. He was tempted to turn stones into bread, to prove who He was by throwing Himself from the Temple, and to receive worship from the nations of the world if He would bow down to Satan. He had to choose whether to deny self and obey God or to surrender to self and the devil who is the enemy of God.

Jesus overcame temptation through prayer, fasting and standing on the Word of God. During this season of Lent, let us develop an intimacy with our Lord, by converting our minds in order that the purpose and pleasure of God will be revealed in us through the Holy Scriptures.

It Is on the WEB

Visit the St. John website, stjohname-hsv.org, often to stay current on church information. Here is a list of some of the information you will find:

- ◇ Announcements for last week's bulletin
- ◇ Pod cast of recent sermons
- ◇ Information about our pastor
- ◇ The church's history
- ◇ St. John AMEN issues for the past year

There is even more information available for persons who set up a userid. Information available to users only includes:

- ◇ Church Directory
- ◇ Sick & Shut-in List
- ◇ Acolyte Schedule
- ◇ List of Stewards and Trustees

Know Your St. John Church Members

(Continued from page 4)

Pastors Aid Board. She is always willing to help wherever needed. Her goal is to always do the will of God by serving His people. Donnie's family members who attend St. John are Deetra, Earl and Drusilla Fitchard. Family and friends are very important to her, especially her church family.

Donnie's favorite scripture is: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

Officer's Reading List

Cracking Your Church's Culture Code by Samuel R. Chand

Put Your Dream to the Test by John C. Maxwell

Less Than Tipping: 25 Reasons to Tithe by William D. Watley

Dr. Watley to Lead Stewardship Seminar

(Continued from page 3)

Dr. Watley's books on tithing include *Bring the Full Tithe*, *Less Than Tipping: Twenty-five Reasons to Tithe* and *Less Than Tipping: Question and Answers About Tithing*. *Less Than Tipping: Twenty-five Reasons to Tithe* will be the basis for the seminar. Officers and members may purchase this book prior to the seminar from the church office.

Pastor's Meditation

(Continued from page 1)

Dr. Thurman's critique was a plea to those who had lost the balance between worship and social justice. When we recall the history of the Civil Rights Movement and the role of the Black Church therein, let us never forget the primacy of worship. Do not forget the prayers of hope from our foremothers in the midst of their tears. Do not forget the forefather who feely praised God – from the brush harbors and praise houses of slaves to the rural Black churches of those in segregation. Do not forget the sermons of slave preachers, abolitionists, and Civil Rights workers – who preached the unadulterated gospel of Jesus. Do not forget the spirituals of those laboring in the fields, the work songs of those unjustly incarcerated, and the gospel songs of thousands of church choirs. Do not forget the dancing of the saints – even when there was no apparent reason for dancing. Do not forget the fellowship – during meals; weddings and other communal celebrations; funerals and other communal lamentations – where the church gathered to share joys and shoulder burdens. Do not forget the inclusion of the Black Church – where even those who oppressed were welcomed.

Do not forget the worship of the Black Church. Do not forget to worship God for yourself! Let us always remember to worship God. For, when we worship God in spirit and truth, God seeks after us. Where God's Spirit is, there is liberty.

"Let our feet stray from the places our God where we met. They let our hearts shook with the noise of the world, we forget Thee." (James William Johnson, "Let Every Voice and Sing")

¹James C. Thompson, *25th Anniversary Edition: The Autobiography of James C. Thompson* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1975), 161.

²From every angle that every African slave ever felt and still feel the Black Church is part of the heritage of the Black Church. Thus the religious heritage of the Black Church is true. The argument is not to hold for their religious heritage.



Bishop Richard Allen: A Man of Prayer

By The Reverend Homer L. McCall

It is a joy to have the opportunity to write this article during this season of celebration of the founding of the African Methodist Episcopal Church by Richard Allen "who was born a slave to Benjamin Chew of Philadelphia in the year of our Lord 1780, on February 14." (*The Life, Experience and Gospel Labors of the Right Rev. Richard Allen*) Though he was born a slave, he was saved. The reader can easily note from the opening paragraph of his autobiography, that he was a praying man. Listen inwardly to his plea for mercy and salvation and the response of faith, witness and study:

My mother and father and four children of us were sold into Delaware State, near Dover, and I was a child and lived with him until I was upwards of twenty years of age, during which time I was awakened and brought to see myself poor, wretched and undone, and without the mercy of God must be lost. Shortly after I obtained mercy through the blood of Christ, and was constrained to exhort my old companions to seek the Lord. I went rejoicing for several days, and was happy in the Lord, in conversing with many old experienced Christians. I was brought under doubts, and was tempted to believe I was deceived, and was constrained to seek the Lord afresh. I went with my head bowed down for many days. My sins were a heavy burden. I was tempted to believe there was no mercy for me. I cried to the Lord both night and day. One night I thought hell would be my portion. I cried unto Him who delighteth to hear the prayers of a poor sinner; and all of a sudden my dungeon shook, my chains flew off, and glory to God, I cried. My soul was filled. I cried, enough for me—the Saviour died. Now my confidence was strengthened that the Lord, for Christ's sake, had heard my prayers, and pardoned all my sins. I was constrained to go from house to house, exhorting my old companions, and telling to all around what a dear Saviour I had found. I joined the Methodist society, and met in class at Benjamin Wells', in the forest, Delaware State. John Gray was the class-leader. I met in his class for several years.

More things have been wrought by the anointing of Richard Allen than we could dream of. Surely, "the Holy Spirit came upon him and the power of the Highest overshadowed him." (Luke 1:35) Not only was his own prayer for mercy/salvation dominant but also his prayers for physical freedom which he and his brothers were purchased from Stokeley near Dover in Delaware for two thousand continental money. Family prayer was also very important:

We left our master's house, and I may truly say it was like leaving our father's house; for he was a kind, affectionate, and tender-hearted master, and told us to make his house our home when we were out of a place or sick. While living with him we had family prayer in the kitchen, to which he frequently would come out himself at time of prayer, and my mistress with him. At length he invited us from the kitchen to the parlour to hold family prayer, which we attended to. We had our stated times to hold our prayer meetings and give exhortations in the neighborhood.

Not only were Richard Allen's prayers, prayers for mercy, for freedom, salvation and family prayer dominant in his autobiographical narrative but also his prayers for provision and guidance. *I kneeled down upon my knees and prayed that the Lord would open some way for me to get my living.* Not only did he pray, serve and risk his life during the Yellow Fever epidemic in 1793 but he also prayed during the walkout in prayerful protest from St. George Methodist Church in Philadelphia in 1787 to establish the Free African Society, a Benevolent Society. Not only did they pray with the establishment of Mother Bethel from a Blacksmith shop on the corner of 6th and Lombard in Philadelphia but also in the establishment, election, consecration of the first Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1816, the Right Reverend Richard Allen. The AME Church continues to be a viable, victorious and a vital part of a problematic world winning souls for Christ and serving people.

What If...? A Celebration of Black History

(Edited from "A World Without Blacks")

By Karla Reddite

Ever wondered what it would be like if there were no Black people in the world?

It certainly would be a lot different around here, not just in our physical features, but in the items we use every day.

Look around your home. Without Black people, we would have to do without a few things.



Garrett Morgan

- We would not be able to use an ironing board. Why? Because it was invented by Sarah Boone, a Black woman.

- Want to comb your hair? Forget about it. Combs were invented by Walter Sammons, a Black man. Don't even think about grabbing a brush because that was invented by Lydia O. Newman, a Black woman. (So, as the kids say, your head would be "tore up from the floor up".)

- Need a protective hood for firefighters? Many firefighter lives have been saved due to inventor Garrett Morgan who invented a type of respiratory protective hood (conceptually similar to modern gas masks). He also invented type of traffic signal and a hair-straightening preparation. He is renowned for a heroic rescue in which he used his hood to save workers trapped in a tunnel system filled with fumes.

- You would not be able to clean your house with a mop. That was invented by Thomas W. Stewart, a Black man.

- Use a dryer to dry your clothes? You better hang them up outside because dryers were invented by George T. Sampson, a Black man.

- If your pencil breaks while making out your grocery list and you need a sharpener, well, you will be out of luck because pencil sharpeners were invented by John Love, a Black man. Think you would have better luck by reaching for a fountain pen? No you won't, because that was invented by William Purvis, a Black man.

- Want to mow the lawn to make your house and neighborhood look a little better? You may want to invest in several cows to keep the grass low because lawn mowers were invented by John Burr, a Black man.

Other items invented by Black people? Dust pans, refrigerators, air-conditioning (hallelujah!), heating furnaces, electric trolleys, elevators, light bulb filaments, and the list goes on and on.

So what if there were no Black people in the world?

Thank God we've never had to find out!

Respect: Use It

An editorial by Karla Reddite



This picture had many of us taking! It shows a heated exchange between President Obama and Arizona governor Jan Brewer. The president had just landed in Phoenix, and once he made his way out of Air Force One, the governor greeted him. According to several media reports, the governor then asked the president to meet with her during his time in Arizona and tour the border. White House officials say President Obama then reminded her that she described their last meeting together inaccurately in her book, "Scorpions for Breakfast". That is when Brewer started to get more animated in her hand gestures, and waved her finger in President Obama's face.

Governor Brewer says the picture was "out of context". President Obama says it was no big deal.

Well, it may not be a "big deal", but it is a big lesson when it comes to respect.

In the book of 1 Peter, Peter writes a letter of encouragement to the Christians who were being persecuted in Asia Minor. He wanted them to know that despite their hardships and suffering, it was still important for them to follow the example of Jesus, by being brave and trusting in God.

As you get deeper into the letter, you find Peter addresses the topic of "submitting to rulers and masters". In 1 Peter 2:13-17, Peter offers this advice:

"Subm it yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good, you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. Live as free men, but do not use your freedom to cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king."

We see many examples of this "advice" put into action long before Peter penned his thoughts. One shining example was the prophet Daniel. Daniel, an Israelite, was a servant to several Babylonian kings who ruled Jerusalem. Now, these kings did not serve the "God of Abraham"; they worshipped a Babylonian idol. Needless to say, Daniel was never on the same page with the kings when it came to values, traditions, or pretty much anything else. However, Daniel always knew his place. While he was intelligent, blessed with an awesome gift, and was a member of a noble family, Daniel knew he was a servant and not a ruler. He always did what he was asked to do, and usually that was to interpret the kings' dreams. He did it without complaints, and he did it well, because everything he said came true.

When Daniel was asked to serve a god other than his own, he didn't lash out by rolling his eyes or his neck. He didn't mumble foul language under his breath or talk about the king's mother. He simply 'went upstairs to his room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day, he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to God, just as he had done before." He did what he knew was right, and as you know, his "respect" for others, as well as for himself, paid off in the end in more ways than one--his life was spared, and the king ordered all of his "subjects" to begin serving the God of Daniel.

Daniel's actions show that while you may not agree with everything a ruler does, respect is always in order. There is always an appropriate way to handle a situation, and when that situation gets a little too tough for you to handle, that's when you step back, continue to do what you know is right to do, and ask God to take control.

(Continued on page 16)

Church School Lesson Overview – March 2012

February lesson reviews were written by Claudinette Purifoy, 1st Sunday; Willie Sandifer, 2nd Sunday; William Bell, 3rd Sunday; and Willie Sandifer, 4th Sunday.



March 4, 2012

Lesson Title: Wisdom's Part in Creation

Lesson Scripture: Proverbs 8:22-35

Print: Proverbs 8:1-38

Devotional Songs: #88 [], #258 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not" (Proverbs 8:33).

Wisdom is personified in the first eight chapters of Proverbs as "she". Just like a mother, she provides wise counsel and protection to her children. She reminds us that she and the knowledge that she holds is not some recent innovation but that she was present when God made the heavens and earth.

Principles of right and wrong are not human invention but are embedded in the very fabric of creation and the cycle of life. Wisdom calls out for us to come to her. We are challenged to (1) hear and obey the voice of Wisdom, submissively and with a willing heart comply with the word of God and (2) be conscientious doers of the Word. She also warns that those who reject wisdom are going against the very principles God built into the world and are on a path of self-destruction.

Wisdom is more than knowing the rules of right and wrong; it is a matter of knowing God.

March 11, 2012

Lesson Title: The Word Became Flesh

Lesson Scripture: John 1:1-14

Print: John 1:1-14

Devotional Songs: #25 [], #251 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

In the lesson we see God's creative Word showing up in human form to make Himself known to us in plain, human terms. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh so that we can understand who our God truly is. As God above, He was far removed from us. As God in the flesh, He came near and took on our human substance and became one of us. He made all things, and in His incarnation He made life

and light available to a world that was spiritually dead and living in darkness.

Kings and leaders have those who go before and announce their coming, and so it was when the Word became flesh. God sent a man, John the Baptist, ahead of His Son to announce His coming so that no one would be taken by surprise or be without proper preparation.

Jesus made the whole world of mankind, but that world did not recognize who He was. He came specifically to His own homeland and His own people, Israel. It was to these people that God gave His Word and the prophets, the sacrificial system, the priesthood, and so much more. The Jews had every advantage; but when the Messiah came, Israel by and large did not receive Him.

March 18, 2012

Lesson Title: The Wedding at Cana

Lesson Scripture: John 2:1-12

Print: John 2:1-12

Tentative Devotional Songs: #221 [], #272 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him" (John 2:11).

In the first chapter of the Gospel of John, the apostle John's account of the life of Jesus begins with different kinds of witness to the person and power of Jesus Christ, the witness of John the Baptist and the witness of Jesus to the first disciples. John 2:1-12 gives us the witness of the sign of water turned to wine. This sign shows Jesus' power to transform the ordinary human life of HIS PEOPLE to one of abundant joy and HIS authority to cleanse the religious life that it may be pleasing to GOD and prepared for the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. The physical miracle was performed in order that it might be a sign of the spiritual miracle that the Lord would perform in the life of everyone who comes to HIM.

At the very beginning of Jesus' ministry, this sign symbolized the glorious mission of Jesus. He came to transform the "water" of Judaism with its legalism from outward and dull formalities such as prescribed fastings, into the joyous, exhilarating "wine" of the Christian gospel. Jesus spoke of HIS teaching as "new wine" in

(Continued on page 15)

Church School Lesson Overview – March 2012

(Continued from page 14)

Luke 5:38. The Old Testament prophets sometimes used "wine" to symbolize an intense joy and heart satisfaction in God Himself. Although drunkenness was a great disgrace, wine was considered an essential at every feast. When the wine was gone, JESUS recognized that it was more than a minor social embarrassment, since the family had an obligation to provide a feast of the socially required standard, for there was no great variety in beverages, people normally drank water or wine, and JESUS fulfilled the need.

The old wine is like the old order of things, Jewish religious life where one tried to keep the Ten Commandments and FAILED and where pure joy was always overshadowed by a sense of SIN. The new wine was produced by a creative action that ONLY CHRIST can perform. Jesus Christ came to give people a NEW LIFE, a NEW CREATION, a NEW BIRTH. This NEW JOYOUS LIFE in CHRIST is infinitely better than the old.

The original water in the jars speaks of Jewish legal cleansing, which could never satisfy the conscience because it was only a shadow of that which was to come according to Hebrews 9:9-15. When the Lord, at HIS death on the cross, provided true cleansing from SIN, CHRIST also provided the unspeakable joy of a life freed from guilt, lived in the presence of GOD HIMSELF. JESUS CHRIST BRINGS JOY! JESUS exchanged "legalistic water" for the "wine of joy" of the HOLY SPIRIT. If JESUS manifested HIMSELF first at a marriage union, it was surely to reveal that when HE is given HIS rightful place in FAMILY life, BLESSINGS will follow. It is HIS desire to give JOY to HIS own.

Finally, wine was used in the Old Testament and New Testament days, although consecrated persons such as priests and Nazirites were commanded to ABSTAIN from using it. The wine used at this feast was genuine wine, it did not have the alcoholic content of most alcoholic beverages of our present day. According to ancient Rabbinic records, the Jews drank their wine in a mixture composed of two parts wine to three parts water. JESUS CHRIST BRINGS JOY!!!

March 25, 2012

Lesson Title: God's Word Saves

Lesson Scripture: John 3:11-21; Numbers 21:4-8

Print: John 3:11-21

Tentative Devotional Songs: #401 []; #345 []; and #243 []

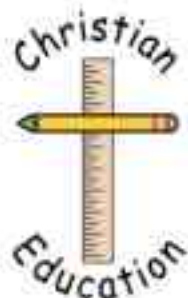
Key Verse: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

This lesson explores the simple solution God has offered us for this great dilemma through His Son Jesus Christ. He died so that we might live. Salvation comes when we trust Him and what He has already accomplished for us. Nicodemus approached Jesus by night and heard words that millions would not only hear but also memorize in the centuries to follow.

Jesus and His disciples had been honest about earthly things, but the unbelief of Nicodemus and others prevented them from trusting Jesus' more lofty teachings. The only one who could speak authoritatively about heavenly things was the Person who had been in heaven, that person is Jesus.

Jesus reminded Nicodemus of God's sending serpents into the midst of the grumbling, unbelieving Israelites in the wilderness as judgment. Only those who looked upon the bronze serpent Moses erected on a pole were healed. As the Israelites had to believe help would come when they looked up at that which represented their judgment, so now sinners must look with the eyes of faith to Christ. Having been made sin for sinners, He paid for their sin.

Join us for Church School
at 9:45 AM each Sunday!



Respect: Use It

(Continued from page 12)

As a voting adult, I have lived under three U.S. presidents, and I have not agreed with every decision made by any one of them—President Obama included. However, I was not voted to be in this position. They were, and as "commanders in chief" of this nation, these three (as well as former and future presidents) deserve my respect, no matter the political affiliation or the color of one's skin.

Being "POTUS" is not an easy task. We do not know everything that goes on behind the scenes when it comes to making decisions for an entire country. However, I do believe that each one of these men makes decisions based on what he truly believes is good for all Americans, and that is what we vote for them to do.

Presidents are current day "rulers", and because God has placed them in their place for a reason, we need to stay in our place for that reason. Now, I'm not saying not to exercise your freedom of speech when necessary to speak out on wrongdoings. However, there is an appropriate way to do it. Governor Brewer's way was not the way.

As we move forward, let us remember Peter's advice to Christians, which is to show proper respect to those in authority, whether it is our nation's president or the manager on your job. Let us also remember Daniel's actions, which show that when you feel the respect "meter" is starting to run on empty, "go in your room, get down on your knees, and pray, just as you've done before".

Use respect...or lose respect.



Parent Wisdom

(Continued from page 13)

Christ Jesus our Lord, Romans 8:37-39

As a Thoughtful Parent: "one may plant, one may water, but it is God who gives the increase. Now the one who plants and waters have the same purpose and will be rewarded for his labor. For we are God's fellow workers, God's field workers and God's building workers." 1 Corinthians 3: 5-9

Church School Book Club

February 2012

Discussion Date: 18 February 2012
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Too Little, Too Late, Victoria Christopher Murray, 2008

March 2012

Discussion Date: 17 March 2012
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Faithful, Kimberly Cash Tate, 2010

Faithful is about three women whose belief in God's faithfulness is being tested. Cyd is single and turning 40 on the day her younger sister is getting married. When the best man sweeps her off her feet, Cyd is torn between impulses and waiting for the man she knows is right for her. Meanwhile her friend Dana discovers her husband is having an affair. Though he apologizes and says he wants their marriage to work, she must decide whether or not to trust him. At the same time Phyllis' husband is antagonistic towards her faith, and when she meets a man who loves God and treats her well, she has to decide where her heart should be.

March 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1  6:00 p.m. Mass Choir Rehearsal	2	3 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 10:00 a.m. Griddle Soup Meeting
4 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship AMEN DEADLINE	5 9:30 a.m. Fifty-Plus Meeting	6 6:00 p.m. Stewardship Board Meeting	7 6:30 p.m. Prayer Service Bible Class	8  6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	9	10 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 10:30 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
11 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship GRADY-MADISON ANNIVERSARY	12 6:00 p.m. Single Adult Ministry	13 6:00 p.m. Sons of Allen Meeting	Stewardship Seminar 6:30 p.m., nightly The Reverend Doctor William D. Watley, Presenter		16	17 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
18 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	19 6:00 p.m. Single Adult Ministry	20 SOUP KITCHEN 11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m.	21 6:30 p.m. Prayer Service Bible Class	22  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	23  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	24 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 9:30 a.m. Women's Ministry
25 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	26  6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal 6:00 p.m. Single Adult Ministry	27	28 6:30 p.m. Prayer Service Bible Class	29  6:00 p.m. Mass Chorus Rehearsal	30	31 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal

Ninth District Winter Meetings

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(256) 534-6828 Fax

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Mrs. Arelis B. Davis, Episcopal Supervisor

Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

Reverend Dr. Patrick Clayborn, Pastor

Important Dates to Remember



- | | |
|-------------|---|
| February 19 | Welcome Reception for the Pastor Clayborn and Family,
Huntsville Board of Realtors, 4:00—6:00 PM |
| February 21 | Lay Organization Meeting, 6:00 PM |
| February 22 | Ash Wednesday Service, 6:30 PM |
| February 26 | Lowe's Chapel United Methodist Church,
The Reverend Sheri D. Smith Clayborn, Guest Preacher, 3:00 PM |
| March 3 | Official Board Meeting, 10:00 AM |
| March 11 | Grady-Madison AME Church Anniversary, 3:00 PM |
| March 14-16 | Stewardship Seminar, The Reverend Doctor William D. Watley,
Guest Presenter, 6:30 PM |
| March 22-24 | Ninth Episcopal District Winter Meetings, Sheraton Hotel,
Birmingham, Alabama |

Thought for the Month

"Lest our feet stray from the places our God where we met Thee;
 lest our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee,
 Shadowed beneath Thy hand, may we forever stand, true to our God, true to our native land."
 James Weldon Johnson, "Lift Every Voice and Sing"

ST. JOHN A.M.E.N. NEWSLETTER



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 17 Issue 3

March 2012

Pastor's Meditation

Processing Your Worship

Mark 1:9-13



Reverend Patrick D. Clayton

Lent is a time of introspection and contemplation. We deny ourselves certain pleasures and steal away from the busy schedules of our lives in order to focus on God's will for our lives. As we journey through this Lenten season, I encourage each of you to process your worship of God. Whenever we worship - whenever we have an encounter with God, we have to process it. We have to get a handle on what just happened. Even if we never fully understand it - and we will not - we have to try to make some sense of it for our living.

This is where we find Jesus in Mark 1:9. He had his encounter with God in the Jordan. John baptized Jesus. When Jesus came up out of the water, he saw the heavens open and the Spirit descend like a dove. God said, "You are my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased." Yes, Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is a part of the Trinity as God, the Son. Jesus can walk on water and calm the raging sea. But, let us not forget that Jesus was fully human. Paul says that "though Jesus was in the form of God, he did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited."

So Jesus emptied himself - "taking the form of a slave being born in human likeness and humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death even death on the cross" (Phil. 2:6-8). Jesus was human - just like you and me. Therefore, Jesus had to reconcile his encounter with God with his human senses. What does all of this mean? Why are the heavens opening for me? Why is the Spirit descending on me? Why is God singling me out?

Do you ever have questions like that? Why is God moving in my life this way? Why is God speaking to me in this way? Why is God being silent now? Why are certain people leaving me? Why are certain people joining me? What is the Spirit doing in my life? How should I respond to all of these things? If you're like me, you probably have even more questions. However, the central question is how do we process worship? How do we process the encounter? How do we attack all of those questions?

First, we need space. The wonderful thing about God is that God knows what we need and when we need it. Obviously, Jesus needed space immediately. Therefore, the Spirit immediately drove Jesus into the wilderness. Jesus was expelled into a desert. He was cast out just as he would later cast out demons. After all of that glorious worship he had at the Jordan, he was cast out into nothingness. He was placed in a liminal space. He was put into an in-between. He was subject to a holding pattern. Holding patterns may not feel good. A wilderness trip may not feel good. If the Spirit is driving us, then the holding pattern is good for us! God needs our undivided attention. God desires one-on-one time with us. God removes all of our distractions in the wilderness. Thus, we have the spiritual, emotional, and physical space to process our worship.

(Continued on page 2)

Pastor's Meditation

(Continued from page 1)

Second, we have to be tested spiritually. Tests help us see how much information we have processed. They also inform us how well we have processed that information. Interestingly, the gospel of Mark does not include the interplay between Satan and Jesus in the wilderness (turn these stones into bread, etc.). We find that interaction in the gospels of Luke and Matthew. Why would Mark leave it out? Scholars suggest that Matthew and Luke had other sources that Mark did not have. Some preachers say that Mark did not want to give the devil that much fame. So, Mark reduced the devil to a footnote. What Mark does – by not giving us a pretest – is leave us open. Your test will not be like my test. Your storm will be different from my storm. Therefore, you cannot look over my shoulder for your answers.

Some get upset because they feel they have already failed the test. Here is the good news. While we are still living, we have another chance to take the test. Jesus had 40 days in the wilderness. Yet, there is some bad news. Just because we may pass the test the first time does not mean that the testing is over. Satan will keep testing our spirits. Passing a test once does not mean that we really know the information! In order to master something, we have to be able to do it repeatedly. This spiritual test aids us in processing our worship.

Third, we have to be tested by life. Not every test is from the devil. Sometimes, life just happens. All sickness is not from the devil. That pink slip on the job is not from a man in a red suit holding a pitchfork. Just as Jesus had to face the natural context of the wilderness, we will have to face the natural context of our wildernesses. Jesus had to deal with wild beasts. We, too, will have to deal with wild beasts. Wild beasts are a part of the territory. When King David was a shepherd, he had to deal with bears and lions. Daniel had to face lions; the three Hebrew boys confronted the flames of the furnace. The widow of Zaraheth endured a famine. We will have to face the wild beasts on our Lenten journey. We will have to handle the loss of loved ones, the mistakes of people who love us, the attitudes of folks who do not know us, and our own shortcomings. We will have to deal with wild beasts of our memories, our mistakes, and our desires. Those wild beasts are vicious!!!

Before accepting defeat from those beasts, be reminded that "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof and all they that dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1)! Those beasts do not have more power than God. They are only able to do what God allows. They are only on assignment to give us our test. The beasts – and Satan as well – do not realize that when we get done with the test, we will get stronger instead of weaker. For in facing our wild beasts, we will have processed even more our worship of God!

Finally, God will give us help. We are not in this wilderness by ourselves. Angels are waiting on us. Mark says that angels waited on Jesus. Yes, this can mean that angels served Jesus. However, if we superimpose an unintended meaning of "wait" on the text, we can interpret Mark as saying that the angels were waiting on Jesus to finish. Perhaps, the angels are waiting for us to finish taking the test. Maybe, they are waiting for us to take the test! The angels will not bring the aid until we take the test. God does not reveal the way until we take the step. God does not bring the resolution until we make the effort to process our worship. So take the test. Process the worship. Contemplate God's will for your life. Ask questions. Make decisions. Face the wild beasts. When we do this, God is faithful to send angels. Their presence in the wilderness is a foreshadowing of what is to come at the end of Lent. For on the third day after Jesus' crucifixion, angels were near the empty tomb...WAITING on the disciples to get there.

Process your worship this Lent. God is waiting on you!

Ash Wednesday Began the 2012 Lenten Journey



Lent is a liturgical (public religious worship) season that lasts 40 days, excluding Sundays and is celebrated by Christians across the world. Lent always begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday, leading to the season of Eastertide. Lent is representative of Jesus being led into the wilderness by the Spirit for 40 days and 40 nights. During this time He endured great temptation but was able to withstand because the Spirit was leading Him. Just as Jesus' time in the wilderness prepared Him for His three year ministry, the Church uses this 40 day season similarly. The 40 days prepare the Church to appropriately remember Jesus' ministry and ultimate sacrifice. This is why the season leads to Resurrection Sunday. Lent also helps the Church to prepare collectively and individually for its continued ministry in the world.

St. John's Ash Wednesday service was held at 6:30 pm on February 22. The devotion was led by the Praise Team. Brother Tommy Anderson offered prayer and Nedra McDaniel, Dennis DeLoach, and the Reverend Sheri Clayborn read the scriptures. Prior to the Ash Wednesday message, worshippers were invited to share their testimonies. All were prayerfully received.

Pastor Clayborn brought the meditation for the evening. The title of the meditation was "Processing Worship" with text from Mark 1:13-14.

The ceremony of the ashes was led by Pastor Clayborn and the ministerial staff. The closing prayer was offered by Pastor Clayborn.

During the 2012 Lenten Journey, St. John members are asked to prayerfully make the following commitments:

Praying, at least, two (2) times a day at 6 am and 6 pm for:

- Church Leadership
- Vision
- Ministries of St. John AMEC
- Growth of St. John AMEC
- Family Time

Spring Revival Scheduled for April 11-14, 2012

St. John will hold its Spring Revival on April 11-14, 2012. Services will begin at 6:30 p.m. nightly. On Friday, the focus will be on youth and young adults and will feature the Alabama A&M Gospel Choir. The Revivalist will be the Reverend Bankole Akinbinu.



The Reverend Bankole Akinbinu was set apart to serve and proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ at an early age. He accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior at the age of ten and was later called into the Gospel Ministry at sixteen years of age.

The Reverend Akinbinu is committed to education. He began his undergraduate studies at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, transferring his sophomore year to Washington Bible College in Lanham, Maryland, where he earned a bachelors degree in Bible Theology. In May 2010, The Reverend Akinbinu was conferred the Masters of Divinity Degree from Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey.

In January 2012, The Reverend Akinbinu was called to be the Pastor of Baptist Grove Church in Raleigh, North Carolina. Prior to serving in the pastorate, he faithfully served as the Young Adult Assistant Pastor at Community Bible Baptist Church, under the pastoral leadership of The Reverend Dr. Clevester O. Wimbish. He also served as the Minister to Youth and

(Continued on page 4)

Guidelines for AMEN Contributors



We thank each person who contributes to the AMENewsletter. Following are some guidelines, which many writers are using already, which will contribute to uniformity. The editorial staff will give specific guidance when need/exceptions are indicated. Pastor and Reverend Clayborn will compose their articles as they are so inspired.

Event articles should always include who, what, when and where. Writers are asked to use third person. In some instances second person would be appropriate or necessary. Please avoid first person with the noted above exception. Please avoid contractions. Articles on events that have already occurred should be in past tense.

Feature articles which cover a special service can be a page or less (approximately 600 words), especially if there are photos accompanying the article (Founder's Day, Women's/Men's Day, etc.)

Regular articles or entries can be one paragraph to one column / approximately one half page or 300 words for a column. (e.g. there are inspirational poems that have been used that are brief).

Sunday school reviews should be one to two paragraphs for each lesson, noting shorter is better for months with five Sundays.



*"Behold,
I send the Promise
of My Father upon you;
but tarry in the city of Jerusalem
until you are endued with
power from on high."
(Luke 24:49)*

Spring Revival

(Continued from page 3)

Young Adults at St. James A.M.E. Church in Newark, New Jersey.

The Reverend Akinbinu has been abundantly blessed with the opportunity to express the gift God has given him on various platforms, including universities, revivals, conferences, and worship services around the country. In 2010, The Reverend Akinbinu was the recipient of the Aaron E. Gast Award in Urban Ministry, which is given annually to a member of the Princeton Theological Seminary community who demonstrates a unique gifting for ministering within a major metropolitan area.

The Reverend Akinbinu and his wife Angel have one daughter, Alivia Alexandra.

The Reverend Akinbinu is committed to spreading the Gospel because he believes that God's Word is able to transform and empower all that believe. He stands on the promise of Philippians 1:6: "He that hath begun a good work in you is faithful to perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Maundy Thursday Service Set for April 5th



Thursday of Holy Week is known as Maundy Thursday. It is the anniversary of the last supper Jesus ate with his disciples on the evening before the crucifixion. The name comes from the Latin term, man-

datur meaning "Command." The command as originally given, was for the followers to continue to remember by washing feet as a sign of humility. However, the contemporary interpretation is that the meal itself is commemorated as an act of remembrance.

This year St. John will host a Maundy Thursday Service at 6:30 pm on Thursday, April 5, 2012. All are welcome to attend!

St. John's March Soup Kitchen Report

It is not we, but the Christ within who
does the work!

Saint John AMEC strives to be a beneficial presence in our community. The monthly "Soup Kitchen" is a small ministry offered along with many other outreach ministries that our Lord calls us to do. These service callings bind us together as a church family and weave us closer to our community.

We are committed to being a beneficial presence in our city, and prayerfully our "soup kitchen" demonstrates the love and compassion that we have for those in need.

Thanks again to church members who come to share. Special thanks to Mrs. Paulette Bargon and Ms. Lenita Rochelle for delicious soup donations. Thanks also to our wonderful Koinonia Ministry and Dr. Dillihunt for sandwiches and desserts.

Kudos to the AMEN Staff for donating two wonderful soup kettles that the entire church family will utilize.

Christ is all and in all. — Colossians 3:11



Definition and Scope of Lay Ministry

If you are not a minister, you are a lay person. The word laity is defined as "people of God." It is through involvement in the Lay Ministry that we learn how laws of the AME Church are made, how bishops are elected and pastors ordained, how the AME Church carries out its ministries globally, and what the church does with collected funds. The Lay Organization is where you can make a positive difference in the direction of the church!!

49th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference

*Exalting Christ
to Impact the World*

June 27 – July 4, 2012

Garland-Opeland Resort and Convention Center, Nashville, Tennessee

Sign up today for the St. John
Lay Organization's bus trip to
General Conference on July 1st.

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

By Isaac Watts

*When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the Prince of Glory died;
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.*

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were an offering far too small;
love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.*

The St. John Lay Organization will sponsor a chartered bus to the Sunday morning worship service at the AME Church's General Conference in Nashville, Tennessee. This will be a wonderful experience for members of the local church to join in a Holy Communion Service with thousands of AMEs from around the world on July 1, 2012.

There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board for persons to sign if they are interested in attending. The cost for the bus is \$20 per person. The bus will depart the church at 7:30 am on July 1st.

Contact Cassandra Ingram or Hodges Washington for more information about the trip.

Visit www.ame-church.com for more information on General Conference.

Ms. Mattie McKinney Honored for Years of Service



Ms. McKinney, Rev. Sheri and Pastor Clayborn

On Sunday, February 12th, St John honored Ms. Mattie McKinney for over 10 years of service as Administrative Assistant. Ms. McKinney retired from that position on February 3rd.

Members offered their congratulations during a reception that was held in the S.S. Hereford Fellowship Hall. As they fellowshiped, they enjoyed cake and punch.

Thank you, Ms. McKinney, for your faithful service and may God bless you as you transition to the next season in your life.

South Birmingham- Huntsville-Bessemer District Conference

April 14th
Bethel, Homewood
Birmingham, Alabama
Rev. Christopher Burnett, Pastor
Rev. Oliver Allen, Presiding Elder



Radio Interview

The Reverend Patrick and the Reverend Sheri Clayborn will be interviewed by Mr. Kenny Anderson on WJOU 90.1 FM on Sunday, March 18th at 3:00 PM.

Upcoming Preaching Engagements

Pastor Clayborn to Preach at Good Friday Service

Pastor Clayborn will preach one of the "Seven Last Words of Christ" at the annual Good Friday Service at Church Street CPCA. This service begins at noon of Good Friday, April 6th.

Plan to attend this service and to support Pastor Clayborn.

Church Street is our neighbor church, located at 226 Church Street. The Reverend Mitchell Waker is the pastor.

Pastor Clayborn to Preach at Progressive Union

Pastor Clayborn will preach on Sunday evening, April 22nd, at 6 pm at Progressive Union Missionary Baptist Church. The Male Chorus will sing.

Progressive Union is located at 1917 Brandon Town Rd NW, Huntsville, AL 35816 and the Reverend Wayne Snodgrass is the pastor.

Have It Your Way

Choose Bible Study at

Noon
or
6:30 pm

Join us for the new Noon Bible Study
or the regular 6:30 p.m. Bible Study
each Wednesday







2012 Project Has Begun



This year's build will be a four bedroom house at 6330 Banks Road for Diane Warren and her family. Dianne is originally from Chicago, but has lived in Tennessee and Alabama most of her life. Dianne, her two daughters, Amanda, 25, and Lindsey, 21, two grandchildren, A'shanae, 10 months, and Linden, 8 months will live in the house. Dianne is employed with National Copper.

This year the group will again include Church of the Nativity Episcopal, First Christian, St. John, St. Matthew's Episcopal, First Presbyterian, Aldersgate United Methodist, United Church Of Huntsville, and Covenant Presbyterian.

DATE	DAY	ACTIVITY
Mar. 13, 15, 17	Tue, Thur, Sat	Apply blueboard to walls, deck roof, install windows, ext. doors, hurricane clips, and deadwood
Mar. 20, 22, 24	Tue, Thur, Sat	Install porch beams, barge rafters, fascia, attic access, electrical rough-in, (plumbing, HVAC rough-in by others)
Mar. 27, 29, 31	Tue, Thur, Sat	Install wall insulation, start vinyl siding, (sheetrock by sub)
Apr. 3, 5, 7	Tue, Thur, Sat	Paint walls, continue vinyl siding, install shutters
Apr. 10, 12, 14	Tue, Thur, Sat	Clean floors and windows, install vinyl tile, landscape
Apr. 17, 19, 21	Tue, Thur, Sat	Install and paint interior doors and trim, install cabinets, (plumbing by others) and electrical fixtures
Apr. 24, 26, 28	Tue, Thur, Sat	Install closet hardware, window blinds, storm doors, Bathroom accessories
May 1, 3, 5	Tue, Thur, Sat	Catch up work, touch up paint, clean and wax floors
May 8, 10, 12	Tue, Thur, Sat	Work punch list, DEDICATION CEREMONY: Sat. 12th

Regular working hours are from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM with a break for lunch around noon.

Lunches are provided on Saturdays only. Bring carpentry tools, a utility knife, gloves, if you have them.

Mr. Eddie Whitehead, Sr. is the Habitat Ministry coordinator for St. John. Contact Mr. Whitehead or the church office for more information on how you can work with this ministry.

Saint John African Methodist Episcopal Church 2012 Founder's Day Worship Celebration

By The Reverend Charles Glover



In modern contemporary fashion, the 2012 Saint John African Methodist Episcopal Church Founder's Day Celebration was initiated with jubilation and praise. Even before the official opening of the early morning eight o'clock service, one could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit and the expectation that something great was about to happen. In tandem with the annual celebration of Black History Month, the congregation with a magnificent voice opened the service with one of the great hymns of the church, hymn number 513, "Time is Filled With Swift Transition". The voices of the congregants assembled resounded with conviction and remembrance of the immense trials and tribulations our founding fathers endured for our great Zion, the AME Church, to be established in 1787 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Surely Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and others of the Free African Society had a resolve to hold on to God's unchanging hand and carry out the vision that was planted and unified through the presence and guiding of the Holy Spirit. Overcoming with "great faith" the many dangerous toils and snares they encountered, they laid a solid foundation that is still being built upon today.

As the celebration for the 8 o'clock service continued, the scripture was taken from First Corinthians, Chapter One, verses 1-9. The occasion for this celebration was given by Dr. Jeanette Jones. The occasion was a stirring rendition of facts that progressed from the early struggles up to our current political, social, and economic challenges. During the Pastor's moments, Pastor Clayborn introduced the speaker for this celebration, the Reverend Doctor Clement W. Fugh, the fifth General Secretary of the AME Church, who was first elected at the 46th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference in 2000. He is currently serving his third term and is a candidate for episcopal honors at the 49th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference that will be held in Nashville, Tennessee this summer. Interesting ties bond the Clayborn and Fugh families. Pastor Clayborn's grandfather licensed Dr. Fugh to preach and later Dr. Fugh pastored the same church. Another little known fact was presented and that was that Dr. Fugh baptized Pastor Clayborn as a little child at that same church.



The Reverend Doctor Fugh and Pastor Clayborn, after the service.

The Saint John choir prepared those assembled for the Word in the singing of the sermon hymn "You've Been So Faithful". God has and continues to prove His faithfulness unto us even in times of our faithlessness. The Reverend Fugh came forth and the presence of the Holy Spirit was very much evident in the worship service. His text was from First Corinthians, Chapter Four, verses 4-9. The preacher explained that Paul being a radical didn't follow the course of tradition, but established himself on the firm foundation of Christ, in His witness to others, and to the church. In this letter, the Reverend Fugh conveyed that Paul wrote some strong words to the Corinthians, but he began on a positive note of thanksgiving. He affirmed their privilege of belonging to the Lord and receiving His grace, the power of God gave them to speak out of him and understand his truth, and the reality of

their spiritual gifts. The Reverend Fugh suggested that when we must correct others, it helps to begin by affirming what God has already accomplished in them.

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Saint John African Methodist Episcopal Church 2012 Founder's Day Worship Celebration

By The Reverend Charles Glover

(Continued from page 9)

Focus Point #1: Accentuate the importance of each individual to the faith. In verse four Paul says, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ." All of us are unique in Christ. The spiritual gifts were a bone of contention in the Corinthian Church and even today are misunderstood. The Corinthian Church had all the spiritual gifts they needed to live a Christian life, to witness for Christ, and to stand against the immoralities present in Corinth. However, instead of using what God had given them, they were arguing over which gifts were more important. The Reverend Fugh reminded everyone that the gifts of God are not for selfish purposes, but for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4: 12).

Focus Point #2: The Constancy of God. Our God is faithful. What God has promised, He will perform. God is the same yesterday, today, and forevermore. The Reverend Fugh reaffirmed that no matter the time, place, or circumstances, God will keep us in "perfect peace" when our minds are stayed on Him (Isaiah 26:3). David in Psalm 37:25 testified that "he had been young, and now was old, yet, he has not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread".

Focus Point #3: God is not looking for perfection. God gives us spiritual gifts in order to build up, serve, and strengthen fellow Christians. In eternity, we will be made perfect and complete and will be in the very presence of God. We will be complete when we see God face to face. The eight o'clock service closed out with the singing of "Great Is Thy Faithfulness".

The 10:50 am service was a continuation of the early morning celebration. The choir's rendition of "I Can Do All Things Through Christ That Strengthens Me" ushered those assembled into the presence of the Holy Spirit. As the service progressed, Pastor Clayborn asked for everyone to pray for Whitney Houston's family in their time of loss. Special prayers were solicited for those who believe in God, but "their faith" may be shaken by her unexpected death. We were encouraged to be like Job, who questioned God concerning his circumstances, but in the midst of his circumstances, Job acknowledged the authority and power of God. Job was so committed to the Lord that he proclaimed, "Though he slay me, YET will I trust in Him" (Job 13:15).

The Reverend Fugh's text for this service was taken from Joshua 4: verses 21-22. His subject was "Colored People". He prolifically performed a surgery on this scriptural passage by outlining the miracles the Israelites overcame before crossing the Jordan River. They crossed the Jordan in the spring, when it was overflowing its banks. God chose the time when the river was at its highest to demonstrate His power; parting the waters so the entire nation could cross on dry ground. Throughout the Exodus Period, God delivered His people from bondage and oppression, but also made provisions for them. They wandered for forty years, yet their shoes never wore out and they were never hungry.

From the text, the Reverend Fugh stated that the memorial of the 12 stones was to be a constant reminder of the day the Israelites crossed the Jordan on dry ground. Their children would see the stones, hear the story, and learn about God. During Black History month, we need to remember from whence we have come. The Reverend Fugh very eloquently provided examples of our technological advances that were a significant part of the Black community. Among these included eating moon pies, washing clothes in a number 3 washtub, having to drink from separate water fountains at restaurants, and living in "colored communities". In the past, we all had surrogate guardians (folks who watched out for us when our parents weren't at home) and who instructed us to walk circumspect to those in authority and be responsible for your actions or risk

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A Salute to Women During Women's History Month

Ain't I A Woman?

by Sojourner Truth

(Delivered in 1851 at the Women's Convention in Akron, Ohio.)

Sojourner Truth (1797-1882)— former slave, abolitionist, preacher and advocate of women's rights.

Wall, chilern,
whar dar is so much racket
dar must be somethin' out o' kilter.

I tink dat 'twixt de nigger of de Souf
and de womin at de Norf,
all talkin' 'bout rights,
de white men will be in a fix pretty soon.
But what's all dis here talkin' 'bout?

Dat man ober dar say
dat womin needs to be helped into carriag-
es,
and lifted ober ditches,
and to hab de best place everywhar.
Nobody eber halps me into carriages,
or ober mudpuddles,
or gibs me any best place!
And ar'n't I a woman?

Look at me!
Look at my arm!
I have ploughed,
and planted,
and gathered into barns,
and no man could head me!
And ar'n't I a woman?

I could work as much
and eat as much as a man –
when I could get it –
and bear de lash as well!
And ar'n't I a woman?

I have borne thirteen chilern,
and seen 'em mos' all sold off to slavery,
and when I cried out with my mother's
grief,
none but Jesus heard me!
And ar'n't I a woman?

Den dey talks 'bout dis ting in de head;
what dis dey call it?

"Intellect,"
(whispered someone near).
Dat's it, honey.
What's dat got to do wid womin's rights
or nigger's rights?
If my cup won't hold but a pint,
and youm holds a quart,
wouldn't ye be mean
not to let me have my little half-measure
full?

Den dat little man in black dar,
he say women can't have as much rights
as men,
'cause Christ want a woman!
Whar did your Christ come from?
Whar did your Christ come from?
From God and a woman!
Man had nothin' to do wid Him.

If de fust woman God ever made
was strong enough to turn de world upside
down
all alone,
dese women togedder ought to be able to
turn it back, and get it right side up again!
And now dey is asking to do it,
de men better let 'em.

Bleeged to ye for hearin' on me,
and now ole Sojourner
han't got nothin' more to say."

St. John Welcomes Dr. Patrick D. Clayborn as Pastor

By Bridget J. Floyd



St. John AME Church hosted a welcome reception for new pastor Reverend Patrick D. Clayborn, Ph.D. and family on Sunday, February 19, 2012 from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Huntsville Board of Realtors on Monroe Street. Reverend Clayborn was appointed pastor of St. John on December 4, 2011. The welcome reception was an opportunity to introduce Reverend Clayborn, his wife, the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn, and son Patrick Clayborn II to the Huntsville community. It also allowed for the St. John family, the Clayborns and their extended family to get better acquainted.

Mr. Hodges Washington, vice chair of the Steward Board, offered the welcome and occasion. The opening prayer was given by Reverend Dr. Wayne Snodgrass, pastor of Progressive Union Missionary Baptist Church and president of the Greater Huntsville Interdenominational Ministerial Fellowship (GHIMF). Mayor Tommy Battle presented Dr. Clayborn with a proclamation from the City of Huntsville and indicated enthusiastic anticipation of working with Dr. Clayborn and St. John in the growth and "progress" of Huntsville. Councilman Richard Showers also welcomed Dr. Clayborn as the representative for the church's district in the city. There were representatives from the Huntsville/North Alabama religious, education, and political communities.

Out of town guests included the family members of the Clayborns. Pastor Clayborn and Reverend Sheri Clayborn were assisted in the receiving line by Stewards and other members of the committee.



The reception featured lovely decorations as well as delicious and a variety of foods/refreshments. There was a unique cake that captured beautifully the theme and text for the welcome reception: "Fitting the Description of a Great Spiritual Leader" (Titus 1:8-9). Another featured cake was the surprise for the upcoming "birthday boy", Patrick II ("P2") who on that day was anticipating his fifth birthday. He seemed pleased to blow out candles as he was serenaded with a familiar birthday tune. There was a warm spirit throughout the room. The St. John family and the Clayborn family bonding process is well on the way.

The culmination of the event was marked by the closing prayer from retired St. John pastor, Dr. Homer L. McCall, who expressed appreciation and requested blessings for the Clayborns as they embark on their new calling. St. John is proud to welcome the Clayborns to Huntsville and St. John. The "dynamic duo" has given an immediate indication that St. John continues to be blessed by spiritually guided and enthusiastic leadership.

The committees and membership should be commended for a wonderful event that seemed to truly represent the open spirit with which The Reverends Clayborn and young Patrick II (P2) are embraced.

WELCOME TO ST. JOHN!

St. John Welcomes Dr. Patrick D. Clayborn as Pastor



Reverend Sheri Preaches for "100 Women in Black" Black History Program

By Paulette Bargon



On Sunday, February 26th, St. John's illustrious First Lady, the Reverend Sheri D. Smith Clayborn delivered the sermon for the Lowe's United Methodist Church's "100 Women in Black" Celebration. The Reverend Waymond K. Smith is the pastor. Many St. John members attended to support this Black History program and especially to support Reverend Sheri.

The program opened with greetings from Sister Angela Debro, followed by the congregational hymn, "We've Come This Far by Faith". The welcome and occasion were given by Sister Tracy Moore and Sister Christy Tallant, respectively. Lowe's spirit-filled and very talented choir rendered musical selections. The scripture was read by Sister Ashley Holden from Romans 5:1-5, 8-9. The prayer was given by Sister Carolyn Pearson. Judge Lynn Sherrod introduced the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn as the preacher for the hour.

The title of the message was "Trust God" and was based on 1 Kings 17: 8-16, the story of "The faithful servant Elijah and the Ravens." The Reverend Sheri stated that during the ruling of King Ahab and because of his evil ways, he provoked the Lord and angered Him. So Elijah said to Ahab... "As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will neither be dew nor rain in the next few years, except at my word." 1 Kings 17:1

Then the Lord told Elijah to go and hide in the Kerith Ravine and I will provide for you. He did as he was told and he lived under trees. The Ravens brought him bread and meat in the mornings and bread and meat in the evenings. He drank from the brook. You see all he had to do was trust in the Lord and the Lord provided.

After a while the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. Then the Lord told Elijah, "Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there, I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you food." 1 Kings 17:7 He did as he was told. There he saw a widow who was gathering sticks, he called to her and asked if she would bring him a drink of water and if she would also bring him a piece of bread. She told him that she could bring the water but she did not have any bread. She had a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. She was gathering a few sticks to make a meal for herself and her son so that they may eat it and wait to die. You see the widow suffered this drought for 3 years. She had no one to take care of her, she was hungry and tired and was giving up and she was making preparations to die.

Elijah told her to go home and do as you said," But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have, bring it to me and then make something for yourself and your son. For the Lord says: "The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the land." 1 Kings:13-14. The widow thought "this man did not listen to a word I said, but I am going to do what he asked of me". She did what Elijah told her and there was enough food every day for Elijah and her family. The Lord used a widow to feed Elijah when she had no one to care for her. She was gathering up sticks and preparing to die.

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Parent Wisdom

By Reverend Vanessa Glover

Be Still
AND KNOW
THAT I AM GOD
-PSALM 46:10

As parents, is it really true that with God all things are possible? Is it possible to see the will of God in everything—even our children, our children's children? Is it possible to cast our care upon Him daily and enjoy great peace in doing so? Whether your children are young and innocent or older and struggling with a rebellious nature, whether they are living at home or are away and out in the world, our children need our prayers like never before.

Oftentimes we feel so helpless, especially when they have gone astray and seem so lost, so angry and so unreachable. But the good news is, Prayer still works. These things are DIVINE POSSIBILITIES, and because they are God's work, the true experience will always cause us to bow lower at His feet and learn to depend and lean to God's Holy Word. I love what Psalm 46:10 says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

God's word tells us "Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." Romans 15:4. What matters is the *discipline* of abandoning the constant stream of distractions that zaps our energy and strength. "Be still" is not a suggestion or when we get around to stopping what we are doing. God wants us to fully STOP. Is it not amazing how God engineers our lives and reminds us of speed limits? Encouragement can come from many sources, but the foundation of our strength and hope is always in the unchangeable Word of God. Some lessons are very hard to learn. "Be still" is more than just slowing down, "Be still" is more than resisting the force of distractions. When we really "Be still" we will know that God is in control of everything—every fear, every failure, every secret, every thought, every word, every deed—with God all things are possible! Salvation for ALL.

Prayer: "And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him," Luke 2:40 Father, thank you for sending your Son to this earth, taking on human flesh and living among us. Lord, thank you for modeling the way to live and what you taught us through Your words as our examples. Now Lord, I pray that our children will grow in the ways that You grew. Lord, sharpen their focus, give them clear purpose that they will know why they are here and where they are going. Lord, strengthen them to grow in character, help them to grow not just in years, but in sound mind and in maturity. Above all, I pray for his/her will to be set on doing all that is pleasing in your sight. Amen.

As a Thoughtful Parent: The search for purpose is a journey, not a destination. God will continue to reveal Himself to us as we journey through the stages of this life. Remember, "Because of the Lord's 'great' love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is the Lord's faithfulness," Lamentations 3:22-23

BIBLE



Basic Information Before Leaving Earth



Get Ready for VBS 2012



We are Fishin' on a Mission! That is right St. John, we are looking for dedicated "fishers of men" to join us in preparing for VBS 2012. The dates are June 11 – 15, and we need your help to "Cast the Net of Truth and draw in the BIG CATCH."

Vacation Bible School is a wonderful and exciting ministry that serves every member of our church family. Tell us what you can do to make VBS 2012 the Best VBS Ever!

As we begin the planning phase we need you to PRAY IT UP and Volunteer Now! Pray throughout the month of March that the church and the community will understand the importance of following Jesus and bringing others to Christ. Then volunteer to serve. Here is where we need you.

- Preschool Teaching staff
- Photographer
- Devotion/Worship Leader
- Registration
- Primary Teaching Staff
- Skit Coordinator
- Craft Coordination Staff
- Recreation Staff
- Adult Teaching Staff
- Publicity Coordinator
- Refreshment Planning
- Junior Teaching Staff
- Teen Teaching Staff
- Decorations

Help wherever you can!

Volunteer forms are available in the church office, in the vestibule, and on the website.

Founder's Day

(Continued from page 11)

being corrected on the spot. One of the most serious obstacles our young men face today is they don't know who they are, for they are called so many names. Within our Black schools, our Black neighborhoods, and even within the Black Church, we must begin to become liberated and continue the fight that is not just physical, social or economic warfare, but spiritual, mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

As the Reverend Fugh concluded the message, he stressed that we all must take a stand for God for the preservation of our spiritual legacy as a people. He ended with Psalm 24: 3-10 (KJV); which is not only a battle cry for the church, but it also looks forward to Christ's future entry into the New Jerusalem to reign forever. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or shall stand in His holy place? He that has clean hands, and a pure heart; who has not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek him; that seek thy face. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, even lift them up ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory."

St. John A.M.E.N. Staff:

Nedra McDaniel, Editor

Bridget Floyd	Cora Speight
Mable McCall	Claire Philadelphia
Charles Brooks	Lydia Owens
Paulette Bargon	Mariah Gullatte
Karla Redditt	Vanessa Glover
Darwin Washington	

The deadline for articles for next month's St. John AMEN is April 1. The next issue will be published on April 15. You may e-mail articles to Nedra McDaniel at nedra.mcdaniel@gmail.com.

"100 Women in Black"

(Continued from page 14)

The Reverend Sheri posed two questions and quickly provided answers that were based on the text. "What do you do when you run out of options? Expect a work from the Lord." What do you do when God tells you to do something and the wading dries up and ravens stop coming? God will tell you what to say or who to ask. Sometimes you may not want to ask. We just prepare to die instead of trusting Him. We give up on relationships, our children, relatives, marriage, fighting for injustice, church, and most of all, we give up our spirit.

The Reverend Sheri said that life is not a fairy tale. Trust God and go where He sends you and do what He says. She stated that there will always be enough for you after you give to God, so do not be afraid to put God's agenda first. She explained that Prophet Elijah's testimony was that He put God first; therefore, do not be afraid. She emphasized that God will take care of you and you must trust God because God is still performing miracles. The Reverend Sheri then related God's ability to protect, provide and direct as He did for Hanna, Ester, Mary (the mother of Jesus), the woman with the issue of blood, the woman with the alabaster jar, the Canaanite woman, Harriet Tubman, Mary McCloud Bethune, Fannie Lou Hamer, Coretta Scott King, Myrlie Evers-Williams, Bishop Vashti McKenzie, Judge Lynn Sherrod, her grandmother and many other women. They did not prepare to die. They trusted in the Lord and did not settle. She strongly encouraged "Trust in Him for your healing and deliverance."

The Reverend Sheri ended her uplifting sermon by quoting Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight." Trust in God!

The service was a blessing from God through the vessel of the Reverend Sheri D. Smith Clayborn.



*Hold the Date
May 27, 2012*



GO GREEN

Use less chemicals!

- Combine 1 teaspoon baking soda, 1 tablespoon vinegar and 2 cups of water. Mix well (until foaming stops), then store the solution in a clearly labeled spray bottle. Spray it anywhere you want to eliminate or control household odors.

Church School Book Club

March 2012 Discussion Date: 17 March 2012
10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Faithful, Kimberly Cash Tate, 2010

April 2012 Discussion Date: 21 April 2012
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Game Plan for Life: Your Personal Playbook for Success, Joe Gibbs, 2011

Joe Gibbs has had an incredible professional career in sports - three-time Super Bowl winning head coach of the Washington Redskins and owner of a three-time NASCAR championship team that has nearly 500 employees - but it was never a clear trail to the winner's circle.

He has stumbled off the path and needed to double-back a few times due to feeling that he had all the questions and answers to life. Yes, this successful head coach sometimes thought he could outsmart the Head Coach.

Christian faith is the cornerstone to gaining a true understanding to the meaning of life - through the Head Coach (God) and Playbook (the Bible).

Gibbs personally commissioned a respected national public opinion research firm to survey men and find out what they are most concerned about and where they'd like to have success in their lives. It revealed 11 areas of prime concern - including health, finances, relationships and overcoming sin - which then allowed him to develop a team of experts to address each topic.

Church School Lesson Overview – April 2012

April Church School reviews were written by Willie Sandifer

April 1, 2012

Lesson Title: The Truth is Told

Lesson Scripture: John 18-19

Print: John 18:28-38

Devotional Songs: #77[], #258 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice" (John 18:37).

In this lesson we see that Caiaphas and the council of elders declared Jesus guilty of both blasphemy, and sent Him to the Roman governor Pilate to be sentenced, for the Jews had no power to execute.

There in front of Pilate stood Jesus the Lamb of God, the Light of the World, waiting to be sentenced to death by crucifixion. Twice Pilate found no fault in Him, but the Jews wanted to kill Him. Pilate had the Messiah beaten relentlessly; then, returned to the mob outside the judgment hall, Pilate gave them a choice, the innocent Jesus or another prisoner. The mob chose the robber Barabbas, and the Christ was sent to Calvary. But on the third day He got up out of the borrowed sepulcher just as He said He would.

April 8, 2012

Lesson Title: Dawn of a New Day

Lesson Scripture: John 20:1-23

Print: John 20:1-10, 19-20

Devotional Songs: #156 []; #251 []; and #243 []

Key Verse: "The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord" (John 20:20).

In this lesson we see Mary Magdalene, who came to the tomb in the predawn hours of darkness of the third day to anoint Jesus' body with spices to prepare the body for final burial.

As soon as Mary Magdalene discovered that the stone had been taken away, she hastened to tell Peter and John that the tomb was empty. John and Peter immediately ran to the

tomb. John arrived first, saw the grave clothes, but did not go in.

In the scripture there are three levels of seeing when John and Peter reached the tomb. First, John saw the linen grave clothes from outside the tomb, but there was no particular significance attached to the seeing of the grave clothes. Second, he saw the linen grave clothes, but there was no immediate reaction when he saw them. John did not make the correlation between the empty tomb, the linen grave clothes, and the missing body of his master.

Third, Peter entered the tomb. He saw the grave clothes and he saw the napkin lying separately by itself which had covered the head of Jesus. Peter surveyed the scene looking carefully at the grave clothes but said nothing.

At last, John entered the tomb; this time he could visualize and immerse himself into the entire scene: the ambience, the smell, the linen grave clothes, the folded napkin, and the missing body of Christ. Finally the reality hit him; He conceived and believed that the Messiah had risen from the dead.

April 15, 2012

Lesson Title: Cleaning the Temple

Lesson Scripture: John 2:13-22

Print: John 2:13-22

Tentative Devotional Songs: #414[]; #272 []; and #243 []

Key Verse: "He told those who were selling the doves, 'Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" (John 2:16).

In this lesson we see a flashback to Joseph and Mary, who found Jesus, after searching for three days, in the temple listening to the words of the religious doctors and asking questions. They were all astonished. His parents were amazed at the sight. Mary asked her son, why have you done this? "And He said unto them, How is it that you came looking for Me? Don't you want Me to be about my Father's business?" His parents did not understand Him then. And neither did the money changers, merchants, and priests when He cleansed the temple.

Jesus came to the temple to take care of other

(Continued on page 19)



Church School Lesson Overview – April 2012

(Continued from page 18)

business for God the Father. This was the first time He engaged in theological discussions with religious leaders in the temple. Jesus was at a point in His ministry when taking was not enough. He had to act. Jesus had to clean up the temple because it was His Father's House. He came to seek and save that which was lost. This time those who were lost were among those with whom He had His first conversations in the temple.

April 22, 2012

Lesson Title: Turning Life Around

Lesson Scripture: John 4:1-42

Print: John 4:7-15, 23-26, 28-30

Tentative Devotional Songs: #97 []; #345 []; and #243 []

Key Verse: "The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life" (John 4:14).

Jesus knew that the Pharisees found out that His disciples baptized more disciples than John. So to avoid inevitable confrontations, Jesus and His disciples left Judaea and travelled north toward Galilee, but He needed to stop in Sychar, a city in Samaria near Jacob's well. Jesus, weary from His journey, sat down on the well. His disciples continued on into the city of Sychar.

The Samaritans were not allowed to worship at the temple in Jerusalem. They believed God chose Mount Gerizim as the ideal place for worship center. Jacob's well was located here, in Sychar or Schechem. The pure-blooded Jews avoided travelling through Samaria, but Jesus had no such prejudices against the Samaritans. So he sat down on the edge of Jacob's well.

While he rested, a Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus asked her for a drink; and so, one of the greatest conversations of all time happened. The woman asked, "Why do you ask me for a drink? I am a Samaritan woman and you are a Jew. Jews and Samaritans have nothing to do with each other." The question launched the two into a lengthy conversation centering on physical thirst as symbolic of the spiritual thirst. This dryness of the soul comes from being a non-believer or at least a believer who has backslid. Once the

woman sought the water, Jesus changed the subject. He had captured her attention and now could move on to even weightier subjects.

April 29, 2012

Lesson Title: What Comes First?

Lesson Scripture: John 9

Print John 9:1-17

Tentative Devotional Songs: #381 []; #283 []; and #243 []

Key Verse: "Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath.' But others said, 'How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs? And they were divided.'" (John 9:18)

In each chapter of the Gospel of John, the Apostle drives home the point of the true identity of Jesus and His deity. He covered extensively the seven "I am" miracles that Jesus performed in public for the benefit of others. These miracles or signs as John calls them were in areas where humanity could not affect a change. They were included by John to prove the identity of Jesus as one with God and resulting from belief in Jesus' divine nature.

Sign 1: The water turned into wine – the ritual of law is by reality of grace

Sign 2: Nobleman's son healed – the gospel brings spiritual restoration

Sign 3: Healing the paralytic – weakness is replaced with strength

Sign 4: Feeding the 5,000 – Jesus the Christ satisfies spiritual hunger

Sign 5: Walking on Water – fear is transformed by faith

Sign 6: Blind man from birth given sight spiritual darkness is overcome by Jesus who brings light of salvation into lives.

Sign 7: Lazarus raised from the dead – the gospel will give eternal life to the spiritually dead.

See you in Church School!



April 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 PALM SUNDAY 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	2 9:30 a.m. PMU-Plus Meeting	3 6:00 p.m. Stewardess Board Meeting	4 5:00 p.m. Steward Board 6:00 p.m. Corporate Prayer 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. All-Week Service and Love Feast	5 6:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday Service	6 12:00 p.m. Good Friday Service	7 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 11:00 a.m. Easter Program Rehearsal 1:30 p.m. VMSB Meeting
8 RESURRECTION SUNDAY 6:00 a.m. SUNRISE SERVICE 7:30 a.m. Breakfast 8:30 a.m. Easter Program 10:50 a.m. Easter Worship	9 6:00 p.m. Single Adult Ministry	10 6:00 p.m. Sons of Men Meeting				14 DISTRICT CONFERENCE 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 10:30 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
15 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	16 6:00 p.m. Single Adult Ministry	17 SOUP KITCHEN 11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m. 6:00 p.m. Lay Meeting	18 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	19  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	20  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	21 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
22 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship 6:00 p.m. Progressive Union MBChurch	23 6:00 p.m. Single Adult Ministry	24 	25 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	26  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	27  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	28 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 9:30 a.m. Women's Ministry
29 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	30  6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal					



AAMU Participating in Home Depot's "Retool Your School" Contest

Huntsville, Ala. ---- Within the course of 24 hours, Alabama A&M University students, faculty, staff, alumni and die-hard friends catapulted "The Hill" into the top spot among historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in Home Depot's "Retool Your School" contest in mid-February. By the first weekend of March 2012, the number of supporters voting for AAMU had reached more than 100,000. The biggest threat to A&M's No. 1 position has been Lincoln University of Pennsylvania, which has, on several occasions, pulled ahead of A&M and had even expanded its lead by 4,000.

Home Depot, the major home improvement chain, sponsors the "Retool" contest calling for HBCUs to create innovative proposals aimed at achieving significant campus improvement and beautification. Online voting began on February 14 and will continue through April 10. St. John's support is needed to help A&M regain its No. 1 footing.

AAMU's three-fold contest submission encompasses (1) a Legacy Lake Beautification Project in honor of the First Ladies of Alabama A&M University, 1875 to present; (2) the revitalization of the R.D. Morrison Fine Arts Building for ADA compliance, along with improved external landscaping and internal painting; and (3) a campus pride project that entails enhancement of the Quadrangle through the installation of a rainwater irrigation system and landscaping of student walkways.

By May 4, Home Depot will select and announce the names of 13 HBCU grant recipients. Already, AAMU's Bulldogs, Normalites and long-time supporters have pushed the University to the top of more than 60 schools, except for the constant attack from Lincoln.

To begin making your daily vote count for AAMU, click (or copy and paste) the following link:

<http://www.retoolyourschool.com/vote-normal.aspx>

Children's Bible Study (CBS)

By Mary Rankin



Children's Bible Study (CBS) at St. John is "on fire" for Christ! This ministry is dedicated to enhancing the spiritual growth of our children through a fun-filled intensive bible-based instruction.

Each lesson is child-centered, engaging and unique, creating a thirst in each child to want to learn more about God's Holy Word. Enhancing each lesson are review questions, music, memory verses, videos and loads of fun activities. Snacks, which are a "hit" with the children, are also provided.

We look forward to having your child join us every Wednesday, from 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. for "CBS"!!!



Something to Smile About!

Joke of the Month

A small town had four churches-Presbyterian, Methodist, Catholic, and Baptist. All four had a serious problem with squirrels in the church. Each church in its own fashion had a meeting to deal with the problem.

The Presbyterians decided that it was predestined that squirrels be in the church and that they would just have to live with them.

The Methodists decided they should deal with the squirrels lovingly in the style of Charles Wesley. They humanely trapped them and released them in a park at the edge of town. Within 3 days, they were all back in the church.

The Catholics also humanely trapped them and attempted to teach them the "rhythm" method which of course did not work.

The Baptists had the best solution. They voted the squirrels in as members. Now they only see them at Christmas and Easter.

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Rt. Reverend James L. Davis, Servant Bishop

Mrs. Arelis B. Davis, Episcopal Supervisor

Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

Reverend Dr. Patrick Clayborn, Pastor

Important Dates to Remember



March 22-24	Ninth Episcopal District Winter Meetings, Sheraton Hotel, Birmingham, Alabama
April 1	Palm Sunday
April 5	Maundy Thursday Service, 6:30 pm
April 6	Good Friday Service, 12:00 pm, Church Street CPCA
April 8	RESURRECTION SUNDAY
April 11-13	Spring Revival, Rev. Bankole Akinbinu, Revivalist, 6:30 pm nightly
April 14	South Birmingham-Huntsville-Bessemer District Conference

Come Join Us
RESURRECTION SUNDAY
APRIL 8TH

Sunrise Service	6:00 A.M.
Breakfast	7:30 A.M.
Easter Program	8:30 A.M.
Morning Worship	10:30 A.M.



ST. JOHN A.M.E.N. NEWSLETTER



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 17 Issue 4

APRIL 2012

Pastor's Meditation

Paradigm Shift

Luke 24:1-9



Reverend and Patrick D. Clayton

Thomas Samuel Kuhn was a philosopher of science. He popularized the phrase: "paradigm shift." He defined a paradigm shift as a radical change in underlying beliefs or theory. It is an essential revolution in method or expectations. Thus, he entitled his book – *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn's thesis is straight forward. A paradigm is a set of concepts, methods, mechanisms, values, and assumptions. That paradigm not only defines an arena of science, but it also solves new problems that arise in that arena. Even in a set paradigm, there is room for growth. However, questions may arise that the existing paradigm cannot solve. Once the amount of those questions reaches a critical mass, the paradigm must undergo drastic adjustment. Some call this scientific revolution. Kuhn called it a paradigm shift.

That is how we know that we are in the midst of a paradigm shift. The questions that are forming in our lives today cannot be answered by yesterday's paradigm. Why is this past relationship not satisfying my current needs? Why are there no opportunities for growth on this job? Why is the attack of the enemy so great at this stage in my life? Where is God in the midst of my trouble and trials? Why can I not feel God today with my prayer from yesterday?

This is where we find the women in our text. They went to the tomb to do what had always been done. When someone died, burial spices were placed on them. But, this death happened at an odd time. This death took place late one Friday afternoon. However, their religion required them to rest Friday evening and Saturday. So, the women followed the body to see where it would be buried. They went home to prepare the spices and rested on their Sabbath. Early Sunday morning, they got up with their spices to anoint the body. When they got there, the stone was rolled away. The tomb was empty. The bible says that they were perplexed. Two men in dazzling clothes appeared, causing the women to become afraid!

What do we do when life throws us into a new schedule? How do we get clarity when our usual touchstones are missing? Where do we get courage when strange things and people point out God to us in unusual ways? How do we handle God's paradigm shift?

First, we have to raise our expectations! Look at what the two men ask the women. "Why are you looking for the living among the dead?" Now, the men already knew the answer to the question. The women expected Jesus to still be dead. Since he was dead on Friday and Saturday, Jesus has to be dead today! The two men - knowing this – give the women a hint. "Why are you looking for the living among the dead?" The paradigm has shifted to life!

If we want to handle the paradigm shift we will have to raise our expectations. We have to expect Christ to be alive. We have to expect that God will keep God's word. We must believe that God loves us. We must believe that God is in control. We have to raise our expectations. Let us lift up our eyes to the hills to see from whence our help comes.

(Continued on page 2)

Pastor's Meditation

(Continued from page 1)

Second, we have to remember. The two men tell the women to remember what Jesus told them. Jesus told them that he would suffer and die, and he also told him that he would rise again. When the two men told the women this, the bible says that they remembered. What does this mean? God does not allow us to go through a paradigm shift unprepared. No matter how quickly life happens, God has prepared us for the shift. What did God do before the shift? Did God say that we would have a hard time? Did God say things would get worse before getting better? Did God say that every day would be Sunday? How did God heal the last time? How did God deliver last year? How did God wipe away those tears last month? Remember!!! The women remembered, and then they did something!

Finally, we have to report. The women went back to the men and told them what had happened. They told them that the tomb was empty and Jesus had risen. Not just to the eleven – not just the folks with titles – but all the rest. They told everyone in the group. They remembered that Jesus wanted all of his followers to understand! But no one believed them. They disregarded it as an idle tale (according to Luke). They still told what had happened. It must have worked because Peter went to the tomb to check it out. And he was amazed at the empty tomb.

Let us tell our story. It is not good enough to make it through the paradigm shift ourselves. We have to tell others how to make it as well. Let us tell them what happened when we went to the tomb. Tell them how death was expected. Then tell them how God rolled away the stone. Tell them how God moved the dead body. Tell them how God sent new people to help identify the shift. Tell them how the memory of God's goodness broke through! Tell them how God moved the situation from death to life.

Tell them how God provided a paradigm shift!

Maundy Thursday Service Held on April 5th



Maundy Thursday is observed during Holy Week on the Thursday before Easter, and commemorates the Last Supper when Jesus shared the Passover meal with His disciples on the night before

He was crucified. In contrast to the joyful Easter celebrations when Christians worship their resurrected Savior, Maundy Thursday services are typically more solemn occasions, marked by the shadow of Jesus' betrayal.

This year's Maundy Thursday service was held at 8:30 pm on April 5th. Devotion was led by the St. John Praise Team. The opening prayer was in the form of an Altar Call where individuals knelt at the altar and silently offered their prayers. The scripture was read from Luke 22:14-23 by the Reverend Meriam Garrett.

The Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn was the messenger. Her sermon was entitled "Life's Brackets" and the text was Luke 22:39-48. She indicated that during Lent some find that they are stronger than they thought and others find they have a ways to go. Jesus' ministry was effective and still God called Him to such a task that honest prayer was necessary. Just as Jesus was honest about His issue with the "cup" believers must be honest about their "cups" because this creates the space needed to hear from God.

Reverend Sheri continued as she explained the reason for the location, the Mount of Olives. It was a familiar place and it was the home to the garden Gethsemane. Gethsemane means olive press. Jesus was being pressed and He embraced the press. When believers embrace the press, what comes out are the press toxins that keep one from saying yes. As He did with Jesus, God sends help.

The brackets in some translations of Luke 22:43-44 mean "did this really happen?" Reverend Sheri concluded by stating that when one gets to the point that they cannot make it, look for the angel because these are the brack-

(Continued on page 3)

Stewardship Seminar Includes Teaching and Preaching

Dr. William D. Watley was the presenter for an empowering stewardship seminar on March 14-16, 2012. Dr. Watley is currently the senior pastor of St. Philip AME Church in Atlanta, Georgia. Prior to his appointment to St. Philip in 2011, he served for 30 years as pastor of St. James AME Church in Newark, NJ. He is a preacher, teacher, scholar and author. St. John had been blessed in the past to have Dr. Watley as evangelist for revivals; however, for this engagement he was a double blessing as both a teacher and a preacher. His humorous presentation style provided an atmosphere for learning the biblical facts about stewardship and life application examples.

Day 1—"How do we manage the resources that God has given us?"

The first session focused on "How do we manage the resources that God has given us?" Dr. Watley noted that God is the owner and people are the managers who have what God owns "for only a little while." Managers should be trustworthy and God has given persons what they have because they are trustworthy in God's eyesight. Giving is in response to what the Lord has given.

Dr. Watley stated that for some, money is the last stronghold to complete surrender to God. He also explained that the tithe is off the gross (off the top). Persons should not penalize God because of a government tax system that takes theirs off the top. If the gift is not 10% it is not a tithe. Tithing is systematic and not whimsical.

In closing, Dr. Watley gave the biblical example of the children of Israel and their tithe. They brought the tithe before they reached the Promised Land. He used that lesson to emphasize that the time to tithe is now.

Day 2—"The Basis of New Testament Giving"

Dr. Watley continued his teaching on the second night of the seminar by focusing on the topic of "The basis of New Testament Giving." He began by noting that some say that Christians are under the New Covenant (grace) and therefore the laws of the Old Testament regarding tithing do not apply. Dr. Watley stated that "Our passion to serve the Lord is why we do what we do. Faith began in the Old Testament." To help those present understand why tithing is still a requirement for Christians, Dr. Watley began by expounding on scriptures in the Old Testament that show that tithing was instituted before the law was given, and therefore is an act of faith, not of the law. Genesis 14 is the first instance of tithing in the Bible. Abraham gave the tithe out of thanksgiving for the goodness of God. The second instance is from Genesis 28:18-22 where Jacob presented a tithe unto the Lord out of gratitude. It is not until the third instance of tithe in Leviticus 27:30-33 that the law and tithing are mentioned.

Next, Dr. Watley moved to New Testament scriptures on tithing. He noted that Jesus took tithing to a higher level of giving; a level beyond what had been mentioned in the law and in Matthew 23:23 Jesus commends the tithe. In Mark 7:17-19 Jesus sets aside the food law but nowhere does he set aside the tithe. In Mark 12:41 Jesus commended the widow who gave her all. In Luke 18:18 Jesus told the young ruler to sell all that he had. Dr. Watley continued to give New Testament scriptures where persons gave much more than the tithe. He followed each scripture with the question, "Are you sure you want to give under grace?"

Dr. Watley concluded the Thursday seminar by emphasizing that in addition to the tithe of treasure, stewardship includes giving of time, 2 hours and 24 minutes of productive time, and talent.

(Continued on page 5)

African Methodist Episcopal Church
9th Episcopal District-2012 Mid-Winter Conference
(March 22-23, 2012)
Sheraton Birmingham Hotel, Birmingham, Alabama
By The Reverend Charles Glover

Bishop James L. Davis in exercising his authority and extraordinary and out-of-the-box vision for the 9th Episcopal District combined the major and most significant events in Church Activities (Founder's Day, Black History Celebration, Mid-Year Convocation, and Men's Conference) into one singular dynamic gathering of the Saints. The various venues at this Mid-Winter Conference included plenary sessions with guest preachers and presenters from across the Connectional Church and special guests from community organizations outside the Church. The preachers were the Reverend Dr. Jamal Bryant of Empowerment Temple AME Church, Baltimore, Maryland, and the Reverend Dr. Kelvin Calloway, Bethel AME Church, Los Angeles, California. The presenters included the Reverend Dr. Harry Seawright, the Reverend Dr. Dennis Dickerson, the Reverend Dr. Caesar Richburg, the Reverend Walter Moon, the Reverend Dr. Anderson Todd, Jr., Mr. Eric Nation, and the Pastor of Saint John AME Church in Huntsville, the Reverend Dr. Patrick Clayborn.

Pastor Clayborn was the facilitator and presenter for Plenary Session III with the topic of "Proclamation". The focal scriptures were Isaiah, Chapter 6: verses 1-13 and John, Chapter 4, verses 1-42. The four topical headings for his presentation were: (1) Mission Not Impossible; (2) The Encounter; (3) Sermon Preparation; and (4) Articulation. Pastor Clayborn very eloquently dissected the scriptures and gave attendees an in-depth scriptural explanation of the mission of born again believers and proclaimers of the Gospel. He began by stating that our mission to reach out to the world and make disciples is not impossible. We as followers of Christ must understand what our Call is, the promises that God has made relative to that call and for living a triumphant life in Him, recognize that we will face challenges in working in our calling, and finally we must exhibit joy while actually doing the call, even in the midst of struggles and uncertainty.

The sermon preparation briefing was very insightful for the Pastors and Preachers in attendance. Pastor Clayborn identified the required segments of effective sermon preparation and in the midst of his presentation, the Holy Spirit overshadowed Him and the conference room was filled with exhortation and praise. Keep "not to forget" nuggets from this presentation included: (1) Pastors and Proclaimers of the Gospel must preach the Bible, utilizing one text as much as possible, while keeping it simple. Let Jesus be the guide. He often spoke in parables that were easily understood by all, the elite and the commoner. (2) In articulation, use your own voice and stop imitating other pastors and tele-evangelists. Be the person God created you to be and let your light so shine that men will see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven (Matt 5: 16). Sharing your vision will require you to become naked before others, but the gain of truthfulness and sincerity in heart will trump the negativity or any losses revealed in your unveiling. (3) Tri-vocal preaching comes from a perspective of Pastoral Priest, Prophet, and Sage (speaking out of wisdom). The questions that must be answered include: (1) What is going on? (2) Why is it going on? (3) What ought to be going on? and, (4) How might we respond?

Pastors and Proclaimers of His Word must understand the concept of theological inquiry. That is, examining the timing of our words. Simply, knowing when to say what you say. Every time we get a flesh glimpse of God, our language should change. Our job or occupation is to keep the fire burning on the altar. Keep the presence of God in the forefront of all we do and say. We are Ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5: 20). We are His voice to the people by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Saint John Church delegation in attendance was very vocal in their appreciation and love of

(Continued on page 6)

Pastor Clayborn Interviewed on WJOU



Pastor Clayborn was interviewed on radio station WJOU 90.1FM on Sunday afternoon, March 18th. We extend a big thank you to Kenny Anderson and WJOU 90.1FM for a great interview with Pastor Patrick Clayborn on the '2nd Chance' radio broadcast.

49th Quadrennia Session of the General Conference

*Exalting Christ
to Impact the World*

June 25 - July 7, 2012

Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center, Nashville, Tennessee

Sign up today for the St. John
Lay Organization's bus trip to
General Conference on July 1st.

Contact Cassandra Ingram or Hodges Washington for more information about the trip.

Visit www.ame-church.com for more information on General Conference.

Sons of Allen Retreat Registration Has Begun

The Sons of Allen (SOA) Ministry is now taking registrations for their 6th annual summer retreat to be held June 15th through 17th at the Lake Gunter State Park Resort. The theme of this year's retreat is "R.E.V.I.V.E.: Rekindling Eternal Vision, Inspiring Victory Everywhere".

The retreat fee is \$50.00 for SOA members of St. John AMEC and \$25.00 for college students. Members that are planning to stay overnight at the resort are encouraged to register early so that plans can be finalized and to ensure that your lodging preferences are captured. Checks should be made payable to St. John AME Church with Sons of Allen Retreat in the memo.

All men, ages 18 and over, are encouraged to attend. For more information please contact Brother Tommy Anderson or Brother Theodore Tyson.

**Third Quarterly
Conference Reports
are due May 12th!**

Maundy Thursday

(Continued from page 2)

ets in life that represent what God did but others may not believe.

Following this anointed message from God and the Invitation to Christian Discipleship, Holy Communion was served. The ministers led in the consecration of the elements and congregants were served individually at the altar by Pastor Clayborn.

The special unleavened communion bread was baked by Sister Paulette Williams. The Benediction was offered by the Reverend Sheri Clayborn. This solemn service was in preparation for the sorrow of Good Friday and the rejoicing on Resurrection Sunday. To God be the Glory!

Stewardship Seminar

(Continued from page 3)

Day 3—"The Tipping Point"

The Friday night session of the Stewardship Seminar was a preaching service. The Male Chorus rendered the music with an appropriate selection, "I've Come to Receive My Blessing."

Dr. Watley's sermon was entitled "The Tipping Point" and the text was from Haggai 2:15-19. Dr. Watley began by giving these examples of tipping points. The tipping point for Blacks in the neighborhood is 20 percent. The fax machine was introduced in 1984 and the tipping point was in 1987. Rosa Parks and the Montgomery bus boycott was the tipping point for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He then posed the question, "Why can some of us not be able to tip over to financial stability?" He explained that this was the question Haggai was posing to the people. As long as they spent what they wanted on themselves and gave God the left overs, He was not going to honor them. They had to put Him first.

Dr. Watley expressed that believers should know how to trust God because they know He is faithful. He proceeded to list biblical fathers who reached their tipping points of trust; including Abraham, Caleb, Moses, Job, David, and others. Jesus reached his tipping point when He was baptized, withstood Satan in the wilderness, when He told Peter to get behind Him, when He was crucified and when He rose on the third day.

Following the message, prayer was offered for current titheers, new titheers and for persons who accepted the challenge to try tithing for 10 weeks.

Some of Dr. Watley's books were available for purchase through the seminar. Many members took advantage of the opportunity to extend the benefits of the seminar through book purchases.

Praise God for this dynamic teacher and preacher!

Ninth District Offers Group Life Insurance

The 9th Episcopal District offers Universal Group Life Insurance for clergy, WMS and Lay members of the District. The distribution to beneficiaries is 88.87% to the primary beneficiary, 13.33% to the church or charitable organization designated, and 20% to Daniel Payne College Legacy Village.

The policy is for \$75,000 (for persons under age 65) and the premium will be determined by August 2012. See the plan form for policy coverage per persons over age 65.

If you plan to enroll in the insurance program for 2013 you must submit the enrollment form to the 9th District office by May 1. The premium payment will be due by October 30, 2012.

Forms and instructions for the application process are available on the 9th District website at <http://www.ninthamec.org/index.php/component/content/article/28>. You may also contact the St John Church office for more information.

9th Episcopal District 2012 Mid-Winter Conference

(Continued from page 4)

Pastor Clayborn that carried over to the other attendees. No one present could deny that the anointed presence of the Holy Spirit had paid us a visit during this session. The question was possibly raised as to who is this anointed young Man of God among us? Now, everyone knows the new Pastor of Saint John AME Church, Huntsville. All praises and honor to God for sending this capable and humble servant to lead this congregation to higher heights and deeper depths in Him. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him (1 Corinthians 2:9).



Workers Needed 2012 Build

This year's build will be a four bedroom house at 6330 Banks Road for Diane Warren and her family. Dianne is originally from Chicago, but has lived in Tennessee and Alabama most of her life. Dianne, her two daughters, Amanda, 25, and Lindsey, 21, two grandchildren, A'shanae, 10 months, and Linden, 8 months will live in the house. Dianne is employed with National Copper.

Churches partnering with St. John are Church of the Nativity Episcopal, First Christian, St. John, St. Matthew's Episcopal, First Presbyterian, Aldersgate United Methodist, United Church Of Huntsville, and Covenant Presbyterian. St. John members are urged to participate in this project. Just show up at the work site on the work days listed below and there will be something for you to do.

DATE	DAY	ACTIVITY
Apr. 17, 19, 21	Tue, Thur, Sat	Paint walls, clean floors and windows, install vinyl tile
Apr. 24, 26, 28	Tue, Thur, Sat	Install and paint interior doors and trim, landscape
May 1, 3, 5	Tue, Thur, Sat	Install cabinets, (plumbing by others) and electrical fixture
May 8, 10, 12	Tue, Thur, Sat	Install closet hardware, window blinds, storm doors, bathroom
May 15, 17, 19	Tue, Thur, Sat	Catch up work, touch up paint, clean and wax floors Work punch list, DEDICATION CEREMONY: Sat. 19th

Regular working hours are from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM with a break for lunch around noon. Lunches are provided on Saturdays only. Bring carpentry tools, a utility knife, gloves, if you have them.

Texting Teen News

March 2012

Written by: Mariah Gullatte

I hope the luck of the Irish was on your side in March! To begin the month, the youth had a youth night out at the bowling alley with Pastor Clayborn and first lady, Reverend Sheri Clayborn, to talk about our needs and ideas for the church! We enjoyed pizza, fellowship, and fun. The pastor also learned a couple of our moves like...the stanky leg, the dougie, and the beef-it-up, just to name a few! LOL (laugh out loud). To all us kids in school, I pray that you take your time and do your absolute BEST on your TEST! :) And a quick tip! Make sure you keep away from this dreadful pollen! And that sums up this month's news! Until next time ttyl (Talk To You Later)

News text for this month is: John 19:6

When then chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.



Vacation Bible School June 11-15, 2012

We are counting on you, St. John. If you have not signed up as a volunteer for VBS, it is not too late. **DO IT TODAY.** Volunteer signup sheets are available online (http://stjohname-hsv.org/resources/file-downloads/cat_view/5-church-forms), in the church office, and in the vestibule.

Here is where volunteers are needed:

Preschool Teaching Staff
Devotion/Worship Leader
Primary Teaching Staff
Craft Coordination Staff
Adult Teaching Staff
Refreshment Planning
Teen Teaching Staff

Photographer
Registration
Skit Coordinator
Recreation Staff
Publicity Coordinator
Junior Teaching Staff
Decorations

Help wherever you can!

VBS Workshop

Urban Ministries, Inc., an African American Christian publishing and communications company, will conduct a VBS workshop to introduce the curriculum to St. John VBS teachers and staff.

EVERYONE IS INVITED!

Come out and bring a friend. The workshop will be held at:

ST JOHN A.M.E.
229 Church Street, Huntsville, AL
Saturday April 21, 2012
10:00 a.m. – 12 noon

"Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." Matthew 4:19

Artist Describes Work Displayed at Pastor's Welcome Reception



This picture was taken before the sculptures were strategically placed.

The fabric-based sculptures were intended to be transformative in nature and purpose. They were positioned in such a manner to change a common hallway into an otherworldly procession of abstract greeters. Each form was a construction of ordinary materials.

The armature or structural support was made from an ironing board and bed pillows. The outer coverings were mostly fabrics, with mixed media.

Each sculpture was based on the concept of "Elevating the Ordinary". This is an aesthetic phenomenon that dates back to the pre-historic artist. However, the concept has been adopted by modern artists, (20th & 21st centuries).

Due to the current advancement, and varied production of materials artists have found creative applications for everyday, common, or ordinary products. These products, along with natural materials, are used to express, to challenge, to delight to puzzle, to inform, and in this case to welcome the viewer.

Dr. Clifton Pearson is a retired professor of art. He has taught at numerous colleges and universities across the nation, including Alabama A&M University. He is married to Clementine Pearson and they have two grown children and a granddaughter. Dr. Pearson is a member of the St. John Steward Board and the Male Chorus.

Upcoming Preaching Engagement

Pastor Clayborn to Preach at Progressive Union

Pastor Clayborn will preach on Sunday evening, April 22nd, at 6 pm at Progressive Union Missionary Baptist Church. The Male Chorus will sing.

Progressive Union is located at 1917 Brandon Town Rd NW, Huntsville, Alabama 35816 and the Reverend Wayne Snodgrass is the pastor.

Reverend Sheri to Speak at Women's Conference

The Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn will be one of the presenters at a Women's Conference at Mt. Zion AME Church in Florence, Alabama, on May 4-5, 2012. Please encourage her with your prayers and, if possible, your attendance.

The Reverend Terrence Cato is the pastor.

Have It Your Way

Choose Bible Study at

Noon
or
6:30 pm

Join us for Noon Bible Study or the regular 6:30 p.m. Bible Study each Wednesday

Children's Bible Study at 6:30 pm

Easter Program 2012: Like No Other

By Cheryl Anderson

When Reverend McCall would always say, "the best is yet to come," he had no idea what would happen on Easter Sunday 2012.

The moments before the Easter program began, started like any other with much hustle and bustle. There were props to be set up, costumes to be donned, and children to be found and put in place. Once these areas were taken care of the program began.

Ms. Ernestine Barnes-Ivery began the program with the song "Were You There" which was followed by a prayer read by Yvette Cooper-Clark and the scripture reading taken from John 3:16-21 read by Reverend Meriam Garrett.



The children marched into the sanctuary to the tune of "Hosanna" holding signs and waving palm leaves looking sharp in their Easter garb. After they were in place to sing, Ms. Rosa Whittaker read a poem titled, "Hosanna Be the Children's Song", and then the children's choir sang "Children, Jesus Loves You" and "Were You There".

Following the children's choir, Michael Clark, Anthony Harbin, Brittney Lockett, Roderick Lockett, Ronald Lockett, Jr. and Eddie Whitehead, Jr. performed a skit called "Happy Happy Day" with assistance from Julian Joseph.

Recitations were given by Jared Burns, Patrick Clayborn II, Kennedy Rankin-Crutchner, Jessica Harbin, Blake Johnson,

Reagan Lawson, Anthony Mack, Caylon Mayes, Curtis Mayes, Jordan Patterson, Breeyanna Rochelle, Jasmyne Rochelle, Kathryn Buckham-White, McLeod Buckham-White, Kimberly Whitehead, Janise Williams, Cambridge Wilson and Channing Ransom Wilson.

Tashia Moore-Hart, LeeTre' Johnson, TaLea Moore, and Tobias Moore (grandchildren of Mrs. Rosemary Wells), all the way from Coleman Chapel A.M.E. Church in



(Continued on page 11)

Easter Program 2012: Like No Other

(Continued from page 10)

Kenosha, Wisconsin, gave an AMAZING praise dance performance to "Don't Cry"! The St. John Youth and Young Adult Praise Dance Team consisting of Kalon Anderson, Kourtney Burwell, Chelsea Carter, Mariah Gullatte, Brittany Lockett, Jayla Mack, Wallace Parham, Kimberly Whitehead, Channing Ransom Wilson, and coordinator Jennifer Patterson performed several dances throughout the play. The songs were: "Help Me Believe", "Father Can You Hear Me", "My Testimony", and "Still I Rise". They were all awesome! The addition of the young men was especially nice to see.

The play titled "God's Masterpiece: A Portrait of the Life that Changed Humanity" was adapted from Matthew chapters 27 and 28. The focus of the play was of Jesus' trial before Pontius Pilate, the soldiers mocking Jesus, the crucifixion, the death and burial of Jesus, the rolling away of the stone at the tomb, and Jesus' resurrection.

The play participants were: Glenn Harbin as Jesus; Dennis DeLoach as Pontius Pilate; Alicia Brownlow as Pilate's wife; Landon Moore as Barabbas; David Wells, Xavier Rembert and Brandon Moore as Pharisees; Josiah Gullatte, Michael Clark, Anthony Harbin and Eddie Whitehead, Jr. as Soldiers; Ashley Lewis as Mary Magdalene; Daisha Rembert as Mary, the mother of James and Joseph; Kaitlyn McClung as Mary, Zebedee's wife; and Erica Harbin as the Angel of the Lord. The narrators were: Yvette Cooper-Clark, Justin York, Lorraine Parham, Pamela Whitehead, and Rosemary Wells. Karmen Latimore read a poem and Shayla Wilson read a prayer at the end of the play. They all were EXCELLENT!



The back ground for the play included a slide show displayed on a big screen with pictures relevant to each scene. Dr. Pearson created a stone which was used as the prop for the tomb scene. There was music playing throughout the scenes provided by Mr. Willie Sandifer in the sound booth. Mr. Lawrence Souffrant on piano also provided music.



The pièce de résistance was Ms. Mary Rankin singing "We Shall Behold Him". OMG that was the best program ending! She sounded BEAUTIFUL! She received a standing ovation and there were many tears shed.

Overall, the program touched so many lives. So much so, that eleven year old Josiah Gullatte gave his life to Christ. There wasn't a dry eye left in the sanctuary. This was the best Easter Program ever!

Parent Wisdom

By Reverend Vanessa Glover

Parents may ask, how does one become wise? What are the human mechanisms to encourage it? When God, of course, is the provider of wisdom, one learns from the cloud of witnesses who have gone before. The wisdom and virtue passed on through time as one generation learns from the obedience of its witnesses/elders. God's faithfulness in the future was established because of His faithfulness in the past. History and traditions are not simply to remember "what happened" but to maintain a shared memory that shaped identity. It is imperative to learn from the cloud of witnesses who by faith faced difficult times yet persevered. We experience wisdom when we pace ourselves in this life fulfilling our God-given purpose. (Hebrews Chapter 11—the Hall of Faith) We experience wisdom when we put on the Armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18) and run the Christian race with perseverance looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of Faith, who endured the cross, despising the shame, and now seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews Chapter 12) The writer of Hebrews presented examples of men and women living by faith in chronological order so that today in real-time these great men and women of faith continue to speak to us, long after they are gone. The writer is encouraging us to live the faith God has given us, not primarily saving faith; but the life of faith!



Why do We Praise Him?

We all have heard the rhyme, "April showers bring May flowers." Well, this is the season to get your Praise on! After the unpleasant elements of the rain in our lives, after an increased level of the Word of God that causes growth, and Faith the size of a mustard seed that He is still working in the unseen realm of our lives—Now is the time to Praise Him for who He is...

He is the foundation of our Faith
He is the key to our Knowledge
He is the well-spring of Wisdom
He is the doorway to our Deliverance
He is the pathway to our Peace
He is the roadway to Righteousness
He is the gate keeper to Glory
He is the highway to our Happiness.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory. Selah. Psalm 24:7-9 KJV

Prayer: Lord, I pray our children will not be ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes. Romans 1:16

Thoughtful Parent: FAMILY, like branches on a tree, all grow in different directions yet roots remain as one.—Author unknown

9th Episcopal District
African Methodist Episcopal Church
2012 Pentecost Explosion

"Igniting the World for Christ"



**DOOR TO DOOR
WITNESSING**

Sunday, May 27, 2012
11:00am – 3:00pm

**All AME Churches
in the
State of Alabama**

"Igniting the World for Christ"

James Levert Davis

Servant Bishop

Arelis B. Davis

NMS Supervisor

*For additional information please contact the 9th Episcopal District Office 205.326.4499
or visit our website: ninthamec.org*

P. O. Box 11705, Birmingham, Alabama 35202

Church School Lesson Overview – May 2012

May Church School reviews were written by Kenneth Parham.

May 6, 2012

Lesson Title: The Bread of Life

Lesson Scripture: John 6

Print: John 18:22-35

Devotional Songs: #530 [], #258 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty" (John 6:35).

After Jesus satisfied the basic need of the crowd, the crowd sought to locate Jesus and to hold a spiritual discussion with Jesus. But Jesus knew that the crowd was not ready. He understood that the crowd still needed nourishing in order to achieve spiritual awareness. In the dialogue with the crowd, Jesus made the points that man should work for food that endures for eternal life, that it was not Moses who provided the bread from heaven but that it was God and, that Jesus (He) is the true Bread. He is to the soul what bread is to the body, nourishment and support for the spiritual life. Matthew Henry's commentary indicates that the significance of Jesus' statements was that He is the Bread which came down from heaven and His proclamation denotes the Divinity of Christ's person and also His authority, the Divine origin of all the good which flows through Him.

May 13, 2012

Lesson Title: The Good Shepherd

Lesson Scripture: John 10:1-18

Print: John 10:7-18

Devotional Songs: #235 [], #251 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me" (John 10:14).

This text can be broken into two parts. In John 10:7-10, Jesus compared Himself to a gate or door and in John 10:11-18, Jesus compared Himself as the Good Shepherd.

As the gate or gate keeper, Jesus implied that He is the great Mediator between God and man. He also implied that there were others before Him who gave inaccurate directions as

to how to come into God's kingdom. The accurate answer is that one must come in by Jesus Christ as the Door. Jesus also made a promise of salvation to the believers. Christ has all that care for His church, and for every believer, that a good shepherd has for his flock; and He expects the church, and every believer, to wait on Him and to stay in His presence.

As a Good Shepherd, Jesus made an analogy with many who were not thieves, yet were careless in their duty and could cause spiritual harm (worldly or poor doctrine) to the sheep, or even abandonment of the sheep; leaving the sheep (Christians) to navigate through worldly crises. Jesus on the other hand, knows whom He has chosen, and is sure of them; they also know whom they have trusted, and are sure of Him. Jesus made acknowledgement of others that may not be of the Jewish faith but who seeks the truth as well and that He will be their Shepherd as well. Jesus identifies the one trait that made Him a candidate for being a Good Shepherd; that was His willingness to lay down His life for the redemption of the sheep.

May 20, 2012

Lesson Title: The Resurrection and the Life

Lesson Scripture: John 11:1-44

Print: John 11:17-27, 41-44

Tentative Devotional Songs: #520 [], #272 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.'" (John 11:25).

This lesson demonstrates an example of unwavering faith shown by both Martha and Mary. Many know the story of Lazarus, his illness, his death and his resurrection by Jesus. Martha, hearing that Jesus was nearby met Him as he approached. It is noted that she was not combative or angry in communicating with Jesus. She confronted Jesus with faith and simply stated that if Jesus had been near, her brother would not have died. Jesus then took the opportunity to teach a life changing lesson. He indicated that if she really believed in HIM, she would know that HE was the resurrection and the life and that those who believe in HIM even though they die, will live. Martha indicated that yes, she believed Jesus was the Son of God.

(Continued on page 15)





Church School Lesson

(Continued from page 14)

This lesson teaches that even though one goes through trials, if they enter with the faith shown by Martha and Mary they too will come out of the storm tested, but spiritually whole.

May 27, 2012

Lesson Title: The Way, the Truth, and the Life

Lesson Scripture: John 14

Print: John 14:1-14

Tentative Devotional Songs: #221 ☐; #345 ☐; and #243 ☐

Key Verse: "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'" (John 14:6).

Throughout the Gospels, the relationship that Jesus had with the disciples was well documented. As noted in the scriptures, Jesus discussed the purpose of His ministry, how His ministry fulfilled the scriptures of the earlier prophets and that He would someday be taken away and would be the sacrificial offering for man.

Time after time, one of the disciples asked or made an inappropriate statement. Jesus then had to either demonstrate His spirituality by performing a miracle or put the disciple in check by making a profound statement or revelation. It is surmised that Jesus spoke in parables or in other methods, because He understood the time schedule that He was on but others of His time did not. Imagine doing all the things that Jesus did in three short years. What He accomplished in that short time period would be the accomplishments of a lifetime for most. The reviewer again surmises that the disciple's minds were not ready to comprehend the finality of the moment in John 13 and John 14. It is noted later, in John, that even after the resurrection, one of the disciples showed his faithlessness by wanting proof before he fully believed.

There is now a Young Adult Church School Class that is taught by Dr. Thalia Love Brown.

See you in Church School!

GO GREEN

Be responsible when disposing of unused medications. Most pharmacies have an envelope that you may purchase for a small fee to be used to mail the medications to a location for safe disposal.

Church School Book Club

April 2012 Discussion Date: 21 April 2012
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Game Plan for Life: Your Personal Playbook for Success, Joe Gibbs, 2011

May 2012 Discussion Date: 20 May 2012
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Emancipation of Robert Sadler, Chapian & Sadler, 2012

Over fifty years after the Emancipation Proclamation, Robert Sadler was sold into slavery at the age of five--by his own father. This is the no-holds-barred tale of those dark days, his quest for freedom, and the determination to serve others born out of his experience. It is a story of good triumphing over evil, of God's grace, and of an extraordinary life of ministry.

Health Corner

The Alzheimer's Association Mid South Chapter is sponsoring an Alzheimer's A-Z Event, Saturday, May 5 2012 at the UAH University Center. Everything one needs to know about Alzheimer's will be under one roof. The event is FREE and it is open to the public.

There will be relevant presentations about Alzheimer's, entertainment, family caregiver workshops, CEU's available for professionals, respite area, kid zone and much more.

Call today for more information at 256.880.1575 or visit us at www.alz.org/altn.

May 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 6:00 p.m. Stewardless Board Meeting	2 12:00 p.m. Bible Study 5:00 p.m. Steward Board 6:30 p.m. Mid-week Service and Love Feast	3  5:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	4	5 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 10:00 a.m. Official Board
6 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	7	8 6:00 p.m. Sons of Allen Meeting	9 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	10	11	12 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 10:30 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting 11:00 a.m. Children's Chorus Rehearsal
13 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	14 6:00 p.m. Single Adult Ministry	15 SOUP KITCHEN 11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m. 6:00 p.m. Trustee Board	16 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	17	18  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	19 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 11:00 a.m. Children's Chorus Rehearsal
20 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship MISSIONARY DAY	21 6:00 p.m. Single Adult Ministry	22	23 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	24  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	25  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	26 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 9:30 a.m. Women's Ministry
27 PENTECOST 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Witnessing	28 MEMORIAL Day	29	30 12:00 p.m. Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Mid-week Service and Love Feast	31  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal		

St. John's Children Enjoy Easter Egg Hunt

Easter week end was an exciting time for the children at St. John. The weekend began on Friday evening with the Easter program rehearsal. Following the rehearsal many of the children and youth (with parental supervision) participated in an overnight lock-in. The morning breakfast included sausage, pancakes, milk, juice and fruit. Another Easter program rehearsal was held at 9 am and the Easter Egg Hunt was held after the rehearsal.



Something to Smile About!

Joke of the Month



A young boy had just gotten his driving permit. He asked his father, who was a minister, if they could discuss the use of the car. His father took him to his study and said to him, "I'll make a deal with you. You bring your grades up, study your Bible a little and get your hair cut and we'll talk about it." After about a month the boy came back and again asked his father if they could discuss use of the car. They again went to the father's study where his father said, "Son, I've been real proud of you. You have brought your grades up, you've studied your Bible diligently, but you didn't get your hair cut!" The young man waited a moment and replied, "You know Dad, I've been thinking about that. You know, Samson had long hair, Moses had long hair, Noah had long hair, and even Jesus had long hair...." To which his father replied, "Yes, and they walked everywhere they went!"

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The Right Reverend James L. Davis, Servant Bishop

Mrs. Arelis B. Davis, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Doctor Patrick Clayborn, Pastor

Important Dates to Remember



- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| April 21 | VBS Workshop, 10:00 am—12:00 pm
Urban Ministries, Inc., Instructor |
| April 22 | Progressive Union Missionary Baptist Church, Pastor Clayborn,
Preacher, 6:00 pm |
| May 20, 2012 | Missionary Day, 10:50 am, The Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn,
Preacher |
| May 27, 2012 | Pentecost Explosion |
| June 11-15, 2012 | Vacation Bible School |
| June 27—July 4, 2012 | 49th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference of the
African Methodist Episcopal Church, Nashville, Tennessee |

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart
that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9

ST. JOHN A.M.E.N. NEWSLETTER



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 17 Issue 5

May 2012

Pastor's Meditation

The Direction of Love: An Ode to Mothers

1 Corinthians 13



Reverend and Patrick D. Clayton

Motherhood is not defined merely by biology. Yes, biology plays a role. However, a person does not have to physically bear a child to be a mother. The force that truly characterizes motherhood is love. The apostle Paul said, "If I speak in the tongues of mortals and angels, but don't have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). Motherhood does involve service to and the rearing of a child, a dream, or a vision. Yet, motherhood is more than a set of actions. The set of actions is guided by love.

Love transforms a person into being a mother. Love is an agent of transformation. Before a person genuinely offers love, he or she has first been transformed by love. Is it not interesting that Jesus told us to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:31)? Certainly, we must love ourselves to love others, but Jesus' statement also implies that we must be touched by love before we offer it to others. Love demands transformation! This is why Paul says, "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways" (1 Corinthians 13:11). Love matures one from childish self-centeredness to a maturity that helps others. Without love, the energy to stay up late helping with homework is impossible to find. Without love, the sensitivity to care for that struggling young child or young dream is undetectable. Love puts an inexhaustible endurance in mothers that never allows for giving up on that which comes from their physical or spiritual wombs.

Thus, the love of a mother always touches someone else. There is no way to love without touching. Howard Thurman – in his book *Jesus and the Disinherited* – says that contact without fellowship produces contempt. Charity work without a sense of fellowship is not love. We cannot overlook people and claim to serve them. Love is not done in general and in abstract. Love is done in the particular and concrete. How do we love someone generally? If we love someone, there are specific reasons why you love that person. Their smile puts a bounce in your step. Their life has so touched our life that it transformed us. Or, we have an inherent interest to help meet their needs. Again, love involves touch. Paul said, "Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful... [Love] bears all things... [and] endures all things" (1 Corinthians 13:4-7). Love touches someone else! Love involves touching with care. This means that a mother's agenda is always making someone else primary.

(Continued on page 2)

Pastor's Meditation

The Direction of Love: An Ode to Mothers

(Continued from page 1)

Let us be clear. When Paul says that love bears all things and endures all things, he is NOT talking about enduring abuse! Love bears the work of rejecting abuse and liberating those trapped by abuse. There is a difference between abuse and sacrifice. Love will make sacrifices. Love turns over tables in the temple and requires a higher standard for those who profess love. Love will risk crucifixion to spread its message. The cross cannot kill love permanently. Love rises again. Love never fails! This typifies the love of a mother.

Finally, love trusts God. A mother's love puts its trust in God. The bible is replete with traditional examples of mothers putting their trust in God. Hannah literally gives her child to God by leaving him in the temple to be raised by the priests (1 Samuel 1-3). Additionally, the bible is filled with examples of non-traditional mothers putting their trust in God. Esther, a queen who has no biological children – intercedes for her nation of Israel by risking her life in going to see the king. She said, "If I perish, I perish" (Esther 4:16). Rahab, a prostitute, protects the enemies of her country because she recognizes that God is for her nation's enemies (Joshua 2). The woman with an alabaster box – who is not connected to any man and has no children – uses the expensive ointment within it to serve Jesus (Matthew 26:6-13). A mother's love is willing to put life at risk in trusting God so that help and hope is given to someone or something else.

Let us thank God for the direction that love takes. Let us thank God for mothers – traditional and non-traditional. We give God praise for each of you. We salute you for the love you have spread in this world!

Reverend Sheri Speaks at Women's Conference

By Janette Smith



The Reverend Sheri Clayborn was an invited guest speaker for Mt. Zion A.M.E.'s first annual Women's Conference. The Florence, Alabama church is under the leadership of the Reverend Terrence Cato and his wife the Reverend Alice Cato.

On Saturday, May 5, 2012, Rev. Sheri ministered to the eager group of about 25 women about, 'Finding the Inner Path to God.' The workshop led attendees to reflect on how much time they spend weekly on activities like working, sleeping, entertainment and faith-filled devotion. Then, Rev. Sheri shared how truly finding the inner path to God requires surrender, accepting and offering forgiveness daily, and a lifestyle of worship. The workshop attendees shared very candidly about the areas of their lives that draw their attentions away from spending time with God and they were open to hear Rev. Sheri's pearls of wisdom about dealing with day to day conflicts that arise. The session created deep inner reflection, meaningful dialogue and even offered a few laughs.

The SonRise Pageant

By Erin Lott

The Single Adult Ministry hosted a trip to the SonRise Pageant in Collegedale, TN on April 7, 2012. The SonRise Pageant is an interactive, put-you-there-at-the-scene trip through Christ's final days leading to His death and resurrection. The cast is made up of over 500 Southern Adventist University students and church members. The Collegedale Seventh-day Adventist Church has offered this "walk-through" pageant since 1998.

The pageant began in the Collegedale Church sanctuary where attendees witnessed various scenes of hopelessness and despair, such as a family in front of their home destroyed by a tornado, the homeless waiting in line for food, and a teen facing peer pressure. It was later revealed that angels were present in every scene. Finally Jesus appeared over each scene, showing that even though one feels alone or without hope, God is ever present.

Once the group left the sanctuary, they entered Judea on the quest to Jerusalem. Judea featured a small market place, llamas, camels, goats, and even lepers outside the city begging for money. At the gates of Jerusalem there was a wait for guards to allow entrance into the city. As the walk continued through Jerusalem, there was a pottery shop, blacksmith's shop, a winery, and a hotel amongst other things. Next, palms were given to everyone and small children announced the coming of Jesus into Jerusalem. Jesus arrived to fanfare on a donkey and began to mingle with the crowd.

Christ and His disciples then gathered for the Last Supper. Jesus made it known that one of His disciples would betray Him. His disciples were flabbergasted by His announcement. The group observed Christ and His disciples engage in the first communion. Jesus broke the bread and poured the wine explaining its meaning and significance. Jesus also washed the feet of His disciples and declared, to the disbelief of Peter, that Peter would deny Him three times.

Everyone walked away from the Last Supper to the Garden of Gethsemane. In the garden, they witnessed Jesus' prayer to God. Though Jesus wanted to fulfill God's will, He also wanted the suffering to end. This struggle was shown by the metaphoric appearance of Satan and an angel. Satan tempted Jesus to walk away and not save sinners. The angel proclaimed that Jesus' act would save the world. Jesus then knew what He had to do, save humankind. After He stood from His prayer to wake His disciples, a mob led by Judas appeared. An altercation arose and Jesus asked His disciples not to resist. Jesus went willingly. This scene rekindled this writer's love to serve the Lord because of all the anguish and trials that He went through just to save me. At that moment, this writer wanted to enter the scene and truly fight for the Lord.

Jesus was then led to be judged by Pilate in front of a large crowd. Pilate asked if Jesus was truly the King of the Jews. Jesus replied that He was. The crowd became restless with people shouting accusations about Jesus. It was very unsettling to know that someone you love (Jesus) was treated so badly. Pilate's yearly custom was to release a prisoner the crowd wanted. When asked to choose between the prisoner and Jesus, the crowd chose the prisoner. Pilate released the prisoner and ordered Jesus flogged, whipped, and turned over to Roman soldiers to be crucified. Overwhelming shouts from the crowd were heard, satisfied with Pilate's orders. Jesus took His cross and with little strength began His walk to be crucified. As the group walked behind Jesus, they witnessed people mocking and yelling at Him. Some in the crowd walked along, celebrating His pain and upcoming crucifixion. This writer was irritated by their actions. It was amazing how the people were so quick to judge and revel in the suffering of Jesus.

Jesus was then crucified on a cross and died. Emotions in the crowd were high as Jana Goggans witnessed a young girl yell "No" and she began to cry. A young soloist sang "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord" as Jesus' body was lowered from the cross and led to the tomb.

(Continued on page 10)



Vacation Bible School
Sunday—Thursday
June 10-14, 2012

Register NOW!

Vacation Bible School 2012 is coming soon. Class registration forms are available in the vestibule. Help us to get you the materials you need to make VBS an enjoyable experience for all.

REGISTER NOW!!

"Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." Matthew 4:19

Pentecost Explosion 2012...

Door to Door Witnessing

"Igniting the World for Christ"

May 27th, 2012

On Sunday May 27th, there will be one service at 8 a.m.

Takin' It to the Streets!
Pentecost Explosion 2012

JOIN US for a LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE!

Sunday, May 27, 2012

11AM-3PM

Join your church family

&

be an agent of change in our community!



Pastor Clayborn leads training session for witness teams.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
Acts 1:8 NLT

Powerful Messages Delivered at Spring Revival

By AMEN Staff Writers



The Reverend Homer McCall, The Reverend Bankole Akinbinu and Pastor Clayborn

Spring Revival was off to a spirited start led by the St John Praise Team of Brother Dennis DeLoach, Mrs. Cheryl Anderson, Ms. Jeanette Smith, Ms. Jakeyah York and Mr. Lars Avery. The Reverend Charles Glover offered the opening prayer. The Reverend Meriam Garrett read scripture. Kalon Anderson and Wallace Parham ministered in dance, along with Mariah Gullatte. The Reverend Bankole Akinbinu, pastor of Baptist Grove Church in Raleigh, North Carolina, was the evangelist.

The evangelist began the first night of revival with a thought provoking message. The back ground text for the sermon was from Genesis 11:31 – 12:3, with Acts 7:1-3 as a supplemental text. The subject was "Goodbye is the only Option." The sermon began with the story as described in Genesis of Abraham. Rev. Akinbinu referenced Abraham as a central personality to assist in understanding a relationship with God and the righteousness that comes through faith.

In the story of Abraham, God directed him to leave his family and country; God wanted to bring him to something new. God told him he would be blessed if he followed Him. Abraham believed God, but struggled to say goodbye to the old. Rev. Akinbinu stated "When God sends us into a new season, He also wants us to say goodbye to the old. We should say hello to seeking God first and goodbye to the idols.....release what is dear to us." Rev. Akinbinu cautioned, "God won't allow you to come into the promise He has for you if someone is going to tear it down. Stop compromising, say goodbye and be free." Every delay on the journey is not because God is not ready to take people into a new season; but because people take the long route. One should release what God wants released to get there faster. Rev. Akinbinu compared the airline's baggage check limit to personal lives. If bags weigh too much, the options are to unload and leave some things behind or pay a higher price. He stated the same is true for one's spiritual life.

Reverend Akinbinu challenged worshippers to ask themselves, "How long will you continue to pay a higher price?" Say goodbye to avoid being controlled by terror. When a person does not follow God's directions, they often "settle in" when God has so many more blessings for them. Rev. Akinbinu suggested persons end up settling for less and therefore they do not have the peace God wants them to have. The evangelist stated "God has more in store for you. You will have everything you need - integrity, peace, everything you need, if you say goodbye to whatever God asks you to let go of."

The spirited services continued on Thursday night. The sermon for the evening was entitled "Weary Warrior, Keep Fighting" with text from 2 Samuel 23:8-10. In this message he likened the life of a believer to that of one of David's mighty warriors, Eleazar. He had tenacity and determination in spite of fatigue. The warrior is a good model for the believer because when one decides to order their footsteps in the Word of God, they are called into warfare. Faith and discipleship are a call to stand in opposition to the world of death. Rev. Akinbinu stated that the bible uses militaristic metaphors to describe the Christian life and quoted a number of these verses.

Eleazar was a model to believers because of the nature of his enemies, the Philistines. They kept coming back, trying to destroy the people of God. Likewise believers repeatedly face the generational curses of families, thorns in the flesh, situations that are taken to the altar and then taken back, racist practices and bigotries. When the devil cannot overpower, his strategy is to make one weary so that they will retreat and abandon a victory that has already been secured. Like Eleazar, believers should stand their ground because the blood still has power.

(Continued on page 6)

Powerful Messages Delivered at Spring Revival

(Continued from page 5)



According to the preacher, Eleazar's motivation was that he knew whose he was. His father was a military general and he was a descendant of Benjamin, a tribe known for warfare. Believers have to know who they are and look within at the rich stock from whence they have come. They have the blood of Jesus. Rev. Akinbinu also highlighted the point that Eleazar knew he had to continue to hold on to the sword, even though his hand grew weary. God would work a victory through his weary hand. The believer has a rock and a sword and should never get too tired or weary to hold on to the sword, the Word of God. Rev. Akinbinu recited a series of promises in the Word of God that should cause one to hold on.

Rev. Akinbinu stated that Eleazar's name means "Lord help me." He asked the question, "Do you know the God who is on your side?" He reminded everyone that they have a God who fought the battle for Jesus on their side and ended the message with the reminder "If God be for us who can be against us?"

Friday was the culmination of an outstanding revival series. Music for the evening was provided by the Alabama A and M Gospel Choir which augmented the inspirational service. The Reverend Akinbinu continued to bring enlightening and uplifting revival messages. In this final night, the text was Luke 1:26-38, with the sermon titled, simply, "Abnormal". The size of the one-word title did not reflect the enormity of the message.

Reverend Akinbinu began by describing the typical or "normal" development over a lifetime that might be described as "uneventful." He noted that Mary, the mother of Jesus, likely expected, but did not have this "normal" transition from childhood to marriage, a family of her own, and death. He noted the specific events that impacted Mary as she learned how "abnormal" her marriage and life would be due to her special calling as well as the "abnormal" events of Jesus' life.

He noted that it would be "tragic" to live life in a normal/"status quo" manner rather than living life in the fashion of being "fearfully and wonderfully made by God". That is, to have the "dash between your birthdate and expiration date read 'normal'". He encouraged those listening to not worry about those who misunderstand or hate them, noting, "They hated Jesus". The evangelist indicated that the methods to hear messages from God (rather than man) include going to church, isolating oneself from people and "the loudness" that "blocks out what God would have you hear; that is, His message/revelations. Reverend Akinbinu urged living on the word of the Lord, even when it seems like things are not going well.

Reverend Akinbinu proclaimed that God has "called us to bring abnormal fruit because of God's abnormal favor (e.g. what God did with and for Mary). He emphasized setting lofty goals and that with God, one can "allow what happened to Mary happen to you. Let the Holy Spirit overshadow you. Allow God to control your tongue, your mind, you." Recognize that those positive attributes, as well as possessions, are all gifts from God.

The masterful evangelist brought the message to a crescendo as he highlighted the "abnormal" life, death, and resurrection, of Jesus. The congregants rose to their feet in acclamation as Reverend Akinbinu proclaimed "I SERVE AN ABNORMAL GOD...I GIVE HIM ABNORMAL PRAISE... AS HE DESERVES."

As with each night, special prayer was offered for individuals (tonight it was Mariah Gullatte who offered a captivating ministry through dance) and anyone who wanted to come forward could do so. This culminating night of revival was filled with a spiritual rejoicing and exuberance, which actually characterized the entire series. Reverend Akinbinu, Pastor Clayborn, and each participant in the services inspired those who were blessed to attend.

Quadrennial General Conference Worship Service July 1, 2012



Round trip bus fare to Nashville:
\$20 per person

Depart from the church parking
lot at 7:00 a.m. and return the
same day.

Deadline to pay bus fare: May 25th

Sponsored by St. John Lay Organization

After the worship service, dine at
"Cock of the Walk" Restaurant (Dutch treat)



Although the outstanding success of these restaurants has been centered around their signature item — fried catfish filets ("Possibly the best catfish in the nation," Craig Claiborne, former food critic for the N.Y. Times), the menu has been expanded to include: fried shrimp, steaks, salads, and broiled chicken and fish.

The Different Dimensions Of Motherhood WHO DO YOU CALL MOTHER?

By Abbiegail Hugine



When Julia Ward Howe conceptualized Mother's Day in the United States in 1870, I am sure she did not intentionally include only biological mothers. As we look at the dimensions of motherhood it can fall into several categories.

As I look back over my life I can group the persons who mentored me into several categories of motherhood. They are biological, spiritual, and surrogate.

My biological mother, Viola Wright Hamilton, can be summed up in the words found in Proverbs 31:25-28: "She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come. She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue. She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness; her children arise and call her blessed; her hus-

band also; and he praises her." She provided care, taught me respect and moral values, taught me how to pray and most importantly, how to love others. I was truly amazed how my mother was able to raise 11 children and provide care and all of our basic necessities. I am sure everyone says the same thing, but my mother was the "best ever."

My spiritual mothers were my grandmothers, Martha Boles Wright and Mary Billie Hamilton, who remind me of Mary and Martha in the bible. Both had a lasting impression on my life. Martha Wright was a very spiritual person who felt that you did everything according to the book. She was the person who led me to accept Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Savior over fifty years ago. She made me learn bible verses and passages. All of the spiritual children had to learn three passages from the Bible: Psalm 23, Psalm 100, and I Corinthians 13. Throughout my life I have remembered these passages but also have added more as I have matured as a Christian. She also taught me how to pray with meaning and conviction.

My grandmother Mary on the other hand was more subtle in expressing her faith, but she expressed and lived the life of a Christian each day with her smile, her care, and sharing her spirit with the entire community. I never saw her angry in the years that I knew her. She was truly an example as stated in James 2: 14-17: "What good is it my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."

Throughout my life, I have also had surrogate mothers. There have been many but I will just name two. Each taught me different things that I am now using in life. My aunt, Deloris Wright Williams, provided opportunities for me to appreciate who I was as a person. Although I came from meager beginnings, it did not mean that I had to live that way. She provided opportunities

(Continued on page 10)

iTHRIVE Magazine Set to Launch June 2012

By Janette R. Smith

The youth and young adults of this age fight what seems to be an uphill battle to grow and develop in character and God consciousness. The messages of mainstream media very seldom reflect the positive images of what and who they should aspire to become. The iTHRIVE team began seeking new ways to minister to the young people in our church. The goal: to make the word of God accessible and palatable for that generation by offering a resource that is real, raw and relevant for the type of situations and circumstances they face.

"If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you always got." That familiar phrase proves true even in church. We know we can't successfully fight what society throws at our young people using the same ministry approaches of our own youth. On that realization the concept for iTHRIVE was born.

Get Connected. Stay Connected. That tag line reflects the magazine's charge to young people to draw close to Jesus Christ through God's Word, as we share transparent and engaging articles on numerous topics including:

- What it means to be saved
- Personal stories and testimonies from members
- How to relate (personal relationships and family ties)
- Coping with Disappointment
- Facing Fear
- Spiritual Growth
- Understanding Financial Responsibility
- Dealing with Attitudes and Emotions

That is only a sample of the types of subjects iTHRIVE will tackle. Each issue will also include a word from Rev. Patrick Clayborn (referred to in the magazine as Pastor P.C.) and will also include a periodic column that gives young people an opportunity to pose questions to Rev. P.C.

Contributing columnists including Rev. Sheri Smith Clayborn (Rev. Sheri), Janette Smith, Mariah Gullatte (aka - Mariah G.), Kalon Anderson, and Dennis DeLoach will also provide entertainment segments covering interests from editorials to fashion, plus hot new music and books. There are so many awesome, creative word-based outlets for young people to plug into, and the magazine aspires to be a resource for these types of offerings. The magazine will also launch its corresponding twitter page to help distribute the magazine and keep followers up-to-date on upcoming events.

The Magazine is just the beginning of a movement to better serve our youth and young adults. Stay tuned for more as we fully develop a plan to launch 'Friday Nite Live' a word and worship experience especially for the young and young at heart. THAT service won't be 'church as usual', but Jesus will be celebrated!

The team also hopes to use the magazine as a vehicle for training, providing internships and mentoring opportunities to those interested in media, journalism, marketing, branding and sales. So if you or someone you know is interested in becoming a part of the iTHRIVE staff, drop by the office to sign up.



The SonRise Pageant

(Continued from page 3)

Finally, the group entered the school gymnasium to view the resurrection of Christ. This was an exciting, spectacular scene full of theatrical pyrotechnics and flying angels.

I would write more about this dramatization but the Single Adult Ministry unanimously decided to plan and host another trip to the SonRise Pageant next year. We hope each of you will join us to feel the spiritual rejuvenation that was experienced that beautiful day.

Who Do You Call Mother?

(Continued from page 8)

for me to experience the finer things of life, acting like a lady, keeping your fingernails clean, speaking fluently, and, more importantly, along with my mother supported the need for an education. She also took me on my first trip out of the state of South Carolina in the fifth grade which sparked my love of travel which continues even today.

My second surrogate mother was my mother-in-law, Irene Short Hugine. I was blessed to have her as my first and second grade teacher. Although resources were limited, she never wavered in giving me the start I needed to become a life-long learner and have a love of learning. She believed that all children could learn, if given a chance. Irene would later become my mother-in-law and I would affectionately call her "mom."

Both of my surrogate mothers lived up to what is stated in Proverbs 4:1-2 and 11-13: "Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction; pay attention and gain understanding. I give you sound learning, so do not forsake my teaching. I guide you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths. When you walk, your steps will not be hampered; when you run, you will not stumble."

I have used the lessons I learned from the "mothers" in my life, throughout my life, as a teacher, administrator, and First Lady. The lessons of respect, moral values, a love of people, presentation of self to the public, and most importantly the love of God who is the center of everything I do. I have tried to share these with students and young people that I come in contact with wherever I go.

In conclusion, these dimensions of "motherhood" (biological, spiritual, and surrogate) can have an impact on all of our lives. On Mother's Day and throughout the year be certain to express your gratitude to those persons who have had a lasting impact on your life. You should make a vow to God that you will become a "mother" to someone to fulfill that physical, spiritual, or emotional need.

Happy Mother's Day!

Calling All Graduates and Retirees!



Calling ALL graduates (High School, College, and Graduate School) and Retirees! Please pick up a form in the church office or the vestibule, complete and return the form to the church office by Sunday, June 3rd.

If you do NOT submit a form, your information will not be included in the recognition bulletin. Please help us honor you on this special day.

Pre-Pentecost Fellowship

ALL are welcome!

Friday, May 18th

from 6:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

Witnessing ~ Dinner ~ Fun ~ Fellowship

Sons of Allen Retreat Registration Has Begun

The Sons of Allen (SOA) Ministry is now taking registrations for their 8th annual summer retreat to be held June 15th through 17th at the Lake Guntersville State Park Resort. The retreat fee is \$50.00 for SOA members of St. John AMEC and \$25.00 for college students. All men, ages 18 and over, are encouraged to attend. For more information please contact Brother Tommy Anderson or Brother Theodore Tyson.

AAMU Corner

AAMU Places in Home Depot "Retool" Contest



After a hard-fought battle by Alabama A&M University supporters, the school secured more than 200,000 votes during a nearly two-month-long Home Depot "Retool Your School" contest for 2012. The valiant effort among the nation's historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) netted AAMU the \$25,000 Campus Pride Grant.

AAMU won the grant owing to its massive popular vote, its grant proposal and the vote of Home Depot advisory board members. The grand prize of the contest was a \$50,000 award for the first place designee.

AAMU won the grant owing to its massive popular vote, its grant proposal and the vote of Home Depot advisory board members. The grand prize of the contest was a \$50,000 award for the first place designee.

Home Depot, a major home improvement chain, sponsors the annual "Retool" contest calling for HBCUs to create innovative proposals aimed at achieving significant campus improvement and beautification.

"We are grateful to the entire AAMU family for making our participation in the Home Depot contest a major success," commented Dr. Andrew Hugine, Jr., president of AAMU. "This grant would not have been possible without the collaborative efforts from students, staff, faculty, alumni, friends and relatives."

Hugine also praised the efforts of Dr. Barbara Cady, who spearheaded the development of A&M's grant proposal and public awareness drive, as well as First Lady Abbiegail Hugine. Mrs. Hugine heads the Bulldog Pride Committee, which encompasses campus beautification projects, along with the Home Depot campus campaign.

Home Depot offered contest winners three categories of prizes at the \$50,000, \$25,000 and \$10,000 levels. Participating schools had to submit three projects at the various prize levels.

Thank you for supporting this project by voting online during the competition.

MS Walk 2012 Thank You!



On March 17th and April 28th, the 'PJ's Partners' Team participated in Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Walks in Dothan and Huntsville, respectively. The Dothan MS Walk was held at Westgate Park and the Huntsville MS Walk was held at the Botanical Gardens. This was the 23rd year that the team had the opportunity to participate in this worthy fundraising activity. MS Walks are held annually all across the country to help raise funds for research to find a cure for MS and to provide support services to MS patients. A significant portion of the funds raised from the MS Walk go toward the research for new treatments and for hopefully one day soon finding a cure for MS.

The 'PJ's Partners' team would like to thank all of you for your generous contributions and support of this annual team activity and fundraiser. Thanks to your support the 'PJ's Partners' team will be ranked in the top three teams for the Dothan MS Walk and in the top twelve teams for the Huntsville MS Walk for funds raised. A special thanks to the Dothan 'PJ's Partners' team family members that joined us in supporting the MS Walk there this year.

YPDer's on the Move!



Panoply Volunteers

St. John YPDers answered the call to serve as volunteers at the Panoply Arts Festival on Saturday, April 28. They did a fantastic job in making musical instruments for young children in celebration of the arts. Volunteers who served were Chelsea Carter, Wallace Parham, Drucilla Fitchard, Brittany Lockett, Ronald Lockett, Roderick Lockett, Eddie Whitehead, Jr., and Kimberly Whitehead.

A big "shawtawgua" goes to parent volunteers from the YPD Directors Team. Parent volunteers/chaperones were Mrs. Cheryl Anderson, Mrs. Felicia Carter, and Mr. Eddie Whitehead, Sr. Thank you for a job well done!



Splendid Whistle Stop Fundraiser

YPD had a splendid Whistle Stop Fundraiser and raised a whopping \$856.37!!!! All glory and honor to God for keeping us safe with no injuries or accidents during the event and for the additional funds that will be used to supplement YPD ministry activities. Thanks to all the youth who came out and worked hard in 80+ degree heat during the 2-day event. Also, a big "shawtawgua" goes to our parent volunteers.

"Hattitude"

To wear a hat with so much flare that it is fierce!

By Claudinette Purifoy

Members of the Single Adult Ministry (SAM) of St. John AME Church attended Hattitude Jazz Luncheon on Saturday, March 31, 2012 in Pulaski, Tennessee. The luncheon was hosted by Round Hill AME Church in Lynnville, Tennessee where the Reverend Debra Peppers is Pastor.

The luncheon featured music from the Jazz Ambassadors from Martin Methodist College, Tommy Friend, a skit by Donna and Mariah Gullatte and praise dances featuring Mariah Gullatte, Jennifer Patterson and Symphony Johnson.

The height of the afternoon was when the ladies in attendance participated in the Hattitude fashion show to strut the runway and model their fine millinery. The hats ranged from small fascinators to large and were in a variety of styles and colors. Mr. Ray Sconiers and Ms. Karla Reddite served as Master and Mistress of Ceremony and proceeds from this great event benefited the American Heart Association.

Student Recognitions

Students will be recognized for accomplishments during the 2011-2012 school year in the next issue of the St. John AMEN.

Please submit information regarding honor roll and all special awards by Sunday, June 3. Forms are available in the church office and vestibule as well as on the website. Please e-mail information to Cora Speight at coraspeight@gmail.com.



South Birmingham-Huntsville-Bessemer Church School Conference

June 8-9, 2012

Gaines Chapel ~ Anniston, Alabama
The Reverend Jerome Green, Pastor
The Reverend Oliver Allen, Presiding Elder

Parent Wisdom

By Reverend Vanessa Glover

The Trying Of Your Faith



Embrace our purpose as parents. The revelation of the glory or character of Jesus Christ in our lives is sometimes produced only through pressure and pain, even sometimes through stress and suffering. While no one desires pain and suffering, 1 Peter 1:7-9 states "that the trial of your FAITH, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." (KJV) God turns up the *heat* in the lives of parents so that they can embrace those seasons that draw out the "real flavor" of their character, that the life of Christ in them is revealed through their love, joy, peace, patience kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and yes self-control. These fiery trials and tribulations are the heartbeat of parenting to refine, to purify, and to beautify their FAITH so that God will see clearly His image reflected in them.

Therefore, embrace the trials and the tribulations for all that they mean...what hardship have you endured, what sacrifice have you made, what rejection have you experienced, what pain have you suffered, what ambition have you denied, what relationship have you forsaken? Regardless of what the trials and tribulations are, would you thank God—not for the suffering and stress or the pressure and pain—but for the opportunity they afford to bring glory and honor to Him and to His name? For this purpose parents glorify God in the *Hard Stuff* knowing that the tough situations reveal His character in their lives despite the painful and difficult circumstances they may face; yet parents believe so that others are drawn to give Him Praise!

Prayer: Lord, help us as parents. Give us strength and *Godly* wisdom to raise our children even our children's children after your Holy Word. God I pray that You supply what we lack and continue to keep us on the path that leads to eternal life. God I pray that Your Holy Word will not return void but that it will accomplish what it has been sent to do. Lord, help our children grow in Your grace and knowledge to overcome the temptations in this world and the sin that would so easily entangle them. Lord, help them to know Your presence; that You will never leave them, nor forsake them. Lord, I pray that the name of Jesus take root in his/her life to forever testify of Your goodness and Your faithfulness. In Jesus' Name AMEN!

Give thanks unto
the Lord, call upon
his name, make known
his deeds among
the people.

As a Thoughtful Parent: The search for purpose is a journey, not a destination. God will continue to reveal Himself to us as we journey through the stages of this life. Remember, "because of the Lord's "great" love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is the Lord's faithfulness." Lamentations 3:22-23

Happy
Mother's
Day



Contact Person: Erin Lott
stjohnsingleministry@gmail.com
St. John A.M.E. Church
(256) 534-3265

St. John A.M.E. Church
Single Adult Ministry
presents
Out of School Festival

Date: June 2, 2012

Time: 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Location: Richard Showers Recreation Center
Blue Spring Road ~ Huntsville, Alabama

The Single Adult Ministry will host an
Out of School Festival
to celebrate the
completion of the school year and
to promote summer reading.

**Games, Music, Reading, Food
3-on-3 Basketball Tournament**



Something to Smile About!

Joke of the Month

A pastor, known for his lengthy sermons, noticed a man get up and leave during the middle of his message. The man returned just before the conclusion of the service.

Afterwards the pastor asked the man where he had gone.

"I went to get a haircut," was the reply.

"But," said the pastor, "why didn't you do that before the service?"

"Because," the gentleman said, "I didn't need one then."

Church School Lesson Overview – June 2012

June Church School reviews were written by Claudinette Purifoy and Willie Sandifer.

June 3, 2012

Lesson Title: Rules for Just Living

Lesson Scripture: Exodus 22:1-23:9

Print: Exodus 23:1-9

Devotional Songs: #413, #258, and #243

Key Verse: You shall not follow a majority in wrongdoing; when you bear witness in a lawsuit, you shall not side with the majority so as to pervert justice (Exodus 23:2).

This lesson expounds on the laws (Commandments) that were provided in Exodus 20:1-21 and provides further guidance to living justly and ethically. We must obey the moral and religious laws as indicated in Chapter 22 regarding property rights and be prepared to make restitution when we have done harm to our neighbor.

If we are to live just lives, we must be ethical. Christian ethics is based upon what is right and what the scriptures indicate as our moral duty and obligation. We are cautioned in Chapter 23 not to spread false rumors, bear false witness, follow the majority when they are doing wrong, show partiality, condemn an innocent person to death, deny justice to a poor person, accept bribes, or mistreat others (foreigners).

As people of God, we should be ready and willing to show mercy, according to the spirit of these laws as well as promote kindness and fairness. We must answer to God, not only for what we do maliciously, but for what we do without thought. Let these scriptures lead our souls to remember, that if the grace of God is upon us, then it has taught us, and enabled us so to conduct ourselves by its holy power and that one should "love your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27).

June 10, 2012

Lesson Title: Living as God's Just People

Lesson Scripture: Leviticus 19:9-18; 33-37

Print: Same

Devotional Songs: #358, #282, and #243

Key Verse: The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself (Leviticus 19:34).

Chapters 17-25 of Leviticus is sometimes called the "Holiness Code" because this is where the people of Israel were given an extensive list of instructions that provide guidance on how to be holy and how to maintain favor with God. However, in Chapter 19 the focus is on holiness as a moral condition particularly in how it relates with our interaction with others.

In Chapter 19, God's people were reminded again and again that moral and ethical behavior is not optional if they are to be His people. The conduct required of God's people went beyond ritual matters to include providing for poor, caring for the disadvantaged, treating others justly, loving one's neighbor, respecting the aged, caring for foreigners (strangers), dealing fairly in business matters, and honoring God.

The memory of God's merciful act of delivering the Israelites from a life of slavery was to motivate them to have compassion and justice for others. An appreciation of the goodness of God and the remembrance of what He has done for our deliverance from sin through the death of His only begotten son Jesus Christ should continue to motivate us to live justly.

June 17, 2012

Lesson Title: Celebrate Jubilee

Lesson Scripture: Leviticus 25:8-55

Print John Leviticus 25:8-12, 25, 35-36, 39-40, 47-48, 55

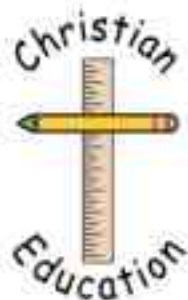
Tentative Devotional Songs: #97, #272, and #243

Key Verse: You shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you (Leviticus 25:10).

In this lesson release, liberty, and refreshing are three of the keywords which best describe the concept of Jubilee. People were allowed to return to their homes, property reverted to the ancestral owners, slaves and bondservants were set free, and debts forgiven. Even the land was granted a period of rests. Jubilee thus opened the door for many to have new beginnings, in order to start over.

Jubilee had a profound economic effect on land ownership. It was a silent regulator of land/

(Continued on page 16)





Church School Lesson Overview – June 2012

(Continued from page 15)

wealth, in that it prevented wealth from accumulation in the hands of a powerful few. Thus, it ensured that the gaps between the rich and poor did not widen rapidly.

Jubilee's effect on the use and productivity of the land clearly displayed God's supreme wisdom. To appreciate this one must see Jubilee as an extension of the Sabbatical Year of Leviticus 25:1-7, and Exodus 23.

June 24, 2012

Lesson Title: The Heart of the Law

Lesson Scripture: Deuteronomy 10:1-22; 16:18-20

Print: Deuteronomy 10:12-22; 16:18-20

Tentative Devotional Songs: #377 []; #251 []; and #243 []

Key Verse: What does the Lord your God require of you? Only to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the Lord. (Deuteronomy 10:12-13).

Many persons see love only in terms of feelings. One comic became famous for defining love as "The feeling we feel when we feel that feeling which we have never felt before." Love is indeed about feelings. Yet it is much more than feelings. Love is about a devotion to someone (or to something), which may cost us dearly.

There is another aspect of love that is sometimes overlooked. It is out of love that God gave laws and commandments. God supremely knows the path that leads to life and prosperity, and those roads which take one into death and destruction. God's love for his people compelled Him to prescribe for them the right way to live. God's love is at the heart of the law.

Christians are to model God's love by extending love (in action) to those God set up laws to protect. This includes the stranger, the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the needy. Refusing to be involved in the practice of bribes and injustice, is also a good way to model God's love for all humanity.



Church School Book Club

May 2012

Discussion Date: 19 May 2012
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Emancipation of Robert Sadler, Chapian & Sadler, 2012

June 2012

Discussion Date: 18 June 2012
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Someday List, Stacy Hawkins Adams, 2009

Rachelle Covington has it all: a fabulous home, a handsome and prestigious husband, two beautiful children, and a place in the upper crust that is quite comfortable. But her life is not all it is cracked up to be.

When her husband goes away on a business trip and the kids are sent off to the grandparents for a month, Rachelle takes up the challenge of a dying friend to start a list of things to do before she dies. She heads back to Jubilant, Texas, to reconnect with her past her purpose, and herself. But when her ex shows up in town looking very fine and very single, Rachelle must confront feelings she thought she had long buried. Will she give up everything to recover the past? Or will she find a reason to plan for the future?

The Someday List is an honest look at what makes people who they are and what can throw them off track. Author Stacy Hawkins Adams writes with a voice that is fresh, sincere, and completely real. Her characters jump off the page and into her readers' hearts.

June 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 9:00 a.m. Officers Meeting
3 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	4	5 6:00 p.m. Stewardess Board	6 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study 5:00 p.m. Steward Board	7  6:00 p.m. Men's Choir Rehearsal	8 7:00 p.m. SBBB District Church School Convention Gaines Chapel AME, Anniston, AL	9 SBBB District Church School Convention 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 10:30 a.m. AMEB Staff Meeting 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
10 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship VB8 3:30-6:30 PM	11	12	13	14	15  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	16 8:00 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 11 a.m. 5th District Prayer Fellowship, S. First Ave. Montgomery 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal Men's Retreat
17 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	18 6:00 p.m. Single Adult Ministry	19 SOUP KITCHEN 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. 6:00 p.m. Trustee Board 6:00 p.m. Lay Organization	20 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	21  6:00 p.m. Men's Choir Rehearsal	22  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	23 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 9:30 a.m. Women's Ministry
24 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	25  6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	26	27 12:00 pm Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Mid-week Service and Love Feast	28  6:00 p.m. Men's Choir Rehearsal	29	30
49th Quadrennial Session AME General Conference						

St. John AME Church
229 Church Street
Huntsville, Alabama 35801
(256) 534-3265
(256) 534-6828 Fax

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The Right Reverend James L. Davis, Servant Bishop

Mrs. Arelis B. Davis, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Doctor Patrick Clayborn, Pastor

Important Dates to Remember



May 20, 2012	Missionary Day, 10:50 am, The Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn, Preacher
May 27, 2012	Pentecost Explosion 8:00 AM Worship Service 11:00 AM Door to Door Witnessing
June 02, 2012	Officer's Meeting, 9:00 a.m. School's Out Celebration, 12:00—4:00 p.m.
June 8-9, 2012	SBHB District Church School Convention (Anniston, AL)
June 10-14, 2012	Vacation Bible School, June 10 th 3:30-6:30 p.m. June 11 th -14 th 6:00-8:00 p.m.
June 16, 2012	9th District Prayer Fellowship (St. Paul, Montgomery, AL)
June 27-July 4, 2012	49th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Nashville, Tennessee
July 1, 2012	Lay Sponsored Trip to General Conference

ST. JOHN A.M.E.N. NEWSLETTER



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 17 Issue 6

June 2012

Pastor's Meditation



Reverend Patrick D. Clayton

The Dangers and Blessings of a Loosed Individual: An Ode to Fathers

John 11:43-44; 12:9-11

In Michelle Alexander's seminal work *The New Jim Crow*, she points to the attention paid to absentee biological fatherhood in the African American community. She notes how President Barack Obama (then Senator Obama) during his campaign highlighted this issue during a speech delivered on Father's Day in 2008. President Obama chided African American men (as well as absentee men of other ethnicities) for not being present in their homes and in their communities. He, as well as other voices, raised the question: where are the African American men? Alexander also notes that the notion of African American men not doing their best to be involved in their families may be a misnomer: "Research by Boston College social psychologist Rebekah Levine Coley found that black fathers not living at home are more likely to keep in contact with their children than fathers of any other ethnic or racial group."¹

Alexander ultimately critiques the criticism of absent African American men. She informs her readers that all the criticism, which asks where African American men are, rarely seeks to answer the question. Alexander helps fill this critical void by pointing to the prison industrial complex. "Hundreds of thousands of black men are unable to be good fathers for their children, not because of a lack of commitment or desire but because they are warehoused in prisons, locked in cages. They did not walk out on their families voluntarily; they were taken away in handcuffs, often due to a massive federal program known as the War on Drugs."² The bulk of her work examines how this war has been skewed and how persons of color are unfairly incarcerated in the United States of America.

When I read *The New Jim Crow*, I could not help but think of Jesus' friend Lazarus. No, he was never put in a legal prison. The government never unfairly took away his legal rights. In John 11, he dies from a mysterious illness. Lazarus was placed in a tomb and was bound with cloth. When Jesus raised him from the dead, the community had to participate in the miracle. They had to remove the stone from the opening of the tomb, and they had to loose him from the binding cloths. After Lazarus is raised and loosed, those who opposed Jesus decided to kill Lazarus "since it was on account of [Lazarus] that many of the Jews were deserting and were believing in Jesus" (John 12:11). The opponents of Jesus viewed Lazarus' freedom as a threat to their way of life. Likewise, those who profit financially and socially in this country from minorities being incarcerated see the freedom of minorities as a threat to their way of life.

(Continued on page 2)

¹Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010), 179. For further analysis of President Obama's speech, see Alexander, 178-181.

²Ibid., 180.

An Ode to Fathers

(Continued from page 1)

Loosed people bring dangers and blessings. Here are the dangers. They challenge the status quo. They show that life and people can be different from the dangerous stereotypes that are perpetuated. Free African American men can, have been, are, and will continue to be good fathers if they are free – spiritually, economically, socially, and physically. When this is seen, it leads others from believing that all a Black man can be is an absentee father. When Lazarus was seen after being raised from the dead, people realized that life could be different with Jesus. Thus, many began to follow him. However, there were those who felt that this was a dangerous transition. In response, they plotted to kill Lazarus.

What is dangerous to those in power is life affirming for those whose backs are against the walls! Loosed people do bring blessings. Lazarus led people to Jesus – just by being alive and living the life God called him to live. Free African American men – free fathers and free “other fathers” as well – lead the world to a new way of thinking and being. Free African American men take care of their responsibilities, their families, and their communities. They break the cycle of oppression and call for justice. This is an authentic movement: “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36). This is also contagious: “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Corinthians 3:17). Free African American men – responsible fathers – bless us. They bless us with love and guidance. They bless us with discipline and wisdom. They bless us with mercy and understanding. They bless us with protection and provision. They bless us with their living just as Lazarus blessed others by his living.

Therefore, we salute all fathers – traditional and non-traditional. We give God praise for you and all that you do for our children. We thank you for accepting the calling that God has placed upon you. We honor you for fearlessly living your life just as Lazarus did. We thank God that you are a danger to the forces of evil and a blessing to the people of light. We pray that you will remain “loosed” and that you will do all you can to “loose” others!

Prayer, Appreciation and Fellowship:

The “Order of the Day”
for June 16 in the
9th Episcopal District



Prior to the beginning of the 49th session of the General Conference of the AME Church, Servant Bishop James L. Davis has summoned the 9th District Church together for a time of Prayer, Appreciation and Fellowship on June 16th. The Church will gather at St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in Montgomery and engage in corporate, fervent, effectual prayer—offering prayers for individual and collective needs. Yes, the “Order of the Day” will be a glorious time praying, praising, fellowshiping, and expressing heartfelt gratitude to God and to each other.

The prayers will be offered by clergy and laity from across the State of Alabama. Music, dance, and other expressions to enhance the prayer time will be rendered by members of all five conferences. Selected members of the District will also give praise reports and convey their gratitude for the work that God has blessed in the Ninth District. A designated prayer of petition will specifically address the 49th Session of the General Conference.

Following the Prayer and Praise Service, everyone will sit together and share a meal as a family.

Persons who want to attend should contact the church office.

*To God be the Glory for the great things
He has done and will do!*

Annual Missionary Day A Past to Remember...A Future to Pursue

By Yvette Cooper-Clark



Missionaries gathered for a picture after the service.

The Betty E. Derrick Women's Missionary Society celebrated Missionary Day during the 10:50 am service on May 20th. Missionaries are called to give of themselves to provide a service to people all over the world, such as to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, and visit the sick and shut-in.

Worship participants were both YPDers and Missionaries. The call to worship was led by Wallace Parham. Kalon Anderson offered the opening prayer and Eddie Whitehead read the scripture. Dr. Thalia Love-Brown ministered to the little children with a spiritual message. The Youth and Young Adult and Children's Choirs ministered in songs of praise. Mrs. Glenda Sconiers welcomed everyone to the service and Mrs. Lorraine Parham gave the history and mission of the

Missionary Society. Mrs. Pearlean Myhand read a memorial passage and Miss Ashley Lewis lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Sally Fitchard and all past missionaries. The offertory prayer was given by Curtis Mayes. Gifts were presented to Mrs. Ada Houston and Mrs. Sarah Alls, St. John A.M.E.'s oldest missionaries. Ms. Claudinette Purifoy introduced the preacher for the service, St. John's first lady, the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn.

The message focused on the woman from the Bible whose issue was an issue of blood. The background text for the sermon was from Luke 8:43-44. The subject title for the sermon was "Fringe Benefits." The sermon began with the story as described in Luke. Rev. Sheri posed an example of what today's issues might be, such as financial, loss of a job, marriage problems, mental issues, physical issues, health issues, etc. She compared these issues to the issue the woman had in the Bible.

The woman had suffered for twelve long years with this problem. She spent all she had trying to get treatment for healing, so you knew she was desperate for relief. We are sometimes the same way. We look to therapists, doctors, etc. to take away our issues with sometimes no relief. However, we must remember to stretch in the midst of it all. The woman came to Jesus by touching the hem of His garment. Her community thought she was untouchable – she had to stretch to get to Jesus. She reached beyond her impossible.

Spiritual "Fringe Benefits" come from our faith connecting with God's power. The woman was instantly healed when she touched Jesus' garment, possibly Jesus' prayer shawl. The woman's faith touched Jesus' prayer closet. When she touched the hem of His garment, her whole life changed. The woman did not want to be noticed. Jesus said someone touched Me. The people in the crowd denied anyone touched Him. But, the woman did not want to be silent anymore; she wanted Jesus and the crowd to know that she was the one who touched Him. The woman believed that Jesus could heal her and turn her life around. Rev. Sheri asked "How many of us have watched the Lord turn our situation around to praise when others pondered?" The woman praised (declared) why she touched Jesus loud enough for the entire crowd to hear.

(Continued on page 8)

Student Recognition for 2011-2012 School Year



Emerson Brooks
 Principals List Honor Roll/4.0 GPA
 Perfect Attendance
 National Junior Honor Society
 JV/Varsity Football
 Lettered in Varsity Baseball
 Jack and Jill Community Service Award

Evan Brooks
 A Honor roll
 Admirable Attendance
 Accelerated Reader Award

Alicia Brownlow
 AB Honor Roll
 Certificate of Appreciation - Alabama Cooperative Extensions System
 Lettered in Soccer

Chelsea Carter
 8th Grade Cheerleader
 Tumblebeez All Star Competition Cheerleader (2nd year)
 Selected to participate in Sci-Quest's "Expanding Your Horizons" Conference
 Buckhorn Middle School National Junior Honor Society
 AB Average Award

Michael J. Clark
 A Honor roll
 Highest Spelling Average
 3rd Place Science Project Award (Volcano Eruptions)
 Superior Excellence in Handwriting
 Bible Memorization Award
 Computer Award
 "Star" Student Piano Award
 Scouting Participation Award
 Pinewood Derby - 4th place in Speed and Looks
 Multiplication Table Award

Josiah Gullatte
 AB Honor Roll
 Harvest Chapter National Honor Society - Vice-President
 Alabama Reading and Math Initiative Recognition (Huntsville Times)
 Accelerated Reader Award

Mariah Gullatte
 Sparkman High School Dance team
 Dance team - 1st Place Pom routine
 Dance team - 3rd place Jazz routine (Nationals)
 Dance team - 5th Place Hip Hop routine (Nationals)
 Community Service Volunteer Award

Kennedy Harris
 AB Honor Roll
 Outstanding Math Student Award
 Cheer Medal for Sports
 Track Medal for Sports

Gerald Moore
 A Honor Roll
 All Tournament Team - HISL Basketball
 1st place - 100M, 200M and 400M Track Meet

Marissa Owens
 AB Honor Roll
 SGA Member
 Sparkman High Volleyball Team

Morgan Owens
 Monrovia Middle School 7th Grade Basketball Team
 Monrovia Middle School 7th Grade Volleyball Team

Eddie Whitehead, Jr.
 AB Honor Roll
 Read to Succeed Program Certificate
 Cub Scout Pack Pinewood Derby - 1st place Looks, 3rd place Speed
 Urban Emphasis Scout Leader Council Pinewood Derby - 1st place Looks, 3rd place Speed
 Cub Scout Pack - Black History Program - 1st Place Public Speaking
 Flag Football Participation
 Soccer Participation (Spring)

Kimberly Whitehead
 AB Honor Roll
 Read to Succeed Program Certificate
 Girl Scout Cookie Sales Badge
 Flag Football
 Soccer Team (Spring)



Exciting Day of Praise and Worship, Preaching and Witnessing

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit enabled them

- Acts 2:1-4



Members singing praises after returning from witnessing.

Pentecost 2012 was an exciting day of Praise and Worship, preaching and witnessing. The day began with 8 am worship. The Male Chorus rendered the music and Kalon Anderson set the tone for the preached Word with a moving ministry in dance to "Rain on Us."

Pastor Clayborn preached from Acts 2:11-17, 21 and the message was entitled "Changing Our Expectations." This timely message combined the theme of Pentecost with the final message in the sermon series on "New Wine." The Pentecost Feast was to commemorate, to give thanks for the harvest and to bring the first gifts of the harvest. In Acts, God was doing something new and the people did not know what to expect. Pastor Clayborn posed the question, "What do you expect from God?" He then gave the answer, based on Isaiah 43:19, "We should expect something new because of the new wine." Expect the new wine to initially be a stumbling block, new wine

can be a stepping stone out of chaos, and a second chance. Also new wine will be empowered by the Holy Spirit. Expect salvation. The church must get its expectation in line with God's will and expect Him to pour out God's Spirit.

Following worship, members assembled in teams of 3-4 persons and took the Gospel to the streets. Teams went to Searcy Homes, Sparkman Homes and homes along the north and south sides of Holmes Avenue. The final witnessing location was Big Spring Park. All teams met at the park to share the Good News with persons who were spending their afternoon there. While the teams were witnessing, a group of faithful prayer warriors remained in prayer at the church.

Statistics collected included:

Accepting Christ	1	Prayers offered	57
Re-committing lives	1	Joined church	1
Asking for information on the AME Church	1	Other Services	2

Participants joined the prayer team at the church at the end of the witnessing period to share testimonies. Both those who witnessed and those who stayed at the church were excited about their experiences. Persons who went out for the first time shared how their anxiety vanished once they began to share with others. It was much easier than they expected. Also, those who were in prayer at church told how they were blessed during this prayer time. The excitement was high and there is a desire to do more witnessing in the future. Refreshments were served in the fellowship hall by the Food Service Committee.

THE ROLES OF BLACK FATHERS: Defying Stereotypes

By Andrew Hugine, Jr.



It is appropriate for us to recognize, acknowledge, and thank those significant persons in our lives. In May, we honor and show appreciation to our Mothers. In February, we show our affection to the persons in our lives that we refer to as our valentine. We celebrate birthdays, children's day, and anniversaries. Each of these is accompanied with various forms of expressing gratitude. So it is appropriate and proper that we celebrate and pay tribute to all of the fathers of the world. In short, Father's day is dedicated to fatherhood, the second most wonderful relationship after motherhood.

Fathers play a very important role in our society by serving as the strength and pillar of the family. Fathers serve as role models, not only to sons, in helping them learn how to become men, but also, in demonstrating to daughters, what true love is all about. Fathers and sons have bonds built around common interests such as sports, but the bond between the father and daughter is

one that is more protective.

Unfortunately, for the Black Father, there is a stereotypical view forged from the media. According to Roberta Coles and Charles Green in *The Myth of the Missing Black Father*, "common stereotypes portray the Black father as being largely absent from their families." This stereotyping has damaged the black man's image in the eyes of their sons, daughters and society. "The Black male, and oftentimes, Hispanic male are constantly portrayed as violent, angry, and hostile, criminally minded, lazy, lacking intelligence, and engaging in illegal activity. The problem is not that the media shows this behavior, but they show it constantly, over and over again. For example "African-American Men and Boys Pittsburgh Media Audit" by Meyer Communications, reported that in a three-month period in 2010, fewer than one in 10 front-page newspaper stories featured black males; one-third of print coverage that did feature black men and boys focused on crime, while 88 percent of the television news did. The Pew Center research a year later found much the same imbalances in print and television news media, with blacks overemphasized in crime and sports. In this regard, Pew reported that on television, 97 percent of the stories involving African-American males offered visual references including negative portrayals. Thus, seeing images over and over again becomes a perceived reality in many people's minds, despite the fact that the perception is not real or accurate," states Erka V. Cox in the article *Negative Images in the Media Lead to Racial Stereotypes*.

However, the stories of black men caring about their children and being a part of a traditional American family do not frequently find their way on the pages of the newspapers. The stories of the many devoted, loving and caring fathers that I know, many of them right here in St. John, are not the subject of front page coverage in the media. The story of President Barack Obama, the first African American President, as an example of a model father is seldom highlighted in the media. These men and fathers certainly defy the stereotypical image that the media would have us believe is true of Black men.

We all have or had a number of fathers in our lives; good men who made a difference. These include our biological fathers who instilled in us values, work ethics, responsibility and morals. For me, my biological father was also my first pastor; so he provided for spiritual growth and develop-

(Cont) read on page 7)

THE ROLES OF BLACK FATHERS

(Continued from page 6)

ment as well. I learned from him about the power of prayer, about faith, and carrying out the Biblical requirement of caring for those and helping those who were less fortunate. I also learned about courage and conviction to stand up for what you believed in. He understood my strengths and my weaknesses. I grew up on a farm and had many farm related chores. To be honest, I was not very good at farm work. My father quickly realized that I would starve to death if I had to provide for myself and my family doing that type of work. He made an agreement with me, that he would never keep me home to work on the farm, as long as I did well in school. Suffice it to say, that I applied myself in school and made good grades.

Fathers are also our mentors and role models. These persons, through their examples, influence our lives and our careers. We can all recall fondly many teachers, coaches, uncles, ministers, and other persons who have impacted our lives positively. We sought to model our lives after them and emulate them. Professionally, I was greatly influenced by Dr. M. Maceo Nance. Dr. Nance served as the president of my Alma Mater and I would later work at the University under his tutelage. Dr. Nance stressed excellence in every aspect of the university, insisted that all programs were always executed in commendable fashion, believed that the campus should always be immaculately kept, and believed in holding individuals accountable for the tasks assigned to them. He was not only a mentor to me, but to a number of other persons who have gone on to successful and productive careers as higher education administrators, including college presidents.

For each of us, there is a man who has influenced us. Whether that man is our biological father, surrogate father, spiritual father such as our pastors, friend, or role model and mentor, let us take time, on this Father's Day, to say thank you. For those whose fathers have gone on to be with the Lord, we still thank them for the lessons, love, faith, and guidance which they instilled in us that sustains us even to this day. On this Father's Day and each day, we thank God for all of them and dedicate this poem, "What Makes Dad," to all of the men who have made a difference in our lives.

God took the strength of a mountain,
The majesty of a tree,
The warmth of a summer sun,
The calm of a quiet sea,
The generous soul of nature,
The comforting arm of night,
The wisdom of the ages,
The power of the eagle's flight,
The joy of a morning in Spring,
The faith of a mustard seed,
The patience of eternity,
The depth of a family need,
Then God combined these qualities,
When there was nothing more to add,
He knew His masterpiece was complete,
And so,
He Called it...Dad

Author Unknown

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY



AAMU Corner

A&M Students Conduct Research on Old 'Times Building'

Huntsville, Ala. --- A group of civil engineering students at Alabama A&M University recently presented their research on the old Huntsville Times building in downtown Huntsville, Alabama.

Five senior students presented their research project and received exit interviews before members of AAMU's civil engineering advisory board. In choosing the Times building, students conducted detailed research and offered findings on the structural and economic aspects of the building.

"According to the advisory board members, this presentation created an exceptional image about the higher aptitude and quality of the students," noted Dr. Mahbub Hasan, assistant professor of civil engineering. The students also acknowledged the guidance and close supervision of Professors Nesar Ahmed and Pabitra Saha, added Hasan. The group was comprised of Mardecial Hines, Dumaras Franklin, Maqueshia Brown, Lolo Bokanga and Joshua Rivers.

Missionary Day

(Continued from page 3)

Jesus reminded the woman that her name was not failure, reject, unclean, loser, sorrow, pain, or shame. He called her "daughter." The only way to have "Fringe Benefits" is by stretching to get to Jesus as in the song, "Father I Stretch My Hands To Thee." Remember that God provides the joy of "Fringe Benefits." These benefits include prayer, grace, mercy, intercession, provision, comfort, many chances, knowing He is near, and salvation. One must be like the woman with the issue of blood; step out on faith and do not worry about what the crowd thinks, but know Jesus is there and if we just call upon Him, we shall be saved.

The service ended with the Missionary Benediction — *In the Name of the Triune God, May the Spirit of Christian Missions Enter Every Heart, May the Spirit of Christian Missions, Enter Every Heart. This we ask in Jesus' Name. Amen.*

Worship Service Announcements



Communion will be celebrated on the 4th Sunday of June, June 24th, instead of the 1st Sunday in July. Bible Study and Love Feast will be celebrated on

Wednesday, June 20th, at 6:30 pm.

There will be only one worship service on Sunday, July 1st. The service will begin at 10 am and Church School will be held at 9 a.m.

Church School Workshop & Promotion Day

Workshop—July 13-14

Church School Promotion Day—July 15

Guest presenter and preacher
Dr. Lynn Westfield



Dr. Westfield earned the B.A. from Murray State University (Kentucky) and the M.A. from Scarritt Graduate School (Tennessee). She completed the Ph.D. at The Union Institute (Ohio). A permanent ordained elder in Eastern Pennsylvania, Westfield has provided leadership in Christian Education as a consultant and preacher across the United States, as well as Japan, the Caribbean and Israel. Professor Westfield's teaching and research interests include pedagogy, engaged pedagogy, African-American women's studies, womanist studies, spirituality, creativity, mysticism, and theological education.



Parent Wisdom

By Reverend Vanessa Glover

PREPARATION...What comes to mind when we think of the month of June—schools out, graduation, wedding, summer, vacation, retiring, and the list goes on. One thing for sure, in all of these concerns PREPARATION is the key. We are often unprepared for what comes next in life, despite constant preoccupation with the future. Sometimes an unfortunate ending may take us by surprise. At other times, we are unprepared for something that seems to take longer than we had anticipated. Yet, we as Parents want to stay out of damage control and have a PLAN. We think we have all the time in the world, to mend relationships, to achieve an important goal, to discontinue a bad habit or begin a good one, to take care of ourselves, to develop our relationship with God, to read, to take a stand, to show we care, and the list goes on. The fact of the matter is now is the time to awake out of sleep and PREPARE, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. We must realize the constant closeness to God that compels us to Draw nigh unto Him just as the forces of the flesh and the forces of the world pull at our very being causing us to forget the urgency of the contact.

In the Gospel of Matthew 25:1-13, Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them; But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

There is great JOY in exposure to the true meaning of scriptures. Instead of becoming satisfied with the intellectual knowledge, perhaps we should prepare for the "Living Lord." Here is the point, halfway is not enough—let's take a look at the PREPARATION of the bridesmaids—five of them wise and five of them foolish. The scripture says five of them who were foolish took only enough oil to give them immediate help in problems, or some release from guilt and shame, but never surrender all to the authority of Jesus. But our FAITH must go beyond our doctrine. The five who were wise bridesmaids took what they had and an extra reservoir of oil which continually feeds the "flame of life—through the mountains and the valleys, through the storms and the rain, the dry places and hot places, no matter what may come, never letting it fade, despite the circumstances, the greater the pressure the brighter the light shines, nevertheless; the oil of the Holy Spirit keeps us steadfast, unmovable always abounding in the work of the Lord. Jesus commands us to WATCH and THINK on these things. AMEN



Prayer: Thank you Lord that FAITH is not an emotion that we need to work up inside of us, instead, it is a GIFT you give as we commit ourselves to You, Lord help us to GROW in FAITH. For we walk by FAITH and not by sight. (2 Corinthians 5:7) For we all are children of God by FAITH in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:26) Watch ye, stand fast in the FAITH, quit you like men, be strong. (1 Corinthians 16:13)



Church School Lesson Overview – July 2012

June Church School reviews were written by Willie Sandifer.

July 1, 2012

Lesson Title: Samuel Administers Justice

Lesson Scripture: 1 Samuel 7:3-17

Print: 1 Samuel 7:3-11, 15-17

Devotional Songs: #215, #272, and #243

Key Verse: Direct your heart to the Lord, and serve him only, and he will deliver you (1 Samuel 7:3).

Israel was in one of those perpetual conflicts with their favorite enemy, the Philistines. They were also in the familiar disobedience – affliction – repent – rescue cycles. The nation would forget God, and God would allow defeat and affliction to overrun them. In their affliction, they would call on God. God would rescue them and they would live in peace and prosperity until they again turned their backs on God, and the cycle would repeat.

Samuel had a recipe for victory. First, the nation was to return to the Lord in repentance. Next, they were to serve the Lord sincerely; then deliverance would come. Samuel looked not to the nation's army size or military strategies. His first focus was on the greatest commander-in-Chief, the Lord of Hosts. He was confident that once Israel went back under God's leadership, victory was assured.

July 8, 2012

Lesson Title: David Embodies God's Justice

Lesson Scripture: 2 Samuel 22:1-23:7; 1 Chronicles 18:14

Print: 2 Samuel 23:1-7; 1 Chronicles 18:14

Devotional Songs: #394, #375, and #243

Key Verse: So David reigned over all Israel; and he administered justice and equity to all his people (1 Chronicles 18:14).

In this lesson, after David's personal reflection on his fortunes under God's hand, he progressed to the blessed insight which God shared with him. The coming Messiah would be a perfectly just ruler. The concept of perfection is expanded in metaphors using the morning light, a cloudless morning, and refreshing rain which brings life.

This led David to this trademark comparison

of the fortunes of the blessed with those of the godless (sons of rebellion). While those who feared the Lord could expect God to look after their safety and success, the wicked could expect troubles and then to be thrown away, both on earth and in eternity.

This thought of honors for the just, and horrors for the wicked, is also a reflection of God's perfect justice. God set before all the choice of good and evil. God offers help to all those who would choose to do good. It is therefore not right that those who struggle to do well should be rewarded, while those who choose to do evil be punished. Everyone reaps the just reward for his / her choices. This is justice at its core.

July 15, 2012

Lesson Title: Solomon Judges with Wisdom and Justice

Lesson Scripture: 1 Kings 3; 2 Chronicles 9:8

Print 1 Kings 3:16 – 28; 2 Chronicles 9:8

Tentative Devotional Songs: #377; #251; and #243

Key Verse: All Israel heard of the judgment that the king had and rendered; and they stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God was in him, to execute justice (1 Kings 3:28).

In this lesson we see the real mother with a deep compassion burning within her. Surely, Solomon saw and felt that burning compassion. Only a real mother would give up a live son, if the alternative were half a dead son. In these difficult cases, when genuine emotions are displayed, this can help determine the outcome.

Although justice in this case was dispensed by King Solomon, we should see it as God's justice. In the earlier section of chapter 3, we have an account of God's visitation to Solomon, and Solomon's request for wisdom to judge the people. Seeing that God granted the request, the case involving the two mothers was but a reflection of how the special wisdom was applied. It was apparent to all that the wisdom of Solomon was unusual. It was a sample of divine wisdom.

July 22, 2012

Lesson Title: A King Acts on a Widow's Behalf

(Continued on page 11)



Church School Lesson Overview – July 2012

(Continued from page 10)

Lesson Scripture: 2 Kings 4:1-37; 8:1-6

Print: 2 Kings 8:1-6

Tentative Devotional Songs: #437; #258; and #243

Key Verse: So the king appointed an official for her, saying, "Restore all that was hers, together with all the revenue of the fields from the day that she left the land until now" (2 Kings 8:6).

All the elements of a just reinstatement provision are in this lesson. The widow, who was favored by God, had her property reinstated, and interest added to compensate her for the period she was deprived of her property. Such a complete restoration could only have flowed from God's favor towards this widow.

This is clearly a passage highlighting how God used human instruments to provide and care for one woman of Shunem. This account is pregnant with lessons for us. The first point to note is that Elisha was known to the woman, and to her he had already proven himself a man of God. Secondly, after the Shunammite's return to her homeland, she appealed to the King for the restoration of her property.

July 29, 2012

Lesson Title: Jehoshaphat Makes Judicial Reform

Lesson Scripture: 2 Chronicles 18:28 – 19:11

Print: 2 Chronicles 19:4-11

Tentative Devotional Songs: #242; #282; and #243

Key Verse: [Jehoshaphat] said to the judges, "Consider what you are doing, for you judge not on behalf of human beings but on the Lord's behalf; he is with you in giving judgment" (2 Chronicles 19:6).

Jehoshaphat had set his heart to seek God. The King was committed to establishing a judicial system to dispense godly justice. Jehoshaphat understood the importance of selecting judges with good character and godly morals. He knew also that a healthy justice system revolves on a crucial linchpin, an alert and educated public. People will be motivated to safeguard known rights. Any leader, who ensures that the citizens know their rights, is acting in the best interests of the country.

Jehoshaphat further demonstrated the belief that good governance started with sound knowledge of, and respect for, God's laws. Jehoshaphat had set himself up to be an instrument of God, reminding people that Jehovah God was the only true God.



Church School Book Club

Discussion Date: 16 June 2012
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Someday List

Stacy Hawkins Adams, 2009

Discussion Date: 21 July 12
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Can I Get a Witness?

ReShonda Tate Billingsley, 2008

The irony of a divorce-court judge getting divorced herself is not lost on Vanessa Colton-Kirk. After all, she's seen everything in her notorious Houston courtroom, where she's presided over the breakup of countless unhappy and disillusioned couples. Even her own sister, Dionne, is dealing with relationship drama of her own, a betrayal that's left Dionne hungry for revenge on the man she hoped to marry. But when career-driven Vanessa chooses to work late on the night of her fifth wedding anniversary, her husband, Thomas, decides he's had enough of her putting work before starting the family he so desperately wants – and he tells her he wants out.

In a last-ditch effort to save the marriage, their own judge orders Vanessa and Thomas to attend a spiritual retreat. She goes – but not without a fight. And just when she thinks she's won, fate steps in and helps her see things in a whole new light. Now Vanessa and her sister face the toughest choices of their lives. Can Dionne untangle herself from a payback play gone horribly wrong? Can Vanessa rebuild a bond that she had a big part in destroying? Will she learn from her own mistakes and her years of experience on the bench? Or will she need something else to keep a tide of bitterness from taking over her life.



CHILDREN LEARN

What They Live

If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.
If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.
If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.
If a child lives with hostility, he learns to feel guilty.
If a child lives with shame, he learns to condemn.
If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.
If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.
If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.
If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.
If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.
If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.
If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,
he learns to find love in the world.

By Dorothy Law Nolte
Submitted by Willie M. Heyward

**Something to Smile About!**

Joke of the Month

A teacher asked the children in her Sunday School class,
"If I sold my house and my car, had a big garage sale
and gave all my money to the church, would I get into heaven?"

"NO!" the children all answered.

"If I cleaned the church every day, mowed the yard,
and kept everything neat and tidy, would I get into heaven?"

Again, the answer was "NO!"

"Well," she continued, "then how can I get to heaven?"

In the back of the room, a five-year-old boy shouted out, "You gotta be dead!"

July 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:00 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	2	3	4	5  6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	6	7 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal
8 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship AMEN Deadline	9 6:00 p.m. Kokoi's Ministry Meeting	10 6:00 p.m. Stewardess Board	11 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	12	13	14 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 10:30 a.m. AMEN Glorify Meeting 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal Church School Workshops
15 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	16	17 8:00 P.M. KITCHEN 11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m. 6:00 p.m. Trustee Board	18 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	19	20  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	21 8:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 11 a.m. 9th District Prayer Fellowship, St. Paul A.M.E. Montgomery 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
22 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship 9th District Christian Education Congress (Montgomery, AL)	23 6:00 p.m. Single Adult Ministry	24 8:00 P.M. KITCHEN 11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m.	25 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	26  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	27  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	28 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 9:30 a.m. Women's Ministry AIDS 101 Workshop
29 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	30  6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	31 6:00 p.m. Church School Board Meeting				

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229 Church Street
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Mrs. Arelis B. Davis, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Doctor Patrick Clayborn, Pastor



web

Important Dates to Remember



June 15-16, 2012	Sons of Allen Retreat
June 16, 2012	9th District Prayer Fellowship & Appreciation St. Paul, Montgomery, Alabama
June 17, 2012	Father's Day
June 22, 2012	D.I.V.A.S. Night Out, 8:30—9:00 p.m.
June 24, 2012	Graduate & Retiree Recognition Sunday, 10:50 a.m. <i>Communion Sunday</i>
June 27-July 4, 2012	49th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Nashville, Tennessee
July 1, 2012	Lay Sponsored Trip to General Conference
July 1, 2012	10:00 AM Worship Service
July 13-14, 2012	Church School Workshop
July 22-25, 2012	Christian Education Congress, Montgomery, Alabama

ST. JOHN A.M.E.N. NEWSLETTER



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 17 Issue 7

July 2012

Pastor's Meditation

A Celebration of Freedom



Reverend Patrick D. Clayton

Freedom – in our day and time – is considered a right. Two hundred thirty-six years ago, the leaders of this country put together and endorsed the Declaration of Independence, which said, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." All across the world, freedom is viewed as a human right. The question then is not about whether a human should have freedom; instead, we find ourselves wondering who is considered human. Are women humans? Are children humans? Are African Americans humans? Are Hispanic Americans humans? Are Asian Americans humans? Are elderly people humans? Are the physically challenged humans? Are the mentally challenged humans? Are the incarcerated humans? Are the sick and invalids humans? Are the poor humans?

When Frederick Douglass approached our nation's celebration of Independence Day in 1852, he raised similar questions: "Fellow-citizens, pardon me, allow me to ask, why am I called upon to speak here today? What have I, or those I represent, to do with your national independence? Are the great principles of political freedom and of natural justice, embodied in that Declaration of Independence, extended to us? And am I, therefore, called upon to bring our humble offering to the national altar, and to confess the benefits and express devout gratitude for the blessings resulting from your independence to us?"¹ Douglass reminded his hearers that the African slave was considered three-fifths of a human.²

Freedom seems to be a right for those with power. However, most dictionaries define freedom as the condition of being free of restraints; liberty from slavery, detention, or oppression; political independence; exemption from the arbitrary exercise of authority or from an unpleasant condition; free will; or the right of enjoying all of the privileges of membership or citizenship. Though it may appear that freedom is only a right for the powerful, this is not the case. Freedom is for all, but it is a right that needs protection by power. This power is not necessarily military or political might. Rather, organic freedom is protected by the power of community.

If we look closely at the bible, real freedom is created and protected by God. The whole of the New Testament declares that freedom is an existence that is not enslaved to sin, the law, and death. Therefore, a free person is not bound by a desire for poor choices, by moralism, or by the consequences of following those two.

Even though freedom – secular and sacred – is described as not being bound to oppression, freedom is not the lack of all boundaries. Though some may say that freedom is a free for all, real, responsible, wholesome, and constructive freedom has parameters. For freedom to keep civilization intact, it must be orderly and considerate of community. Yes, the bible concurs. After Galatians 5:1 says, "For freedom Christ has set you free," it states, "Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery." Further, Galatians 5:13-14 says, "For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Freedom is not the property of the elite and powerful. Freedom, however, needs the power of community to be maintained. Furthermore as God's children, we need God's power to create true freedom. It takes the sacrifice of God's Son to bring freedom into existence. As a result, we have to handle the responsibilities that freedom entails. We must live according to God's word.

(Continued on page 2)

¹ Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the 4th of July?" – Speech given to the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, Rochester Hall, Rochester, NY, July 5, 1852.

² See Article 1, Section 2, Paragraph 3 of the United States Constitution and note that it precedes the creation of the thirteen and fifteen amendments.

Pastor's Meditation

(Continued from page 1)

Even though Independence Day is a secular holiday, we all need a common understanding of God's freedom. Freedom is the removal of slavery to sin that we might serve God! Freedom is a primary ingredient for worship! Freedom is often the element that takes worship from mediocrity to greatness. Freedom is actually a requirement for authentic worship. Recall that Jesus told the Samaritan woman that real worship is done in spirit and truth. The bible says that where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. The bible also says that the truth shall set you free.³ Hence, authentic worship is free – freed by God for the worship of God!

When freedom gets in worship, it takes wings! When we get free in worship, we let go of the false pretenses. When we get free, we avoid destructive traditions. When we get free, we abandon practices of death and follow life. When we get free, we stand up straight and praise God. When we get free, we are opened! Our minds are opened. Our hearts are opened. Our spirits are opened. Our wallets are opened. Our schedules are opened. Our faith is opened. Our obedience is opened. Our love is opened. Our service is opened. Our forgiveness is opened. Our mercy is opened.

Let us be free. Be free by focusing more on God than the surrounding problems. I'm not saying that we should avoid our issues or pretend that they aren't real. Instead, we should not make them our primary focus. Look at what the bible says in Acts 16:19-24. Paul and Silas were brought to court on trumped up charges. They were stripped and beaten. They were thrown into prison. Their feet were put in stocks. Yet, they did not complain. They didn't argue with each other. They didn't focus on their issues. They prayed and sang hymns to God! They exhibited freedom of spirit. They had peace. God will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are stayed on God.⁴ Not only will that peace bless us, but that peace will inspire those around us!

Let us be free by inspiring others as we focus on God. When we operate in freedom, we give others permission to do the same. When we move in joy, we encourage others to do so. When we praise in public, we entice others to join us. When we put God first in the midst of our storm, we let others know that they can do it too!

When Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns, they did so outwardly. They prayed out loud. They sang out loud. Their primary agenda in prayer and praise was NOT to be heard by the other prisoners. Their primary focus was to connect with God. Paul and Silas wanted to encounter God in the midst of their jail! Yet, their connection to God resulted in a freedom that became contagious. An earthquake takes place. It is so violent that the foundation of the jail is shaken. All the doors open, and EVERYONE'S chains are unfastened! Our freedom can free others! Be free for yourself and for those around you. Be free so that the prisons in your life and in the lives of those around you are shaken and opened.

Finally, be free by speaking the word to those in need. Paul spoke the word to the prison guard after the earthquake. As a result, the guard was saved. He was freed. To speak the word of God is not just preaching on Sunday morning. To speak the word of God is to show people how to live in a way that honors God. To speak the word of God is to let someone know that she/he is a child of God. To speak the word of God is to offer someone forgiveness and restoration. To speak the word of God is to extend grace to a person's family. To speak the word of God is to help people understand their circumstances. To speak the word of God is to call out sin and to plead for God's mercy. To speak the word of God is to shine a light on where God is in the world. To speak the word of God is to set forth how one shows love to another. To speak the word of God is to serve someone other than ourselves. To speak the word of God is to put God first in all we do.

Be free to speak the word of God in your home. Be free to speak the word of God to your neighbor. Be free to speak the word of God on your lunch break. Be free to speak the word of God in your car pool. Be free to speak the word of God in your relationships. Be free to speak the word of God over your health. Be free to speak the word of God over your finances. Be free to speak the word of God to yourself and to those in need.

Let us celebrate our freedom – freedom in Christ. "Whom the Son sets free is free indeed!"⁵

³Joh 1:424; 2 Cor 13:17; Joh 1:8:32.

⁴Isa 26:3.

⁵Joh 1:8:36.

49th Quadrennial Session of General Conference



Rev. Sheri, Chaplain Johnson and Pastor Clayborn on opening day.

The 49th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church was held in Nashville, Tennessee from June 27 to July 4, 2012. The conference was hosted by the 13th Episcopal District and host bishop, Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie. Bishop Gregory G. M. Ingram was the General Conference chairperson. For more than four years the 13th District, Team 13, had prepared to host thousands of African Methodist Episcopal clergy and lay from around the world. Their labors were evident by the warm welcome and cordial hospitality extended throughout the conference and the ministry in music and dance at the worship services by the 13th Episcopal District choir and dance ministry.

The agenda for General Conference was a packed eight (8) day schedule and there were also pre-conference meetings and banquets. For this writer, the worship services (opening, Sunday and Consecration) are normally the highlight of the General Conference; however, this year two additional services, the Richard Allen Young Adult Council Service and the Keynote Address, were the highlights.

The General Conference officially began on Wednesday morning, June 27, at 10 am with the Opening Worship Service. The processional included the Chaplains, College Presidents, Judicial Council members, Connectional and General Officers, and the Bishops of the church (retired and active). The opening message was delivered by Bishop McKinley Young, the 109th elected and consecrated Bishop of the AME Church. His text was from John 18:37, and the sermon was entitled "The Defining Moment"

The Conference paused from business discussions for an Ecumenical Worship Service on Friday evening. Bishops and ministers from other denominations, especially Methodist, gathered as one in Christ for a powerful service. The preacher for the hour was Dr. Ivan Abrahams, General Secretary, World Methodist Council. His text was Esther 4. His message was based on the General Conference theme and emphasized that the church is called for such a time as this to exalt Christ.

Sunday morning was another great time of praise and worship. The conference hall was filled to capacity as AMEs came for Sunday Worship Service. This was not only Sunday Morning Worship, but it was Holy Communion Service. The preacher for this grand Sunday morning service was Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry, the 122nd elected and consecrated Bishop of the AME Church. Bishop Guidry's sermon was entitled "Lift Jesus Up" and the text was John 12:32-33. She related her message to the quadrennial theme on exalting Christ. Over forty persons were in the delegation that came from St. John for this service.



Pastor Clayborn preaches at RAYAC Service

Sunday was a full day. In addition to Church School and morning worship, the Christian Debutante and Masters Cotillion was held that afternoon, a special Music and Christian Art Ministry Service was held at 6 pm and the Richard Allen Young Adult Council (RAYAC) Revival Service was held at 10:00 p.m. St. John members who were present were proud to support Pastor Patrick Clayborn as he delivered the RAYAC message

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49th Quadrennial Session of General Conference

(Continued from page 3)

that evening. He was introduced by Bishop James Davis. His sermon was entitled "Dealing with God's Delay" and the text was from Matthew 25:1-7. Pastor Clayborn expounded on three points that tell how to deal with God's delay: 1. Go beyond our normal limitations. 2. Look beyond self to serve somebody else. 3. Fall asleep. He stated that falling asleep and waking is symbolic of the crucifixion and resurrection. The message brought everyone to their feet and it was a spirit-filled and invigorating end to a full day of praise and worship.

Other General Conference services, including the Retirement Service (for Bishop C. Garnett Henning and Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry) and the Memorial Service were high spiritual moments.

Keynote Address



The General Conference was honored to receive the First Lady of the United States, Mrs. Michelle Obama, as the keynote speaker. Her address was delivered on Thursday morning, June 28th to a packed house. After receiving high accolades from Bishop John R. Bryant, Bishop Samuel Green and Bishop Gregory G. M. Ingram, Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie introduced and presented Mrs. Obama. Mrs. Obama's message focused on the need for AMEs to carry on the legacy that is their heritage. She spoke of the many accomplishments of persons who were African Methodist. She also touched on current social issues of obesity and voter apathy. She emphasized the importance of getting out to vote. She received several instances of thunderous applause during her speech and a rousing standing ovation at the conclusion. Some were fortunate enough to shake her hand and even a few took pictures with her. This was a great moment in AME history.

The Episcopal Address

On the evening of the first day of General Conference, Bishop C. Garnett Henning delivered the Episcopal Address. This address, compiled by bishops and lay, was well written and well delivered. It addressed many of the issues and concerns of today and called for the AME Church to make a difference.

There was so much more to General Conference. Morning Prayer Services, Morning Bible Studies, business sessions where revisions to the Book of Doctrine and Discipline were discussed, reports from all of the connectional and general officers, from the Lay and the WMS and SADA, and the Schools and Universities, and the Chaplains, the Judicial Council, the Episcopal Committee, the Health Core and much, much more. There is not enough room to print everything. Visit the AME Church's website blog, <http://www.ame-church.com/blog/>, for minutes and other information on the Conference. Look for the new edition of the Book of Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church within the next year.

From an initial ballot of 17 candidates, two persons were elected Bishop during this General Conference. Former General Officer Clement W. Fugh was elected the 131st Bishop and the Reverend Reginald T. Jackson, pastor of St. Matthew AME Church in East Orange, New Jersey, was elected the 132nd Bishop. Congratulations to both.

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49th Quadrennial Session of General Conference

The General Officers elected to serve this Quadrennial are:

General Secretary/CIO	The Reverend Dr. Jeffery Cooper
Sunday School Union President/Publisher	The Reverend Dr. Johnny Barbour, Jr.
Department of Annuity Investments and Insurance	The Reverend Dr. Jerome Harris
The Christian Recorder Editor	The Reverend Dr. Calvin H. Sydnor III
Global Witness and Ministry	The Reverend Dr. George F. Flowers
Department of Christian Education	The Reverend Dr. Daryl B. Ingram
Department of Church Growth & Development	The Reverend Dr. James C. Wade
Historiographer/	
Director of Research & Scholarship of AME Review	The Reverend Dr. Teresa Fry Brown
New members of the Judicial Council	The Reverend Dr. Vernon J. Byrd
	The Reverend Dr. Glenda Hodges
Judicial Council Alternates	The Reverend Dr. Frederick D. Sherrod
	TaShun Y. Bowden-Lewis, Esq.

The Closing and Consecration Worship Service was the final worship service of the General Conference. Senior Bishop John R. Bryant was the messenger. His sermon was entitled "Does Jesus Still Work?" with text from Acts 3:1. He spoke of how Peter and John did "something radical" when they "dropped" the name of Jesus. He asked the question "Does JESUS still work today?" and immediately answered "YES." He said that AMEs today can plead the blood of Jesus. There is power in the blood and all that needs to be done is to "Let JESUS shake up the house."

The final Business Session was presided over by Bishop Samuel L. Green, president of the Council of Bishops. The long awaited report from the Episcopal Committee on the assignment of Bishops for 2012-2016 was the order of the day. Here is the report of the Episcopal Committee.

First Episcopal District:	Bishop Gregory Gerald McKinley Ingram
Second Episcopal District:	Bishop William Phillips DeVeaux Sr.
Third Episcopal District:	Bishop McKinley Young
Fourth Episcopal District:	Bishop John Richard Bryant
Fifth Episcopal District:	Bishop Theodore Larry Kirkland
Sixth Episcopal District:	Bishop Preston Warren Williams II
Seventh Episcopal District:	Bishop Richard Franklin Norris
Eighth Episcopal District:	Bishop Julius Harrison McAllister
Ninth Episcopal District:	Bishop James Levert Davis
Tenth Episcopal District:	Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie
Eleventh Episcopal District:	Bishop Adam Jefferson Richardson Jr.
Twelfth Episcopal District:	Bishop Samuel Lawrence Green Sr.
Thirteenth Episcopal District:	Bishop Jeffrey Nathaniel Leath
Fourteenth Episcopal District:	Bishop Clement W. Fugh
Fifteenth Episcopal District:	Bishop David Rwhynica Daniels Jr.
Sixteenth Episcopal District:	Bishop Sarah Frances Davis
Seventeenth Episcopal District:	Bishop Wilfred Jacobus Messiah
Eighteenth Episcopal District:	Bishop John Franklin White
Nineteenth Episcopal District:	Bishop Paul J. M. Kawimbe
Twentieth Episcopal District:	Bishop Reginald T. Jackson
Ecumenical Officer:	Bishop Reginald T. Jackson
Located:	Bishop E. Earl McCloud Jr.

Mr. Hodges Washington was a Lay alternate delegate for the Northwest Annual Conference. The Reverend Dr. Homer L. McCall was a delegate representing Daniel Payne College and the Reverend Dr. James R. Johnson was a delegate because he is a retired military chaplain. Pastor Clayborn, Reverend Sheri, Patrick II, and several other members of St. John attended as observers.

Sons of Allen Men's Retreat

By Michael D. Clark



St. John's Sons of Allen Men's Ministry celebrated their 6th Annual Men's Retreat at Gunterville State Park during the weekend of June 15th-17th. This annual gathering allowed the men of St. John to bond and continue their spiritual growth and teachings. They participated in a two-night stay at this out of town location in order to fellowship and share knowledge on various topics. The theme for this year's retreat was "R.E.V.I.V.E., Rekindling Eternal Vision, Inspiring Victory Everywhere".

The first day of the retreat began with bonding activities including a cookout, fishing, various board games and watching movies. The men were treated to some fine food, as usual, by Brother Theodore Tyson, Head Chef for the Sons of Allen. After dining, Reverend Dr. Patrick Clayborn conducted a workshop session entitled, "From the Couch to a 5K Run". Following Reverend Clayborn's workshop, the men continued their bonding activities by watching movies donated by Brother Karl Gullatte. This ended the first day of activities.

The second day of the retreat began with the men gathering for breakfast followed by workshop sessions that lasted throughout the day. Each workshop session lasted approximately one hour and included questions and discussions.

The following workshops were presented on the second day:

- "Sharpening the Saw" by Dr. Arthur Waker
- "Evangelism" by Dr. Lee Williams
- "3 Ts of Tithing" by President Tommy Anderson

After conclusion of the workshops, the Sons of Allen president, Brother Tommy Anderson, facilitated a retreat reflections and remarks session, followed by a Sons of Allen meeting. Afterwards the men gathered for a group photo, followed by dinner. After dinner, the men continued their fellowship and bonding activities for the rest of the evening. The retreat concluded with the men gathering for breakfast on Sunday morning and afterwards departing for Church service.

Vacation Bible School 2012 Fishin' on a Mission with Jesus!

By Lorraine Parham, Vacation Bible School Director

We prepared the tackle box, chose the very best bait, casted our lines and reeled in the most exciting, electrifying, exhilarating, uplifting, elevating, stimulating and spirit-filled VBS ever. From beginning to end, we were truly "Fishin' on a Mission with JESUS".



Did I say from beginning to end? Well, there is a before the beginning. Before VBS 2012 began, Mrs. Donna Gullatte set the stage by capturing the VBS theme in a mural which was strategically placed on the entrance wall. Everyone entering the church was immediately captivated and wanted to know more about the plans for VBS.

The week prior to the start of VBS, Mrs. Mary Rarkin launched a publicity rally in the Searcy Homes community with members of the children's choir and their parents. The group marched through the complex carrying fishing rods and chanting "Fishin' on a Mission"; passing out gold fish and inviting all to VBS 2012. They returned to the Church with more children than she had when she left. A special salute is extended to Brother Dennis DeLoach and Mrs. Kristina Ligin for creating the publicity flyers.

Matthew 4: 18-21 details Jesus' encounter with four fishermen while walking by the Sea of Galilee. The lives of Peter, Andrew, James and John were immediately changed by the words, "Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men." The scripture says "...straight away, immediately, without hesitation, they left their nets and followed him." They followed Him throughout Galilee as He taught and preached the Gospel in the synagogues. Christians are also called to spread the gospel; however, before going out they must be equipped. VBS 2012 focused on equipping us in preparation for sharing the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ. Throughout the week more than 120 students were anchored in truth and prepared to share that truth with others as fishermen for Jesus. The bible study focused on five tenets:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| PRAY FIRST | - As fishers we must practice prayer and pray mightily before witnessing to others. |
| SPEAK UP | - Fishers must understand the importance of speaking up with boldness about Jesus. |
| BE BRAVE | - Although we may be anxious we can take comfort in the knowledge that we can witness without fear of persecution. |
| LIVE RIGHT | - As fishers we know that we are imperfect; however we should endeavor to live a righteous life to be effective in our witness. |
| REACH OUT | - As Christians we have a responsibility to share the Gospel with every one God sends our way. |

These five tenets could be heard in every class beginning with the Preschool Minnows, (ages 2 - 5) taught by Mrs. Erica Harbin, Mrs. Yvette Clark and Mrs. Stephanie Hasan. Can you imagine being in a class with twelve, that's right twelve 2-5 year olds who knew that they needed to PRAY FIRST? And it did not stop there. The Primary Starfish, (ages 6-8) taught by Mrs. Lydia Owens and Mrs. Karen Minor, with the help of Mrs. Rosemary Wells, had no problem SPEAKING UP. When asked to whom they could witness, they spoke with boldness about witnessing on the school bus to classmates, to friends and to their neighbors. The courageous Junior Stingrays

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Vacation Bible School 2012 Fishin' on a Mission with Jesus!

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(ages 9-12), under the direction of Mr. Justin York and Mrs. Kristina Liggins (Grady Madison AME) personified what it means to BE BRAVE as they engaged in one-on-one interviews about the importance of witnessing. The teen Sharks, ages 13 and up (SHARK ATTACK!!) were 28 to 30 strong each night. This explosive group under the care of a dynamic trio, Brother Dennis DeLoach, Ms. Janette Smith and Rev. Sheri Smith Clayborn engaged in continuous discussions on how important it is to LIVE RIGHT. What did you say Ms. Smith? "When you know better, you ought to do better". The "Big Bass" Adult and Young Adult Seahorse classes were led by Mrs. Lillie Rivers, Mr. Hodges Washington, Mr. Bernard Powers, Mrs. Mildred Powers, Mr. Rufus Gilmore, and Mrs. Agnes Gilmore. Dr. Thalia Love-Brown, and Ms. Claudinette Purifoy shared their experiences in REACHING OUT and encouraged each other to be persistent in their witness and take every opportunity to share the Gospel even in the oddest of situations.

But wait, it did not stop there, let's not forget the fun. On the inside of the church, the hands-on



The Christian Drill Team from True Light Church of God and Christ

creative design team of Mrs. Cheryl Anderson, Mrs. Donna Gullatte, Mrs. Mary Rankin, and Rev. Miriam Garrett, selected and assisted the youth in completing lesson-focused crafts to reinforce the bible study theme. On the outside of the church the sports team consisting of Mr. Glenn Harbin and Mr. Earl Fitchard reminded youth of the importance of letting others see the God in them while at work and at play.

Those who missed VBS 2012, not only missed an important bible study but also the wonder-

ful fellowship with St. John's sister church, Grady Madison AME, and an energetic performance by the Christian Drill Team from True Light Church of God and Christ. Each day participants were greeted by the most congenial team of registrars ever, Mrs. Vanona Walton, Mrs. Eva Smith, Mrs. Edna Owens and Ms. Donnie Thompson.

Once again, VBS would not be complete without a service project. The Clothes Closet, under the careful coordination of Ms. Donnie Thompson, was a tremendous success. Thank you, St. John for the generous donations. All items donated were delivered to the Women's and Men's Shelters at the Downtown Rescue Mission.

There are not enough words to thank all of the teachers, staff members, boards and auxiliaries for their hard work and dedication to VBS and to the mission of Christian Education. If you participated in any way as a volunteer or as a student, you reeled it in, the best VBS from beginning to end.

Take a few minutes to enjoy some special moments captured on film by the wonderful photographer, Mr. Darwin Washington, and printed on the next page. More pictures are posted online in the media section of the church's website at stjohname-hsv.org.

Vacation Bible School 2012 Fishin' on a Mission with Jesus!



Fishin' On A Mission: Using New Bait in Different Ponds

By Janette R. Smith



When it comes to evangelism, St. John AME has always shown a heart for reaching out to the surrounding communities by leveraging the connection with Alabama A&M University, through door-to-door evangelism, the soup kitchen, or even the "bring a friend to church practice." "Fishin' on a mission" was more than a catchy phrase, it was a part of St. John's fiber. So when the number of teens, youth and young adults remained constant or fell off, it was understood to be a part of what many ministries face regardless of race or denomination.

Following God's leadings is quite like an adventure. Many times He gives details like puzzle pieces and believers find themselves holding up an odd-shaped "heavenly directive" and thinking, "Where in the world

does THIS fit?" At least that was this writer's sentiment when God began sharing ideas and concepts about youth, teen, young adult, and young-at-heart events.

Following God's lead on using new bait, we began developing ways to minister to the youth in relevant, yet authentic ways. The test would be Vacation Bible School this summer. The bait: A change of scenery for the classroom, audio / visual additions, exposure to the type of music teens like, but with Jesus-focused lyrics. That would be the bait to get them in the door, and we had the Urban Ministries Inc., curriculum to carry us the rest of the way. However, the way in which that week unfolded caught even the "fishers of men" by surprise.

On the first night of VBS there were 12 students; most of those were St. John AME youth. The number jumped to 30 the second night and then to 42 the third night. On that third night no one complained that they ran out of food because "our" nets were full. On the fourth night "The Sharks" division leveled off at 39. Seven students gave their lives to the Lord, two of those were



re-dedications. As the nets got heavy with the weight of "the catch," the teachers grew stronger. Rev. Sheri, Dennis DeLoach and this writer were challenged to stay flexible: Be prepared with the planned lesson, but definitely be ready to minister "off the cuff." In fact, the willingness to let the classes operate as a living, breathing entity is what kept students coming back. The class dealt with real life issues, and listened to the daily challenges of the students. Occasionally tough love had to be administered when teens just wanted to act like teens. Still, they returned. When that week was over, several began "showing up" at the church to serve with the soup kitchen, or hang out at choir rehearsal. St. John has even begun a regular Wednesday night bible study that usually hosts 13-18 students. Three VBS visitors have joined the church and other young people have

begun attending St. John in recent months. The new blood has even rekindled a fire amongst existing St. John youth that have been long time members.

"Fishin' on a Mission" for souls proved to be very much like fishing for food. When "fishermen" stop "getting nibbles," they change the bait, and they are not afraid to fish in other ponds.

The Out of School Festival was Fun Experience

By Erin Lott

On June 2, 2012, the Single Adult Ministry of St. John A.M.E. Church sponsored an "Out of School Festival" that was held at the Richard Showers Center located on Blue Springs Road. The purpose of the event was to provide school age youth who attend schools in Huntsville and Madison City as well as Madison County with a spirited day of fun, fellowship, and entertainment.



Students were not only provided hot dogs, chips, cookies, and drinks, but they were also given the opportunity to participate in various activities. Students were thrilled to get their faces painted like a butterfly or tiger thanks to the artistic talent of Cassie Shropshire. Shannon Lott did not get much of a break as young girls waited to get a mini-manicure at the Nail Bar. DJ Chief Rocka brought the WEUP Van and provided students with the latest Hip-Hop and R&B music. The popular Moonbounce was in place and remained full during the majority of the festival. When the children needed a snack to keep their energy up, they could stop and get popcorn and cotton candy. Needless to say, children were in line multiple times for the cotton candy.

Students were also given the opportunity to participate in a 3 on 3 basketball tournament. Mr. Brownlow provided his referee talents during the tournament. Three boys from the community won the tournament and were given medals of achievement. They wore their medals proudly during the remainder of the festival.



Pastor Clayborn came out to the festival to read to the children in support of summer reading. He read a few books including *Go Away, Big Green Monster!* by Ed Emberley and *Stuck in the Mud* by Jane Clarke. These books were definitely crowd pleasers. The Richard Showers Center Library Branch provided reading tools and information about the summer reading program that is led by the Huntsville-Madison County Public Library. After the reading, Pastor Clayborn ended with an energetic game of "Duck, Duck, Goose".

All in all, the Out of School Festival was a big success and The Single Adult Ministry hopes to make it an even bigger success next year. The Single Adult Ministry thanks the following for their donations in our effort: James Carpets and Lighting, the Honorable Commissioner Bob Harrison, and Frank Jenkins of the Coca-Cola Company. A special thank you goes out to all members and friends of St. John who volunteered their time in support of this event. It was greatly appreciated.

2012 Graduate and Retiree Recognition

High School Graduates



High School Graduates (left to right) Jacquelyn Thompson, Ricardo Love, Kourtney Burwell and Nina Johnson with Pastor Clayborn.

Kourtney Elizabeth Burwell earned an Advanced Honors Diploma from Hazel Green High School. She graduated with honors with an overall average of 90. She will attend Jacksonville State University (Jacksonville, Alabama) and will major in exercise science and wellness. Kourtney is an active member of the YPD and the Praise Dance Ministry. Kourtney is the daughter of Ms. Jill Burwell, grand-daughter of Ms. Eleanor Burnett, niece of Mr. Lars Avery, Ms. Mary Powers and Ms. Rosa Whitman, and cousin of Ms. Brandy Powers Lockett.

Alesia Kamaria Ginn earned a high school Diploma from Bob Jones High School where she was a member of the Spanish Honor Society. Alesia will attend Mercer University (Macon, Georgia). She is a

member of the YPD and Youth Young Adult Choir of St. John AME Church. Alesia is the daughter of Mr. Guy Ginn.

Nina Marie Johnson earned a high school diploma from Lee High School. She will attend J. F. Drake State Technical College (Huntsville, Alabama). Nina plans to become a chef. She is an active member of the YPD, Kitchen Ministry, and praise dance ministry. She is the niece of Ms. Barbara Ann Johnson and Mr. Jessie Johnson, and the cousin of Ms. Alice Hereford, Joshua Hereford, and Ms. Marjorie Reed.

Ricardo Miguel Love earned a high school diploma from James Oliver Johnson High School. While in high school Ricardo was a member of the Student Government Association, marching band, and an academic honors student. Ricardo received the 2011-2012 National Business Education Award. Ricardo will attend Alabama A & M University (Huntsville, Alabama) and major in Marketing. He is the only son of Mr. Randy and Mrs. Rickshel Love and grandson of Ms. Marie Sanchez.

Jacquelyn Nicole Thompson earned an Advanced Diploma with a 4.0 grade point average from Buckhorn High School. Her honors and awards include the National Honor Society, Buckhorn High School Top Ten, FCCLA, 2012 Alpha Kappa Alpha Debutante, and the President's Education Awards Program for Outstanding Academic Excellence. Jacquelyn is the recipient of an academic and athletic scholarship from the University of Montevallo (Montevallo, Alabama), where she will be majoring in Bio-Chemistry/Pre-Med. Jacquelyn plans to become an OB/GYN. She is the daughter of Dr. Tommy and Mrs. Cassandra Thompson and the granddaughter of Dr. Willie Mingo Clark and Mrs. Lou Clark.

*For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD,
"plans to prosper you and not to harm you,
plans to give you hope and a future."*

Jeremiah 29:11

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2012 Graduate and Retiree Recognition

(Continued from page 12)

Undergraduate and Graduate Studies



Graduates (left to right) Janette Smith and Dr. Jennifer Patterson with Pastor Clayborn.

Ms. Leandria Tia Lott, B.A., earned a Bachelor's of Arts Degree from Tennessee State University. Her major was Commercial Music Performance with emphasis in Violin Studies. During her tenure at TSU she was able to study in London, England and perform in Italy. She has a position at Drexel Preparatory Academy teaching strings. She also plans to continue playing musicals and participating in other musical outlets around the city of Nashville. She is the daughter of Mr. Peter & Dr. Rena Lott, and the sister of Peter Lott, IV.

Ms. Janette R. Smith, B.A., earned a Bachelor's of Arts Degree in Telecommunications from Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University. Ms. Smith returned to AAMU in the summer and fall of 2011, to complete two full semesters of coursework, for which she earned a 4.0 grade point average. She returned to Alabama A&M University after enjoying a

27+ year career as a Broadcast Journalist in several markets and as Host for programming on the DIY Network and HGTV.

Ms. Smith is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., and Alpha Epsilon Rho—the National Honorary Broadcasting Society. When Ms. Smith first attended Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University, she served as an officer in the Student Government Association, as Second Attendant to Miss Alabama A&M, and was a faithful member of the University Choir for three years under the direction of Dr. Henry & Mrs. Nell Lane Bradford and Mr. Richard Tucker.

Janette would like to thank her mother Eva and brother Marc for their tireless support, and recognize her father Lt. Col (Ret) John Smith, in whose memory she returned to finish her degree. Ms. Smith serves on the planning committee for St. John AMEC's iThrive magazine and Friday Nite Live, Young Adult/Student Ministry events, AMENews letter, Youth/Young Adult & Mass Choirs. She is the daughter of St. John member, Mrs. Eva Smith, and Ms. Ada Houston is her adopted great aunt.

Jennifer Lynn Oliver Patterson, Ph.D., was conferred the Doctorate of Philosophy degree in Food Science from Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University in Huntsville, Alabama. Her dissertation is entitled, "Distribution, bioaccumulation, and toxicity of N-nitrosamines in Red Swamp Crayfish." Dr. Patterson held a 4.0 grade point average, authored two peer-reviewed manuscripts recently published in *The Journal of Pharmacology and Toxicology: A Science Alert Journal*; co-authored 4 peer-reviewed manuscripts, and was inducted into Phi Tau Sigma Honor Society for Food Scientist and Iota Sigma Pi honor Society for Women in Chemistry.

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2012 Graduate and Retiree Recognition

(Continued from page 13)

Dr. Patterson is currently a postdoctoral research associate in the Department of Food and Animal Science at Alabama A&M University, conducting research in the areas of food and nutritional toxicology, with particular emphasis in colon cancer prevention, diabetes (type 2) management, and toxicological parameters of bioactive foods.

Dr. Patterson is the lead choreographer of the St John Dance Ministry, and a member of the Women's Missionary Society. She is the wife of Mr. Julian N. Patterson and the mother of Jordan Patterson.

The Reverend Malik JoDavid Sales, Ph.D., was conferred the Doctorate of Philosophy degree in Systematic Theology from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. The title of my dissertation was "Saving Possibilities: Salvation, the Holy Spirit, and Variegated Resistance." Dr. Sales was ordained an itinerant elder in the AME Church in 2007.

Sales taught Introduction to Theology at Xavier University, from Summer 2003 to 2005. At the Calhoun Community College in Huntsville, Alabama, he taught Introduction to Religious Studies and Introduction to the New Testament. In addition to his work in theology, Sales is a prolific creative writer. He recently completed a science fiction manuscript.

Dr. Sales is the son of Attorney Michael Sales and Attorney Juanita Lee. Sales is the beloved nephew of Ruby Sales and the beloved grandson of Mrs. Willie M. Sales Griffin. He is married to Dr. Kedra Sales, who is a pediatrician.

The Reverend Deborah Denise Peppers, M.Div., earned the Master's of Divinity Degree from Payne Theological Seminary. Rev. Peppers has served as a staff minister of St. John AME Church and continues to advise the Single Adult Ministry. She is pastor of Round Hill AME Church in Lynnville, Tennessee.



Pastor Clayborn with retirees Reverend McCall, Ms. Barbara Johnson and Mr. Lafayette Townsend

Retirees

Ms. Barbara A. Johnson

Huntsville City Schools
35 years and 8 months of service
Currently serves as the President of the Stewardess Board

The Reverend Homer L. McCall, D.Min.

St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church
40 years of service as pastor of St. John
and 50 years in the ministry.
Currently serves on the St. John ministerial staff

Mr. Lafayette Townsend, Sr.

Redstone Army & Air Force Exchange
Shipping & Receiving Clerk
43 years of service
Currently serves on the Usher Board

Divinely Inspired Victoriously Anointed Sisters D.I.V.A.S. Night Out

By Brittney Bell



Lydia Owens, Janette Smith, Thalia Love-Brown and Tami McGhee enjoy the evening.

A night to remember at The Eaves Restaurant on Church Street was hosted by the women of St. John. The turnout for the event was better than expected, with women from wall to wall enjoying the fellowship of one another. Beautiful theme-centered decorations served as centerpieces and were arranged by Mary Rankin and Donna Gullatte. As women do not always have time to enjoy the fellowship of others because of the commitments of everyday life.

The evening started off with a welcome and prayer by the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn, followed by ice breakers by Yvette Cooper-Clark. The ice breakers allowed ladies to find out a little more about one another. The women then sat back and relaxed with some entertainment by St. John member and comedienne, Mrs. Brenda Jones. After that the women enjoyed a dinner and dessert with conversation from our fellow friends and sisters in Christ.

Thank you, Mrs. Lauretta Teague and Women's Ministry, for coordinating this enjoyable evening.



ST. JOHN A.M.E. CHURCH SOUP KITCHEN

3rd and 4th Tuesdays
11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m.

229 Church Street — Huntsville, AL
(on the corner of Church and Monroe Streets)
ALL ARE WELCOME

The St. John Soup Kitchen Ministry has expanded to serving meals twice a month. The Soup Kitchen is open on the third and fourth Tuesdays of each month.

On June 19th the Soup Kitchen Ministry fed 27 visitors and members and 19 lunch bags were prepared for the First Stop Shelter. On June 26th 35 bags were delivered to First Stop Homeless Shelter as well as meals were served to a gentleman who stopped by the church and a mother of eight children in Searcy Homes. There was also plenty for members who attended the Noon Bible Study.

The Soup Kitchen Ministry is thankful for each person that God has sent with a willing heart to serve the community and all mankind. They appreciate those who made monetary donations as well as those who provide the soup and other food items. Thank you volunteers and supporters for your labors in this ministry.

Flowers on the Altar

Members who would like to donate flowers for the altar starting September 2, 2012 through August 31, 2013 may contact Pearlean Myhand at 256.852.8265.

Youth Day 2012

Chains Broken: Young people embracing
the **FREEDOM** of the Spirit of God
Galatians 5:1



Sunday, August 19, 2012
8:00 a.m. & 10:50 a.m.

St. John A.M.E. Church
128 Church Street - Huntsville, AL
(205) 544-1365
www.stjohname.org
Rev. Patrick D. Clayborn, Ph.D., Pastor

Youth Day 2012 will be held Sunday, August 19th. It will be observed at both the 8:00 & 10:50 services with the actual celebration taking place at the 10:50 service. The theme for Youth Day is "Chains Broken: Young people embracing their FREEDOM in the Spirit of God." The scripture reference is Galatians 5:1.

There are two pre-Youth Day events. The pre-Youth Day Concert will be Sunday, August 5th at 3:30 p.m. and the Youth Extravaganza: Celebrating Our Youth & an Evening of Fashion will be Saturday, August 18th. The location for the extravaganza will be announced at a later date.

The youth will be selling ads to support the Youth Day program. A full color page is \$30, full black and white page is \$25, half color page is \$20, half black and white page is \$15, quarter page ad is \$10, and business cards or patrons are \$5. Contact person are Mrs. Pamela Whitehead or Brother Dennis DeLoach.

Something to Smile About!

Joke of the Month

Smith climbs to the top of Mount Sinai to talk to God. Looking up, he asks the Lord, "God, what does a million years mean to you?"

The Lord replies, "A minute."

Smith asks, "And what does a million dollars mean to you?"

The Lord replies, "A penny."

Smith asks, "Can I have a penny?"

The Lord replies, "In a minute."

Texting Teen News June 2k12

Written by: Mariah Gullatte

Hot, Hot, Hot! This summer is scorching with the word of God! Welcome to all of the new members! We pray that you have found a loving church home here at St. John and that you will find a blessing in being here! The youth are out of school and chilling! Make sure you stay hydrated and covered with sun-screen! The youth have also taken time out from their relaxed summer days to help out at the soup kitchen.

Vacation Bible School for the teens took place in the most stylish room of the church, thanks to Ms. Jannette Smith. It was home to the SHARKS! SHARK ATTACK! We learned each day a new nugget...Pray First, Be Brave, Live Right, Speak Up, Reach Out, and to Follow Him. The Sharks learned to apply the nuggets in their everyday life. In fact, I just received a text from some eager SHARKS.

Question #1: How did you enjoy VBS?

Question #2: What did you learn or take from the class?

Question #3: Do you apply it in your everyday life now?

Answer: "I did enjoy VBS. I learned to speak up, Be Brave & Reach Out to others by using the gifts God gave to me. And yes, I do apply what I have learned in my everyday life."

—Ashley Lewis

Answer: "I learned not to forget God in the things I do, and before I act I need to pray and consider Him as well as to not be afraid or hesitant to speak a testimony when speaking to others. And yes, I apply it in my day to day life; especially praying now more than ever. I keep him in my mouth"

— Kalon Anderson

We somehow managed to fit over 30 teens, 3 adults, and a small fan in our stylish room. And God always works his "magic"... 9 special young girls and boys who were in need of His blessing gave Him their hearts and lives.

Until next time TTYL (Talk To You Later)!

News Text for the Month...

Matthew 4:19 Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.



Presented by ITHRIVE & ST JOHN A.M.E. CHURCH

AUGUST 24, 2012

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SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR FRIDAY NITE LIVE - The Word & Worship Experience by sowing a ministry seed today!

Church School Lesson Overview – August 2012

August Church School reviews were written by Kenneth Parham.

August 5, 2012

Lesson Title: Praise for God's Justice

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 146:1-10; Exodus 21-23; Isaiah 58

Print: Psalm 146:1-10

Devotional Songs: #97 [], #251 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob... who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry" (Psalm 146:5, 7).

In this lesson, we are given a prospective of a psalmist who has a close relationship with GOD. The psalmist continuously gives praises to God for His greatness, the Maker of all things. The psalmist cannot even fathom placing trust in the human "man", knowing that man is limited in knowledge and is limited in time. The psalmist knows through his/her personal walk with God that God has fed, with the bread of life, those who hunger for salvation; has granted deliverance to captives bound in the chains of sin and Satan; has opened the eyes of the understanding; He has proven to be the constant Friend of the poor in spirit, the helpless; and for sinners, He shows mercy. The psalmist also knows the wrath of God and indicates that God turns the life of the wicked upside-down.

The psalmist also knows that God reigns forever and ever and that he/she will praise the LORD.

August 12, 2012

Lesson Title: God Promised a Righteous Lord

Lesson Scripture: Isaiah 9:1-7

Print: Isaiah 9:2-7

Devotional Songs: #424 [], #272 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "For a child has been born for us, a son given to us" (Isaiah 9:6).

Research indicates that during this time, the Syrians and Assyrians conquered the Israelites. Even though that region was once favored by the preaching of God, those who professed God waked in darkness, and in the utmost danger. The lesson scripture also indicated that, even in darkness, when God's word comes to any place, to any soul, light comes. God's word brings joy with it. Those who would have joy, must expect to go through hard work, as the laborer before he has the joy of harvest; and hard conflict, as the soldier, before he divides the spoil. The Jews were delivered from the yoke of many oppressors. The cleansing the souls of believers from the power and pollution of sin, would be by the influence of the Holy Spirit, as purifying fire. These great things for the church, were to be done by the Messiah, Emmanuel. This Child was born for the benefit of men, of sinners, of all believers, from the beginning to the end of the world. Justly is He called Wonderful, for He is both God and man. His love is the wonder of angels and glorified saints. He is the Counselor, for He knew the counsels of God from eternity; and He gives counsel to men. He is the Wonderful Counselor; none teaches like Him. As the Prince of Peace, He reconciles us to God; He is the Giver of peace in the heart and conscience; and when His kingdom is fully established, men shall learn war no more. The government shall be upon Him; He shall bear the burden of it. Glorious things are spoken of Christ's government. There is no end to the increase of its peace, for the happiness of its subjects shall last forever.

August 19, 2012

Lesson Title: God Promised a Righteous Branch

Lesson Scripture: Jeremiah 23:1-6; 33:14-18

Print: Same

Tentative Devotional Songs: #377 [], #258 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall... execute justice and righteousness in the land" (Jeremiah 23:5).

Jeremiah delivered a message to the priests of his time. He relayed that GOD was unhappy with the state of His church and He would hold the pastors/priests responsible for driving folks

*The reviewer would like to acknowledge Matthew Henry's Commentary as a source for this lesson summary.

(Continued on page 19)



Church School Lesson Overview – August 2012

(Continued from page 18)

away from the church and He would personally punish the offenders. In modern time, this is analogous to religious organizations, deep in tradition and values, changing doctrine/directions for the perceived gain of a few.

God indicated that He will bring back His people and they will bring the church back to life in numbers. God will personally send pastors to administer to the people and the people will fear no more. The ones that remained knew who they were and to whom they belonged. They weathered the storm and God placed the right minister in the right church. God continues to watch over the churches of today.

Jeremiah continued to relay that God's plan is to produce a righteous seed (The Messiah) from the lineage of David. Jeremiah indicated that the ruler would prosper and execute judgment throughout the earth and that God would soon deliver on His promise. In that day, it is noted that once the Messiah is come and shows His greatness, it will be impossible for King David to see an ordinary man rule over the House of Israel nor would the Levites want an ordinary man offering sacrifices to God.

August 26, 2012

Lesson Title: God Promised to be with Us

Lesson Scripture: Ezekiel 34

Print: Ezekiel 34:23-31

Tentative Devotional Songs: #437 ☐; #282 ☐; and #243 ☐

Key Verse: "I will set up over them one shepherd... he shall feed them and be their shepherd" (Ezekiel 34:23).

In this lesson, the prophet Ezekiel delivers a message from God to the Israelites. The Sunday School Lesson summary indicates that the Israelites were demoralized with hopelessness after being in captivity. Ezekiel's message was welcomed in that it brought an official explanation of what was happening as well as a vision of hope for future restoration. God's promise of taking personal responsibility over the scattered Israelites (similar theme noted in 19 Aug 2012 Lesson), demonstrates the love for His chosen people. In verses 23-24, God sets the stage for the Messiah by appointing a shepherd for His chosen flock.

God indicates that He has placed the shepherd even over David, His Beloved. In verses 25-29, God sets up a covenant between God and His chosen people. The covenant promises deliverance from the oppressors, deliverance from sin (or the heathen), a promise of showers of blessings (their land would prosper) and, He will give His people a plant of renown (Jesus – a branch from King David) and there will be no more shame of being a Child of God. And finally, in verses 30-31, by God fulfilling His promise to the children of Israel, All nations will know that God is their shepherd and they are His flock.



Church School Book Club

Discussion Date: 18 August 12
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Good Stuff, Michelle Stimpson, 2009

Discussion Date: 15 September 12
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Up to No Good, Carl Weber, 2009

There is always a man around the corner. Church trustee James Black should know—he's usually that man, carrying on adulterous affairs and sleeping with one conquest after another. But when he suddenly finds himself truly in love, the other women in his church have a thing or two to say about it—including his daughter, Jamie.

Jamie has every intention of dismantling the relationship—until she discovers a mystery woman has been secretly calling her lover, Louis. Meanwhile, James's son, Daniel, spirals out of control after he catches his fiancée cheating. James knows he's to blame for the turmoil that surrounds him and his loved ones. Now he'll have to find a way to bring peace to their lives. But he can only do it by facing some hard truths about himself and changing his scandalous ways.

Parent Wisdom

By Reverend Vanessa Glover

*Cast thy burden
upon the Lord,
and He shall
sustain thee.
He shall never suffer
the righteous to be moved.
Psalm 55:22*

There are many things that will keep us in the infancy of Christianity, when God's highest purpose for us is to grow to maturity. It may be that we are unwilling to run the risk of failure or perhaps we are afraid to leave our comfort zone of infancy for the rugged life of faith; but anything worth having there is a price to be paid. Whether the price is emotional pain that runs so deep, whether the challenges of parenting have been so great, or just maybe the cares of life have been so intense—the fact of the matter is God plants in our FAITH life seeds of nourishment from the Word of God. So then FAITH comes by hearing the Word of God, Romans 10:17

As parents, the only way we can come to terms with this reality is by trusting God and literally trusting His Words, regardless of the situations we faced. No ifs ands or buts. Psalm 55: 22 declares, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord and He shall sustain thee. He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." The word cast literally means to "throw" off or away; to get rid of; in other words release the burdens of our hearts onto the Lord. He is the Sovereign God who has the power, the insight, and the ability to handle every circumstance. We cannot wait for our conditions to be perfect nor can we wait for things to be free of all risks; we are to "cast all of our anxiety onto the Lord because He cares for us," 1 Peter 5:7

God's way is always right. It may not always make sense or seldom can we explain it, for His thoughts and ways are far above our thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9) God then uses the elements of our adversity to make us strong. With this truth in mind, adversity can be a teaching tool if we allow it to do its refining work in our lives. Instead of protecting ourselves, we release ourselves to God. Instead of worrying over failures or missed opportunities, we forget those things which are behind and reach forth to those things that are before us and pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14) Instead of drifting and doubting, we are to courageously trust God at His Word— "Come unto me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30 AMEN.



Timely Tip: Be positive: If your thoughts tend to be all over the place or toward the negative end of the spectrum, redirect them. How? Start by counting your Blessings and by Thanking God, Our Father in heaven. And while you are there; whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things! Philippians 4: 8

Prayer: Luke 2:40 Father, thank you for sending your Son to this earth, taking on human flesh and living among us. Lord, thank you for modeling the way to live and what you taught us through Your words as our examples. Now Lord, I pray that our children will grow in the ways that you grew. Lord, sharpen their focus, give them clear purpose that they know why they are here and where they are going. Lord, strengthen them to grow in character, help them to grow not just in years, but in sound mind and in maturity. Above all, I pray for his/her will to be set on doing all that is pleasing in your sight. Amen.

As a Thoughtful Parent: God will continue to reveal Himself to us as we journey through the stages of this life. The Lord shall preserve us from all evil; He shall preserve our soul. The Lord shall preserve our going out and our coming in from this time forth and even forevermore. Psalm 121:7-8

August 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 12:00 p.m. Bible Study 5:00 p.m. Steward Board Mtg 6:30 p.m. Mid-Week Service and Love Feast	2  6:00 p.m. Mens Choir Rehearsal	3	4 9:00 a.m. Sr. Usher Board Meeting 10:00 a.m. Official Board Meeting 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
5 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship AMEN Deadline	6 6:00 p.m. Nokola Ministry Meeting	7 6:00 p.m. Stewardless Board  Voices of Praise Rehearsal	8 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	9 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	10	11 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal AMEN Moon Anniversary Luncheon Meeting
12 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship	13	14 6:00 p.m. Sons of Allen Mtg  Voices of Praise Rehearsal	15 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	16	17  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	18 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
19 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship	20 6:00 p.m. Single Adult Ministry	21 11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m. BO UP KITCHEN 6:00 Lay Organization Mtg 6:30 p.m. Trustee Board	22 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	23  6:00 p.m. Mens Choir Rehearsal	24 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal 8:00 p.m. FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE	25 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal
26 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship	27  6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal VMS Meeting	28 11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m. BO UP KITCHEN 6:00 p.m. Church School Board Meeting	29 12:00 p.m. Bible Study 5:00 p.m. Steward Board Mtg 6:30 p.m. Mid-Week Service and Love Feast	30  6:00 p.m. Mens Choir Rehearsal	31	

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The Reverend Doctor Patrick Clayborn, Pastor



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Important Dates to Remember



- | | |
|------------------|---|
| July 22-25, 2012 | Christian Education Congress, Montgomery, Alabama |
| July 28, 2012 | Koinonia Youth and Young Adult Summit, 8:00 am—3:00 pm |
| July 29, 2012 | Hopewell AME Church, Florence, Alabama, 2:30 pm. Pastor Clayborn will preach, and the Mass Choir will sing. |
| August 19, 2012 | Youth Day, 8:00 a.m. and 10:50 a.m. |
| August 21, 2012 | The St. John Lay Organization Meeting 8:00 pm. |
| August 24, 2012 | Friday Nite Live, 8:00—10:00 p.m. |

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved, Romans 10:9

ST. JOHN A.M.E.N. NEWSLETTER



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 17 Issue 8

August 2012

Pastor's Meditation

Facing the Red Sea

Exodus 14:10-18



Reverend Patrick D. Clayton

The Israelites left captivity and perhaps thought that nothing but good times were ahead. They – after over 400 years of slavery – were FREE!!! This is how Exodus 13 ends. Israel is having a commencement service. They're graduating from slavery to freedom.

However, they found themselves in a worse predicament in the next chapter. Instead of enjoying the laps of luxury, Israel is trapped in chapter 14. The Red Sea is in front of them, and the Egyptian armies are closing in behind them.

Have you ever been there? You were supposed to be free – enjoying the high life. Your troubles should have been long gone, but the path to your breakthrough is blocked by an impossible situation. Furthermore, that old trouble is back and is stronger than ever!

Yes, we are free - free from our old way of life. But, into what have we been freed? The place of freedom will not have sunshine every day. It is not a place of ease. Freedom comes at a cost. That cost is often perilous. With every blessing there comes a challenge, and the greatest challenge may not come from our enemies. It may be that our greatest challenge comes from the Lord!

In the beginning of the 14th chapter of Exodus, God made the Israelites double back. They had made it to the edge of the wilderness. Then God told them to go back between Migdol and the sea. Some scholars believe this area is a valley in Egypt with mountains on both sides and the Red Sea in front. The Egyptian army on the Israelites' backside makes this a tight issue. Further, God told them to go there!!!

How do we deal with this? How do we handle ourselves when our circumstances contradict God's promise? How do we face struggle when we are supposed to be free? How do we keep our minds on freedom when our situation suggests that we are still slaves? How do we face our Red Sea?

First, we must remember that God is on our side! It is easy to get disillusioned when what God tells us doesn't come to pass immediately. God promised that Israel would be free, but God leads them to a place that appears to be their demise. William Johnstone says that "the liberation of Israel from the tyrant by itself is not enough; all possibility of the tyrant ever again imposing his servitude has to be eliminated. The Red Sea is the limit at which the power of Egypt is definitively destroyed."¹ Some of us are ready to be out of our "Egypt," but we're not quite ready to be in our "Promised Land!" God has to destroy the grip that Egypt has on us. In order to do so, God has to put us in a place where that can happen. Even though Israel was on its way to the Promised Land, they were not yet free. At the first sign of trouble, they scream, "We should've stayed in Egypt!" Though they had changed geographic locations, their mentality was still the same. Do you know anyone who carries around a slave mentality? You can put them in a new context with all the amenities, but their walk and talk is trapped in their past.

God decided that being geographically free was not good enough for Israel. God chose to eradicate the Israelites' bondage altogether. God used the Red Sea to do it! Many of us are complaining to God about our "Red Seas." God why did you bring me here? God why did you let me meet that person? God why haven't I met anybody? God why did you let me feel that way? God why is this going on at church? God why aren't my finances the way I want them? God why isn't my job doing what I think it should do? However, the very problem that we may be complaining about might be the agent that sets us free! God

(Continued on page 2)

Some of us are ready to be out of our "Egypt," but we're not quite ready to be in our "Promised Land!"

¹William D. Johnstone, "Exodus," in *Eerdman's Commentary on the Bible*, ed. James D. G. Dunn (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 88.

Pastor's Meditation

(Continued from page 1)

may be using that job or unemployment to get our minds right! God may put that person in our lives to give us a new perspective. God may be relocating us to help us see the baggage that we are still carrying. God is letting our finances go down the drain to show us our true source. God is allowing that situation to develop so we can see the people in our lives for who they truly are. So, we must know that God is on our side even though it may feel like the Lord is giving us Castor oil. Though God's work may not feel good to us; it is good for us.

Since God is for us, the second thing we must do is move forward. Rev. Dr. William Wiatley wrote a book entitled *You Have to Face it to Fix it*. We have to face the challenge God has placed before us. Therefore, that negative mindset has to be eliminated.

God says in Exodus 14:15, 'Why do you cry to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward!' Put the pessimistic talk away! Put the backbiting away! Put the bickering away! Quit all of that wining and pouting! GO FORWARD!!!

Now, it may seem offensive (at least I was initially offended) when you think about the appearance of this situation. God doesn't seem to care about the Israelites' concern. If they go forward, they DROWN!!! God responds, "You won't drown...if you embrace who I've called you to be!" Therefore, we must have faith in God to move forward. In particular, we must have faith in who God says we are!

This is the third move. After we know that God is for us and after we move forward to the challenge that God places in front of us, then we have to face that challenge by being ourselves. We have to be the persons God has called us to be. We have to do what God has called us to do.

In Exodus 14:15-16, God talks to Moses. Moses is the leader. Moreover, he is God's representative to and for Israel. God tells Moses that if he embraces his calling and does his job, Israel will walk across the sea on dry ground!

It is not that Moses had denied his calling; rather, he got sidetracked. In verses 13 and 14, Moses told Israel to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. God is going to fight for you. You just keep still. However, God doesn't completely agree with Moses. Moses says stand still; God says go forward!

A whole bunch of churches are standing still, but God is saying go forward! Myriads of church people are standing still. While we are standing still, people are losing hope. While we are standing still, folks are going hungry. While we are standing still, children are not getting a quality education. When we stand still, President Obama does not get any support. When we stand still, greedy corporations think that they can do anything they want. When we stand still, Trayvon Martin's murder goes unnoticed. When we stand still, our enemies get what they want.

If the Israelites had just sat there, the Egyptians would have captured them. They were only able to be free by going forward and doing what God called them to do.

I am not trying to totally dismiss what Moses said. The problem is that many of us often take standing still too far. Standing still is about not doing God's job. God will do God's job. Stand still means get out of God's way! However, many take this to mean that God will do everything for us. Yet, God said if we want to cross over on dry ground, there are three things that must be done: lift up the rod, stretch out one's hand over the sea, and divide it. These three actions symbolize who Moses is -- a leader. We, as the church, are supposed to be leaders. This is who God has called us to be. If the world is going to cross over on dry ground, we have got to lead the effort.

We, too, have to lift up our rods. We must show others the transforming power that God has. We must lift up the areas in our lives that God has touched. We have to lift up our testimonies. Moses said, 'This rod was just a shepherd's staff. One day, God changed my life, and my rod changed. It turned into a snake. It even ate the Pharaoh's snakes.' We must lift up our testimonies as well. For, we overcome by the blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony (Revelation 12:11).

We also have to stretch out our hands over the sea. The hand is a symbol for power. God says stretch your power over your problem. Stretch your prayers over that child. Stretch your giving over that lack. Stretch your patience over that job. Stretch your joy over that heartache. Stretch your mind over that question.

(Continued on page 8)



St. John Members Reflect on Experiences at General Conference

Compiled by the Reverend Vanessa Glover

More than fifty members of St. John attended one or more sessions of the 49th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church that was held in Nashville, Tennessee, June 27 - July 4, 2012. This article is a compilation of the experiences of some of the persons who attended the General Conference. (The Reverend Glover was given preacher privilege to include a report on the preached Word at the Conference.)

Mrs. Edna Owens

The Quadrennial Service on Sunday was a very spiritual experience beginning with the processional of all of the Bishops and the choir singing "Total Praise". The service was very uplifting, ending with the Holy Communion service and I truly enjoyed the whole experience.

Ms. Claudinette Purifoy

This was the first General Conference that I have attended and it was a great experience. The music was wonderful, the pageantry of seeing the Bishops take their positions on the stage was awesome, and the sermon by Bishop Guidry was inspiring. However, I was impressed with the number of persons in attendance at conference who support the mission of the AME church but also the business of the AME church. That was very gratifying particularly because of the so called loss in popularity of organized religion.

Mrs. Mable McCall

Even though I spent the entire time at the General Conference on a scooter, not being able to walk and talk like I'm used to doing, due to the doctor's orders of staying off my foot, we were blessed to have a General Conference that was exciting, exhilarating, and exemplary. One of the highlights was First Lady Michelle Obama who addressed the General Conference, challenging us to continue the legacy that began in 1816 and not to forget the persons that have laid the foundations before us; we all have a right and responsibility to keep their work progressing and moving forward. From the Ecumenical Service World Methodist Council General Secretary sermon, CONN-M-SWAWO breakfast, RAYAC Hour of Power with Pastor Clayborn, election of Bishops, to Closing Worship and Consecration Service with the dynamic spirit-filled Senior Bishop, Bishop John Bryant, the 49th Session of the AME General Conference was an awesome time not just celebrating as an AME, but celebrating Christ and worshipping Him with fellow believers across the globe.

Ms. Janette Smith

I personally enjoyed the 'fellowship' that the bus rides provided. We were able to leisurely travel to Nashville and enjoy the conversation and camaraderie that opportunity provided. Since we only enjoyed one session, I will say that the Sunday session was inspiring, but what I enjoyed most was the spirit and worship atmosphere with so many believers and Saints taking part in the Praise & Worship and Communion services. The bus ride back was equally restorative, because we deepened our fellowship by breaking bread together. :)

Reverend Vanessa Glover

Although, a member of the AME Church for over 17 years, I must admit this was my first General Conference. What an awesome experience to be a part of history with the first female Bishop, Vashti Murphy McKenzie, hosting the General Conference and the First Lady of the United States, Mrs. Michelle Obama, addressing the General Conference; what a mighty God we serve.

Deaconess Ernestine Barnes-Ivery

I love hearing, "And are we yet Alive?" at the opening worship service. The First Lady of the USA

(Cont) read on page 4)





Members Reflect on General Conference

(Continued from page 3)

and some say the "world", Mrs. Michelle Robinson Obama, was the "keynote speaker." Mayor Dean of Nashville greeted the Conference and asked we not wait 140 years to come back. He also stated that AMEs would leave 8 million dollars in the city when they departed Nashville. Those gone from labor to reward since the last General Conference were remembered during a Memorial Service. The Reverend Doctor Patrick Clayborn preached the 10 pm RAYAC Service and "He was off the chain, as usual." We thank our host for making readily available scooters and wheelchairs for those in need.

Col. (Ret.) James O. Heyward

This is the first time since the 43rd Quadrennial General Conference in Cincinnati, Ohio that I have not attended more than one day as an observer or an alternate delegate to the Quadrennial General Conference. The first thing that made an impression on me was the super large auditorium in the Convention Center where the Sunday worship service was held. Second was the colorfulness of the clerical robes worn by the bishops and other clergy. A visit to the conference always seems to provide me with an appreciation for the organization and operation of the African Methodist Episcopal Denomination. It is like going back to the well for more water to survive. I believe that if it is at all possible, every member of our denomination should try to attend at least one Quadrennial General Convention during their life time. Our trip to Nashville on the bus was very enjoyable as it provided an opportunity to fellowship with fellow Saint John members.

Mrs. Maeola Peoples

This was my first time attending the General Conference and I must say it was an awesome feeling to be in the presence of all the men and women of the Cloth representing "The Lord". I woke up that morning so excited because I was going to Nashville to hear the First Lady of The United States speak. When she walked on stage to the podium, I got chill bumps all over because this was the woman representing these United States of America and the best part was she looked like me. To me this was a once in a lifetime experience one that I will probably never experience again and one for the history books.

The message she brought was something that we needed to hear. First and foremost she talked about the history of the AME Church and how it came about and then she went on to talk about how far we've come standing on the backs of people like William H. Council, Martin L. King and others that were out there fighting for the Rights of Black People. Fighting for the right to "Vote", something that some of us take for granted and still some of us do not even bother to get out and vote. She stressed the importance of voting so that Congress hears our voice. She also talked about children and obesity. She said that some children aren't eating healthy because in some cases there is a shortage of grocery stores in certain neighborhoods and that they were working on partnering with Wal-Mart and other stores to build in these neighborhoods so that our parents can shop and buy healthy food for our kids. She said we should shop our local Farmers Market.

Then there was the Holy Communion Service on Sunday where Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry brought the message with a sermon entitled "I will Exalt God". The scripture was from John 12: 29-32. Finally was the Daily Report. If you did not get the opportunity to pick up one, you missed a treat. They were informative and HILARIOUS.

Christine McMillian

I was among a group comprised of St. John members and friends who traveled to Nashville, Tennessee, during the AME Church General Conference in June. The highlight of our trip was to hear Mrs. Michelle Obama, the First Lady of the United States, give the keynote address of the Conference. Mrs. Obama was very articulate, poised, and knowledgeable about the history of the AME Church. She merged the church history with her relevant, contemporary message exceptionally well. I was able to take many pictures of her. At the conclusion of her message, she

(Continued on page 5)



Members Reflect on General Conference

(Continued from page 4)

received thunderous rounds of applause, and then stepped onto the convention floor where she shook hands with some of the attendees.

The Reverend Charles E. Glover

My attendance at the 48th Session of the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church was very inspiring. Although my wife and I have been AMEs for over 17 years, this was our first attendance at a General Conference. Previously, my military commitments and the mere distance and locations of the General Conferences prevented us from attending. The gallantry and parade of posters and other exhibits by the candidates for various offices illustrated an enormous sense of purpose which was felt by all who entered the convention halls. Bishop Vashti McKenzie and Supervisor Stan McKenzie and the wonderful folks of the 13th Episcopal District left no stone unturned in hosting this historic gathering (first time a woman hosted the General Conference along with the speaking of First Lady Michelle Obama at one of the events).

While all the services were truly thought provoking and summons our church to respond to the secular and spiritual challenges facing the church and our communities at such a time as this, the sermons rendered on Sunday (July 1, 2012 at the Worship Service and Holy Communion) by Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry, and the Closing Consecration Sermon by the Senior Bishop, Bishop John Richard Bryant, on Wednesday (July 4, 2012) were the ones most memorable to me personally. Bishop Guidry's text was John 12, with a subject of "Exalting Christ in the World, The Exalted Christ, Look and Live". Her most memorable statements included; "Jesus stated IF He be lifted up, He will draw "ALL" men unto himself (the intelligent, the unschooled, the cultured, and the crude). The Christ of the Cross is our redeemer. Jesus was not the only one to die on the cross (the two thieves were also on the cross) and we all will have our crosses to bear. In our lifetimes, we should do at least one deed exactly as Jesus would have, especially if you are a preacher of the Gospel. We are to live a life of Christ so that others see HIM in us. We may be "by yourself", but you are never alone, unless you want it that way. Christ draws some, but repels others. Where do you stand?"

Bishop John R. Bryant electrified attendees with his sermon presentation. His text was Acts 3: 1-8 with a subject of, "Does Jesus Still Work?". Just the subject alone caused those assembled to go into a frenzy of praise and glory. Bishop Bryant presented numerous memorable statements. Among those included: The love Jesus has for us is unexplainable. He loves us so much He "reduced" Himself so that we can "increase" IN Him. Jesus became "Very-God" and "Very-Man". He came putting a drug store in the hem of His garment. He came walking on water and telling the wind and waves to shut up and Be Still. He ate, slept, and waked like a man, so He knows what we encounter and experience. God "CAN" and God "WILL" do just what His Word says He will do. His promises to us are "Yea" and "Amen", which is the benediction for "IT IS FINISHED". Does Jesus still work? Yes indeed, Jesus still works! How?

1. Jesus works through "His Name".
2. Jesus works through "His Blood".
3. The "Word of Jesus" still works.

Pray in the word. Keep preaching and praying in the Word until your change comes. God specializes in doing the impossible. When you give "it", whatever "it" may be to Jesus, then He can move and do that which only He can do. When we "surrender" to Jesus, HE WILL work in "ALL" things pertaining to Godliness. Bishop Bryant and the 13th Episcopal District's General Conference choir closed with that great sermon hymn of the church, "All to Jesus I Surrender."

"Let The Church Say Amen"

2012 Christian Education and Leadership Congress

BORN TO WORSHIP
A Lifestyle Not an Event

By Lorraine Parham, St. John Christian Education Director



St. John's delegation at the Christian Education Congress in Montgomery.

The Ninth Episcopal District Christian Education and Leadership Congress was held July 22 – 25, 2012 at the Renaissance Conference Center in Montgomery, Alabama.

This year's theme "Born to Worship - A lifestyle Not an Event" kindled a fire in the hearts of all participants.

In his message to the congress Bishop Davis wrote, "We hope during these few days that we spend together we will all rediscover our passion for worship..." It was very clear from day one that the people of the Ninth Episcopal District have a passion for worship. AMEs across the state of every age and gender, gathered to share their faith through song, dance, prayer, poetry and of course PRAISE.

The opening worship service on Sunday, July 22nd was ignited by the spirit-filled voice of guest artist, Shelia J. Fayson Jackson, who prepared worshippers for a non-stop Praise Fest. The opening sermon was delivered by Bishop Clement W. Fugh, the 131st (newly) elected Bishop who is currently assigned to the 14th Episcopal District. In his sermon entitled "There Are No Children Here," Bishop Fugh declared that children have been "over exposed". Everything is done in front of them. He encouraged parents to allow their children to see Jesus by bringing them to Christ at an early age. His parting advice was "It's not where you live but how you live. And, the sun always comes up on a new day."

The leaders planned Christian Education and Leadership workshops focused on strengthening

(Continued on page 7)

2012 Christian Education and Leadership Congress

BORN TO WORSHIP
A Lifestyle Not an Event

By Lorraine Parham, St. John Christian Education Director

(Continued from page 6)

the foundation of the African Methodist worship experience. The following sessions were attended by the writer of this article.

Worship Suits My Case - Unpacking the Worship Services

This session was facilitated by Dr. Isaac Hudson, Pastor of Nichols Chapel AME Church, Phenix City, AL. The liturgy from the prelude to the invitation was discussed. Dr. Hudson emphasized the significance of each area of the worship service. He also stressed that worship does not begin when one gets to church on Sunday; worship begins when one wakes up each morning.

His Temple Sings

This session was facilitated by the Reverend Maurice Wright, pastor of Bethel AME Church Alexandria, Louisiana. The Reverend Wright is a former minister of music. He explained the importance of selecting appropriate music for the worship service. He stressed the need to keep the worship service relevant. However, he also reminded participants that every moment is not a handclapping, footstomping moment and hymns still have a place in the worship experience.

Worship and Modern Technology

The Reverend Roosevelt Williams facilitated this session. He encouraged participants to establish a 7 point plan for creative and innovative worship. This includes establishing goals and a plan for achieving them; determining the target audience, selecting marketing tools, establishing a niche, setting a time line and managing to the budget.

"Something Within Me."

The Congress was blessed by the Reverend Doctor Frank M. Reid III at the noonday worship service on Tuesday. His sermon was entitled "Something Within Me." Using as a text 2 Timothy 1:1-7, he challenged believers to stir up the gifts within. He explained that worship should be transforming and result in a connection with God. And through that connection - through worship, we get Character, Courage and Confidence.

The Reverend Pedro Baisden, from Quinn Chapel, in Louisville, Kentucky delivered the closing sermon, entitled "Wired to Worship". The Reverend Baisden indicated that people are wired to worship and if persons know the Lord, they cannot help but serve Him.

Other highlights included Morning Glory Walks, Communion at the river, the Debutante and Masters Presentation and Awards ceremony, religious comedy, poetry, PRAISE and more PRAISE.

St. John participated in large numbers. The church registered 22 participants and received recognition from the Bishop for having the second largest attendance across the state. More importantly, members played significant roles in the success of the Congress. Pastor Patrick Clayborn presented a workshop to the ministers entitled "The Three Ps for Worship". Mrs. Mary Rankin had the awesome responsibility of coordinating special activities for participants ages 4-7 for the duration of the Congress. (Mrs. Rankin, You Rock!) Mr. Kaylon Anderson and Ms. Mariah Gullatte ministered in dance and Brother Dennis DeLoach ministered in song. Wallace Parham served as marshal for the Name that Tune and Bible Bowl contests.

This year's Congress was the best this writer has ever experience. The Christian Education Department thanks Rev. Sheri for her patience and excellent coordination skills.

General Officer to Preach Revival at St. John

"Anticipating Breakthrough, Glory and Victory"



Revival will be held at St. John on Wednesday, September 5 through Friday, September 7, at 8:30 pm nightly. The guest revivalist will be Dr. Teresa L. Fry Brown, the newly elected Historiographer/Director of Research & Scholarship, Editor of AME Review.

Dr. Fry Brown earned the B.S. and M.S. degrees from Central Missouri State University and M.Div. and Ph.D. degrees from Iliff School of Theology and University of Denver. She is Professor of Homiletics and Director of Black Church Studies at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. She is the first African American woman to attain the rank of full professor at Candler School of Theology.

gy.

Dr. Fry Brown's research interests include homiletics, womanism, womanist ethics, socio-cultural transformation, and African diaspora history focusing on African American spiritual values. The four books published by Dr. Fry Brown are *Can A Sistah Get a Little Help: Advice and Encouragement for Black Women in Ministry*, (Pilgrim Press, 2008), *Delivering the Sermon: Voice, Body and Animation in Proclamation*, (Fortress Press, 2008), *Weary Throats and New Songs: Black Women Proclaiming God's Word*, (Abingdon Press, 2003) and *God Don't Like Ugly: African American Women Handing on Spiritual Values*, (Abingdon Press, 2000). In addition to four complete books, she has written articles and chapters for over a dozen more, including *Those Preaching Women*, Vol. 3 and The Abingdon Women's Preaching Annual.

Plan now to hear this mighty woman of God and invite friends and family to attend the revival.

Pastor's Meditation

(Continued from page 2)

God didn't just tell Moses to only stretch out his hand over the sea. God also told him to divide the sea with that outstretched hand! To divide – here in the Hebrew – means to plow or furrow. Take the power God has given you and stretch it out over your Red Sea – over the issue facing you. Start plowing. Cultivate it. Dig around it. Invest in it. Reinvest in it.

Ultimately, the Red Sea is not your problem. It is your deliverance. It is the thing that will destroy your enemy. You just have to stretch your power over your Red Sea. You must divide it. You have to find the riches in it. When you do, something happens!!!

According to scholars, to stretch out your hand in Hebrew means that you're ready. When he stretched out his hand, Moses essentially said, "I'm ready!" Then God moved. God sent a strong east wind all night long. That wind divided the waters and gave the Israelites dry ground. I am sure many of you are aware that a number of scientists and skeptics doubt that this event ever happened. About 18 years ago, a group of scientists figured out how to explain the Red Sea event. They found that there is a northeast wind (which is the same as the east wind) in that region which is strong enough to push the waters apart. Predictably, the science community was going back and forth over this issue. Yet, all were certain that there was a wind that could do this!

In the Hebrew, wind (ruach) means spirit. The force that pushed the waters apart is the breath that God puts in us! The Spirit of God pushed those waters apart!!! When we do what God says do, when we know that God is for us, when we move forward, when we become who God calls us to be, God sends the Spirit to make a way where there is no way! God sends the anointing to destroy the yoke! God sends the Holy Ghost to blaze a trail!

The Spirit has a way of clearing a path for us! When Jesus finished his work on the cross, He needed a path to the resurrection. He said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." Three days later, God raised Him from the dead, and Jesus got up with all power in his hands! When you face your Red Sea, the Spirit will come in and give you the ability to cross over on dry ground.

When we go where God sends us and do what God commands, there will be a Red Sea waiting for us. Do not panic. Just face your Red Sea knowing that God is for you. Move forward doing what God called you to do. The Lord will send the Holy Spirit to empower you and give you victory!

CEC Was an Experience

by Mariah Gullatte

*Born to worship:
A lifestyle not an event.*

This was more than a theme; it was an experience. Worship, to me, means to praise, serve, and obey Him with all that He has given you.

On Sunday we arrived in Montgomery to start our amazing week. As soon as we took our seats in the Impact Center, I began to feel the Spirit move through the auditorium and people began to worship God.

The next day was packed full of informational workshops. The first was titled "His Temple Dances". Presented by Mrs. Ira Cummings, she spoke about why we dance, who we dance for, and who dances. We dance because God gave us the body, so we glorify Him by using our body to worship Him. Everyone, including men, dances and praises the Lord. Following the first workshop was the most important in my book, "His Temple in Prayer" presented by the Reverend Jessica Durr. We learned that prayer is mandatory. Why? Because it is how we communicate with God, ask for forgiveness, and have a relationship with God. Last but not least, to always pray first before anything and everything you do. To wrap up workshops for the day, was "His Temple Sings". The Reverend Wright explained that we should all use our voices to praise the Lord, even though our God given talent may not be through song.

On Tuesday, the Reverend Doctor Frank Reid III preached on "Flattery and Flatters" and how they are out to do evil in the world. But he also said that there has to be something in you that makes a difference and that your faith has to be authentic and original to avoid this "flattery and flatter." And if we didn't get anything out of his message, he said to us to STIR UP OUR FAITH: Character, Courage, Courageous, Confident, and Cultured.

I enjoyed the worship filled week and learned, experienced, and observed Worship!

*O LORD, our Lord,
how excellent is your name in
all the earth!* Psalm 8:1

Texting Teen News July 2k12

Written by: Mariah Gullatte

My phone has been blowing up with hot news from the young peeps! lol (Laugh Out Loud)

The YPD had a day of fellowship at Alabama A & M's Wellness Center. We enjoyed bowling, swimming, playing video games, and the most important thing ... eating! Thanks to Dr. Darrel Ezell for sponsoring and supporting this event! We love you!

The following text was from CEC (Christian Education Congress) -A Week of Worship: A lifestyle not an Event! (read my CEC article!)

To all of our new peeps of youth...welcome. This is an article just for you! If there is anything you would like to add, just holla! We are all apart of one big fam and we are glad you chose to be a part of ours!

To all of our friends going off to college, we wish you the best and will always be here for you! And of course I cannot forget about us young ones still here! Lol. I pray that we all do our best in and out of school and also work hard for the grades I know we all can achieve!

That wraps up our texts for this month...!

News text this month is...

Luke 9:26

"For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his father's, and of the holy angels."



Something to Smile About!

Joke of the Month

Attending a wedding for the first time, a little girl whispered to her mother, "Why is the bride dressed in white?" The mother replied "Because white is the color of happiness, and today is the happiest day of her life."

The child thought about this for a moment, then said "So why is the groom wearing black?"

St. John Celebrates Men's Day with St. Peter United Methodist Church

By Reverend Vanessa Glover

St. John's Male Chorus and the Reverend Charles Glover were the special guests for the Annual Men's Day afternoon service at St. Peter United Methodist Church in Madison. The service was held at 4:00 pm on July 22, 2012. The Men's Day theme was "A righteous man understands and delivers wisdom to the unrighteous man" with scripture from Proverbs 12:8, "A man will be commended according to his wisdom, but he who is of a perverse heart will be despised." The Reverend Danny Jefferson is the pastor of St. Peter and Mr. Stan Gordon is the president of the Men's Group.

Following a full day of worship at St. John, one delegation of members departed the church for the Ninth District Christian Education Congress in Montgomery while St. John's Male Chorus, called by Reverend Charles—The Mighty Men of Valor, and other members of the church family attended the Men's Day service at St. Peter's. The Male Chorus, directed by Mr. Rufus Gilmore, sang songs with anointed voices that reflected their approach in ministering to God's people. They were the backbone of the service as they rendered selections that included "I've been Singing Hallelujah All Day," "It's Good to Know Him," "I Want to Be Worthy", "Jesus Christ is the Way," "You Can't Beat God's Giving," and "I Don't want no Trouble at the River."



The Reverend Charles Glover's sermon and text were based on the Men's Day theme. The sermon was entitled "Wisdom for Today" and the text was Proverbs 12:8. Reverend Glover read the King James Version, but much emphasis was placed on the Living Bible translation; which reads, "Everyone admires a man with 'good sense' but a man with a warped mind is despised." Reverend Glover's sermon echoed clearly, "Men today know that to be successful requires some degree of a struggle, but if the truth be told success is only given at the end of a great struggle." He continued to explain the success that God gives to men who diligently persevere, fighting the obstacles and challenges that block men's way. The men of St. Peter UMC and the parishioners and the men of St. John AME listened attentively to the sermon as Reverend Glover shared practical and scriptural nuggets that will

help all to "survive" life's challenges. In summation, he said that all wisdom is the ability to make right choices at the right time, whether one seeks wisdom from above which is pure, peace-loving, and considerate—blessing others first; or the wisdom from below which is self-centered and has selfish desires. Wisdom has benefits; wisdom protects and prolongs life and brings prosperity. Finally, he admonished all to be careful where they look for wisdom; The BIBLE is the BEST SOURCE. If we look for wisdom in other sources, it will be "hit and miss," so be wise in wisdom, the choice to be GODLY.

Following the sermon and remarks from the Men's Day chairman, refreshments were served in the church's fellowship hall.

St. John Celebrates 133rd Homecoming with Hopewell AMEC

By Reverend Charles Glover

Pastor Clayborn and the Saint John Church Family journeyed to Florence, Alabama to join in the 133rd Homecoming Celebration of Hopewell AME Church, where the Reverend Vicki Mayberry is the Pastor. The Reverend Mayberry is a daughter of the pulpit of St. John and her mother and father are still members. The trip to the rural area of Florence for Saint John travelers was quite a difference from the surrounding of the city limits of Huntsville. Congregants experienced tranquility at its best and the scenic countryside eradicated our minds from the busy-ness of normal Sunday rituals.

Upon entry onto the grounds of Hopewell, members were immediately greeted with warm hospitality from Pastor Mayberry and members assembled for this grand occasion. As the Saint John Mass Choir moved into place to begin the service, one could sense that this was a special occasion to be remembered. Reverend Sandra Cole, Associate Minister, Hopewell AME Church, gave the welcome and occasion. She very eloquently welcomed everyone and provided a brief and inspiring historical perspective for this 133rd celebration. She summarized Hopewell's many accomplishments over the past century by stating, "We've come this far by faith, leaning on the Lord. Trusting in His Holy Word, He has never failed us yet". This faithful testimony reinforced the biblical principle that "the will of God will never take you where the Grace of God will not make provision(s) and protect you."

After selections from the Mass Choir, Pastor Mayberry introduced the preacher. The text was Luke 23:39-43. The subject was "God's Contradiction". Pastor Clayborn elaborated on numerous examples in culture where contradictions are commonplace. The uncertainty of life as exemplified in the recent Colorado incident, the Trayvon Martin case, the ever increasing variance between the "haves and the have-nots". The seemingly victorious life those outside the church are experiencing versus the seemingly complicated and burdensome life Christians are experiencing. As Christians, we must move beyond having faith in God and learn to trust Him and His Word. This brilliant and thought provoking message reminded hearers of the words spoken in Psalms 37, "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. Trust in the Lord and do good, so shall thou dwell in the land, and thou shall be fed. A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked. The Lord knows the days of the upright and their inheritance shall be forever". Pastor Clayborn, in his continued example of spirited excellence, left the congregation with these main thoughts:

- A. Have contradictory faith. Have trust and faith in God "in spite of" what it seems or looks like in your life. Our physical eyes and innate emotional side cannot lead us into the spiritual revelations of God. We have been influenced and often polluted with cares of the world which limits our coming into a complete union with God. A transformation must occur.
- B. When we recognize God's character, it touches our hearts. When God touches us, a change, a metamorphosis takes place, not just externally, but also internally. When we pray, when we give, when we worship, when we bless His name, He touches us.
- C. Seek God's heart before His Hand. We were reminded of the tendency of most believers to seek God for what he can do versus seeking Him for who He is. Matthew 6:33 reminds us to "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

A delicious meal was served after the service and the fellowship was great. It is always a blessing when brothers and sisters dwell together in unity. Praise God for this opportunity to worship together in His name.

"God's
Contradiction"

Presented by ITHRIVE & ST JOHN A.M.E. CHURCH

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Church School Workshop and Promotion Day

By Willie J. Sandifer



Dr. Westfield leads discussion during workshop.

What began as a bold idea to help the Church School teachers be more effective, to help students to get the most out of Church School, to promote students who have qualified to move to the next class level, and to promote our Church School came to fruition on July 13-15, 2012.

The weekend began with workshops conducted by the Reverend Doctor Nancy Lynne Westfield, Associate Professor of Religious Education at Drew Theological Seminary in Madison, New Jersey, on Friday evening. Dr. Westfield began by asking us questions that required us to assess the strengths of our current Sunday School. Teachers assessed that we have a dedicated staff, student attendance is high/consistent in the adult classes, and the leadership is empowered to teach. Then we were asked to reflect on our best teaching or learning experience when we were the learners. By doing this we were able to identify what "good teaching is." All teachers were then asked to list three things about teaching that that we personally do well. This was to encourage the teacher to remember that no matter how much growth is needed, you are already doing some things well.

Teachers were then given an opportunity to dialogue about how they can be more effective teachers. Instructions were given on employing different styles of teaching and the use of methods that involve all of our senses. Teachers were encouraged to become more experiential, and reminded that the more rich the experience the more students will grasp the concept teachers teach. Teachers were also encouraged to use children's methods for teaching adults. We were encouraged to go on field trips, walks, use movies, music, and role playing to provide the richest experience in the classroom to help students engage more fully and remember the lesson taught.

Saturday morning there was another class for the teachers who wanted to become more effective and Saturday afternoon for the students who wanted to find ways to get the most from church school.

The following students were promoted to the next class level and attendance recognition given during the 10:50 a.m. Sunday morning service on Sunday, July 15th.

Eddie Whitehead to the Intermediate Class
Michael Clark to the Intermediate Class
Nina Johnson to the Young Adult Class
Ashley-Ann Lewis to the Young Adult Class

Michael Clark – Attendance Recognition
Patrick Clayborn II – Attendance Recognition
Wallace Parham – Attendance Recognition
Anthony Harbin – Attendance Recognition
Jessica Harbin – Attendance Recognition
Ashley-Ann Lewis – Attendance Recognition

There were six benefits given at each service by Sister Lillie Rivers for one to attend church school:

1. Attending church school is where one starts to build a strong foundation for oneself and one's family knowledge of God and his word.
2. To study God's word is a command.
3. It will keep one's relationship with God in tune.
4. In church school each one teaches one. When we come together as a class, the variety of questions, comments, and observation of each person enlightens the thoughts of others.
5. One is encouraged to be a participant and not a spectator.
6. When we come together to study God's word, His presence is there. God is with us as we equip ourselves to go out and share the good news of Jesus Christ.

The weekend concluded with a message on teaching from the Reverend Doctor Nancy Lynne Westfield at the 10:50 a.m. service. The sermon was entitled, *Respect Yourself* and the scriptural text was taken from Mark 12:30-31.

Tips for Parents and College Students

By The Reverend Homer L. McCall, D.Min.

No matter what the era or season of our lives, the message that many of you and I received remains the same. When I was asked to give a few brief notes to parents of college students, the key connecting word that came to my mind was *encouragement*. This encouragement came from many places and significant people: our parents, church, community, friends, books, etc. We all should pass this gift of encouragement on to others. Encourage the college students, all of them to continue to be the best that God wants them to be in mind, body and spirit.

Early in life, before entering Morehouse College in 1957, I was encouraged by my own parents, Dr. and Mrs. Martin Luther King Jr., our neighbors and friends on South Jackson Street in Montgomery, as well as other supportive members at church, school, and throughout our community, to develop and keep good study habits. They also challenged us to do our very best at all times and "Don't forget to pray." These are the same important life lessons now being passed on to our youth by members of St. John AME Huntsville.

Aren't you glad to have been encouraged by many Spirit-filled, intellectually sensitive persons who were not afraid to let their little light shine! Aren't we blessed to have been influenced by people who were faithfully obedient to Scripture! It is now our duty to pass the torch on.

Finally, a wonderful summary of the *Twenty Five Lessons for Life* is given by Marian Wright Edelman, graduate of Spelman College and Yale Law School and Founder of The Children's Defense Fund. She gives a profound and inspirational statement of encouragement by explaining the above lessons in her book, *The Measure of our Success: A Letter to My Children and Yours*.

Tennyson was right: "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." Therefore, let us encourage our youth throughout

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AMEN Staff Celebrates 16th Anniversary

The members of the AMENewsletter celebrated their 16th Anniversary with a luncheon meeting on Saturday, August 12th. The AMEN's first edition was printed in July 1996. The newsletter has evolved from eight (8) pages to an average of 20 to 24 pages and is now in color. The circulation exceeds 300 and the newsletter is mailed to all members as well as persons throughout the Ninth District and across the connection.

The staff appreciates the support of members and readers, and all who have contributed articles over the years.

Electronic AMEN

The AMENewsletter is available in electronic form. If you prefer to receive an electronic copy of the newsletter, please notify the church at stjohnameh@aol.com.



AAMU DAY

Sunday, August 26 at 10:50 AM

The members of the Alabama A&M University (AAMU) athletic department will worship

at St. John on Sunday, August 26, at 10:50 am. This will include staff and all athletes. Please be present to greet the guests from AAMU.

Flowers on the Altar



Members who would like to donate flowers for the altar starting September 2, 2012 through August 31, 2013 may contact Pearlean Myhand at 256.852.8265.

... the key connecting word that came to my mind was *encouragement*

"More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."



Parent Wisdom

By Reverend Vanessa Glover

Back to School—Back to Discipline

What a coincidence that back to school and learning tie together. Proverbs 12:1a reads: Whosoever loves discipline loves *Knowledge*. In other words, to learn you must love discipline; it provides a framework to learn. Getting back into the school mindset takes effort because over the summer families generally lose the regiment of preparing, organizing, and scheduling. Back to school brings new beginnings, new people, new situations, transitions, and others circumstances; the point is not to beat parents up over it—but to move forward and get back to discipline.

This is an excerpt from an article written by Ms. Barbara Johnson (2009), *St. John AMENewsletter*.

Research on parental involvement indicates that when parents are involved, student achievement increases and improves. Studies have found that students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, are more likely to—

- ♦ Earn high grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs;
- ♦ Pass their classes, earn credits, and be promoted;
- ♦ Attend school regularly; and
- ♦ Graduate and go on to postsecondary education.

This is what every parent wants for their children, but it does not just happen. Students do not just enter kindergarten and graduate 12 years later as engineers, teachers, lawyers, ministers or promising medical students. Parents, guardians or other significant mentors are in the background inspiring and encouraging students to take the hard courses (AP courses), Honors courses, do the difficult work and prepare themselves for the rigors of college/university study.

Authors, Thernstorm and Thernstorm, in their book *No Excuses: Closing the Racial Learning Gap*, have completed extensive research in how the achievement gap between African-American students and white students is growing wider each year. When so much emphasis is being placed on math and science skills, African-American students are electing not to enroll in the more rigorous math classes, instead opting for easy classes to keep their GPA up.

Their findings are alarming and should call all parents and educators to action. "In science and math, a mere 3 percent of black students were able to display more than a "partial mastery" of the "knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work" at the twelfth-grade level, in contrast to seven to ten times as many whites and Asians." This means that, in the future, we will have fewer and fewer African-American engineers and accountants.

St. John members who have experience as educators and administrators have provided this list of Tips for Parents:

- ♦ Before School Begins
 - ◊ With Huntsville City Schools moving to the 1 to 1 Initiative this year where all students will be equipped with a technological device, parents should also learn as much as they can about computer literacy.
 - ◊ When transitioning or moving to a new school, lessen the stress by taking the child on several tours of the school and neighborhood before the beginning of school. Meet his/her future teachers.
 - ◊ Discuss how the child will get to and from school. If the child is walking, walk the route together beforehand. Make arrangements for the child to walk with older children in the neighborhood. If the child will ride a bus, go over the procedures for using the bus. If

(Continued on page 16)

Parent Wisdom

By Reverend Vanessa Glover

(Continued from page 15)



carpooling, explain the importance of being ready on time.

- ◆ **At Home**
 - ◇ Re-establish regular homework hours, meal times, and bedtime. Children need a good night's sleep to perform well in class.
 - ◇ Provide a quiet area for at-home study with good lighting, adequate school supplies, a flat writing surface, and a comfortable straight-backed chair.
 - ◇ Keep backpacks and lunch in the same place/space.
 - ◇ Make sure needed supplies are available.
- ◇ Modify schedules for school dates if possible.
- ◇ Try to maintain a normal, routine atmosphere at home the first few days of school. Making the first day too special may cause the child to be nervous or anxious.
- ◇ Give children free playtime at home. The school environment is structured and children need some free time.
- ◇ Plan the day so that there is time to spend with the child. After-school and bedtime chats give children great opportunities to talk about themselves and their experiences at school.
- ◆ **Parental Involvement**
 - ◇ Get involved with the child's school activities. This includes academic and extracurricular activities. Partnering with teachers will have great dividends. Volunteer in the classroom or in the school whenever available.
 - ◇ Try to attend at least one PTA meeting this year and let the child know their parent supports them 100%.
 - ◇ Keep good-byes warm but firm. Do not go into the classroom with a teary-eyed child. Allow the teacher to take over. The child's tears will usually end as soon as the parent disappears.
 - ◇ Notify the teacher of any concerns or questions you have regarding their learning or treatment in school.
 - ◇ Never take sides against the teacher without talking to him or her. Remember that there are two sides to every story! Children will generally tell the one that favors him (her).
 - ◇ Ensure your child is at school, on time, every day possible. Arrange for vacations, trips, etc. during days off school.
- ◆ **Encouragement**
 - ◇ Focus on the child's strengths. Encourage the child daily; be calm and positive.
 - ◇ Have a motto: for example "Do your best and God will do the rest."
 - ◇ Reward achievement and performance with \$5 gift cards!; students love it!
 - ◇ Praise a child for his or her accomplishments in school. Avoid comparing this child's school performance with that of siblings or friends.
 - ◇ Daily encourage children to listen carefully, ask questions about any unclear material, and to write down all assignments, not just the homework assignments.
 - ◇ Ask this one question to your child every day, "How was your day at school?" This one question lets your student know that you care about their education and gives an opportunity to talk with your student about his/her education daily.
 - ◇ Thank God every morning when you get up. Always make your child or children feel special and loved.
 - ◇ Remember to speak a blessing over your child before he/she heads out each morning, allowing them to experience God's promises, protection, and provision for the day!!

(Continued on page 17)



Parent Wisdom

By Reverend Vanessa Glover

(Continued from page 16)

- ◊ Be a positive role model in your child's eyes who shows interest in reading and learning new things. Read with your children regularly. Encourage them to read.
- **Guidance**
 - ◊ Listen to the child and give practical adult assistance. Show daily interest. When faced with frustrations and failures, give godly wisdom. Communicate, communicate, and communicate.
 - ◊ Set appropriate goals and help to get organized.
 - ◊ Let young children settle any quarrels of difficulties that may arise with school friends. Try not to interfere, unless necessary.
 - ◊ Express a positive attitude toward education, so that children will want to learn. If they have had successful experiences at home, children will look forward to learning experiences at school.
 - ◊ If older child/children have cell phones, have a time to turn the phone off. Take them away from the child/children and put them in a secure place where the child/children cannot get the phone. Make sure this is discussed and the time is agreed.
 - ◊ Monitor the television and radio stations that play a role part in shaping children's world. Listen to the groups and ask, "What are the lyrics saying?" Do they glorify violence? Demean women? While you may hate the idea of being an old-fashioned parent it is important for you to keep your finger on the values being pumped into them.
 - ◊ Discuss safety issues openly. Help make sure there are not barriers to learning.
 - ◊ Spend time with children as homework / studying is done. Let them know parents care about academic understanding and achievement.
 - ◊ Prioritize schoolwork, extra-curricula activities, scheduling, conferences, and routines. Have a "cut-off" time from socialization via media, TV, radio, phone, Internet, or other devices.
- **Athletics and competing in contact sports**
 - ◊ Children should be supervised during sports activities.
 - ◊ Concussions are common but very serious concerns and injuries when playing football and other contact sports. Know the symptoms, warning signs and be aware that all concussion is serious.
 - ◊ Be careful of heat related illness such as dehydration, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, heat strokes, hyponatremia (water intoxication), and sunburn-heat rash.
 - ◊ Diet is very important when competing. Certain foods are contributing factors to various athletic health problems and conditions. Drink plenty of water or sports drinks and not pops or soft drinks.
 - ◊ Treat all neck injuries very seriously; get medical help
 - ◊ Get plenty of rest.
- **Advice for parents of college and universities students**
 - ◊ Make plans for communication with the student. Talk to them at least once a week, surely within two weeks.
 - ◊ Go with the student for the initial enrollment and class scheduling events.
 - ◊ Discourage motor vehicles during the first year and encourage students to live in the dormitory and eat in the cafeteria.

The following St. John educators and administrators contributed to this article: Ms. Jill Burwell, Mr. Eddie Sherrod, Mrs. Carolyn Russ, Ms. Alice Hereford, Mrs. Rose Bell, Mrs. Charlsie Brooks, Mrs. Willie Heyward, Mrs. Christine McMillan, Mrs. Rosa Waker, Ms. Mattie Ezell, Ms. Barbara Johnson, Mrs. Rosetta Williams, Reverend Vanessa Glover, Dr. Lee Williams, and Dr. Arthur Waker.

Church School Lesson Overview – September 2012

The Church School reviews were written by Willie Sandifer.



September 2, 2012

Lesson Title: Steadfast Determination

Lesson Scripture: Hebrews 10:19-31

Print: Hebrews 10:19-31

Devotional Songs: #520 [], #251 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)" (Hebrews 10:23).

This lesson is the first of five in this fall's unit where we study about what it means to have a living faith. This unit shows us how to do this in our daily lives. The lesson takes us into a study of the book of Hebrews, where we explore the concept of a living faith. The first vital step is learning how to trust God with unfailing determination, even when it seems that everything is against us. We learn in particular about trusting God without wavering.

Hebrews 10:19-31 can be summarized with three commands that will help us understand what a determined faith looks like: In the first command, enter God's presence with boldness, believers in the Old Testament were restricted from entering God's presence. Only the high priest could enter God's presence in the tabernacle or temple, and this happened only once a year. When Jesus Christ died on the cross, the veil in the Jerusalem temple – which symbolized the barrier between God and His people – was torn from top to bottom. The way to God was totally open.

In the second command, draw near in faith, boldness is not all that is needed to draw near to God. Wholeheartedness is also required. The passage refers to this as "full assurance." Wholehearted reliance on Christ gives us the boldness and determination to approach God.

The third command, do not defect from the faith, uses an Old Testament warning against deliberately rejecting God's message. The author of Hebrews encouraged his readers to maintain their attendance at the church gatherings.

September 9, 2012

Lesson Title: Steadfast Confidence

Lesson Scripture: Hebrews 11:1-7; Psalm 46:1-11

Print: Hebrews 11:1-3, 6; Psalm 46:1-3, 8-11

Devotional Songs: #1 [], #272 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).

Steadfast confidence brings the fulfillment of our expectations only when it is placed in a worthy object. Misplaced trust is just as fatal as no trust at all. This lesson brings putting ourselves in His hands and entrusting our whole life and destiny to Him together. Hebrews 11 examines what faith is, while Psalm 46 looks at the kinds of works God had done to show that He is worthy of our trust. It is by faith that we see the answers to our prayers materialize because we believe in a God who is always working on our behalf.

Confident faith in God is not based on assumptions. It is based on a certainty that is backed by all the evidence in the world. The elders of old staked everything on God, and history has proven them right.

Confident faith in God is broader than just believing that He exists. It is our believing that God really cares about us. It is our believing that God will reward us for doing what He commands. It is our believing that God always has our best interests at heart.

Confident faith in God will result in seeing Him as our "refuge and strength." Using imagery of his times, the psalmist expressed his confidence in God as his source of protection from all his enemies. While we may experience times of great trouble, we can trust God as our source of help in such times.

Confident faith in God will result in inner peace. Instead of having to fight all our battles on our own, faith trusts God to fight our battles for us. While the reference in this psalm is to physical enemies, the application can easily be made to any inner struggles we might have. Believing that God can handle any of our battles will give us great confidence to handle anything that life throws at us.

(Continued on page 19)

Church School Lesson Overview – September 2012

(Continued from page 18)

September 16, 2012

Lesson Title: Steadfast Fortitude

Lesson Scripture: Hebrews 12:1-11

Print: Same

Tentative Devotional Songs: #375[]; #258[]; and #243[]

Key Verse: "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

This lesson is about the need for fortitude in our dark times of extreme adversity. Fortitude does not come easy for many of us, but it is a core ingredient of a vibrant faith.

In a world where we are used to getting things instantaneously, patience does not come easily. Patience teaches us to wait for those things that really matter and to give up our tendency to want immediate gratification. Jesus' example itself teaches us the need for patience and helps us see what is truly important in our journey of faith.

The fortitude required in the race of faith takes the strength of every fiber of our being. It stretches us to the maximum. Only those who endure can reap the benefits of such training and godly discipline. Holding on when God disciplines us takes steadfast fortitude and faith. God is faithful and never leaves us during our times of His extreme discipline. We are His children. And as our Heavenly Father, He loves us enough to discipline us.

September 23, 2012

Lesson Title: Steadfast Thanks

Lesson Scripture: Hebrews 12:14-29

Print: Hebrews 12:18-29

Tentative Devotional Songs: #450[]; Alleluia[]; and #243[]

Key Verse: "Wherefore we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear (Hebrews 12:28).

This lesson explores how we can use an attitude of gratitude to open the door to a living, steadfast faith. We learn to be grateful. This

lesson discusses the relationship that gratitude has to a life of faith. The bottom line is simple; a person of faith will be a person of gratitude.

The response to what Jesus has done, by dying and rising again to give life, must be one of gratitude. In the New Testament, God shows His grace through Jesus, so the door to the eternal is now wide open for everyone who wants to walk through and experience life eternal.

September 30, 2012

Lesson Title: Steadfast Love

Lesson Scripture: Hebrews 13:1-3; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Print: Hebrews 13:1-6; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Tentative Devotional Songs: #481[]; 345[]; and #243[]

Key Verse: "And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:13)

This lesson counters the thought that many times it is easier to talk about faith than to really put it into practice by describing how to serve others in Christian love. It investigates four aspects of love to help us understand how faith can be put into action:

The first aspect is the broadness of love in Hebrews 13:1-3. Christian love is much bigger than just liking those we find attractive. Christian love embraces everyone. It does not stop with those we know; it reaches out to those we do not know.

The second aspect is the greatness of love in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. The church at Corinth had everything and yet struggled greatly. The Apostle Paul prescribed love as the solution to their many problems. He began his treatise on love by describing its greatness. If a person were to possess all the spiritual gifts that were possible and yet did not have love for others, he/she would be "nothing." Love is great because it causes one to reach out to others.

The third aspect is the necessity of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. One is a "nobody" without love. Love is never optional among Christians. One should never claim to have faith without being demonstrated in love. Genuine love will override

(Continued on page 20)





ST. JOHN A.M.E. CHURCH SOUP KITCHEN

3rd and 4th Tuesdays
11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m.

229 Church Street ~ Huntsville, AL
(on the corner of Church and Monroe Streets)
ALL ARE WELCOME

Please support the expansion of the St. John Soup Kitchen which is open on the third and fourth Tuesdays of each month.

The Soup Kitchen Ministry is thankful for each person that God has sent with a willing heart to serve the community and all mankind. They appreciate those who made monetary donations as well as those who provide the soup and other foods items.

Thank you volunteers and supporters for your labors in this ministry.

Tips for Parents

(Continued from page 14)

their educational process to be faithful and obedient to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let us all pray without ceasing and love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength and love our neighbor as ourselves. The Master tip to parents of college students is to encourage our youth to pray constantly and treat others the way you wish to be treated, study purposefully and give God Praise and Thanksgiving for the outcome.

Church School Lesson

(Continued from page 19)

all other considerations.

The fourth is the eternity of love in I Corinthians 13:8-13. God is love; therefore, love will last as long as God lasts. The Apostle Paul went so far as to say that of the three key virtues of the Christian life, love, or "charity," is the best. Love is a key component of Christian faith. A person can never make a credible claim to be a Christian if he/she is not engaged in serving others.



Church School Book Club

Discussion Date: 18 August 2012
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Up to No Good, Carl Weber, 2009

Discussion Date: 15 September 2012
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Rally 'Round Green, Judy Pace Christie, 2011

Green survived a tornado, but now the town faces a new storm—one that threatens the schools!

As Green continues to recover from a horrendous tornado, newlyweds Lois and Chris just want to return to a normal life in their home on Route Two.

But even more threats to Green loom on the horizon. The state of Louisiana announces plans to close Green's schools, which will put Chris out of work and end a long-standing tradition of community pride. Lois and Chris know the loss will crush the community and harm students forced to travel more than an hour to classes. Then there's that new highway that's creeping even closer.

But Green has another tradition: Rallying around each other. Newspaper owner Lois, Mayor Eva, and college students unite to fight the bureaucrats, with some surprising—and unexpected results.

September 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 9:30 am. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 11:00 am.
2 8:00 am. Worship 9:45 am. Church School 10:30 am. Worship AMEN Deadline	3 LABOR DAY	4  6:00 p.m. Voices In Praise Rehearsal Stewardess Board	5 REVIVAL 8:30 pm Dr. Teresa Fry Brown, Revivalist "Anticipating Breakthrough, Glory and Victory" Romans 8		7	8 9:30 am. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal AMEN Start Meeting 10:30 am
9 8:00 am. Worship 9:45 am. Church School 10:30 am. Worship	10	11  6:00 p.m. Sons of Allen Mtg Voices In Praise Rehearsal	12 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study 6:00 p.m. Steward Board	13	14  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	15 9:30 am. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 10:30 am. Children's Meeting 11:00 am. Children's Choir Rehearsal
16 8:00 am. Worship 9:45 am. Church School 10:30 am. Worship	17	18 11:30 am. — 1:00 p.m. BOVP KITCHEN 6:30 p.m. Twelve Board	19 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	20	21  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	22 9:30 am. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal
23 8:00 am. Worship 9:45 am. Church School 10:30 am. Worship MEN'S DAY	24  6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal WMSM Meeting	25 11:30 am. — 1:00 p.m. BOVP KITCHEN 6:00 p.m. Church School Board Meeting	26 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	27  6:00 p.m. Mass Choir Rehearsal	28	29 9:30 am. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal
30 8:00 am. Breakfast 9:00 am. Church School 10:00 am. Worship						

POTPOURRI

Pray for our Sick & Shut-ins

Jason Brown

Altonette Burks

Mildred Hereford

Evelyn Hildreth

Ada Houston

James Jamar

Rev. Kenneth Johnson

Doris Outlaw

Pray for our sick and shut-in...

About St. John Members



The Reverend Charles Glover received the Superior Civilian Service Award from General Ann E. Dunwoody.

This award was in recognition of his exceptional service as a Supervisory Security Specialist, Security

Branch, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, U. S. Army Material Command, from June 2010 to February 2012. The Superior Civilian Service Award is the third highest award and consists of a medal, lapel button, and citation certificate. This award is comparable to the military Meritorious Service Medal.

The Reverend Charles Glover is the husband of the Reverend Vanessa Glover and they have two (2) adult sons. Congratulations Reverend Glover!



GO GREEN

Attend the Green U Home and Health Initiative at the Huntsville Botanical Gardens on Saturday, August 25, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Guest speakers will present ways the community can become more ecologically friendly. Regional businesses specializing in "green" products and services will be on hand to educate and demonstrate their offerings. There will be a variety of workshop and hands-on events to teach you how to "be green." Local schools will also be involved with projects, stories, games, contests and demonstrations.

Learn more at <http://www.greenhuntsville.org>

Admission is 5 recyclable items or \$5.



PRAY FOR OUR MILITARY

Pray without ceasing....

Please continue to pray for our military persons who are deployed overseas as well as those stationed within the United States.

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The Right Reverend James L. Davis, Servant Bishop

Mrs. Arelis B. Davis, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Doctor Patrick Clayborn, Pastor



web

Important Dates to Remember



- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| August 18, 2012 | 9th District Visioning Meeting, Hopewell, AME, Kingston
Youth Extravaganza, 5:30 p.m., Clyde Foster Multipurpose Room, AAMU |
| August 19, 2012 | Youth Day, 8:00 a.m. and 10:50 a.m. |
| August 21, 2012 | St. John Lay Organization Meeting 5:30 p.m. |
| August 24, 2012 | Friday Nite Live, 8:00—10:00 p.m. |
| August 25, 2012 | SBHB Harvest Home, Saddlers Chapel, Bessemer |
| August 26, 2012 | AAMU Day, 10:50 a.m. |
| September 5-7, 2012 | Revival, 8:30 pm nightly,
The Reverend Doctor Teresa Fry Brown, Revivalist |

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart
that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9

ST. JOHN A.M.E.N. NEWSLETTER



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 17 Issue 9

September 2012

Pastor's Meditation

From Casting Lots to Casting Votes

Acts 1:15-26

WE are in the midst of election season. Both the Democrats and Republicans have nominated their respective choices for President and Vice-President of the United States. In the near future, we will follow the campaigning and the debating of the candidates.

Here, in our scripture, the apostles had an election of sorts. They sought to fill the vacancy opened by Judas' death. The apostles nominated Joseph and Matthias and selected one of them to become the next apostle.

Let us note that the apostles were not intimidated by the issues of Judas. Certainly, the betrayal of Judas left a sour taste in all of their mouths: "How could he have given Jesus over to the religious hypocrites that wanted Jesus to die? Jesus loved him just as he loved all of us." There must have been a host of hurt feelings, painful memories, uneasy emotions, and rabid anger when bringing up the name Judas. With this tortuous history, one might think that the apostles would have preferred to eliminate that position altogether and operate with only eleven apostles. Yet, they felt called to replace Judas. They felt called to go beyond that hurt and establish what God wanted — twelve apostles — a reconstitution of the twelve tribes of Israel.

In this election, a flood of issues are trying to suppress voting. Certain states have made the ability to vote much more complex by requiring higher level identification (e.g. government issued photo ID or birth certificate) from potential voters at the polls. Certain campaigns attempt to dissuade people from voting by intimating that — since the American situation is so bleak — their vote cannot make a difference.

We must press
through ...

In the same vein as the apostles, we must not be deterred by these tactics. We must press through the hurt, the anger, the empty rhetoric, the fear, and the uncertainty to cast our votes! Yes, we may have to get a government issued ID. Yes, we may have to obtain our birth certificate. Yes, we may have to jump through other hoops in order to vote. Yes, all of this is unfair when the incidents of voter fraud are close to nil. However, we must do all that is in our power to cast our vote. Our future depends on it.

Allow this
scripture —
Psalm 109:8
— to motivate
our vote.

Please notice that when the apostles justified their desire to replace Judas, they used Psalm 109:8 — "May his days be few, may another take his place." Ironically, this is the same scripture portions of Tea Party use to campaign against our current President. The apostles employed this scripture to point out Judas' heinous act against Jesus (after Judas is dead). Segments of the Tea Party use the scripture to incite hatred and violence against President Barack Obama while he is alive! It is alarming that this rhetoric coming from the Tea Party reeks of racism.

Allow this scripture — Psalm 109:8 — to motivate our vote. The apostles voted against the ideals they believed were upheld by Judas. We, too, should let the use of this scripture in our current context motivate us to vote against the racism and violence that segments of the Tea Party

(Continued on page 2)



Reverend and Patrick D. Clayton

Pastor's Meditation

(Continued from page 1)

have displayed. Instead of having this scripture scare us and keep us at home, let the way the scripture has been distorted fill us with a righteous indignation. Let that righteous indignation lead us to vote for those who appeal to hope instead of fear and to progress instead of suppression.

I am sure that most of you see in the scripture (Acts 1:26) that the apostles cast lots. Yes, casting lots is much closer – at least in form – to gambling than to voting. Before we write off the apostles, let us look at the spiritual nature of casting lots. Proverbs 18:18 says, "Casting the lot puts an end to disputes and decides between powerful contenders." The drawing of straws, stones, or some other inanimate object was not a game of chance for those in antiquity. Iain Chalmers states, "Chance" is envisioned as the working of some impartial power, which makes dice fall in a specific way, or an odd or even number of pebbles jump out of a buffalo horn, or a specific individual draw a certain lot. Whether it is used as a way of revealing divine will, or for ensuring fairness, lottery has always served as a definitive adjudicating engine: it never fails to provide an unequivocal answer.³

Ultimately, the apostles wanted the selection of the twelfth apostle to be determined by some power other than their own. However, they controlled the pool from which that person would be selected. The apostles nominated two worthy candidates, and they prayed that God would lead their decision making process. Then, they cast lots. They used their best resources and their best understanding of God at that time (over 2,000 years ago).

Let us use all of these devices to find the candidate that best meets our needs in this upcoming election.

We, on the other hand, have internet, twenty-four hour news stations, newspapers, books and journals on politics, radio, and word of mouth to go along with our praying to God to inform our voting. Let us use all of these devices to find the candidate that best meets our needs in this upcoming election. No, we will not cast lots as was done in the time of the apostles. But, we should be like the apostles in doing our best to be led by God as we vote. Though the vote is not casting a lot, there is a faint similarity. Our vote is an indirect vote. When we vote (for our choice for President), that vote selects a person to be in the Electoral College. That elector has the option to vote for any candidate. Usually, the elector will vote for the candidate to whom he or she has pledged allegiance. However, there are rare moments when an elector is unpledged or faithless! Certain people may allow this to scare them from the polls. On the contrary, this should make us run to the polls. The more votes we place, the better chance that electors vote for their pledge. For example, the more votes placed for President Obama, the better chance he has of winning the Electoral College. There will be fewer chances for unpledged or faithless electors.

Just as the apostles prayed and cast their lots, we must pray and vote in the polls. Let us pray for all of our government officials, and let us vote our consciences. Let us vote for those persons who can relate to our issues and our contexts. Let us vote for those who seek to empower the poor as well as the wealthy. Let us vote for persons who have hearts for those with their backs against the wall. Let us vote for those who are willing to help us and people with whom we do not agree! Let us vote for those who are seeking to build communities of love, hope, peace, justice, and growth in this country.

GO VOTE IN THE NAME OF JESUS!!!!!!

³ http://www.jameslindlibrary.org/essays/casting_of_lots/casting.html.



Annual A&M Athletic Day Was a Day of Worship, Food and Fellowship

by The Reverend Charles Glover

Saint John African Methodist Episcopal Church, Huntsville, Alabama, celebrated the annual Alabama A&M University Day on Sunday, August 26, 2012, at the 10:50 a.m. service. The Reverend Sheri Clayborn and the ministerial staff opened the worship experience, admonishing those assembled to give God our very best praise with thanksgiving and testifying of God's unceasing love and mercy towards us.



Participation in the service by Alabama A&M University began with representatives from the freshman and senior classes reading portions of the Old and New Testament, respectively, for the morning scriptures. This was followed by a very soul stirring rendition by the Saint John Male Chorus, the *Mighty Men of Valor*, entitled, "The Blood Still Works". The Holy Spirit moved in quickly and captured the hearts of attendees as was evident by the joyous and continuous overflow of singing, clapping of hands, and dancing unto God. Yes, Oh Yes, the Blood Still Works! What a preview of what was yet to come!

Dr. Andrew Hugine, Jr., President of Alabama A&M University, came forward to state the purpose and occasion for the service on this glorious day. He began his oratorical rendition by saying that Pastor Clayborn, Reverend Sheri, the Ministerial Staff, Officers, Members of St. John AME Church, and especially First Lady Abbiegail Hugine and he were delighted that everyone was present. Dr. Hugine reminded everyone that he and First Lady Hugine can think of no better

(Continued on page 4)



Annual A&M Athletic Day

(Continued from page 3)

way to begin the year than to invoke the blessings of the Almighty on everyone's aspirations and goals for the year. President Hugine encouraged the large delegation of athletes and student body members that the Bible teaches "seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and His righteousness, then all other things will be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33). Dr. Hugine provided attendees a historical perspective in stating that Dr. Council clearly understood the standard of putting God first and he did not consider his work complete until he founded, not only Alabama A&M University, to enrich the mind, but was one of the founders of this church, St. John AME Church, to minister to the soul. Conversely, the great tradition continues by addressing the needs of the mind, body, and soul through these two great institutions. Dr. Hugine boldly told the athletes and Athletic Staff that all are very proud of them and their many athletic accomplishments over the years. Dr. Hugine shared some precious nuggets from God's Holy Writ, the Bible, for the staff and athletes to hold on to during this academic year and athletic competition. Some of these included:

Philippians 4:13 (AKJV): "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."

Isaiah 40:29-31(AKJV): "He gives power to the faint; and to them that have no might, He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk, and not faint."

Finally, Dr. Hugine ended his delivery with the biblical quotes: "*The race is not given to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, but to the one who endureth until the end.*" — which tells us, in whatever we do, not to give up but to finish the race. He encouraged those assembled to run this race before them this year and run the race with:

R—Resolve—removing and dispelling all doubt and bringing our efforts to a successful conclusion.

A—Adeptness—Be skillful in using your God given talents wisely.

C—Courage—do not be fearful in whatever you do "For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity but a spirit of power and love and a sound mind."

E—Endurance—Keep trying, never give up.

The morning message was delivered by the Reverend Patrick Clayborn, Ph.D., Pastor of Saint John AME Church. His biblical text was from Habakkuk, chapter two, verses 1-4. The subject was "Be Vision Driven." Pastor Clayborn initiated his sermon by stating that where there is no vision, people perish (Proverbs 29:18). Where there is "Godless" vision, people run amok. Pastor Clayborn also shared a powerful quote from Dr. William D. Watley, "God has a vision for His people that is greater than the vision we have for ourselves or what others have for us." God's vision encourages, yet simultaneously, challenges. God's vision makes one search their soul and transforms their lives. This makes persons more selfless and more giving towards others. Pastor Clayborn left the congregants with several spiritual insights from Habakkuk. These included:

- (1) For us to go where God wants us, it will be scary.
- (2) It will also be inconvenient. Time interval delays are commonplace, but not permanent.
- (3) We must own the vision. Habakkuk had to accept God's plan and trust as well as yield to the vision. God made the plan plain, workable, and concrete.
- (4) We must stand by the vision. When we say "yes" to God, our situations often change. If

(Continued on page 5)



Dr. Andrew Hugine, Jr.
President of Alabama A&M University

Annual A&M Athletic Day

(Continued from page 4)



the situation doesn't change, God changes us to be able to handle the circumstances that are present.

(5) We are to have hope, despite circumstances and situations, for these are only moments of testing.

(6) God may give a vision that contradicts the circumstances of life. Despite trials and obstacles, "Somehow", God works it all to His Good. "Somehow" God does the miraculous. His Word "shall" come to pass!

(7) Have endurance. Wait on the vision. The vision may not come on your personal timetable. How long will you have to endure? As long as God says so. God has already announced an expiration date for our situations.

(8) Have faith. Believing is only part of the process. Faith in the original Hebrew language means "certainty", "firm". Be certain that God's Word is true and it "shall" come to pass. We have to remain firm and committed in our worship, firm and committed in our praise, and firm and committed in our living for God.

This great worship celebration ended with Pastor Clayborn asking President and First Lady Hugine, as well as the faculty, staff, students, and athletes of Alabama A & M University to come down to the altar for prayer. As the aisles were filled and everyone across the church joined hands, Pastor Clayborn invoked the covering of the Holy Spirit on all those who earnestly seek Him. He asked for God's abundant blessings to overshadow them and for God to make His vision more clear so that they may fulfill His divine purpose for their lives.

Following the worship service, dinner was served by the Kitchen Ministry and a host of church volunteers. The Kitchen Ministry worked diligently to ensure everything was in place and a delicious meal was served. Men of the church had started grilling at 6 am. They grilled hot dogs, hamburgers and chicken. The sides served included slaw, baked beans, chips, and potato salad and an assortment of desserts and beverages were also served.



**Pastor Patrick Clayborn
and
Bryan Hicks AAMU Director of Athletics**



Youth Day

"CHAINS BROKEN: Young People Embracing the Freedom of the Spirit of God"

By Lydia Owens



Voices In Praise Choir

Voices in Praise Concert
August 5, 2012

The Youth Day celebration began with a pre-Youth Day concert on Sunday afternoon, August 5th. The program began with devotion by Brother Arthur Sconiers. He prepared attendees for an upbeat powerful service of praise. Prayer was offered by Kalon Anderson and scripture was read from Psalm 150 by Marcus Harris. The Voices In Praise Choir began their energetic and upbeat concert with a processional. Under the direction of Interim Music Director, Brother Dennis DeLoach, the musical selections for the first half of the concert were "High Praise," "Come Thou Almighty King," "Hallelujah, Salvation and Glory," and "God Is Great." The St. John Praise Dance Ministry continued to offer praise as they ministered to "Moving Forward." Songs sung during the second half of the concert were "We Sing Praises," "You've Been So Faithful," "Faithful is our God," and "Lord You are Good."

This service of praise through song and dance was a great start to promote the theme of "Chains Broken: Young People Embracing the Freedom of the Spirit of God."

Youth Day Extravaganza

The Foster Building Multipurpose Room at AAMU
August 18, 2012

What a spirit-filled weekend for the youth of St. John, as the Grace of God shone throughout each and every face. The weekend began on Saturday with a Youth Extravaganza. The youth of St. John embraced the freedom of worship. Brother Dennis DeLoach and Sister Nina Johnson were the program commentators. The opening prayer was given by Josiah Gullatte, and Marissa Owens read scripture from John 8: 31-36. The Program allowed young people to give honor and praise to God, while they expressed their freedom to worship in degrees.

90 Degrees: Freedom to be Me Fashion Show – Youth and Young at Heart modeled a variety of athletic attire and the latest fads as they were presented to the audience. They shared their school, classification and their proudest moments from the past year.

180 Degrees: Freedom of Expression – Poster and Oratorical Contest

(Continued on page 7)

Youth Day

"CHAINS BROKEN: Young People Embracing the Freedom of the Spirit of God"



The Fashion Parade

(Continued from page 6)

Poster Contest

- 1st Place – Nina Johnson
- 2nd Place – Kimberly Whitehead
- 3rd Place – Eddie Whitehead Jr.

Oratorical Contest

- 1st Place – Nina Johnson and
Kaitlyn McClung

270 Degrees: Freedom to Worship My Way

- Praise Dance – St. John Youth Dance Ministry
- Spoken Word – Karmen Latimore
- Praise Step – St. John Youth Steppers

360 Degrees: Celebration of Freedom

- Dr. Thalia Love-Brown presented the winners of the Oratorical and Poster Contests.

Salute to Our Youth: Mrs. Pamela Whitehead saluted the youth for their past accomplishments in academics and athletics. She wished them well in the upcoming year and encouraged them to be better than before.

Youth Challenge: Pastor Clayborn offered a challenge to all youth. His encouragement was from Matthew 24:43, "But know this; that if the owner of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have allowed his house to be broken into."

Be Real – Be the person God called you to be.

Be Consistent – The way we have on Sunday should be the same as we have any other day of the week.

Be Focused – It can be hard to stay on task with all that surrounds you, but stay focused.

Be Prepared – You never know when your time is coming. Get yourself together. Do not wait for the night before the test to study.

Be Ready – To Be BLESSED. Blessings may pass us by because we are not ready. Pastor Clayborn shared his \$100,000 scholarship testimony with the youth – "Because he stayed awake! He ended with these words: *"You never know what blessings may come your way!"*

(Continued on page 8)

Youth Day

"CHAINS BROKEN: Young People Embracing the Freedom of the Spirit of God"

(Continued from page 7)

Youth Day

August 19, 2012



Flash Mob Prayers

Youth Day was observed at both the 8:00 a.m. and 10:50 a.m. services; however, the main observance occurred during the 10:50 service. The *Voices In Praise* Choir kicked things off with an energetic processional. The Youth lead the call to worship, morning prayer, scripture, and then welcomed visitors. Worship in the form of a break-out 'Flash Mob' dance team helped electrify the atmosphere. The Praise Dance Ministry's *Set Free* Mix medley was equally dynamic. The normal third Sunday children's message and selection by the children's choir were also part of this special service.

The message for the morning was delivered by Pastor Clayborn. The sermon was entitled "Be Loosed" and the text was Luke 13:10-17 with a focus on verse 12 – "And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." He began by asking "Have you ever felt that everything has you BENT OVER and there is nothing you can do about?" There are times when God will allow Satan free reign in believer's lives. When this occurs, they should ask themselves these questions: "What do you do when Satan has the upper hand?" "What do you do when you want to be loosed?"

Pastor Clayborn offered the following requirements to "be loosed."

- 1). Be present. The woman was present. She showed up at the same time that Christ was teaching. Every time one walks into the house of the Lord, there is the possibility of a miracle happening. Her presence says, no matter what bondage a person may be in, Satan cannot keep them from my blessing. Be present, in order to be in a position to be blessed.
- 2). Be Open: When she decided to go to the synagogue, she knew she would be exposed. It took courage for her to show up. She opened herself up to the likelihood that things might get worse before they got better. It's hard to be open. When one takes the risk to be open, they are open to the will of God. When open to His will, one can hear from God and realize God sees them. Jesus saw her and called her over to him. He had her break the traditional boundary lines. God's word will contradict circumstances.
- 3). Be responsible. When the woman straightened up, she had to take responsibility for her life. She was LOOSED! If people straighten up they will see a new dimension of God. If they have gone through something for 18 years and then they get a breakthrough.... There IS going to be some praise. The synagogue officials wanted to mess with the woman's blessing.

In closing, when Jesus was done, all of His opponents were put to shame. The woman's praise started a chain reaction. One by one, they started counting their blessings and rejoicing. Pastor Clayborn concluded by encouraging everyone to "LET OUR PRAISE BE CONTAGIOUS!"

At both services, prayer was offered at the altar for all students, parents, educators, and school employees. After the service, hot dogs and hamburgers were served by the Kolonia Ministry and Youth Day Committee and school supplies were distributed.

Congratulations to the Youth Day Committee for three outstanding celebrations of praise.

Speeches from the Oratorical Contestants

An Oratorical Contest was part of the Youth Extravaganza on Saturday, August 18th. The judges ruled that the first place award was a tie between Nina Johnson and Kaitlyn McClung. The speeches are printed below for AMEN readers to enjoy. Congratulations to Nina and Kaitlyn!

FREEDOM

By Nina Johnson



The definition of freedom is the power or right to act, think, or speak as one wants, without restraint or hindrance. [via google.com] Examples of freedom movements are the civil rights movement, women's rights, and the underground railroad. Our ancestors used the freedom of speech and petition to make us all equal. In present day, we now have the freedom to do whatever we please, with some limitations of course. We have the freedom to vote, the freedom to share the same facilities, and the freedom to express ourselves through art and music.

Personally, we as young people and some older people are free, but we're also under a new form of slavery and are completely unaware of it. We're now enslaved to the music, materials, money, and promiscuity. We just got to have the tightest clothes, the best bottles at the bar, the most expensive watch, and every last foreign name brand you can imagine. (Mmm, hmm)

So how do we break this new form of bondage? We have to break the shame of openly worshiping our God and son Jesus Christ.

Now I know, some of you all are like "I already know God" and "hobody but God can judge me", but are you really worshiping God when you're about to fight someone you're quick to put everything on him. "I put that on....." Yeah, you already know. You're most defiantly not worshiping God when you're twerking your heart out either, maybe the fella behind you but he's no better. God has done so much for us and there's no need to explain. We all know how much He's done. The least we can do is give Him, not some, but all the credit and all the praise. He knows and wants what's best for us. He doesn't want you to have all these meaningless possessions, that'll lead us into struggling to keep up with the Joneses. He just wants our praise.

Here's a question I asked myself and other influences; what really is the reason that keeps us from worshiping Him in confidence? Think about it, you're not shouting hallelujah in the middle of class when you get and "A" on an exam. Yet, when your best friend gets gunned down you're calling on Him in a split second. Why, because nothing matters. So why should how people look at you matter; it really shouldn't.

God gave His only son for us. Would you sacrifice one of your children for the rest of the world? I don't think so. We should embrace this thought. We embrace everything else good in our lives. Friends, family, opportunities, your boo boo or your little babe. We do this without thinking, which in a way would make it a reflex. Yet, we think before we embrace God. (Yeah you do). If you didn't hug your grandmother, uncle, or girlfriend/boyfriend, somebody would be a little upset. How do you think God and Jesus feels? What if Jesus was like one of us? We wouldn't even be here, let alone be able to witness what He had to say. So I encourage all today. He accepts the good, forgives the bad, and handles the ugly. So why shouldn't we shamelessly embrace Him in return?

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Speeches from the Oratorical Contestants

(Continued from page 9)

Freedom in the Spirit of God

By Kaitlyn McClung

Freedom in the spirit of God... Galatians 5:1 says, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

Slavery is a term that we often think of as in the 1800s slaves; Africans taken from their home land to be owned and mistreated. And when people hear that Christ has set us free they think of God commanding Moses to go to Pharaoh and say "Let my people go." Now some people may think "Well how can slavery be relevant today? Slavery has been abolished for centuries! Why are we talking about this now?"

Yes slavery is over in that form. But so many young people are slaves to the mind of today's society, fashion, cars, and making money. Older people may be trapped in the mind set of tradition and are refusing to change things. They are in the mindset that it's not okay to be different; I mean it's been like that since my grandparents went to church and they think it should stay like that.

I know that many young people don't go to church maybe because they are afraid of what people will think of them, how they dress, or the type of music they listen to. Maybe it's because they just got out of 18 years at their mama's house going to church. Maybe they don't like the old school or traditional church music or the traditional church clothes. Well you don't have to dress fancy to worship God because clothes are there to cover your body and they don't make you. You don't have to listen to traditional gospel to praise the Lord. That's what makes freedom of the spirit of God so great! Christ set us free; we can be different. Any way we praise God, He is still going to love us the same. God loves us so much that He gave up His only Son so our sins can be forgiven, so that we could be saved... You know John 3:16. What you might not know is that David was the first one to dance before the Lord. The scripture says that he danced with all his might. And in Psalm 138:2 says "I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your love and your faithfulness; for you have exalted above all things your name and your word."

Now that we know it is okay to praise Him as we are, it's getting people to accept us. In ancient China they would bind the girls' feet so they wouldn't grow. We need to be free so we can grow in the church and our knowledge of the Lord can expand. Unbind the feet of the young people and children so they can grow through our Lord, Jesus Christ! Matthew 19:14 says, "Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.'"

Most of the people in my school don't like to talk about Jesus or go to church. And when we talk about it they look down on us and tell us He's not real or that we spend too much time in church. They would rather listen to Nicki Minaj, Wiz Kalifa, Lil Boosie, and watch the latest rated "R" movies such as Project X and 21 Jump Street. Even in the Biblical times people didn't want to praise the Lord. John 12:43 says "For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Some people in the church may be like that. They can have their eyes wide open and can't see God. They can hear what the preacher is saying but are not listening to the word of Jesus Christ.

But even so, we have to know that when we are down and our friends turn their backs on us that God is always in our hearts and He will set us free from our troubles. I am blessed enough to know who Jesus is and I have the freedom to turn to Him whenever I need Him. Some people don't know Jesus. I don't know what is going on in their life, they may be enslaved in a situation with the devil and just needs a light to show them the way out. And if we, who love the Lord, let our light shine we can guide them to freedom... for those who love G-O-D are truly free!



Men's Day and Women's Day Plans Are Being Made

Men's Day 2012

Sunday, September 23rd
8:00 a.m. and 10:50 a.m.

The Reverend Errol M. Thomas, Jr., M.D. will be the guest preacher. The Reverend Thomas is Minister to Men at St. Andrew AME Church in Memphis, Tennessee. He is also a medical doctor, specializing in internal medicine.

Women's Day 2012

Sunday, October 7th
8:00 a.m. and 10:50 a.m.

The Reverend Raquel St. Clair Lettsome, Ph.D. will be the guest preacher. The Reverend St. Clair Lettsome is a preacher, scholar, administrator, author, and lecturer. Her books include one that she co-authored with the Reverend Doctor William Watley. She previously served as Executive Minister at St. James AME Church in Newark, New Jersey. Currently, Dr. St. Clair Lettsome lives in New York with her husband, the Reverend Dr. Lydell Lettsome, a medical doctor in New York.

Something to Smile About!

Joke of the Month



I'd had a pretty hectic day with my four-year-old. When bedtime finally came, I laid down the law "We're putting on your pajamas, brushing your teeth, and reading ONE book. Then it's lights out!"

Her arms went around my neck in a gentle embrace, and she said, "We learned in Sunday School about little boys and girls who don't have mommies and daddies." Even after I'd been such a grouch, I thought, she was still grateful to have me. I felt tears begin to well up in my eyes, and then she whispered, "Maybe you could go be THEIR mom?"

Texting Teen News August 2k12

Written by: Mariah Gullatte

Are you free to worship!? After experiencing this month's activities, it's hard not to be free! First things first, you can't send us back to school without a party! A back to school bash was right on time! Activities included a hallelujah fashion show that was funny and stylish. Our engaging praise dancers shared an encouraging message for the school year, through the song "Moving Forward." The Steppers...Great! Stomped all over the devil and his evil ways. And how about those speeches?! Congratulations to all of the participants of the oratorical contest. How could we forget about the beautiful posters, great work!

Youth Sunday was one of a kind! St. John's *Voices in Praise* choir turned the church out! After a weekend like that, it is hard not to be loosed and set free from chains! In preparation for Friday Night Live, we surprised the church with a flash mob dance. Kids came from all parts of the sanctuary ready to get crunk for Jesus!

About Friday Night Live? Glad you asked! It was the true word and worship experience! We had an awesome turnout from a variety of churches and denominations. Seeing a sea of teens in the sanctuary praising God is a wonderful sight. There was a house DJ, SAM SMITE, and a gospel rap group, *Unanimous*. Afterward everyone enjoyed snacks, fun, and fellowship. A busy weekend accomplished! As always, don't forget to work hard and do your best in school! That wraps up this month.

TTYU

3rd Annual Northwest Annual Conference

October 16-20, 2012

Jones Chapel AME Church
Fairfield, Alabama

Opening Worship—Parker High School

Friday Nite Live! Offers a 'New Wine' Approach to Worship

By Janette R. Smith

It started with a question; how can the church minister to youth, young adults and the young at heart in creative and innovative ways, so they know God is relevant today?

Friday Nite Live opened it's doors to more than 250 attendees and volunteers on August 24, 2012. The premiere of the Word and Worship event marked another 'new wine' approach to fulfilling the great commission of taking the good news of the gospel and love of Jesus Christ into all the world. Attendees were met at the registration area with arm bracelets and 'take away' sacks of goodies which included glow in the dark bracelets, literature on St John AME Church and staying sober and drug free. Guests then had the opportunity to take a red carpet photograph in front of the backdrop known in the industry as a 'step and repeat', since celebrities generally step, pose and take a picture, then step, pose and take another photo. Corporate sponsors included Salon Prive' of Huntsville.



The sanctuary was transformed for the Friday Nite Live Event

Inside, the sanctuary was transformed with help from CGI construction, Donna Gullatte set design creations, and America's Party Pros, which provided the lighting design elements, enhanced audio equipment, and a giant screen. The theme for the evening led the audience, which included both the



Unanimous

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Friday Nite Live! Offers a 'New Wine' Approach to Worship

By Janette R. Smith

(Continued from page 12)

young and the young-at-heart, to draw closer to God through letting go. First, award-winning Christian DJ Sam Smite loosened everyone up with great mixes of faith-filled, inspirational music. Then, the Holy Hip Hop rap trio *Unanimous* tore up the stage, lifting Jesus up, while luring the young people to the altar for fist pumping, energetic praise. The event was immersed in visual components including an introductory video which discussed the downfalls of 'baggage'. The opening skit introduced characters who attempt to push through their barrage of problems and baggage. The cast consisted of new and old St. John members; Christina Sanders, Mary Rankin, and Marcus Harris

gave stirring performances as did Rhonda Hammonds, a cast member from New Beginnings Christian Church. The moment when the characters turned to the cross and realized they could lug their burdens and shortcomings to it and leave them there communicates the deep freedom people of faith sense when they link to God's power. Video vignettes gave way to lyrics and video animation as the praise team took the stage to minister in song. As the interdenominational group also consisting of Seventh Day Adventists sang "Make Me Over" by Tonex, St. John AME's own Mariah Gullette and Kalon Anderson performed a soul-stirring dance communicating the struggle of being 'made over.'

Supporters who purchased lunches and dinners before and after bible study through the FNL cafe' were able to see that ministry seed

put to good use through newly purchased technology. This made the FNL event a tech lovers' dream. The ProPresenter software allowed the FNL team to highlight and feature tweets posted about the event. Each part of the skit had an interactive video element that accompanied it. All praise and worship songs had lyrics displayed, and when Pastor 'P.C.' (Patrick Clayborn) shared his timely word from Luke 7:36-50, the scripture in its entirety was shown on the big screen for all to see.

One of the most moving portions of the night came during altar call. Guests were invited down to the altar for prayer and to lay their burdens down. They were also invited to write those burdens on sticky notes and place them on the cross in the vestibule. It was quite a site to see them posted all over the cross. Prayers continue to surround the 'baggage' represented by each sticky.

The night ended with a grand meet-and-greet with rap group *Unanimous*, and a free-stylin' after-party where the youth showcased their dance and rap skills.

Planning continues for the next Friday Nite Live event. The event will most likely run quarterly instead of monthly, to give the committee time to keep creating cutting-edge themes and conduct city-wide casting calls. With God's blessing, all these elements will continue to come together to offer an explosive worship experience for everyone involved.





**It is time to
celebrate!**

Pastor's Appreciation

Sunday, September 30, 2012
10:00 a.m.

Come and celebrate the blessings of
this first conference year
under the leadership of

Pastor Patrick D. Clayborn
and
Reverend Sheri

The Reverend Telley Lynnette Gadson,
Guest Preacher

Senior Pastor,
St. Mark United Methodist Church,
Sumter, South Carolina

Steward Abbiegail Hugine, Chairperson,
Stewards Martha Smith and Clifton Pearson,
co-chairpersons

SOMETIMES

SOMETIMES...

*We must be hurt in order to grow,
We must fail in order to know,
We must lose in order to gain.*

*Some lessons are learned best only through
pain.*

SOMETIMES...

*Our vision clears only after our eyes are
washed with tears.
We have to be broken, so we can be tender,
We are sick so we can rest and think better on
things more important than work or fun,
We are taken for trip near death, so we can
assess how we've run.*

SOMETIMES...

*We have to suffer lack, so we can know God's
provision,
We have to feel another's pain, so we can
have a sense of mission.*

*So take heart, my friend, if you don't under-
stand today,
Instead of grumbling, ask God what He means
to say,
In order to learn you must endure, and learn to
see the bigger picture.*

*In order to grow, you must stand and look be-
yond the hurt,
Trust in God's loving hand that takes what is
Good, and gives what is Best,*

*And on this blessed thought, rest your anxious
heart with all the questions,*

*God's hand only gives what his loving heart
dictates.*

*Sometimes the Lord calms the storm,
Sometimes He lets the storm rage... and
calms His child.
Better go through the storm with Him,
Than smooth waters without Him.*



**ST. JOHN A.M.E. CHURCH
SOUP KITCHEN**

3rd and 4th Tuesdays
11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m.

229 Church Street ~ Huntsville, AL
(on the corner of Church and Malone Streets)

ALL ARE WELCOME

St. John's Soup Kitchen Provides Love & Nutrition

God is love, and people are a creation of that love. Through kind words and deeds, people give to others from the love of God within. Love motivates actions toward others.

St. John's soup kitchen is the loving and kind thing that God commands. The soup kitchen provides a heart-to-heart connection with others, many in need of a nutritious meal.

The power of kindness is an extraordinary power for good. Words and tone convey encouragement, support, inspiration, and comfort. The soup kitchen sponsors tap into innate sacredness, guided by divine love and caring.

Thanks to all the Soup Kitchen workers and those who donate to this ministry.

"Whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward." Matthew 10:42

Happy Grandparents Day!

September 9, 2012

The idea for a National Grandparents Day originated with Marian McQuade, a housewife in Fayette County, West Virginia. Her primary motivation was to champion the cause of lonely elderly in nursing homes. She also hoped to persuade grandchildren to tap into the wisdom and heritage their grandparents could provide. President Jimmy Carter, in 1978, proclaimed that National Grandparents Day would be celebrated every year on the first Sunday after Labor Day.

Here are a few words that have been used to describe GRANDPARENTS:

Generous
Reliable
Adorable
Nice
Dazzling
Precious
Appreciated
Regulator
Enjoyable
Nurturer
Tolerant
Sweet

Seeking New Members

The Pastor's Aid Board invites members of St. John to join their board. If you are interested in being a part of this ministry of service to the Pastor and his family, please contact Mrs. Claire Philadelphia.



Flowers on the Altar

Members who would like to donate flowers for the altar starting September 2, 2012 through August 31, 2013 may contact Pearlean Myhand at 256.852.8265.

Madison County 2012 Family
Day
presents
"Gold Medal Families"

Family Day Focuses on Frequent Family Dinners

By Donna Gullatte

*Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older,
they will not leave it. Proverbs 22:6*

Family Day is a day to share a meal with children...It was launched in 2001 by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University. Family Day is a national movement that informs parents that the engagement fostered during frequent family dinners is an effective tool to help keep America's kids substance free. *Dinner Makes a Difference!* The Madison County Alabama Cooperative Extension System-Urban New and Nontraditional Programs as well as other Urban Centers throughout the state joined forces two years ago to help spread the word about sharing meals together to increase communication between families and with much effort hopefully reducing the risk of kids and teens becoming involved in drugs, tobacco, and alcohol. This year the Olympic Spirit continues on families sharing meals together and families being active together!

Communication is any sharing of meaning between two or more people. Often communication is without words and the recipient may or may not understand what one is trying to say...So how can communication be made better? 1) Take time to discover children's meanings. 2) Send clear and encouraging messages. 3) Share feelings in helpful ways. 4) Keep your relationship positive.

Check out the Nine (9) Facets Of Parental Engagement:

1. Be there: Get involved in children's lives and activities.
2. Open the lines of communication and keep them wide open.
3. Set a good example. Actions are more persuasive than words.
4. Set rules and expect children to follow them.
5. Monitor children's whereabouts.
6. Maintain family rituals such as eating dinner together.
7. Incorporate religious and spiritual practices into family life.
8. Get Dad engaged—and keep him engaged.
9. Engage the larger family of children's friends, teachers, classmates, neighbors, and community.

Become a Family Day STAR by making these commitments:

- Spend time with your kids by having dinner together.
- Talk to them about their friends, interests and the dangers of drugs and alcohol.
- Answer their questions and listen to what they have to say.
- Recognize that I have the power to help keep my kids substance free!

Whether cooking a gourmet meal, ordering food from a take-out place or eating on the go, rest assured that what kids really want during dinnertime is YOU! Family meals are the perfect time to talk to kids and to listen to what's on their mind. Studies show the more often kids eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink or use drugs.

Alabama Cooperative Extension System Urban New Nontraditional Programs is proud to invite you to attend the Family Day that is normally celebrated on the 4th Monday of September, but this year consolidated with Grandparents Day on Sunday, September 16th. Enjoy a fun-filled day at Alabama A&M Health and Wellness Center where families can learn new ways to communicate and stay fit together. Families who register you will receive a **FREE** Box Lunch for each registered guest.

Register by calling 256-532-1578 or 256-536-4779. Check out the Family Day Website for your Family Tool Kit: <http://cse.afamilyday.org/familyday/> and a Family Day recipe on page 23 of this newsletter.

Parent Wisdom

By Reverend Vanessa Glover

*These commandments that I give you today
are to be on your hearts
Impress them upon your children.
Talk about them when you sit at home
and when you walk along the road,
when you lie down, and when you get up.*
Deuteronomy 6:6-7

As Parents, we are surrounded by the educational system and psychological experts on raising children, at times we feel inadequate to the task of raising children. Many of us have raised our children and some have been successful at it. So why Parent Wisdom? The Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments, gives parents a much more important role in passing on the "Legacy of Faith" to our children. We know that parenting does not come with a manual, therefore; whether we are successful or we feel failure as a parent or if a child who has been successful or a child we feel have failed be not dismayed God's Word provides Wisdom for us to teach and restore with the purpose of "No Child Left Behind" nor lost and that we will not hide these Biblical truths from our children.

The Legacy of Faith is Godly wisdom passed on to our children and the next generation that God is always at work in every detail of our lives, using setback, shifting, ever changing, altering assignments for His purpose and for His glory. No person or event is outside of the power and rule of God Almighty. God's Word commands us to tell of His power and the mighty Miracles He did. We are to teach them to our children even our children's children so that the next generation might know that they in turn will teach their children. Each generation can set its hope in their encounter with all Wise God our Savior and Lord. This is the Legacy of Faith. In the book of Deuteronomy, Chapter 4:35, Moses, begins with the Israelites' experience; then he shows how the laws of the covenant relate directly to their experience—our experiences teaches us to communicate with our children we must never forget our own encounter with God as Pastor Clayborn so vividly reminds us.

This is the Legacy of Faith—so that in the future, when our son or daughter asks us, "What is the meaning of the stipulations decrees and laws the Lord our God has commanded us?" tell him or her: We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Before our eyes the Lord sent miraculous signs and wonders—great and terrible—upon Egypt and Pharaoh and his whole household. But he brought us out from there to bring us in and give us the land he promised on oath to our ancestors. The Lord commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the LORD our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today. (Deuteronomy 6:20-24) Know that God chose us to be Parents out of His pure Grace not because of our impressiveness, nor our goodness, nor faithfulness, but because of His Great love for us while we were yet in our sins, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

What a Might God we served! Much like Deuteronomy in the Old Testament, in the New Testament 2 Peter echoes throughout his letter advice and wisdom to refresh our memory regarding the "internal" knowledge of our encounter with God grounded in the Old Testament prophecies and miracles to the eyewitness account of the life Jesus Christ not just in "cleverly" invented stories, but the Gospel truths in the New Testament. 2 Peter warns and reminds us for this very reason lest we for-

(Continued on page 18)

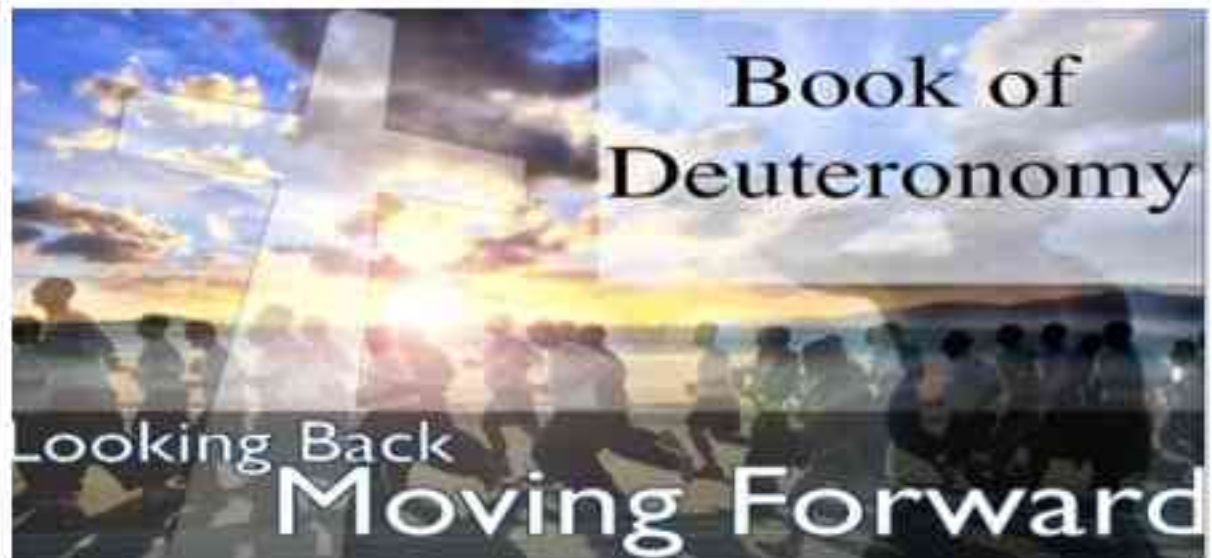
Parent Wisdom

By Reverend Vanessa Glover

(Continued from page 17)

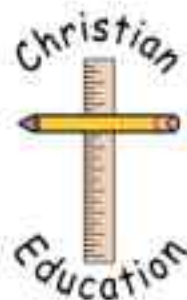
get; having escaped the corruption in the world caused by our own evil desires to make every effort to add to our faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if we possess these qualities in increasing measure; these virtues will keep us from being ineffective and unproductive in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever comes, His Love for us ensures He will keep us to that appointed day. Leave a Legacy of Faith by the Life we LIVE in Christ Jesus.

A legacy comes from the idea that everyone, regardless of their position or status including parents can make a difference. Legacies encompass the past, present, and the future. It forces us to consider where we have been, where we are now, and where we are going. It is no accident that we are where we are right now. So work hard and accomplish all that you can. Do not settle for anything less than your best.. While we enjoy the abundance this life can offer, we must also never forget how God brought us out to bring us in the Family of God. Make the Lord God proud as we live each day for Him, and let our light shine brightly for all around us to see. Never forget, our loudest witness to nonbelievers is not what we say, but how we live our life. Is your focus on Him daily? This is the key to staying balanced and on track in the midst of all the many things we do each day. It is what keeps us on straight and narrow way which leads to life, so that God can use us to be a blessing to others. (Matthew 7:13-14) Leave a Legacy of Faith.



Prayer: Thank you Lord that FAITH is not an emotion that we need to work up inside of us; instead, it is a GIFT you give as we commit ourselves to You. Lord help us to GROW in FAITH. For we walk by FAITH and not by sight. For we all are children of God by FAITH in Christ Jesus. Help us to be sensitive to your Great Love for coming to earth to die for our sins so that in our successes and failures I can see victory and in victory I can see YOU! 2 Corinthians 5:7 Galatians 3:26

Church School Lesson Overview – October 2012



The Church School reviews were written by Willie Sandifer.

October 7, 2012

Lesson Title: Stephens Arrest and Speech

Lesson Scripture: Acts 6:8-7:53

Print: Acts 6:8-7:2A

Devotional Songs: #358 [], #272 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people" (Acts 6:8).

The first thing noted in Stephen's profile is he was "a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit." Stephen's boldness and fearlessness sprang from this characteristic. Only people of solid faith can stand their ground in the face of daunting opposition.

Those who opposed Stephen were of his own nationality (Jews), although of a different sect. Today, some of the most vicious assaults on Christianity originate not from other religions, but from within Christianity.

As believers, we are fully aware that leaders who feel offended by our teaching and preaching will not make life easy for us. We must speak truth even when it is unpopular. God will be our protector against those who are offended by truth.

October 14, 2012

Lesson Title: Stephen's Martyrdom

Lesson Scripture: Acts 7:1-8:1A

Print: Acts 7:51-8:1A

Devotional Songs: #390 [], #258 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit'" (Acts 7:59).

The charge against Stephen was blasphemy, which at that time was punishable by death. Like Jesus during his trial, Stephen did not seek to refute the charges directly. He had the option of challenging the validity of the charges, or even pleading for mercy. Instead, he elected to state the case for Christ and the new dispensation of God's grace to humankind. In taking this position, Stephen had to refer to some truths which further infuriated his accusers. Stephen's speech showed that these persons who claimed to be loyalists of

God were anything but faithful to God.

When we face harassment because of our faith in Jesus Christ, we ought to remind ourselves that God is near and can use any situation for God's glory. We can also bring immense glory to God's name by forgiving those who hurt or seek to hurt us. Our God is best represented by love and forgiveness, not grudges, or a desire to get even.

October 21, 2012

Lesson Title: Simon Wants to Buy Power

Lesson Scripture: Acts 8:4-24

Print Acts 8:9-24

Tentative Devotional Songs: #520 [], #251 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money" (Acts 8:9-24).

This lesson teaches an important lesson about ministry by contrasting an early church preacher named Philip with a sorcerer by the name of Simon. Here is a clear case that some people just do not get it. The "it" here is the purpose and source of ministry. Phillip understood ministry as helping hurting people. He preached Christ, cast out demons, and healed those who were paralyzed and crippled (Acts 8:5-7). Simon had an entirely different attitude about ministry. He saw ministry as an opportunity to make a name for himself and to gain great power.

The most interesting thing about the series of events is that it was at the point of manifestation of the Holy Spirit that Simon got excited and wanted to purchase the power. Peter rightly rebuked Simon for his greed. Peter nevertheless extended to Simon the possibility of forgiveness and restoration. Whatever else we may want to say about Simon's greed, let us admit that Simon was smart. When Peter opened the door, Simon entered. That is all God requires of us. As our transgressions are pointed out, we are to respond with humility and prayers of repentance.

October 28, 2012

Lesson Title: Phillips and the Ethiopian Eu-

(Continued on page 20)

Church School Lesson

(Continued from page 19)

nuch

Lesson Scripture: Acts 8:26-39

Print: Same

Tentative Devotional Songs: #424 ☐; 282 ☐; and #243 ☐

Key Verse: "The eunuch said, 'Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?' (Acts 8:36)?

This lesson is about the human need for connection and community; the joy of belonging, and the frustration of rejection. How we relate to people especially people of different backgrounds, may be more important in attracting them to our communities than economic considerations. Philip's success with the Ethiopian Eunuch can be related to these principles:

1. Philip was obedient to the directions of the Holy Spirit, despite the inconvenience to himself.
2. Philip adopted an open approach to the eunuch. Even with the outcast status of the eunuch, Philip did as instructed, apparently with a good attitude. This pleasant attitude undoubtedly made the eunuch more receptive to Philip.
3. Phillip was willing to be God's instrument for including the eunuch in God's community of believers.

These three factors are still important when seeking to add persons to God's community of believers. A willingness to accept people as they are, and to give them the warmth of community, is very important in kingdom building.

WMS Meeting Date Changed

Please note that the regular meeting date for the WMS has been changed to the 4th Saturday of the each month at 10:30 a.m. The next scheduled meeting is September 29 at the church.

Lt. Col. Felicia Carter, President



Transportation Available

The St. John AME Church bus will pick up students from AAMU on Sundays at each dorm prior to 10:20 a.m., and pick up students at the Knight Center between 10:20 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Students may also call the church office at 256-634-3265, Monday - Friday, to secure a ride to St. John on Sunday.



Church School Book Club

Discussion Date: 15 September 2012
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Rally 'Round Green; Judy Pace Christie, 2011

Discussion Date: 20 October 2012
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

If Memory Serves; Vanessa Davis Griggs, 2008

Memory Patterson has been hiding from her family for much too long. Her instinct has always been to run, and never more so than when a chance meeting with Pastor Landris and his pregnant wife, Johnnie Mae, leads to a shocking revelation as Johnnie Mae discloses the truth about Memory's mother.

Told her daughter had died at birth, ninety-year-old Sarah Fleming has spent the past three-and-a-half years searching for Memory. Sarah has been warned repeatedly by Memory's daughter and granddaughter not to trust the ever-conning Memory no matter how much she may claim she has changed.

Just as Memory attempts to convince everyone that she truly is saved now, the faithful woman responsible for reuniting her with her past finds herself suffering with troubles of her own. When Johnnie Mae experiences complications with her pregnancy, Pastor Landris learns he may have to make an impossible choice--one that will amount to true spiritual warfare. Meanwhile, Johnnie Mae's friend, Charity, finally comes face to face with the painful truth and damaging secret of her own past.

October 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 9:30 a.m. Fifty-Four Meeting	2	3 12:00 p.m. Bible Study 5:00 p.m. Steward Board 6:30 p.m. Mid-week Service and Love Feast	4  6:00 p.m. Mass Chorus Rehearsal	5	6 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 11:00 a.m. Offical Board Meeting
7 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship AMEN Deadline	8	9 6:00 p.m. Stewardess Board Sons of AmenMg Voices in Praise Rehearsal 	10 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	11  6:00 p.m. Gospel Chorus Rehearsal	12	13 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal AMEN Staff Meeting 10:30am 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
14 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	15	16 11:30am.—1:00 p.m. BOUP KITCHEN	17	18	19	20
Northwest Annual Conference Jones Chapel AME Church 225 57th Street Fairfield, Alabama						
21 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	22	23 11:30am.—1:00 p.m. BOUP KITCHEN	24 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	25  6:00 p.m. Mass Chorus Rehearsal	26  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	27 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 9:30 a.m. Women's Ministry 10:30 a.m. WMS Meeting
28 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	29  6:00 p.m. Gospel Chorus Rehearsal	30 6:00 p.m. Church School Board Meeting	31 12:00 p.m. Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Mid-week Service and Love Feast			

POTPOURRI

Pray for our Sick & Shut-ins

Jason Brown

Altonette Burks

Mildred Hereford

Evelyn Hildreth

Ada Houston

James Jamar

Rev. Kenneth Johnson

Doris Outlaw

Pray for our sick and shut-in.

About St. John Members

Karla Reddite has accepted a position with the NBC television news team in Richmond, Virginia. Karla has been a member of St John for over two (2) years and was employed by WAFF Channel 48 as co-anchor to the morning newscast.

At St. John, Karla was a member of the Praise Dance Ministry and the AMENewsletter Staff.

Congratulations Karla! We will miss your beautiful smile and your willing spirit. We pray God's blessing for you on this new endeavor.

Financial Contributions

To ensure that you receive proper credit for your offering, please place your tithes and offerings in an envelope and include your name and the amount of the offering on the envelope.

To give online visit www.stjohname-hsv.org, click on Online Giving, and follow the instructions from there... giving made easy.

Electronic AMEN

The AMENewsletter is available in electronic form. If you prefer to receive an electronic copy of the newsletter, please notify the church at stjohname@aol.com.

GO GREEN

From *The Upper Room Devotional* for September 8, 2012

Do something for the environment—pray for the earth. Earth Gospel offers four weeks of prayer (seven days per week with prayers for morning, midday, and evening) to encourage care of God's creation.

Thought for the Day: Do I behave as if I am an owner or a caretaker of God's garden?

Prayer: Dear God, help us to honor the work you have given us, to care for the Earth rather than destroy it. In Jesus' name. Amen.



PRAY FOR OUR MILITARY

every man, every woman, every child Pray without ceasing....

Please continue to pray for our military persons who are deployed overseas as well as those stationed within the United States.

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The Right Reverend James L. Davis, Servant Bishop

Mrs. Arelis B. Davis, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Doctor Patrick Clayborn, Pastor



web

Important Dates to Remember



- September 23, 2012 Men's Day, 8:00 am and 10:50 am,
The Reverend Errol Thomas, Jr., M.D., Guest Preacher
- September 30, 2012 Pastor's Appreciation, 10:00 am,
The Reverend Telley Lynnette Gadson, Guest Preacher
Breakfast, 8:00 am
- October 7, 2012 Women's Day, 8:00 am and 10:50 am,
The Reverend Raquel St. Clair Lettsome, Ph.D., Guest Preacher
- October 14, 2012 Holy Communion, 8:00 am and 10:50 am
- October 16-20, 2012 Northwest Alabama Annual Conference
Jones Chapel AME Church, Fairfield, Alabama

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart
that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9

ST. JOHN A.M.E.N. NEWSLETTER



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 17 Issue 10

October 2012

Pastor's Meditation

Be Vision Driven

Habakkuk 2:1-4



Reverend and Patrick D. Clayton

We have begun a new series of sermons and bible studies entitled "Vision Driven." In order to be the people God called us to be, we must follow God's vision for our lives. In my first ten months as the pastor of St. John, I prayed for vision – a specific vision for us. I thank God that Bishop James L. Davis has reappointed me as the pastor, so I can carry out the vision that I have received. I have asked the church to join me in reading John Maxwell's *Put Your Dream to the Test*.¹ My purpose is twofold. I hope that we will begin to catch, claim, cultivate, and carry the vision that God has for St. John. As well, I pray that each member (along with you the reader) will seek God's vision for her or his life.

There is an often quoted proverb that says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Prov. 29:18). And, this proverb has been proved true time and time again. Yet, we really should add to this proverb: Where there is a Godless vision, the people are led astray. For this proverb has been proved true as well.

Just look around and note the results of having either no vision or a Godless vision. There are numbers of Black, Brown, and poor White peoples in jail because there is no vision. There is no vision on how to educate all persons equitably. There is no vision on how to reform our judicial system so that justice is handed out fairly. There is no vision on how to correct our penal system so that convicts are rehabilitated instead of institutionalized. And, there are numbers of Black, Brown, and poor White peoples in jail because there is a Godless vision. There is a Godless vision of profiting off of minorities in jail. There is a Godless vision of boosting diversity population numbers in certain districts (by having prisons) without having to have diversity walking freely through those districts! There is a Godless vision of bringing about the grandchild of slavery and the child of Jim Crow segregation through the prison system!²

When there is no vision, we run the church without focusing on God's word. We put more emphasis on our own needs than the needs of those who are destitute. We treat the church like a social club. We tithe whenever we choose or not at all. We sing songs that sound good but have little theology. We run programs based on certain people's whims. We build up a hierarchy instead of equality.

When there is a Godless vision, we say we are in charge of the church. We put the agenda of our separate organization over the church's agenda. We judge others believing that no judgment should come back to us. We limit who others can be in Christ. We think that our sacrifice built the church! Again, where there is no vision, we perish. Where there is godless vision, we are led astray!

(Continued on page 2)

¹John Maxwell, *Put Your Dream to the Test: 10 Questions to Help You See It and Seize It* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009).

²For further information, see Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010).

Pastor's Meditation

(Continued from page 1)

But there is good news! In the midst of there being no vision, and in the midst of godless visions running wild, God has a vision for our lives!!!! Dr. William Watley says this: "God has a vision for your life – greater than any vision you can have for yourself or others can have for you!" By vision, I just mean a picture of desired future. Since God has a vision for us, this vision is a picture of the future God desires for us. We find this theme in scripture. God told Jeremiah, "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope" (Jeremiah 29:11).

God certainly has a vision for our lives! When we grasp God's vision for our lives, it will frighten us. It will be bigger than we anticipate. God's vision will also encourage us. It will reinforce the fact that God loves us! God's vision will challenge us to be our best selves! It will not let us take the easy road. It will search the depths of our being. God's vision will transform us. God's vision will change our outlook on life. Through it, we will realize that our world will be bigger than we imagined. It will humble us and make us more accepting of others. God's vision for our lives will usually be inconvenient! There will be all kinds of twists and turns along the way to fulfilling vision!

Within the inconvenience of vision is where we find Habakkuk. He is praying for God to give him a word for his people. They are under attack from the Chaldeans, and Habakkuk asks God why the good suffer and the evil win. God responds, "I'll give you a vision!" This is INCONVENIENT! God is going to show Habakkuk his future, but Habakkuk wants to know how to rectify his present. God is going to show Habakkuk his promise, but Habakkuk wants to know God's plan!

When vision is inconvenient how do we become vision driven?

First, we must own the vision. God told Habakkuk to write the vision and make it plain. Therefore, Habakkuk had to yield to the vision. He could not write and make plain that to which he doesn't yield. Habakkuk didn't just yield to God's vision; he also wrote the vision. When we own something, we are willing to put it in our handwriting. Once we write something, it becomes concrete. It leaves the abstract thought of our minds, and it begins to take shape.

Habakkuk also made the vision plain. This means he had to study it until he could put it in his own words. This means he simplified it in order to explain it to someone else. This means he had to tell someone else. We have to be willing to stand by the vision and offer it to others. For when we own the vision, we say, "YES" to God! Just own the vision – say, "yes" to God. You will be surprised how the vision will begin to take hold of you!

Second, we must have hope. God told Habakkuk that the vision is for an appointed time. The vision speaks of the end and does not lie. Essentially, God tells Habakkuk to have hope. Just because we say yes to God does not mean that everything in our lives will become great! On the contrary, when we say, "yes" to God, often our lives fall apart. This is a moment of testing! God may give you a vision that will contradict your current circumstances. That is why we need hope. We have to anticipate - we have to expect - that God will keep God's promises! God may not show us the plan, but SOMEHOW God will work it out. Just know that if the situation looks bleak, but God gave us a vision, IT WILL COME TO PASS! The vision is for an appointed time.

Third, we must have endurance. God told Habakkuk that if the vision looks like it is slow, just wait for it. It will certainly come. The vision will not delay. God basically tells Habakkuk to employ endurance. The vision may not come on your time table. But, God assures that it will come on God's timetable. Now this is an easy point to say - have endurance. But, this is a difficult point to live out. Howard Thurman says, "The contradictions of life are never final." That means there is an expiration date to our suffering, pain, and accusations from our enemies.

(Continued on page 9)

General Officer Fry Brown Preaches Fall Revival

By The Reverend Meriam Garrett and The Reverend Charles Glover



St. John held Fall Revival on Wednesday through Friday, September 5-7, 2012. The Revival 2012 theme, "Anticipating Breakthrough, Glory, and Victory," was based on the scripture text from Romans 8. The Revivalist was the Reverend Teresa Fry Brown, Ph.D. Dr. Fry Brown is the Historiographer and Executive Director of Research and Scholarship of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. She also holds the position of professor of homiletics and director of Black Church Studies at Candler School of Theology, Emory University. In 2010, she became the first African American woman to attain the rank of full professor at Candler.

Wednesday night service began with spirited singing by the Male Chorus.

The theme for the opening night of revival was "breakthrough" and the sermon was entitled "It Is Time to Move" with the biblical text from Deuteronomy 1:6-8.

She explained that to move spiritually means to change one's reservation in eternity by modifying behavior to come in line with what God wants it to be. Dr. Fry Brown posed the question, "What are we doing in 2012?"

In expounding on the text, she stated that Moses was leading the "80 and under crowd" and some had followed him out of Egypt. Standing on the banks of the Red Sea, they could see what God had promised them. They became restless and began to second-guess God. They could almost see freedom, but they hesitated. They camped out in the "Valley of Almost" Moses began his last sermon series by reminding them of God's plan. Deuteronomy 18 is the crux of the sermon series, "We have been around this mountain long enough." He was commissioning them to stop waiting.

Dr. Fry Brown then related the text to today's church. If persons do not do what God says they will be sitting still their entire life. Too many in 2012 have been waiting for too long. God has already promised He will do what He said, so there is no need to despair. God has time and He is waiting. God gives assurance for the journey. Not everyone will move, as some people are ordained to hinder the progress. God is calling for a change, a new beginning, a new relationship. She encouraged those present to think about what God told them to do and asked "Is the church looking at what God said they should do?" She concluded with the story of what God did through the life of Jesus as a reason to move. It is time to move!

The second night of Fall Revival began with an energized praise service that was led by Brother Dennis DeLoach. Praise continued and was heightened as Pastor Clayborn offered prayer and read scripture from Romans 8:15-21 from the Message Translation of the Bible.

Dr. Fry Brown used the theme of "Glory" for the second night of the revival. The sermon was entitled "After This" and the focus biblical text was from Joel 2:1-2, 13-14, 25-29. She also related the message to the lyrics by J.J. Hairston of Youthful Praise.

There will be glory after this!
There will be victory after this!
God will turn it around!
He will bring you out!
There will be glory after this!

(Continued on page 4)

General Officer Fry Brown Preaches Fall Revival



Pastor Clayborn and Dr. Fry Brown

(Continued from page 3)

Dr. Fry Brown told how Joel repeatedly called for repentance as well as she told how in repentance, God will bless. The fall of Judah and Jerusalem was eminent. Joel gave a state of the union address to all the people and called on the entire nation to repent. God used the disaster to wake up the people. There was no joy in the land as the drought began to come upon the land. Israel had forgotten who they were and whose they were. The coming of God's judgment and glory were on the way. God sent a locust, which Joel equated to God's judgment on the land. Joel shouted "wake up" to the people and pleaded for them to return to the Lord. Dr. Fry Brown emphasized that people must listen to the word from God's mouth because He will give a second chance. He gives a warning and He will remove the locust if one repents. After repentance God springs into action... He

heals the land. After repentance God restores... He gives blessings. God will bless over and over again. He will repay for all the sufferings and will reinstate all that was thought to be lost. Never again will the person who repents be hungry, in pain, thirsty, or without hope because after this God promises to "pour out my spirit." When one repents they live in God's glory. After this there will be joy, a testimony, and glory. Dr. Fry Brown concluded with these encouraging words:

After this... God will pour out His spirit on everybody.
 After this... God will bless all His children.
 After this... There will be Glory!

This revival's final night began with the Call to Worship that established a solid foundation for the service. Rev. Sheri Smith Clayborn led the congregation in proclaiming to God that we praise Him in advance for breakthrough, for His Glory, and for victory. The congregants assembled came to this final night expecting God to do the super extraordinary in His servant, Dr. Fry Brown, and no one left disappointed.

The sermon title for this final night was "Hold on to your Hope" and scriptural text was Ezekiel 37: 9-13. This particular text captures Ezekiel's predictions concerning the restoration of the Jewish exiles to the Promised Land. Ezekiel was given a vision that pictured a staged process of return; that of a strange vision of dry bones scattered in a desolate valley. The vision illustrated the promise of Chapter 38, new life and a nation restored both physically and spiritually. The bones were a picture of the Jews in captivity, scattered and dead. Ezekiel told of restoration back to God through hope, even while preaching to a people who refused to listen. God was not pleased and He taught them a lesson. The people became physically and spiritually dead.

Many questions surface during current times of despair and persons ponder these questions:

- (a) In the midst of broken dreams and aspiration, can these bones still live? Darkness gives way to light when hope appears.
- (b) Can life come out of a dead situation? God is the only one who knows the answer to this question.

God did not tell Ezekiel to "touch" the bones, he said; "Bones, Hear the Word of the Lord!"

In time of weariness, sometimes God is looking for obedience in the smallest of matters. In this

(Continued on page 5)

Men's Day Was A Day of R.E.V.I.V.E.

by Tommy Anderson

Rekindling Eternal Vision and Inspiring Victory Everywhere (REVIVE) was the theme for the Men's Day Program on September 23, 2012; and what better way to begin this season of R.E.V.I.V.E. than to have a powerful, spirit-filled message as well as the inspiring announcement of new Sons of Allen (SOA) Officers. The men of St. John participated in all aspects of the worship service and the Male Chorus rendered the music for the 8:00 a.m. and 10:50 a.m. services.



Dr. Thomas delivers morning sermon.

The guest preacher for the Men's Day observance was the Reverend Errol Thomas, M.D. The Reverend Thomas has served as Minister to Men at St. Andrew AME Church in Memphis, Tennessee since 2005 where he administers a weekly men's bible study, a monthly men's fellowship and an annual men's season.

The Men's Day sermon at the 10:50 a.m. service was entitled "Don't Be Fooled" with text from 1 Corinthians 1:18-25. His message placed emphasis on the steps that are considered necessary in order to avoid the conception of foolish plans. He stated that one must first discover their "call". Discovering one's call allows them to identify specific God-given capability and employ it for the good works sanctioned by God, not man. Second, one must explore their capacity by recognizing their God-given power. Reverend Thomas' point emphasized that strength is gained upon activation of consciousness of God's presence during all efforts toward uplifting Him. Third, put it in a course of action. Christians must train daily in order to "get on the track" and run the "Christian Race". The "Christian Race" is the reminder that spiritual righteousness is the only object to aim for throughout one's daily living.

Finally, Reverend Thomas' message on discovering the "call", exploring capacity, and putting it in a course of action was a great preface to the announcement of new officers for the SOA organization. The incoming President, Theodore Tyson; Vice-President, Karl Gullatte; Secretary, Justin York; Treasurer, Carl Lewis; Correspondence Secretary, Dennis DeLoach and Chaplin, Guy Ginn have vowed to demonstrate all points preached during the Men's Day Program through their commitment of service to both church and community. "Men's Day Program was a day of Rekindling Eternal Vision and Inspiring Victory Everywhere (REVIVE)!"



Sons of Allen Officers: Justin York, Guy Ginn, Dennis DeLoach, Pastor Clayborn, Theodore Tyson, Carl Lewis, Karl Gullatte

Pastor's Appreciation Celebrated on Fifth Sunday

By Martha Smith

The St. John Family enthusiastically honored Pastor Patrick, First Lady Rev. Sheri and Patrick II Clayborn on Sunday, September 30th, 2012 with a day of appreciation activities. It was a day of showing love and appreciation for a very spirit-filled and energetic couple who is constantly seeking ways to enhance the St. John worship experience. The theme was "New Beginnings." St. John has witnessed quite a few new beginnings, including noon bible study and the premier of Friday Night Live.



Steward Pearson displays his huge welcome sign!

The day began with a 5th Sunday/Appreciation breakfast that was prepared by the Food Service Committee. The Worship Service began at 10:00 a.m. Steward Hodges Washington, Vice-chairman of the Steward Board, presided during the service. The service opened with an abbreviated call to worship that was led by the Reverend Meriam Garrett. This was followed by a "from the heart" prayer by Steward Clifton Miller. Steward Martha Smith read the scripture from Isaiah 43: 14-21. The St. John Mass Choir delighted the worshippers with uplifting songs. It was said that Steward Clifton Pearson "was off the chain" with his welcome and occasion which included a huge welcome sign that he held up for all to see. Surely everyone in the sanctuary felt the warmth of his welcome.

Steward Hodges Washington did a superb job in recognizing special guests and visitors. Steward Jeanette Jones eloquently led the litany, which she had written, that was inspired by scriptures taken from the Book of Isaiah. The Praise Dancers, as always, set the tone for a spirit-filled worship experience. Steward Adrienne P-K Washington, in a unique way, introduced the preacher for the occasion.



The Reverend Telly Gadson delivers the sermon.

Guest preacher, the Reverend Telly Gadson, was both intellectual and down to earth with her message that was entitled "Who Do You Think You Are?" She continued to ask the question "Are we defined by the opinions of people or by our purposes that are given by God?" She took a text from 1 Peter 2:1-10.

Some wondered if the Reverend Gadson considered using the services of UPS to carry home all the gift expressions presented to her on behalf of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Presentations were made from the AKAs of St. John, the Huntsville graduate chapter, Epsilon Gamma Omega, and from the Regional Director Adrienne P. K. Washington.



Steward Washington presents gifts to the Clayborns.

It was said earlier that Pastor Clayborn thought that his gift from the church would be a robe. Well, the committee did not want to disappoint him, so Steward Washington and Steward Hugine presented him and Rev. Sheri with robes (both robes that is). A bouquet of beautiful roses was presented in a unique vase that was crafted by Steward Pearson. Little Patrick was presented a gift, as well. A treasure chest full of love expressions was presented to the Clayborn family from the entire church body and friends. Last but not least, a gift certificate was presented by the Stewards for a robe (a clergy robe that is).

Very heart felt and humble remarks were made by

(Continued on page 12)

The Clayborns Bring a New Preaching Experience to Revival at Fellowship Presbyterian Church



The Reverend Bentley introduces the Clayborns.

Pastor Clayborn and Rev. Sheri were the revivalists for a spirit-filled four day revival at Fellowship Presbyterian Church in Huntsville on September 30 through October 3, 2012. The pastor of Fellowship, the Reverend Gregory J. Bentley and his family arrived in Huntsville shortly after the Clayborns and the couples quickly formed a bond that led to the invitation to the Clayborns to lead this revival.

Each night the devotion was led by Elders of Fellowship and music was rendered by various choirs. Fellowship's youth and children's choirs offered music for youth night on Sunday, The Singing Pearls of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Epsilon Gamma Omega Chapter, sang for the women's night on Monday, St. John's Male Chorus sang for men's night on Tuesday, and the St. John

Mass Choir sang for family and friends night on Wednesday.

The Clayborns shared the pulpit during this powerful revival preaching series. On both Sunday and Wednesday nights, they delivered the sermon as a team. This was a new experience for the Clayborns as well as for most persons in attendance. The Rev. Sheri Smith Clayborn preached on Monday and the Reverend Doctor Patrick Clayborn preached on Tuesday.



Team Clayborn on Sunday night.

The opening night team sermon was entitled "More Than Bling" and the text was from Acts 3. The preachers compared bling, a term used in today's vocabulary for shiny jewelry, to the alms that the man at the gate called Beautiful was requesting, to focus in the church on name recognition, and to giving enough to make one dependent. They called for a deeper look. Just as Peter and John saw the request for alms as an opportunity to do more than enable, the church needs to give more than bling. It needs to move from enablement to empowerment by sharing the core of who it is to empower others. Just as the gate called Beautiful was ripe for the season, the time is right for a miracle today.

The preaching series continued on Monday with a message from Rev. Sheri that was entitled "Jesus Is on His Way to Your House." The text was from Luke 8. The woman with the issue of blood

(Continued on page 11)

Reverend Kennebrew Urges Worshippers to Keep on Walking

By Bridget J. Floyd

The Women of St. John celebrated Women's Day during the 8 a.m. and 10:50 a.m. worship services on Sunday, October 7, 2012. The guest preacher, the Reverend Delesslyn Kennebrew, embraced the theme "Christian Women Walking in the Light for the Glory of God". The Women's Choir set the tone with inspirational music. Mrs. Danita Wilson Jones, daughter of the choir's director and pianist Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland Wilson, joined the choir as guest soloist. Similarly,

the Praise Dance Ministry drew a rousing response from the congregation. Women of St. John participated in the order of worship at both services. The Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn led the services.



Women's Day Choir, directed by Mr. Cleveland Wilson

Pastor Patrick Clayborn introduced the preacher of the day. Reverend Kennebrew is Director of Campus Life at the East Location of the Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church in Memphis, Tennessee. She has written three books as well as other projects and is involved in several consulting services. While Reverend Kennebrew has earned the Jurist Doctorate from the University of Arkansas School of Law

and Master of Divinity from Emory University, she is currently working towards a doctorate in Educational Ministry at Columbia Theological Seminary.

In keeping with the theme, Reverend Kennebrew entitled her sermon, "Keep on Walking" from Psalm 23:4. She explored Psalm 23, highlighting the role of "The Good Shepherd" in negotiating the valleys that one encounters in life. According to Reverend Kennebrew, in order to benefit from God's "stabilizing restoration", one must have a "surrendering spirit" while going through the valley. She further postulated that it is at this time that one has the "sympathetic reinforcement of the presence of God". The "reinforcement and correction" of the Shepherd's rod and staff are personalized to the individual needs or for the specific "valley" of the person. Reverend Kennebrew encouraged the parishioners to keep on walking toward "saturated satisfaction" (an overflowing cup of relaxation and/or acknowledgment and "public display of your overcoming in front of those who thought you wouldn't make it"). She further proclaimed that in spite of the valley, "you will be able to declare surely goodness and mercy will follow you all the days of your life if you KEEP ON WALKING." The Reverend Kennebrew ended the messages, just as she began, with a song that augmented the encouraging message.



The Reverend Kennebrew delivers morning message.

Pastor Clayborn offered the invitation to Christian Discipleship or recommitment. At the 10:50 service, there was the blessing of Xavier Rembert joining the church. Additionally Pastor Clayborn offered prayer for Mr. Kalon Anderson who will be soon departing to start military service. The St. John Family was supportive of these two young men and their families as they transition to another level in their lives.

This service closed in the acknowledgement of the Chairperson, Mrs. Pamela Whitehead and the Women's Day Committee, while focusing on the spirit of worship, commitment and prayerful encouragement.

Pastor's Meditation

(Continued from page 2)

Finally, we must have faith. God told Habakkuk that while he is waiting, he should look around. The proud do not have a right spirit; but, the just will live by faith. Yes, faith can mean belief. Yes, we should believe in God and in God's vision for our lives, but believing only a part of what Habakkuk is being asked to do here. When God tells Habakkuk that the righteous live by faith, God is telling him that the righteous live with a certainty! Faith, here, means certainty or firmness! There is a certainty we have to have deep down in our spirits.

To be vision driven, we have to be certain that God is able to bring the vision to pass. To be vision driven, we have to be firm in our love for God. To be vision driven, we have to be certain that God saved us and called us. To be vision driven, we have to be firm in how we live for God. To be vision driven, we have to be firm in our praise! That is how Habakkuk ends: "Though the fig tree doesn't blossom and no fruit is on the vines; though the produce of the olive fails and the fields yield no food; though the flock is cut off from the fold and there is no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will exult in the God of my salvation. God, the Lord, is my strength, he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, and makes me tread upon the heights" (Habakkuk 3:17-19). When we have faith, when we are certain about the God who gave us a vision, when we have firmness that says, "God will do what God promises," we can bless God at all times. In season and out of season, we can give God thanks!

Let's be vision driven!!!!



Fall Revival

(Continued from page 4)

modern age of spontaneity and "gotta have it right now attitudes", people rush so much that they miss the Word of God and the movement of God. Rev. Dr. Fry Brown very eloquently brought to life descriptive pictures of the parts of the human body and their interaction and dependency on each other. All the parts of the body ascribe to the awesomeness of God's creation.

She noted that in the holding pattern of despair moments, persons are encouraged to hold on to their hope in Jesus. Do not let circumstances immobilize, listen for God's voice, and then speak to the situations. Speak life to dry bones! Darkness gives way to light when "hope" appears. If persons listen for and to the voice of God, they can have "hope".

Verse 12 of Chapter 37 reminds one that God will open up their graves and bring them up. This resurrection hope is in Jesus and not "our stuff", or others. Not only will Jesus restore souls (Psalms 23:3) but He will restore, renew, and revive the joy of our salvation (Psalm 51:12). "If God be for us, who can be against us?" If one listens to the voice of God, they can have HOPE!

The great hymn of the church, "My Hope Is Built" by Edward Mote summarized Dr. Fry Brown's sermon for the final night. One can overcome anything when they have HOPE in Jesus. Victory is not something to just sing about, but how one lives in Christ.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).

Seeking New Members

The Pastor's Aid Board invites members of St. John to join their board. If you are interested in being a part of this ministry of service to the Pastor and his family, please contact Mrs. Claire Philadelphia.

The Pastor's Aid Board will hold their Annual Bake sale on November 18, after both the 8:00 a.m. and 10:50 a.m. services.

Breakfast Fellowship Prepares Women for Worship

By Laretta Teague



On Saturday, October 6th, the ladies of St. John AME celebrated a Pre-Women's Day Breakfast hosted by the men of St. John. The spirit-filled event brought fellowship and camaraderie to all who attended. The theme "Christian Women Waking in the Light for the Glory of God" was a prerequisite for the outstanding presentations that were to follow.

The service opened with a devotion led by Mrs. Mattie Ezell, followed by greetings from Mrs. Pamela Whitehead. A delicious breakfast was prepared and served by the men of St. John.

Dr. Thalia Love-Brown introduced the first presenter, Mr. Lester Jones, Regional Vice-President for Primerica Financial Services. Mr. Jones' presentation, *Walking into Financial Freedom*, focused on the importance of com-

pleting a financial needs analysis to plan for financial freedom. His presentation highlighted saving versus investing and the power of the *Rule of 72*. Planning for personal and family needs was presented. Most importantly, he emphasized that women should recognize that life insurance and other investment and/or saving vehicles are critical for successful life planning. He stated "we don't plan to fail, we fail to plan." Women need to empower themselves to understand and manage their financial resources. The presentation was excellent and very well received.

Mrs. Mary Rankin, with her gift of creativity, had the ladies to do a soul-sharing moment. Women selected words such as prayerful and empowerment, among many others, for discussion at their tables. The activity allowed them to reflect and even find support from one another as they shared experiences through conversations.



Ms. Karmen Latimore and Ms. Nina Johnson introduced a church-based community service project, *Souls 4 Soles*. Requests were made for donations of new or slightly used shoes for women, children, and men to be distributed to undeveloped countries. The request was for local contributions as well.

"Healing for the Help Meet: Strongholds for the Sisterhood" was the topic of the presentation given by guest speaker, Ms. Arianne Price. Arianne's presentation was powerful and thought-provoking as she focused on several areas: strongholds, how strongholds are created, and four (4) core values (friendliness, openness, honesty, and taking to God). She expounded on these points in dealing with bitterness: keeping a clean heart before God and man, (go to a prayer closet and meditate on Psalm 51); be honest with God about pain and, with an open mind and heart, allow the Lord to keep ones relationships aligned to His will; try to keep a thankful countenance, and treat each other as sisters (Proverbs 13:20, Proverbs 27:5-6, and Ecclesiastes 4: 9-10). She cited these scriptures in her presentation: Genesis 1:26-28, Genesis 3, Ephesians 6:11-20, 2 Corinthians 10:4, Ephesians 4: 31-32, and Matthew 7:18. Arianne was

no surprise to those who know her presentations. She is always spiritual, honest, exuberant, and God led.

Revival at Fellowship

(Continued from page 7)

showed up expecting Jesus. Because she pressed her way, she was healed instantly. Jarius was in the same crowd and also in need of healing for his daughter. Even though his need was temporarily interrupted by the woman with the issue of blood, he did not give up. He continued to expect a blessing. Likewise, believers must be prayerful and trust God to meet them at the point of their need. Do not be fooled by the delay, "Jesus Is on His Way to Your House."

On Tuesday, Pastor Clayborn preached from the sermon topic "An Etude on Faith." The scripture was Mark 10:12-25. During the sermon, the definition of the word "etude" was given and the emphasis was on the repetitive and increasing difficulty which results in improvement/betterment. That is, the more one practices, the better they become. This is not true just in music but in the practice of one's faith. The sermon was an inspired 'etude' itself on the necessity of preparation for and practice in one's faith, following the examples set forth in the selected scripture.

Team Clayborn preached from Mark 5 on the final night of revival. The sermon was entitled "Go Home." They spoke of the encounter the demon-possessed man had with Jesus and compared the demons in his body to the life experiences of victims of abuse. They also compared the deliverance of the man to deliverance that is available to all who accept Jesus. Just as the man was instructed to "go home" after he was delivered and to tell his friends what the Lord had done, believers are to respond likewise when they have been delivered. They must walk with their head high and people will be amazed when they see the change and see the newly delivered person doing what Jesus told them to do.

This four day experience was a blessing to the members of Fellowship, St. John and the community. God used these preaching vessels to teach, inspire, and encourage all who attended. Thank you, Pastor Clayborn and Rev. Sheri, for "stretching beyond your comfort zone" and allowing God to use you in a powerful way to bless others.

"The Unhappy Benchwarmer"

A short story by Paulette Bargon

That choir sounds bad this morning. Max thought while sitting in church. I could have done better, but I don't have time. Also choir practice is the same night as my favorite TV show. The ushers really look tired today. I can't believe it's the same people every Sunday. They asked me to join but I don't have time to be bothered with standing and smiling all during service. That just makes my back hurt. I work hard all week and I deserve to relax on Sunday. I would like to be an officer but no one ever asks me. I wonder why? They did ask me to read the scripture for Sunday morning service. I told them to find someone else.

Why can't they just be satisfied with my offering? That's all the preacher wants anyway. And if he thinks I'm going to tithe, then he is very wrong. I work too hard to be giving all my money to church. Beside that new suit that I want to wear next Sunday is calling my name, but I seem to be a little short of funds. It's always like that. I never seem to have enough money to do everything I want. I wonder why?

Come to Bible Study! Why? I thought that was the purpose of the sermon. I thought good singing and good preaching were all I needed.

I feel like something is missing in my life. I'm just not satisfied. My mom says I should pray for guidance. Lord, you know I just don't have the time for that. Momma says she prays for me all the time, that should be enough.

That lady next to me is really into that praise thing. She is so full of joy. She said that she is glad just to be in the house of God. She took the time to tell me some of the many blessings the Lord has bestowed upon her. She said giving her tithe and her time serving Him is just a small sacrifice. After all He sacrificed His only Son for our sins. Just listening to her and seeing how happy she was made me feel good. I was so surprised when she asked me if I had Christ in my life and, if I wanted, she would go with me to the altar to have prayer. I definitely have time for that.

"He touched me. O He touched me. And O, the joy that touched my soul."



Team Clayborn on Day 4

St. John's Soup Kitchen Had a Busy Summer

Until You Are Full

After a meal, a Chinese greeting asks "Have you eaten until you are full?" It is reported that this greeting likely originated during a time when food was scarce and many people did not know when they would have their next meal. So, when food was available, it was advisable to eat until you were full.

As followers of Jesus, who fed the hungry (John 6:1-13), we strive to help those who lack adequate physical nutrition. That is the mission of the St. John Soup Kitchen. As we feed the hungry we share the good news that our hunger for inner peace, forgiveness and hope can be satisfied by knowing Christ the Lord.

The Soup Kitchen Ministry has been busy this summer preparing hot meals every third Tuesday and bag lunches for the

homeless and needy. Over the past four months the Kitchen Ministry has fed four hundred fifty-seven meals. This included First Stop Homeless Shelter and the Downtown Rescue Mission. Many have stopped by the church to be fed.

Thanks to those servant-workers and those who give to feed the hungry in our community twice monthly.

"The human mind plans the way but the Lord directs the steps." Proverbs 16:9

"I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." John 6:35



ST. JOHN A.M.E. CHURCH SOUP KITCHEN

3rd and 4th Tuesdays
11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m.

229 Church Street — Huntsville, AL
(on the corner of Church and Monroe Streets)
ALL ARE WELCOME

Appreciation

(Continued from page 6)

Pastor Clayborn. He concluded his remarks with a soul stirring rendition of "I Won't Complain." The celebration concluded with a delicious fellowship meal at Grille 29.



Steward Hugue, Pastor Clayborn and the Rev. Gaskin

Many thanks go to Steward Abbiegail Hugue, chairperson, and her committee, and the St. John family for a joyous appreciation celebration for St. John's beloved Clayborn family.



Church School Book Club

Discussion Date: 17 November 2012
10:00 A.M. — 11:30 A.M.

An Inconvenient Friend, Rhonda McKnight, 2010

Samaria has her sights set on Gregory Preston. A successful surgeon who has the bankroll she needs to keep her in the lifestyle to which she is accustomed. Although he is married, Samaria would not let that get in her way. Samaria joins New Mercies Christian Church to get close to Gregory's wife, Angelina. Angelina's life is filled with a successful career and busy ministry work. When Samaria thinks she has it all figured out, she finds herself drawn to Angelina's kindness. Will she be able to carry out her plan after she finds herself yearning for the one thing she's never had... the friendship of a woman?

Pre-Women's Day Breakfast

(Continued from page 11)

The sessions closed with special presentations by Mrs. Carol Ball and a *Sisters United Prayer Walk* led by Mrs. Pearlean Myhand. Reverend Sheri Clayborn gave closing remarks.

Thanks to all the women of St. John who planned and prepared an outstanding program of sisterhood, love, and fellowship. You are all appreciated.



Electronic AMEN

The AMENewsletter is available in electronic form. If you prefer to receive an electronic copy of the newsletter, please notify the church at stjohnameh@aol.com.

Transportation Available for AAMU Students

The St. John A.M.E. Church bus will pick up students from AAMU on Sundays at each dorm prior to 10:20 a.m., and pick up students at the Knight Center between 10:20 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Students may also call the church office at 256-534-3265 to secure a ride to St. John on Sunday.

Lay Roundup Luncheon

December 8, 2012

All members are invited to a Lay Roundup on Saturday morning, December 8th. The keynote speaker will be Ms. Tamara Bonner, First Vice President, Northwest Conference Lay Organization.

The purpose of this event is to bring together church members who are interested and committed to active involvement within the local and connectional church.

Lunch will be provided. For more information or questions, please contact Cassandra Ingram at 256.837.8646 or Maeola Peoples at 256.534.6276.



9th District Empowerment Workshop

Sponsored by
the Connectional Lay Organization
Mrs. Edith Cartledge,
CLO Director of Lay Activities
Dr. Willie C. Glover, CLO President

January 18-19, 2013

St. Paul A.M.E. Church (Smithfield) Birmingham
300 4th Court North Birmingham, AL 35204

FRIDAY, JANUARY 18TH 7:00PM
Preacher: Pastor Patrick Clayborn

Rev. Ronald D. Sterling, Host Pastor
Ms. Mary Banks, Local Lay President
Dr. Wayman B. Shiver, Jr., Lay Conference
President, Northwest Conference
Ms. Veronica Wiley, Lay Episcopal District,
Director of Lay Activities
Mr. James C. Bonner, Lay Episcopal District,
President

Mrs. Ardis B. Davis, WMS Supervisor
Servant Bishop James L. Davis,
Presiding Prelate

Registration: \$25.00
(Deadline December 15, 2012)

Make checks payable to the
9th District Lay Organization

Report registration funds to
St. John's Lay Organization



Parent Wisdom

By Vanessa Glover

*Let the words of my mouth, and
the meditation of my heart, be
acceptable in thy sight,
O LORD, my strength, and my
redeemer.*

Psalms 19:14 (KJV)

Psalms 19:14 is often recited as a component of the Call to Worship. One of the most important things to remember is that words and hearts should be synchronized. The word meditation, according to *The Master Study Bible*, denotes a calling to mind, pondering upon, correlating to one's own life and an act of worship leading to spiritual renewal. Whether positive or negative, nonverbal communication is very powerful. What if one could not speak a word, what would their life say to others—in particular to children who are watching? Would anyone know something is different? Would the children know the difference?

So as parents, words and heart are directly linked to the life that is portrayed. Use words that are uplifting, empowering, and encouraging, not words that are out of anger, or criticize or put down. Words are to benefit the hearers, even the children. There will be times when words are strong for correction, but clearly the words and heart are connected to feelings and affections which are the center of parents' moral and spiritual life. Consider for a moment, the mouth is used to communicate—out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, "confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus Christ" Blessings and cursing out of the same mouth; these things ought not to be. (Ref. Luke 8:45, Romans 10:9-10, James 3:9-10) Parents must be very careful with their words. 1 Samuel 16:7c (NIV) states "Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

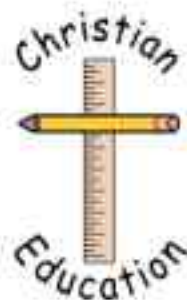
The heart is where God does His work in individuals—the heart is where the Word of God is sown—the heart is the place of spiritual surgery, where rebirth, renewal, restoration, and regeneration take place; where the senses of conscience to discern good and evil develop. Matthew 15:18-19 (NIV) states "But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander." What God expects of parents is to be clear in the words they use and how they use them. Although, there are no perfect parents, they can bring "great" Glory to God by desiring the sincere milk of the Word of God that they may grow and begin the process of true spiritual renewal of their heart. Not only should parents search God's Word, but God's Word also searches them. Psalm 139: 23-24 states "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (KJV)

Prayer: "O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer." Lord, in everything we give thanks; the good, the bad, and the ugly. We present our requests and petitions unto you, O Lord our Great Intercessor; that the Peace of God transcends our children's challenges and concerns that they face; knowing that You, O God, are always working on their behalf. Lord, sharpen their focus; give them clear understanding that their search for purpose is a journey not a destination. Lord, strengthen them to grow in character, help them to grow not just in years, but in a sound mind and faith in Christ Jesus. AMEN

As a Thoughtful Parent: What we do is a product of the heart. What we say is evidence of what lies within the heart. Think of the heart as the womb where all of our actions, attitudes, and words are conceived. "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is the Lord's faithfulness." Lamentations 3:22-23 (NIV)



Church School Lesson Overview – November 2012



The Church School reviews for this month were written by Kenneth Parham.

November 4, 2012

Lesson Title: Taking a Stand

Lesson Scripture: Acts 25:23-26:32

Print: Acts 26:19-32

Devotional Songs: #424, #272, and #243

Key Verse: [Paul] said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness" (Acts 26:25).

Paul stands before King Agrippa; after he presented a similar defense before Governor Felix (Acts 24) and to Governor Festus (Acts 25). Both governors could not find any crime committed against the Roman Empire in the accusations. They simply allowed the system to work by allowing Paul's appeals to go forward.

Here, Paul is allowed to state his case before King Agrippa. Paul played to his audience by associating himself with those who were in judgment of him. Paul's stately defense is that (a) all knew of his past; he was born a Pharisee/Roman, (b) he relentlessly persecuted the Christians, (c) all knew of his conversion on the road to Damascus and (d) all became aware of Paul's new mission; that was to open the eyes of the lost, to turn the lost from darkness to light, to turn those from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins. Paul's defense also included making reference to Jesus' suffering and being raised from the dead.

Those who sat in judgment of Paul thought he was insane. His response was to continue to show that those offering judgment knew of the recent past (Jesus' death and resurrection), they also knew what was written by the prophets. Paul concluded by offering that those sitting in judgment might be converted. Paul's trial ended with King Agrippa finding no fault with Paul. The King wished to set Paul free; however, Paul's appeal meant that King Agrippa had to send him to the Caesar in Rome.

November 11, 2012

Lesson Title: Weathering the Storm

Lesson Scripture: Acts 27:1-44

Print: Acts 27:33-44

Devotional Songs: #437; #258; and #243

Key Verse: "And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land" (Acts 27:44).

Based on accounts noted in Acts 27, the voyage to Rome was treacherous due to the rough seas (hurricane season and near wintertime). Paul attempted to persuade both the centurion (head soldier in charge of the prisoners) and the captain of the ship not to set sail, but they did not listen. Further along the voyage they encountered more bad weather. Paul noticed that none on board the vessel had eaten before setting off and that they would not get an opportunity anytime soon to do so because they were monitoring the ship's sea worthiness. Paul realized the situation and the mood of the men on board and offered an opportunity for hope by declaring that "last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God" (verses 23-26).

On the fourteenth day of the journey, before daybreak, the sailors had devised a plan to escape the ship but did not go through with it after being warned by Paul. Paul also convinced all to take nourishment. He again calmed the men on the ship by reminding them that no one would perish if they all stayed on the ship. Paul blessed the food and the men all ate until they were content. It is noted that afterward, the men threw all remaining food overboard to lighten the ship.

Finally, land appeared in the near distance and the sailors agreed to beach the ship on the land. However, the ship struck a sandbar and proceeded no closer to land. All decided to abandon ship and swim to shore. The soldiers guarding the prisoners wanted to kill the prisoners to prevent their escape but through the calmness that Paul displayed throughout the journey, the centurion persuaded the soldiers to not go through with their plan, thus ensuring Paul would not suffer any harm. All made it to land unharmed and no prisoners escaped.

This reviewer notes that sometimes in life God may not cause the external forces to cease but

(Continued on page 16)

Church School Lesson Overview – November 2012

(Continued from page 15)

instead He will allow an inner peace to calm the storms of life.

November 18, 2012

Lesson Title: Ministering Through Faith

Lesson Scripture: Acts 28:1-10

Print: Acts 28:1-10

Tentative Devotional Songs: #520; #251; and #243

Key Verse: "Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him" (Acts 28:8).

This lesson follows the previous two in relaying the quest of Paul to appeal his case in front of Caesar in Rome.

As the story continued, the men came out of the sea onto an island called Malta. The islanders were very kind. Upon seeing the men cold from the waters, a fire was built for warmth. Paul assisted in getting wood for the fire. But as he reached for the wood a viper struck and held onto his hand. The natives, who worshiped idol gods, thought that Paul was a murderer (having an unclean spirit) and would die because of his encounter with the snake. Paul simply removed the snake and continued his chore. After some time passed, the islanders changed their minds about their idol gods, and proclaimed that Paul must be a god.

The men visited Publius, chief official of the island and were welcomed with kindness for three days. Paul noticed that Publius' father was sick and in bed suffering with fever and from dysentery. Paul took the opportunity to pray and lay hands on Publius' father who immediately recovered. Again being a curious people, all the island sick came to Paul for healing. For payment of the works of Paul, the islanders provided the men all the supplies they needed when they were ready to continue their journey to Rome. Paul's encounter with the people of Malta allowed Paul to act on the command of Jesus; that is, to spread the Gospel and salvation throughout all nations.

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Key Verse: "Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him" (Acts 28:8).

Paul arrived in Rome and had his appeal heard. His audience was the Jewish leaders. Paul opened a discussion with them indicating the reason why he made his appeal to Caesar. He stated in verses 17-20, "I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. They examined me and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death. The Jews objected, so I was compelled to make an appeal to Caesar. I certainly did not intend to bring any charge against my own people. For this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain."

The response from the Jewish leaders indicated that they had not received a letter from Judea nor had they heard anything bad about Paul. But the leaders in Rome knew that all throughout were speaking against this new cult. The Jewish leaders wanted to hear from Paul.

Paul explained the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus. Some were convinced and others were not. Paul's final statement was from Isaiah – "they will see and hear but will not believe, the gospel will be given to the Gentiles who will listen".

Without the grace of God to open people's understandings, they would be as the Jewish leaders who were not convinced. Believers should rejoice that the salvation of God is sent to others, who will receive it; and if they are of that number, should be thankful to Him who hath made them to differ. Paul kept to his principle, "to know and preach nothing but Christ and His crucifixion." Christians, when tempted from their main business, should bring themselves back with these questions, "In what way does this concern the Lord Jesus? What tendency has it to bring us to Him, and to keep us waking in Him?"

Paul preached not himself, but Christ, and he was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, nor should believers be ashamed.

November 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1  6:00 p.m. Mens Choe Rehearsal	2	3 9:30am. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 11:00 a.m. Officers Board Meeting
4 DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship AMEN Deadline	5 60+ Meeting 9:30 a.m.	6 ELECTION DAY 6:00 p.m. Stewardess Board Gons of Allen Mtg  Voices In Praise Rehearsal	7 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	8  6:00 p.m. Gospel Choe Rehearsal	9 9th District Planning Meeting	
						10 9:30am. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal AMEN Staff Meeting 10:30 am 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
11 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship HARVEST SUNDAY	12	13 6:00 p.m. Gons of Allen Mtg  Voices In Praise Rehearsal	14 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	15	16  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	17 SBHS Planning Meeting 9:30am. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
18 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship BAKE SALE	19	20 6:00 p.m. Trustee Board Mtg. 11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	21 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	22 	23  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	24 9:30am. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 5:30am. Women's Ministry 10:30 a.m. WMO Meeting
25 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	26  6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	27 11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN 6:00 p.m. Church School Board Meeting	28 12:00 p.m. Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Mid-week Service and Love Feast	29  6:00 p.m. Mens Chorus Rehearsal	30	

St. John AME Church
229 Church Street
Huntsville, Alabama 35801
(256) 534-3265
(256) 534-6828 Fax

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The Right Reverend James L. Davis, Servant Bishop

Mrs. Arelis B. Davis, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Doctor Patrick Clayborn, Pastor



web

Important Dates to Remember



October 16-20, 2012 Northwest Alabama Annual Conference
Jones Chapel AME Church, Fairfield, Alabama

October 29—November 1, 2012
GHIMF Fall Revival, 7:00 PM
First Missionary Baptist Church, Huntsville, Alabama

November 4, 2012 Daylight Savings Time Ends—Fall back one hour!

November 6, 2012 **Election Day—VOTE!**

November 9-10, 2012 Ninth District Planning Meeting, Enterprise, Alabama

November 11, 2012 Fifty-Plus Harvest Service

November 17, 2012 South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer District Planning Meeting

November 22, 2012 Thanksgiving Day

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart
that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9

ST. JOHN A.M.E.N. NEWSLETTER



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 17 Issue 11

November 2012

Pastor's Meditation

Giving Thanks: Voter ID for the Church

*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing,
give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18



Reverend and Patrick D. Clayton

This month our country re-elected President Barak Obama. In the midst of the election, much propaganda around voter ID abounded. There was growing sentiment that this intense focus on voter ID and voter fraud was an attempt at voter suppression because cases of voter fraud were few and far between. Many of the areas under scrutiny and targeted with voter ID advertisements are populated heavily with minorities and those of lower economic status. Recently, a friend from Indiana told me that his state had one of the toughest voter ID laws; yet, there had not been one case of voter fraud in the state's history! Certainly, most Democrats felt that this was a Republican strategy to block votes for President Obama. While this feeling was not a proven fact, one could argue that a trend was emerging to bolster the claim. Thankfully, a number of courts found these voter ID laws to be illegitimate.

As the political talk around voter ID swelled, I began to wonder if there was voter ID for church. What is the **outward** sign that a person is a member of the church? Some will say the public confession of Jesus as Lord and Savior. Others will say baptism. Still others may say that a person's name is on a church roll. Some may suggest that a person serves a church by giving time, talent, or treasure. There will be others that will offer to end the discussion with the following: a person models her or his life after the life of Jesus. Undoubtedly, the aforementioned are all valid answers. However, if we only see one of the signs in a person instead of a combination of most, we are still left wondering!!!

In 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, the apostle Paul adds three more signs that are voter ID for church. If one is a part of church, that one should rejoice, pray and give thanks. I am amazed at how many people go to church with no sense of joy. Yet, Paul said to rejoice always. Furthermore, he said this to a group of people who were being persecuted for their faith (1 Thessalonians 2:13-16). God's will includes our having joy; Jesus wants our joy to be complete (John 15:11). Joy is not satisfaction with a traumatic situation. God knows that pain hurts us. God is not calling us to ignore our pain or to pretend that our pain does not exist. Rather, God wants us to have joy. Joy is the sentiment that affirms life. Those who have joy believe that life is worth living regardless of its circumstances. Joy affirms humanity. Despite what others may say about a person's presence, one who has joy believes that s/he is fearfully and wonderfully made by God. Joy ultimately affirms God! Those who have

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Pastor's Meditation

(Continued from page 1)

joy know the promise that God will never leave them or forsake them (Hebrews 13:5). Therefore, they can proclaim with the psalmist that in God's presence there exists the fullness of joy (Psalm 16:11). Those who have joy may not be satisfied with their circumstances, but they are satisfied with God in the midst of them!

People who belong to church should also be in a constant state of prayer. Paul's admonition to pray without ceasing may seem impractical at first glance. With further inspection, one may see that prayer is more than just assuming a particular posture and uttering words to an invisible entity (namely, God). Prayer also includes the activities of waiting on God and listening to God. As a matter of fact, these should be the major portions of prayer. More of prayer should entail listening to God instead of talking to God. Paul's requirement now makes sense: pray without ceasing! Listen to God without ceasing. Wait on God without ceasing. Without ceasing, make sure your decisions are in line with God's will for your life. Without ceasing, be your brother's and your sister's keeper. Without ceasing, help those who cannot help themselves. This is the fullness of prayer. This is what brings about transformation in the world. We are truly the church when we pray in this manner!

Lastly, the church can only be the church by giving God thanks in all things. No, Paul did not say that we have to give thanks **FOR** all things; we are to give thanks **IN** all things. Yes, this can be a difficult concept. How do we give God thanks when we lose a loved one to gun violence? How do we give God thanks in the midst of marital drama, financial crisis, or health issues? How do we give God thanks when coworkers breathe hate toward us? How do we give God thanks when we feel that God is not there? How can we give God thanks when life pulls the rug right out from under us? Why should we give God thanks when, after doing what God says do, we are met with mountains of trouble?

Giving thanks to God in troubling times may appear oxymoronic and might feel counterintuitive. However, giving thanks to God is one of the best responses to troubling times! Giving thanks does not negate our frustrations, fears, or hurts. Paul never said not to express our grief. He said that, in addition to expressing all of our other feelings, we should give God thanks in every situation. As we cry over the loss of a loved one, we should also thank God for her or his life. As we struggle with emotional, fiscal, and physical wounds that ensue from issues in relationships, finances, and health, we must still give God thanks for the promises of emotional, fiscal, and physical health. God's promises mean that our meager situations are not our ending places! If coworkers are against us, we should at least thank God that we have a job!

Certainly, there are times when we feel that God is not there. Jesus even felt that way on the cross (Mark 15:34). Yes, there are times in life when we face more trouble after obeying God's word. Yet, in all these things, we must give God thanks. Why? We give God thanks because we still have our lives! We give God thanks because God has been good to us in times past. God has forgiven our sins time and time again. God has blessed us far beyond measure, and whatever situation we face is not beyond God's power! God deserves our thanks. God is worthy of our thanks. Hence, the psalmist commands us to enter God's gates with thanksgiving.

As we enter this Thanksgiving holiday, let us be sure that we have our voter ID for church. Be sure to confess Christ. Be sure to follow His example. Be sure to live for Him. Be sure to serve the church and the community. Be sure to rejoice always. Be sure to pray without ceasing. Be sure to give God thanks in everything. Hallelujah!

The Annual Conference Report

*And are we yet alive, And see each other's face?
Glory and praise to Jesus give, For His redeeming grace.
- Charles Wesley*



Host Pastor, the Reverend Guice, leads the Call to Worship

The Third Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference began on Tuesday afternoon, October 18th. Bishop James Levert Davis, presiding prelate of the Ninth Episcopal District, led the Conference with a spirit that exemplified the District theme of Re-kindling Eternal Vision. Inspiring Victory Everywhere. (REVIVE) Mrs. Arelis B. Davis served graciously as Episcopal Supervisor. The conference was hosted by Jones Chapel AME Church, Fairfield, Alabama, where the Reverend Cleophas Guice was host pastor and the Reverend Willis Huggins, Sr., was host Presiding Elder. The Northwest Alabama Annual Conference is comprised of three Presiding Elder Districts: the South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer District (of which St. John is a member), the Birmingham Florence Tuscaloosa District and the West Birmingham Ensley Greensboro District.

Following Roll Call, the Opening Worship Service began. The worship leader was Presiding Elder Willis N. Huggins, Sr. In the tradition of African Methodism, the procession of the ministers of the Conference and the singing of the Opening Hymn, "And Are We Yet Alive," marked the start of the Conference. The Northwest Alabama Annual Conference Choir rendered music for this powerful and spirit-filled service and various ministers in the Conference participated in the order of worship. Pastor Clayborn lined the sermonic hymn, "I've a Message from the Lord."

The Reverend Mashod Evans, pastor of St. John AME Church, Birmingham, was honored to be selected to preach the Annual Sermon. The sermon text was Numbers 13:26-33 and the sermon was entitled "The Pastor's Report." For pastors, a key moment of the Annual Conference is when they make their verbal report to the Bishop and the members of the conference. S/he gives key statistics from the year and highlights of the year. The Reverend Evans centered his message on this report and the fact that he feels there are two reports; the one that is read/printed and the report of God's grace that brought pastors to the conference. He compared the pastor's reports of the two reports brought by the Israelite spies who reported to Moses their view of the land they were to possess. He concluded the message by asking a question and quickly answering that question. "Whose report will you believe? We shall believe the report of the Lord."

The conference continued on Wednesday morning with the organization and the setting of conference boundaries. Bishop Davis led the Conference Institute throughout the conference and his focus was on highlights of the legislation that was passed at the 2012 General Conference. He noted that this was important because changes are effective immediately after the General Conference although it may be a year before the revised edition of the *Book of Discipline of the African Methodist*

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The Annual Conference Report

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Episcopal Church is available. All legislation is available on the AME Church website at <http://www.ame-church.com/news-and-events/general-conference/highlights-2012.php#legislation>. The delegate has compiled a summary of the legislation highlighted by Bishop Davis and it is available in the church office. The remainder of the Wednesday morning session focused on business reports from the components of the Conference.

Pastor Patrick Clayborn was the preacher for the Noon Day Service on the 17th. The sermon was entitled "God's Contradictions" and the text was Luke 23:39-43. He spoke of life's contradictions as well as contradictions in the Bible. Pastor Clayborn stated that one must have "contradictory faith" by believing in God even when it seems God is absent. He emphasized that contradictory faith leads to transformation. God blessed Pastor Clayborn to deliver a powerful message.

The afternoon session was devoted to Pastor's Reports. The evening service was a service of song and praise, coordinated by the Reverend Charles Marie Davis. Soloists included the Reverend Charles Marie Davis, Sister Patricia Smith (Northwest Alabama WMS President), Sister Nadia Burks Hopson. Selections were also rendered by Grant Chapefs Women's Choir.

The Thursday, October 18th, business session began with more discussion on the legislature of the General Conference. More Pastor's Reports were read during this morning's business session. Pas-



tor Clayborn made his first Pastor's Report and was supported by Rev. Sheri, Patrick II, delegate Nedra McDaniel, alternate delegate Monica Dillihunt, and over twenty (20) members of the St. John congregation. Pastor Clayborn listed among the highlights of the conference year the addition of the Noon Bible Study and the premier of Friday Night Live. The delegate reiterated the impact of the addition of the Noon Bible Study as well as the overall growth through the dynamic teaching and preaching of Pastor Clayborn. She

noted that the pastor has given the church, and particularly the officers, a reading list. The delegate expressed appreciation to Bishop Davis for the appointment of Pastor Clayborn and called it an "Ephesians 3:20 appointment." She asked for the return of Pastor Clayborn and Presiding Elder Allen. Bishop Davis commended the church and Pastor Clayborn on the transition and the work that had been done this conference year. He also acknowledged the strong foundation that was laid by the forty years of service of the Reverend Doctor Homer McCall at St. John, Huntsville.

The preacher for the noon day service on the 18th was the Reverend Chris Hamet Hamlin, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Birmingham. Pastor Clayborn was the worship leader for this service. The sermon was entitled "Don't DoubtBelieve" with text from Mark 11.

Afternoon reports included the Board of Examiners Report and additional Pastor's Reports. During this session the Daniel Payne Legacy Village report was made and over \$37,000 was raised during this session for the Daniel Payne project. Before the Conference ended on Saturday, the total raised exceeded \$40,000. (See Col. Heyward if you are interested in financially supporting this project.)

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The Annual Conference Report

(Continued from page 4)

The Sons of Allen Service was held on Thursday evening. The preacher was the Reverend Levi Billups. The sermon was entitled "We Must Make a Change" with text from 2 Kings 7. The preacher noted that the subtitle for his message was "Why Sit We Here Until We Die?" Because of a famine in the land, the men in the text assessed their situation and determined that they had to make a change. Before they got there God had already "fixed it." Likewise believers need to assess their situation, seek God, and make the change that He has already planned for them.

The Friday, October 19th, morning session included more Pastors' Reports and the Ministerial Efficiency Report. This report included the approval of the request of the Reverend Robert B. Hereford for superannuated status (retirement). The Conference also accepted the invitation from St. Mark AME Church, Tuscaloosa, to host the next Northwest Alabama Annual Conference.

The preacher for the Ordination Service was the Reverend Doctor Harry Seawright, pastor of Union Bethel AME Church in Brandywine, Maryland. The sermon text was Matthew 16 and the sermon was entitled "Living a Life that Counts." He stated that there is nothing like waking up and knowing the purpose of life and knowing God is in full control. He gave four recommendations for "Living a Life that Counts." 1) Read the Bible every day because God will speak through His Word. 2) Pray. Prayer changes things. 3) Invest in the kingdom and obey God. 4) Have an attitude of gratitude. Although the ordination sermon's focus is on persons being ordained, this message was an encouragement to all. The Reverend Virginia Richardson, Allen Temple, Bessemer, was ordained Local Deacon during this service.

The Friday Night Service was led by the Northwest Alabama Conference Lay Organization. Dr. Wayman Shriver, Jr. is the conference president. The focus of the service was informing persons of the struggle for voter rights and the importance of all persons participating in the election process. A dramatization was used to deliver the message.

Saturday, October 20th, was the final day of the conference. The YPD service was the first order of the day. Young people participated in this service of song and dance. Wallace Parham represented St. John and was elected Financial Secretary of the Conference YPD. Church School was conducted by the Conference Church School officers and teachers. This session gave attendees a preview of the lesson for the following Sunday.

The Conference Memorial Committee led a moving memorial service that recognized ministers who transitioned from labor to reward during the Conference year.

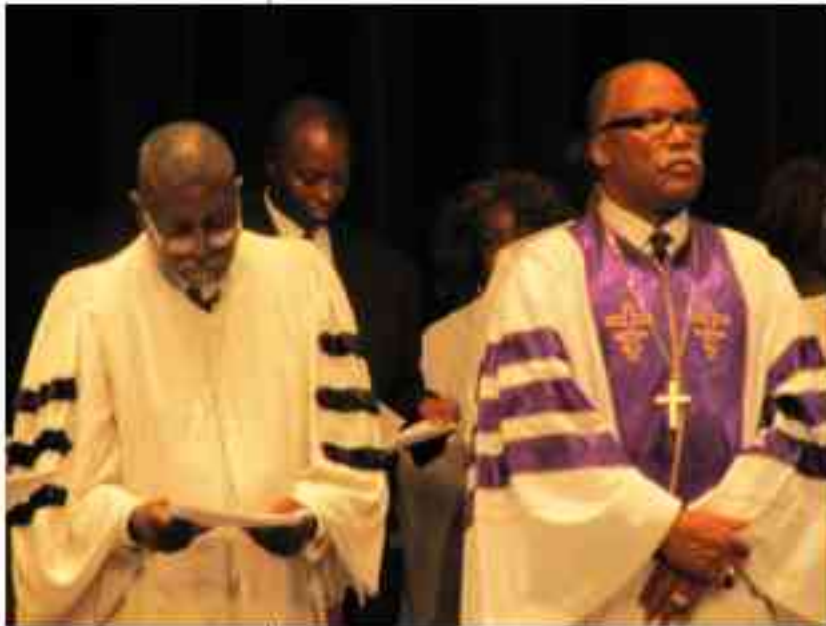
The Closing Worship began with an upbeat processional of ministers of the conference and the singing of the hymn of praise, "Standing On the Promises". The Conference Choir again provided music for the service and various ministers of the Conference participated in the order of service. The preacher for the closing service was Bishop Thomas L. Hoyt, Jr., Senior Bishop of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. The message was entitled "The Testimony of a Preacher" with text from 2 Corinthians 12:8-10. This message equipped the ministers of the conference to return to their respective congregations for another year of service.

The Annual Conference concluded with the commissioning service. St. John welcomes back Pastor Patrick Clayborn and Presiding Elder Oliver Allen. The delegates to this Annual Conference were Nedra McDaniel and Monica Dillihunt (alternate).

*Let us take up the cross Till we the crown obtain;
And gladly reckon all things loss, So we may Jesus gain.
- Charles Wesley*

Third Northwest Annual Conference Anchored in Powerful Opening and Closing Messages

By The Reverend Charles Glover



Presiding Elder Dillard and Bishop Davis, during opening worship

Bishop James L. Davis and Supervisor Arelis B. Davis led activities of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference. The Third Session of the Northwest Annual Conference was hosted by Jones Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Fairfield, Alabama, where the Reverend Cleophas Guice is pastor and the Reverend Willis Huggins, Sr., Presiding Elder. The historic Parker High School was the site for the Opening and Closing Services.

The Opening Annual Sermon was delivered by the Reverend Mashod A. Evans, Pastor of Saint John AME Church, Birmingham, Alabama. The sermon text was from Numbers, Chapter 13, verses 30-31, with a subject of "The Pastor's Report". Reverend Evans opened by stating "It is good to be here for we have traveled near and far to be participants in the Annual Conference and to give reports of the Pastors' stewardship and leadership of their respective congregations, but even more so to give God praise and glory for another church year." He further stated that for some it was another year of successes, but

for others, a year of overcoming challenges. God has blessed those assembled to come together and be witnesses one to another proclaiming, "And are we yet alive" and able to see each other's faces, one more time.

The Reverend Evans alluded to the fact that there will be pastoral reports of accomplishments for the church year; however, this report is limited. Pastors have come with more than one report. One report is comprised of numbers and other doctrinal functional requirements, while the other report is one of God's mercy and grace that has been with each pastor and church body for the conference year. All come with that "which-is" and that which "ought-to-be". The Reverend Evans very eloquently stated that God does not always call the qualified, but rather, qualifies those He calls. Many biblical examples were named to include Moses, who possessed a stuttering impediment. The Reverend Evans explained that the people in the text were free, but physically in the middle of the desert. Two varying reports of observation were given. Joshua and Caleb came with a good report of a land flowing with milk and honey. The other spies came with another report of giants being in the land and their inability to mentally comprehend and process God's provision already given to them.

The Reverend Evans stated that segments of society have decided to stay in the wilderness rather than go into the promise land. This is one of the primary reasons persons have lack in their lives. Some have gotten comfortable in the wilderness, too impotent to lead, and too arrogant to follow God's direction for their lives. Maybe, just maybe, they have heard and believed the wrong report. He noted that preachers and congregations have to be transformed by the renewing of their minds to God's purpose and direction for their lives, in spite of what the current circumstances may be (Romans 12:2). If the report is not good yet, God is not finished with shaping and molding for His purpose and service. "Eyes have not seen, not ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him." (1 Corinthians 2:9) The Reverend Evans closed by summarizing the great contributions former patriarchs and matriarchs made in overcoming great struggles such as the Civil Rights Movement and the Underground Railroad. Harriet Tubman

(Continued on page 7)

Third Northwest Annual Conference Anchored in Powerful Opening and Closing Messages

(Continued from page 6)

kept a pistol in her purse and was so determined to pursue the "freedom call" that she became known for saying, "You can be free in this life or the next one". When you hear the dogs, "keep running". The work of the ministry may cause hurt and pain, but "keep running". Keep running for Jesus toward a purpose and destiny in Jesus.

He concluded by asking, "Whose report will you believe?" (Isaiah 53:1) And he answered with "We shall believe the 'report' of the Lord! Let God use you like He made you!" This message set the tone for the Pastors' Reports that would be given throughout the Conference.

*"The
Testimony
of a
Preacher"*

The Conference returned to Parker High School on Saturday, October 20th, for the Closing and Commissioning Worship Service. Presiding Elder Oliver Allen was the Worship Leader. Proclamation of the Word was delivered by Bishop Thomas L. Hoyt, Bishop for the 7th Episcopal District of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. Bishop Hoyt opened by giving a background of his roots at Parker High School where he went for one year and his wife went for 4 years. He began by singing the old-fashioned hymn "Shine On Me. Let the Light from the Lighthouse, Shine on Me." His text was 2 Corinthians 2: 8-10, with a subject of "The Testimony of a Preacher". He began by laying the foundation for the key points of the message as he described Paul's ministry. There was no question about Paul's devotion to Christ; however, Paul was not always appreciated. Paul is disturbed in this 3rd letter as those in the church were questioning His authority. Pastors should understand that there will always be persons who question leadership. The Bishop may appoint a pastor at a church, but s/he cannot keep the pastor there. The pastor has to earn the people's trust. People can change by the power of God. Bishop Hoyt then posed the question, "What did Christ's work cost Paul and 'you'?" People have a strange tendency to not appreciate what they do not pay to receive.

The preacher then focused on the following three (3) points.

- 1) A "servant" is worthy of his hire. Pastors and leaders in a church have to know or learn to "receive" as well as "give". Paul was a witness that God always provides. He was flogged, stoned almost to death, shipwrecked, all because of his heavenly vision and call to Christ. Sufferings enable one to akin to the plight of the less fortunate. Glory in tribulation for it works patience and hope. Sincere pastors have to spend time with their congregants and suffer when they suffer and hurt when they hurt. Take care of the needs of the people. Preachers are called to fight against injustices. Stop talking and take an active resolve to help the blind (those not knowledgeable of Satan's devices). Storms bring an increase in sensitivity to God's movement. The ministry brought Paul suffering for Christ's sake.
- 2) The Lord always works in conjunction with the vision "He gives." Take the Lord at His Word and do not rest on "feelings" or "emotions". Stop looking for or expecting a "pat-on-the-head" for doing what is supposed to be done. Paul prayed three (3) times for his thorn to be released. "God may not come 'when' you want, or 'how' you want, but He 'will' come in His own timing."
- 3) Only God can provide a "cure" for sins and shortcomings, when a person seeks "healing". He provides a permanent solution to temporary societal ills. Even though one may have or experience a myriad of difficulties and challenges in life, God is a deliverer and is true to His Word (all His promises). Stand solidly and be thankful for what God has already done, for He promised to "never leave us or forsake us." He is "Emmanuel-God IS with us".

This powerful message concluded an outstanding conference and prepared ministers and lay to return to their local churches for another conference year.

*"Go, preach My gospel," saith the Lord. "Bid the whole earth My grace receive.
Explain to them My sacred word; Bid them believe, obey, and live."*

A Veteran Speaks on the Meaning of Veterans Day

By Clifton Miller



Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then said I, "Here am I; send me."

- Isaiah 6:8 (KJV)

Like so many of my fellow veterans, we heard the call for service to our nation and our fellow man and we answered that call with a resounding, "Send me, I'll go!" Like many of you, military service was not a part of my boyhood dreams and aspirations. That was something my ancestors and relatives did and was not for me. But when the call came we picked up our rucksacks, weapons and gas masks and moved out swiftly. And today we wear the title of veteran.

What is a veteran and who are they? The dictionary defines a veteran as a person who served in the armed forces of a country, especially in time of war. They are much more than that. They are people of all races, colors and creeds. They are your spouse, significant other, mom, dad, little sister, big brother, uncle, aunt, cousin, church member, deceased relative, friend, coworker, pastor, son, daughter and much more. Most of all they are patriotic Americans who have accepted the call to duty in the military services of these United States of America and have served honorably for the cause of freedom that we all enjoy today, whether we served or not. They are the ones who endured war, loneliness, danger, hard work, separation from family, friends and so much more to ensure that this nation and other nations would become and remain free so all can enjoy the freedom of living free, raising our family in freedom and worshipping our God in freedom.

It was the veterans who gave up their personal freedom for you and me. Therefore, we owe them our thanks for a job well done.

We owe them our commitment to ensure that at a minimum, every veteran and their families, who also sacrificed, are able to enjoy all the rights and privileges due to them as citizens of these United States of America. Also, to honor those who gave so much, we have a duty to vote and be a part of the political process as so many of us did on November 6, 2012. And what a blessing the results of that election had for all Americans, especially African Americans. We the people were able to return an African American to the White House as President and Commander-in-Chief of these United States of America for four more years. To God be the Glory! And as President Barack Obama said during his victory speech, "The Best is yet to come!"

So on this Veterans Day 2012 or sometime shortly thereafter, I encourage each of you to take a few moments of your precious time, find a veteran and simply say to him or her, thank you for your service and shake their hand, give them a hug, or both. I can assure you that it will mean more to them than anything else you will ever do for them.

May God continue to bless you, God bless our veterans and God bless these United States of America.

Clifton Miller is a veteran with 20 years and 13 days of Military Service with the United States Army, from which he retired as a Major. He is currently employed with Rice Real Estate as an Associate Broker and the state of Alabama as an Alabama Real Estate Commissioner.



Pre-Thanksgiving Bake Sale

Thank you for supporting the Annual Bake sale that was held on November 18, after both the 8:00 a.m. and 10:50 a.m. services.

Lay Election Announcement

An excellent opportunity for service now presents itself with election of officers for the St. John AMEC Lay Organization. Please become a member today and volunteer to serve as a Lay Organization officer. Positions open are as President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Recording Secretary, Assistant Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Chaplain, Parliamentarian, Director of Lay Activities, and Young Adult Representative.

All non-clergy are Lay. Self-nominations are welcomed. Contact Dr. Lee E. Williams, II at 256-858-1332 or by e-mail at Willialeuah.edu to nominate yourself or become a Lay Organization member. We need your support in body and in spirit. The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

The election will be held at November 28th meeting.

Lay Roundup Luncheon December 8, 2012

12:00 p.m.

S. S. Hereford Fellowship Hall

All members are invited to a Lay Roundup on Saturday morning, December 8th. The keynote speaker will be Ms. Tamara Bonner, First Vice President, Northwest Conference Lay Organization.

The purpose of this event is to bring together church members who are interested and committed to active involvement within the local and connectional church.



Connectional Lay Empowerment Workshop

Sponsored by
the Connectional Lay Organization
Mrs. Edith Cartledge,
CLO Director of Lay Activities
Dr. Willie C. Glover, CLO President

January 18-19, 2013

St. Paul A.M.E. Church (Smithfield) Birmingham
300 4th Court North Birmingham, AL 35204

FRIDAY, JANUARY 18TH 7:00PM
Preacher: Pastor Patrick Clayborn

Rev. Ronald D. Sterling, Host Pastor
Ms. Mary Banks, Local Lay President
Dr. Wayman B. Shiver, Jr., Lay Conference
President, Northwest Conference
Ms. Veronica Wiley, Lay Episcopal District,
Director of Lay Activities
Mr. James C. Bonner, Lay Episcopal District,
President

Mrs. Arelis B. Davis, WMS Supervisor
Servant Bishop James L. Davis,
Presiding Prelate

Registration: \$25.00
(Deadline December 15, 2012)

Make checks payable to the
9th District Lay Organization

Report registration funds to
St. John's Lay Organization



A Thanksgiving Examination

By The Reverend Charles Glover



Dietrich Bonhoeffer stated, "It is only with gratitude that life becomes rich".

Warren Wiersle eloquently posed the quote, "When there is peace in the heart, there will be praise on the lips".

Thanksgiving or Thanksgiving Day is celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November of each year. It is an annual federal holiday that is used to express thanks for one's material and spiritual possessions. Most people celebrate Thanksgiving by gathering at home with family or friends for a holiday feast, as well as a time of communion and togetherness.

We can trace this historic American Christian tradition back to the year 1623. After the harvest, crops were gathered in November 1623, then Governor William Bradford of the 1620 Pilgrim Colony, Plymouth Plantation in Plymouth, Massachusetts proclaimed, "All ye Pilgrims with your wives and little ones, do gather at the Meeting House, on the hill, there to listen to the Pastor, and render, Thanksgiving to the Almighty God for all His blessings". Thusly, here we are in the year 2012, continuing this long tradition of giving thanks.

The Holy Scriptures and history have proven that those nations whose God is the Lord are blessed in numerous ways. However, America like many other Christian nations, have often placed God in a secondary position. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in multiple wars and conflicts, given us peace and strengthened us, even in the midst of unexpected events, such as the recent storm, Sandy.

Reasons for our thankfulness in this period of Thanksgiving are found in the saving acts of Jesus Christ because it is their deliverance from Satan's devices that are received and we are ushered into

(Continued on page 11)

A Thanksgiving Examination

By The Reverend Charles Glover

(Continued from page 10)

the realm of gratitude and spiritual fruitfulness. Simply stated, thankfulness is a mental and/or verbal expression of one's acknowledgement and appreciation of God: thankfulness of His grace, blessings, and sovereign work in our lives.

Why should we be thankful?

1. Because it honors God. When we are thankful, we recognize that God exists and we declare and live by Him as our only source of being. True thankfulness exhibits total dependence on God (2 Corinthians 4: 15).
2. Because it is commanded in Scriptures. First, the Psalms are filled with the call to give thanks. Psalm 100 says, "Enter His gates with Thanksgiving and into His courts with praise, be thankful unto Him, and bless His name". Then Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, "In everything give thanks, for this is the Will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you". In Colossians, Paul twice gives us commands to be thankful (Chapter 3, verses 15 and 17). These scriptural principles help us to focus on the sovereignty of God and the fact that He is in control and working all things together for good regardless of how we may seem to see things in our limited minds (Romans 8: 28-29). While all things may not be good, God uses them for good, the good of shaping and molding us into the image of His Son.
3. Because of the dangerous consequences of thanklessness. Thanklessness is dangerous to individuals and for others around them. It dishonors God and leads to a proud spirit and/or a dependence on humans rather than God (Romans 1:21). Additionally, thanklessness often leads to bitterness, complaining, and a joyless life (Hebrews 12:15). Thanklessness promotes pettiness and occupation with self, people, and problems. That in turn, creates depression and feelings of hopelessness because we have become focused on our own problems rather than on the Lord.

Today's society places loyalty on a number of different gods (small "g"). These include money, prestige, and power. When we attribute what we have or the blessings we receive to these gods, we are guilty of misplaced gratitude. If there is anything worse than ingratitude, it is misplaced gratitude and thanksgiving. Nothing is worse than thanking someone else for what God has done for us. As we reflect on our past and see the victories that have been experienced, we must realize that it was God, and Him alone, who brought us through the valley and we should be thankful to Him.

In conclusion, Paul provides the ultimate test of thankfulness in the questions and responses posed in Romans 8:31-39. Everyone, at some season of their life, experiences disappointment, challenges, and significant limiting factors, which displace living to our fullest potential. We are not unique in that respect. We all will encounter life situations and circumstances we don't understand, but God does. Although we may think our challenges are enormous, tragic, or even devastating, somebody, and possibly many, have it much worse than we do. Our life compared to somebody else's is a bed of roses. Don't ever take for granted what God has "already done" for you and "Be Thankful". Living in America and standing on the shoulders of our ancestors who have paved the way for us to enjoy the freedoms and prosperity of today, should prompt us to joyous praises of thanksgiving. We must stop emphasizing what's wrong and start thanking God for what's right!

Our proclamation for Thanksgiving must be as Paul stated, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8: 38-39).

"Now thanks be to God which always causes us to triumph in Christ, and make manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place" (2 Corinthians 2: 14).

Now thanks be to God which always causes us to triumph in Christ, and make manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place"

2 Corinthians 2: 14

"Classic" Revival precedes "Classic" Football

By Janette R. Smith

In the spirit of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) football, St John AME Church, Birmingham, held its annual "Classic Revival," that plays up the college football rivalry between Alabama State and Alabama A&M Universities.

The revival kicked off on October 22, the Tuesday prior to the big game, with a Tailgate Party in the church's fellowship hall. That pre-game warm-up proved to be an ample snack for what the Reverend Doctor Patrick D. Clayborn would later serve in Word during the service. An estimated 130 attendees filled St. John AMEC (Birmingham) where the Reverend Mashad Evans, Sr. is pastor. The Hopewell AME Church Choir offered ministry through music.

Pastor Clayborn's scripture text was Luke 13: 10-17, which shares the account of Jesus healing the crippled woman on the Sabbath. This was the foundation for the message entitled, "Be Loosed" (a favorite with the home congregation in Huntsville).

Revival did indeed erupt in the place as hearers of the word digested the charge to 1) Be Present 2) Be Open and 3) Be Responsive so that God can loose them from the situations in life that may have them 'bent over.'

This powerful word from Pastor Clayborn set the stage for the rest of the "Classic Revival" which continued over the following two nights, ending on the Thursday night before the actual rival HBCU event.



You Really Can't Beat God's Giving

by Paulette Bargon

One day I received an unexpected small check. Now I call that fun money. I will spend it on anything I want. I decided to tithe the proper portion of it. Now, like I said, this was a small amount of money so I really could not do much with it once I gave a tithe, but I reluctantly did it anyway. A few days later I was at a meeting at church and we were talking about donating to a particular event, again I was not planning on giving anything that day because I did not bring any money with me. As I was preparing to leave I noticed a ten dollar bill just sitting in my purse. I was really surprised because I did not remember where it came from. So I donated it to that affair. The following Sunday I opened my Bible to read the scripture for the service and out pops a ten dollar bill! Now tell me that that was not a blessing.

I know that we are always blessed by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We are blessed just by having a relationship with Him. He blesses us with His grace and mercy. You see you really can't beat God's giving.

Your heavenly Father already knows all your needs, and he will give you all you need from day to day if you live for Him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern.

- Matthew 6:31-33

The Advent Season



ADVENT begins the Christian liturgical year on the Sunday closest to November 30, which is St. Andrew's Day. The season is four Sundays in duration. The Sundays are referred to as "Sundays in Advent". This year Advent begins on December 2. The liturgical color for advent is purple.

The advent message comes from the two Latin words, *as venire*, which means "to come to". The message is that God, in Christ, is coming into the world.

St. John's Soup Kitchen

TRUE HOSPITALITY

"When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you."
- Luke 14:13-14 (NSV)



ST. JOHN A.M.E. CHURCH SOUP KITCHEN

3rd and 4th Tuesdays
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

229 Church Street - Huntsville, AL
(on the corner of Church and Monroe Streets)
ALL ARE WELCOME

In this passage, Luke states no credit is needed when work is done for Christ and that serving others, whether one is acknowledged or not, the good deed done for Christ counts eternally. Jesus warns that true hospitality has nothing to do with receiving a reward for actions and is given without the hope of being paid back. True hospitality grows out of love for God and desire to be Christ in the world, not out of a desire to build or protect ego or public image.

Those who donate food for the twice monthly SOUP KITCHEN, as well as the wonderful servant workers who are there to serve the needy, warmly and with love, provide a nurturing and caring ministry that God will call "Holy". Pray for this ministry, any support will always be welcomed.



2012 Christmas Program

"The Gift"

December 16th

Rehearsals dates and times will be announced in the weekly bulletin and on the website.

St. John Encourages Sister Church

In the mist of closing the conference year and preparing for Annual Conference, St. John took time to encourage a sister AME Church. On Sunday afternoon, October 14, Pastor Clayborn and a group of St. John members traveled to Birmingham for an afternoon service at New Seed of Faith AME Church. The Reverend Willie Mae Rice, pastor, and the church family were celebrating their Church Anniversary. This was an important anniversary celebration as it marked the end of the second conference year for the combined congregations of Miles Memorial and St. Stephens churches.

Brother Dennis DeLoach led the devotion for the service. Brother Adrian Rice of New Seed of Faith read scripture from Psalm 100 and New Seed of Faith's Minister of Music sang a solo, "You Are Holy." St. John's Mass Choir also rendered musical selections.

Pastor Clayborn preached from Daniel 10:10-14 a message entitled "The Angels Are Coming," with focus on verse 12. He began by explaining that the angels only purpose is to accomplish God's purpose through worship and service. They are in the presence of God and nothing can beat God's presence. Before focusing on Daniel, Pastor Clayborn spoke of experiences of Moses, Abraham, Jacob, the children of Israel, John on the isle of Patmos, and others when they were in the presence of angels.

Pastor Clayborn told how Daniel was at a turning point in his life in the text. Daniel had been fasting for 21 days and looking to the east for a sign, a divine movement. He needed a vision, an interpretation of the dream, but he had to wait. When the angel did arrive, he told Daniel that God heard him the first time he prayed. At this point Daniel was totally dependent on God. The angel came to give him power. Pastor Clayborn related Daniel's situation to the church, specifically New Seed of Faith. He assured them that the angels are coming and God has something big for them.

Following the invitation to discipleship and a special prayer for the members of New Seed of Faith, members of the two congregations fel-

(Continued on page 16)

Parent Wisdom

By Vanessa Glover



So often parents become troubled leading to not trusting God and whining when circumstances are not as they would have them. In an attempt to get it right, sometimes it is our example that portrays God's Grace to our families and other times we are the ones who learn a lesson about our faith and walk in Christ. The real question, Jesus answered was not who was re-

sponsible for the man's blindness but who could heal him and for what purpose. This is the kind of question we all ponder from time to time. Whom should I blame? Who is responsible for my problems? Even if we find someone to blame, we still have not done anything about the problem. In fact, we probably have made it worse. Well, let me be the first to say as the scriptures explain some things come about that God's work and Grace might be displayed for the GLORY of God!

We are not always healed of our diseases, nor of problems, nor of shame, but if we pray for new life in a hopeless situation we can always see God at work in our circumstances. John 9:1-3 as He was passing by, He saw a man blind from birth, His disciples questioned Him: "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind? Neither this man nor his parents sinned, Jesus answered; this came about that God's works might be revealed in him." When we have our spiritual eyes and ears open we can receive a blessing by seeing a reflection of God's Grace in those closest to us. The blind man's sight and the Pharisee's blindness — it is what is in a person's heart that matters more than what is on the outside. Therefore, we do not give up. We do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen; for what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is ETERNAL! 2 Corinthians 4:18

To keep from being conceited or boasting, like the Pharisee's blindness and much like Paul, there was given unto Paul a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment him. No matter how many times one may seek the Lord and plead to Him to take away blindness or thorns, God's response is, "My Grace is Sufficient for God's power is made perfect in weakness." 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 God's Grace is available to all. God will use ordinary people for the most sacred purpose of His Kingdom. What one has or does not have seems small or great, little becomes much when placed in the Master's Hand.

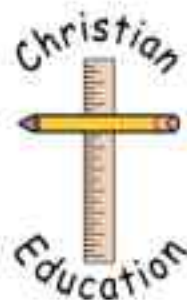


Dear God, for another day, for another minute, for another chance to live and serve you. I am grateful. Please keep me free from fear of the future, from anxiety about tomorrow, from bitterness towards anyone, from cowardice in the face of danger, from laziness in my daily work, from failure before opportunity, from weakness when your power is at hand. But fill me with love that knows no bounds, with sympathy that reaches all, with courage that cannot be shaken, with faith strong enough for the darkness, with strength sufficient for my tasks. Be with me for another day, and use me as you will. Amen. —*The Pilgrim's Prayer Book*

Wisdom for Daily Living: Get wisdom, get understanding, do not forget my words or turn away from them. Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you, love her and she will watch over you. The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. Cherish her and she will exalt you; embrace her and she will honor you. She will give you a garland of grace your head and present you with a glorious crown. Proverbs 4:5-9 (NIV)

As a Thoughtful Parent: Two ears and one mouth, what is more important? There are times to talk and times to listen. Know the difference. Never withhold your love from your children no matter what their age. Have the patience to listen to the concerns, the hopes, and the dreams for that is how we are connected for a lifetime. For God is a God of a Second Chance!

Church School Lesson Overview – December 2012



The Church School reviews for this month were written by Willie Sandifer.

December 2, 2012

Lesson Title: Spiritual Blessings in Jesus Christ

Lesson Scripture: Ephesians 1

Print: Ephesians 1:3-14

Devotional Songs: #118 [], #114 [], and #111 []

Key Verse: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Ephesians 1:5-6).

This is one of the most joyful and profound passages in the Bible. Like an anthem of praise, it celebrates God's eternal and glorious plan of redemption. It is broken into three stanzas, each beginning or ending with the phrase "to the praise of his glorious grace".

The passage in this lesson examines the plan of redemption from a triune perspective: The first praises the Father for choosing to redeem persons from their sin; the second highlights Jesus as the Redeemer; and the third stanza reveals the Holy Spirit as the living, divine presence to the church and the world.

December 9, 2012

Lesson Title: One in Jesus Christ

Lesson Scripture: Ephesians 2-3

Print: Ephesians 2:11-22

Devotional Songs: #106 [], #116 [], and #115 []

Key Verse: "In whom all the building fitly framed together growth unto an holy temple in the Lord" (Ephesians 2:21).

Many barriers separated Jews and Gentiles in the ancient world. Paul allots much of his attention in this portion of the letter to the essential oneness of the church. For Jews and Gentiles alike, Paul explained that keeping the law was not a requirement for salvation. Christ is the fulfillment of the law, making it complete. Salvation cannot be earned through keeping the letter of the law or by works. There was no need for Jews and Gentiles to be divided based on Mosaic Law. Christ became and remains the peace of all believers. Therefore, there is no need for division and discord. By

lessening the significance of ethnic and cultural identity, both Jews and Gentiles gained something far better and greater.

December 16, 2012

Lesson Title: Unity in the Body of Christ

Lesson Scripture: Ephesians 4:1-16

Print Ephesians 4:1-16

Tentative Devotional Songs: #121 [], #109 [], and #111 []

Key Verse: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:4-5).

After laying the foundation concerning Christ and His church in previous parts of his letter, Paul changes his focus in this lesson to a more practical purpose, setting guidelines for his readers concerning Christian's conduct. Paul gives the readers an overview of the church's place in the world.

Paul called for the Ephesians to be true to whom they are called to be in Christ and noted several truths for them to embrace: First, it is their responsibility to be one in the body; two, the call for unity does not mean that they should strive for a type of dull sameness; three, the church is a living organism made up of living beings who are expected to grow according to their use of the gifts Christ has given them; four, Christ desires that the church reach maturity and that the people of the church be prepared to exercise their gifts; and five, as the church grows, its members should take on the nature and character of its head, Christ Jesus.

December 23, 2012

Lesson Title: Live in the Light

Lesson Scripture: John 1:1-14; Ephesians 4:17-5:20

Print John 1:1-5; Ephesians 5:1-2, 6-14

Tentative Devotional Songs: #112 [], #108 [], and #115 []

Key Verse: "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children" (Ephesians 5:1).

The Gospel of John emphasizes that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God, through whom salvation is made available to those who

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Church School Lesson

(Continued from page 15)

believe. In Jewish thought, a son is one who is obedient to his father, an apprentice of his father, and is an agent of his father. Jesus is all these things, but His relationship with the Father goes even deeper than this understanding of a son. Jesus also is one with the Father. John solidified this fact in the first few verses in the Gospel by proclaiming Christ's identity as the Word of God and then writing of His encounter with John the Baptist, who declares Jesus' identity.

December 30, 2012

Lesson Title: Christ's Love for the Church

Lesson Scripture: Ephesians 5:21-6:4

Print: Ephesians 5:21-6:4

Tentative Devotional Songs: #120[]; #121 []; and #122 []

Key Verse: "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God" (Ephesians 5:21).

In the 5th chapter of Ephesians, Paul calls on believers to live out a life of holiness in relation to the world around them. He challenges them to live wisely, being led by the Spirit. Such a life will produce a believer who becomes more like Christ every day. As they become more like Christ, they will learn to respect and submit to others in love and humility. And the foundation of family relationships is to be modeled after Christ's love for the church.

Make Church School a part of your regular
Sunday schedule!
There are classes for all ages.

St. John Encourages Sister Church

(Continued from page 13)

lowshipped together and the St. John family received a delicious carry-out meal. The Reverend Willie Mae Rice, pastor, and the members were visually moved by the support of St. John and by the preached word.

To God be the glory!



Church School Book Club

Discussion Date: 17 November 2012

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

An Inconvenient Friend, Rhonda McKnight, 2010

Discussion Date: 15 December 12

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Scandalous Truth, Monica Carter, 2012

Nikki Broussard hasn't always been saved, but she is now, and that's what counts. Happily married and raising an active young daughter, her past is tucked safely away from the life she has now. She's married to William, a devoted man who is struggling to grow a successful business and give his family the life he dreams they can have. But Nikki's idyllic life spins out of control when two life-altering events occur.

Financially stretched and facing devastating news, Nikki's new faith is tested when she must make a decision that she knows could come back to bite not only her, but William as well. In the midst of her crisis, William is thrust into the political spotlight when he decides to run for mayor after a candidate – his pastor and mentor dies. Suddenly, every detail of Nikki and William's lives is up for scrutiny.



Electronic AMEN

The AMENewsletter is available in electronic form. If you prefer to receive an electronic copy of the newsletter, please notify the church at stjohnameh@aol.com.

Transportation Available for AAMU Students

The St. John AME Church bus will pick up students from AAMU on Sundays at each dorm prior to 10:20 a.m., and pick up students at the Knight Center between 10:20 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Students may also call the church office at 256-534-3285 to secure a ride to St. John on Sunday.

December 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 <i>Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! - 2 Corinthians 9:15</i>						1 8:00 a.m. Official Board Meeting 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal
2 COMMUNION 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship AMEN Deadline	3 50+ Meeting 9:30 a.m.	4 6:00 p.m. Stewardship Board  Voices in Praise Rehearsal	5 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	6  6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	7	8 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal AMEN Staff Meeting 10:30 a.m. 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal 12:00 p.m. LAY ROUNDUP
9 COMMUNION 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship TASTETEA	10 Church Conference 6:00 p.m.	11 6:00 p.m. Sons of Allen Mtg.  Voices in Praise Rehearsal	12 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	13	14  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	15 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
16 8:00 a.m. Worship 10:50 a.m. CHRISTMAS PROGRAM & Worship	17	18 6:00 p.m. Trustee Board Mtg. 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	19 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study COMMUNION	20	21  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	22 9:30 a.m. Youth Praise Dance Rehearsal 10:30 a.m. WME Meeting
23 COMMUNION 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	24	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26	27	28	29
30 COMMUNION 8:00 a.m. Breakfast 9:00 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	31 New Year's Eve WATCHNIGHT SERVICE 10:00 p.m.	YOKE RELEASE MONTH The month of December in the 9th Episcopal District is Yoke Release Month. During this month, communion will be celebrated weekly as people release the yokes that are binding them in order to walk into 2013 free. 				

St. John AME Church
229 Church Street
Huntsville, Alabama 35801
(256) 534-3265
(256) 534-6828 Fax

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The Right Reverend James L. Davis, Servant Bishop

Mrs. Arelis B. Davis, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Doctor Patrick Clayborn, Pastor



web



November 22, 2012 Thanksgiving Day

~~December 1, 2012 Thanksgiving Service~~

December 1, 2012 Official Board, 9:00 a.m.

December 8, 2012 Lay Round-up, 12 p.m.

December 9, 2012 Annual Taste Tea, after 10:50 am Service

December 16, 2012 Annual Christmas Program and Worship Service, 10:50 a.m.

December 25, 2012 Christmas Day

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart
that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ST. JOHN A.M.E.N NEWSLETTER



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 17 Issue 12

December 2012

Pastor Clayborn's Message for December

Embracing the Spirit of Advent

Isaiah 9:6-7

This month I celebrate one full year as the pastor of St. John A.M.E. Church in Huntsville, Alabama. God has truly made this journey a blessing. I thank God for all of the miracles seen this year: for a loving wife who works alongside me in this divine venture; and for an open, service-minded, and responsible church family. My prayer is that we continue to grow together in love and service to our gracious Lord.

I anticipate great things this year. I envision: an expansion of our feeding program, growth in our music department, even more fervor in worship, an increase in our stewardship, higher attendance in bible study, more unity and focus in our service to the community, more people being saved and joining our church, mentoring programs for our young people, a congregational care ministry, creating an action plan for our Blue Springs property, and so much more. Moreover, I am expecting God to "add to the church daily." Within me is hope that we will grow for God's glory!

Hope is the spirit of Advent. Please note that Advent literally means arrival. Thus, in Advent, we anticipate the arrival of a new dimension of God in our lives. Over two thousand years ago, the Israelites hoped for a new move of God: "For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onwards and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this" (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Let us embrace hope this Advent just as the ancient Israelites did years ago. Let us expect God to come into our lives in new ways. Yes, a number of us may be experiencing stress, grief, and pain due to the holidays. Even so, I urge us to hold the spirit of Advent. God will send us a new dimension of love, grace, and peace; will raise up resources and opportunities; and will heal the wounds of our hearts, souls, minds, and bodies. We know God will do this when we remember how the prophecy of Isaiah 9:6-7 was fulfilled in Jesus. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14)! God showed us in Jesus that God will take a new direction and use new supplies to meet our needs. Therefore, let us embrace the spirit of Advent this season. Let us expect God to "supply all of our needs" (Phil. 4:19). Let us anticipate God's healing, deliverance, breakthrough, protection, guidance, and assurance. Let us put our hope in God!

"My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand!"

**VISION DRIVEN**

St. John AME Church

Vision Statement

We are a church that seeks growth in spirit, mind, heart, health, wealth, membership, and service. Our aim is to worship God corporately and individually through the giving of our time, talents, and treasures. We will preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and will encourage all members to cultivate their callings in God. We will reach out to lost souls for Christ, and we will give assistance to those who are in need. We will lift up our voices on behalf of those who are voiceless, and we will take care of the Earth that God has given us. We seek to do these things with God's help through our core values of spiritual formation, stewardship, service, evangelism, and education.

Catching Vision Through Core Values*S.E.E. our way into the future.***Spiritual Formation**

Vital Worship, Prayer, Bible Study, Mentoring

StewardshipLeadership Development, Congregational Care,
100% Tithing Church, Social Justice,
Economic Development, Recycling**Service**Soup Kitchen, Benevolence, Four Service
Projects (Habitat for Humanity, Church Wide
Visitation, Back to School, Thanksgiving/
Christmas Baskets)**Evangelism**80 new members, Pentecost Explosion,
Goals for Sharing, Goals for Inviting**Education**

Tutorial Ministry, Increase Scholarship Fund, Provide Guidance for Future Military



Tuscaloosa Group Visits St. John's Fifty-Plus Auxiliary

By Mattie Eell

The Fifty-Plus Auxiliary of St. John was absolutely thrilled to host the 50+ Golden Gems from the historical Beautiful Zion AME Zion Church, Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The church was organized in the 1870's by freed slaves. Services were first held under an arbor on the Old Kenorr Cagle's place. Later a modest wooden-frame structure was constructed nearby in 1880. In 1896, after enough money was raised to purchase land, the church was moved to its present location at 7420 Sanders Ferry Road. On Christmas Eve of 2008, that 112 year-old building, which had been remodeled and expanded over the years, was completely destroyed by an electrical fire. However, on Christmas Eve of 2010, after a two year struggle, the Reverend Terry Cole, 150 members, the entire Big Bend community, and many friends paraded in the rain to the new church, singing praises to Almighty God for His goodness. For YouTube video about Beautiful Zion, search Beautiful Zion.mp4 and Beautiful Zion AME Zion Church Praise Dance to view their progress.

Now that Beautiful Zion members have settled in their new church, they are eager to start new ministries. After hearing so many wonderful things about the 50+ Auxiliary of St. John, they decided to come and gather ideas to enrich their newly organized Golden Gems Ministry. They have invited St. John's 50+ to come to Tuscaloosa in the spring to check in on them and give them additional ideas for moving their ministry forward. They also want St. John to see some of the landmarks in Tuscaloosa. Tuscaloosa is a former capital of Alabama, the home of Stillman College and the #1 Alabama Crimson Tide football team. It is also the city where Governor George Wallace stood in the schoolhouse door on June 11, 1963 to try to block the entry of two black students to the University of Alabama. Tuscaloosa is the city that President Obama visited right after the April 27, 2011, devastating tornadoes.

The speaker for this meeting, Mr. Eddie Sherrod, chairman of the Alabama Democratic Conference of Huntsville/Madison County, encouraged all members and guests to vote on November 6. He reminded them that voteless people are hopeless people. He urged persons to demonstrate their power at the ballot box by exercising their right to vote. Everyone's vote does matter. One's action or inaction would certainly make a difference.

After the meeting, Col. (Ret.) James Heyward and a few of St. John's 50+ Auxiliary members loaded St. John's church bus and took the Golden Gems on a short tour of Huntsville; riding past the VBC, Embassy Suites, Huntsville Museum of Art, Veterans' Memorial, Children's Advocacy Center, and ending up on the beautiful campus of Alabama A&M University before returning to St. John.



Members from Beautiful Zion AME Zion Church

The Golden Gems were equally impressed with all of the food that was prepared by the 50+ Food Committee, Mrs. Charlie Brooks, chairperson. Two members of St. John's food committee, Mrs. Pearlean Myhand and Mrs. Paulette Williams even volunteered to help.

Before loading their van, there were hugs and kisses and thanks from everyone. Their vice-president, Mrs. Minerva Thomas, reiterated their desire to have St. John's auxiliary visit them in the spring.

Off they went!!!!

Fifty-Plus Auxiliary Celebrates Harvest Sunday

By Mattie Ezell



Rev. Sheri preaches for Harvest Sunday

On Sunday, November 11, 2012, the Fifty-Plus Auxiliary celebrated its 24th Harvest Sunday. However, it was the first time they celebrated it with St. John's new pastor, the Reverend Dr. Patrick Clayborn and first lady, the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn. Another first, the members took part in both the 8 am and the 10:50 am service. And still another first, the first lady, the Reverend Sheri delivered a very challenging message. The sermon was entitled "Moving Beyond Doubt" and the text was Matthew 28: 16 - 20. Even when the storms of life are raging, believers must still keep their eyes on Jesus because He promised never to leave them. What a word!

When Mrs. Marie Cobb, the late founder, organized the 50+ Auxiliary, she had three simple objectives in mind. First, she wanted the seniors to gather at least once a month just to have fun, 50+ style. Secondly, she wanted to make sure that seniors were kept abreast of current issues, whether they be social, economic, health, political, or educational. Thirdly, she wanted to make sure that the old wine was preserved so that it would be available for usage in God's service.



Fifty-Plus Members participate in the worship service.

Mrs. Cobb felt that a harvest service would allow the seniors to express the great need for a new generation of harvest workers to head into God's global harvest. Since there were four distinct seasons twenty-four years ago, it was very fitting to celebrate Harvest Sunday right after farmers had visually ended the gathering of their crops and just before a long, dark, cold winter set in. Therefore, Mrs. Cobb and the 50+ Auxiliary deemed a Sunday in November appropriate to celebrate the harvest and also use it to help ease the needs of some of those who need a little extra help, especially at Thanksgiving. This year three families were beneficiaries.

Luke 10:2 reads: "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest will send forth

laborers into his Harvest." With the national unemployment at 7.9 and for Blacks 11.4, the need for labourers is even greater. God needs us to be His hands and feet. Can He count on you?

St. John's Soup Kitchen Shares During the Holidays

Tuesday, December 18th



ST. JOHN A.M.E. CHURCH
SOUP KITCHEN

3rd and 4th Tuesdays
11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m.

229 Church Street — Huntsville, AL
(on the corner of Church and Adams Streets)
ALL ARE WELCOME

"Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it."

-Proverbs 3:27 (NAS)

One of the many ways the St. John Church family shares is by sharing warm, nutritious meals from the "Soup Kitchen." Sharing Thanksgiving soups and all one can hold is special to those who are guests to the holiday tables. The kindness of a warm meal reminds one of the Old Testament story of Ruth. A poor young widow recently arriving in Bethlehem with her mother-in-law, also widowed, Ruth went into the fields to glean grain. The owner of one field, knowing Ruth's circumstances, told his servants to "purposely" pull out for her some grain from the bundles and leave it that she may glean, and do not rebuke her (Ruth 2:16, NAS).

The Soup Kitchen Ministry is thankful for the wonderful workers who glean their pantries monthly to serve persons in need with love and meaning. The soup kitchen served 37 persons on November 20th and 75 persons on November 28th.

Connectional Lay Empowerment Workshop



January 18-19, 2013

St. Paul A.M.E. Church (Smithfield) Birmingham

300 4th Court North Birmingham, AL 35204



FRIDAY, JANUARY 18TH

7:00PM

Preacher:
Pastor Patrick Clayborn

"The Gift"

"The best gifts don't always come in packages."



2012 Christmas Play
St. John A.M.E.C.
December 16, 2012
10:30am Service

Schedule of Services December 16, 2012

8:00 a.m. Morning Worship

9:30 a.m. Christmas Social

10:30 a.m.

Morning Worship and Christmas Play
Word from Pastor Patrick Clayborn

What If Christmas Did Not Come?

By The Reverend Judith Gardner
Executive Minister, St. Paul A.M.E Church, Hamilton, Bermuda

What if Christmas did not come? We may go through the motions of Christmas, observing the customs of Christmas, saying the right words of Christmas, sing all the carols of Christmas, write the letters of Christmas to Santa; organizations will have their parties of Christmas; schools and churches will have their Christmas plays; yet, many, even though they will attend church this season, will still miss Christmas.

Scientifically, we know that the Christmas season will come and everything associated with it, will be here. The earth will make its 359th change, and December 25th will arrive. We know all the commercials of Christmas will come and the shops will do their biggest sales, and make their largest profits during the month of December. Within the stores, on our jobs, throughout the streets, we will see stars, angels, nativity scenes, and hear the music of Christmas being played.

We are in the midst of this festival season, and the spirit of Christmas is in the air. Thousands are preparing or have begun to travel near and far, for the uniting of families and friends. We will exchange gifts and well wishes, and the stories of the Wise Men and the Shepherds will be repeated over and over again. We will hear the legends and myths of the Christmas tree, the mistletoe, the characters of Rudolph, the Red-Nosed-Reindeer, and the jolly man from the North Pole, who makes all children happy.

But, is this enough to indicate that Christmas has come? Christmas comes when Christ is born into the human heart, because Jesus is the gift of the heart. John tells us the meaning of Christmas, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (1:14). When Christ is born and dwells among us and all through us, then we will know that Christmas has come.

We have to live our lives in a manner that does not crowd Jesus out. In St. Luke's beautiful story of Christmas, he tells how Mary and Joseph tried to find accommodations in an Inn located in Bethlehem, but everywhere was crowded and there was no room in the Inn... "And she gave birth to her first born son and wrapped Him, in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the Inn" (Luke 2:7). Luke does not blame the Innkeeper, he simply states the facts. The Inn was crowded and there was no room for Jesus.

We too have crowded Jesus out of our lives, it may not be with evil things, and it may be that our lives have become cluttered with good and respectable things, but you have still crowded Jesus out. Christ will be born within, when we really want Him individually and collectively, in our lives. Many are torn between wanting and not wanting Christ in their lives, and the anxiety between wanting and not wanting Him closes the door. We want His comfort, but not His cross; we want His forgiveness, but not His essential removal of judgment. We want His love, but not His unyielding demands; we want His acceptance of us, but not His rejection of our prejudices and false values.

We need to be like the merchant, whom Jesus talked about, who was a seeker of fine pearls, and when he found a pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and brought it. Jesus Christ is the value above all values, the good above all goods, we have to be willing to give all for Him, and we have to be willing to separate from anything that keeps us apart from Him.

Whatever it takes for you to get to the one in the manger this Christmas, whether it is music, a sermon, prayers or a good deed, then let your prayer be; "Let the Word become flesh and dwell in me...let Christ be born again," and then Christmas will really come.



Texting Teen News December 2k12

By Mariah Gullatte

Can you guess what we are celebrating this December? Yes, Christmas-the Birth of Jesus, and this is also National Read-a New Book Month. So, open your mind and let your imagination go wild this December. Reading is very important for children and adults.

Here are a few benefits of reading a book:

1. Reading can help your communication skills as well as your vocabulary.
2. Reading helps you get your "Smart" on, and it keeps you sharp as you age.
3. Reading a good book distracts you from a stressful day and helps you to relax.
4. Reading helps you to improve your vocabulary.
5. Reading improves your memory, writing skills and helps you prioritize your goals way more than texting or tweeting!

I can remember my parents reading to me when I was younger and one of my favorite books was *Designed by God So I Must be Special*. It is still one of my favs! I also remember that I learned in elementary school that reading aloud helped me to comprehend better and following each line with my finger/pencil helped me to stay on point and keep my place.

Reading can begin even before you are born. Once you learn how to read you never forget. It can also help to further your education, your career, help you pass those graduation exams, and those very important tests we have to take to get scholarships and get into college.

Right now I'm reading a girly book entitled *Belle of the Bowl* by Alphas Series. What book are you reading? If you can't seem to find a good book...I know that Pastor Clayborn always has a great suggestion like the latest book *Putting Your Dreams to the Test* by John Maxwell and of course the best book ever *The Bible* always makes for a good read...so come on and let's get to READING!!!

Lay Organization Officers Elected for New Conference Year

The following persons were elected officers for St. John's Lay Organization at the Lay meeting on November 28th.

President.....	Ms. Cassandra Ingram
First Vice-President.....	Mr. Hodges Washington
Second Vice-President.....	Mrs. Erica Harbin
Recording Secretary.....	Mrs. Maesha Peoples
Assistant Recording Secretary.....	Mrs. Charlie Brooks
Treasurer.....	Mr. Lars Avery
Chaplain.....	Mr. Clifton Miller
Parliamentarian.....	Dr. Monica Dillihunt
Director of Lay Activities.....	Mr. Claudinette Fears
Young Adult Representative.....	open
Public Relations Director.....	Lorraine Parham

All St. John members are invited to actively participate in the Lay Organization.

Hey YPDers and St. John Family here are a couple of newsworthy announcements that are worth *READING* about before I sign out:

You could have your own personal Cheering and Fan section at your next event!!!

At St. John we love to get out and support our youth, so, if you are involved in any academic/extracurricular activities, competitions, sports, music, dance/drama and any other activities please share your game schedule/recital/event dates with me so that I can post them at church for all to see.

We would like to send A BIG CONGRATULATIONS to Wallace Parham for being elected as the 2013 YPD 9th District Financial Secretary. Wallace was also presented as a Beau in the 2012 Beautillion Ball November 17th. Wallace is the son of Kenneth and Lorraine Parham and his escort was Marissa Owens, daughter of Myron and Lydia Owens.

TTYL!

AMEN Taste Tea Marks Sixteenth Anniversary

By Darwin Washington



Sunday, December 9th, 2012, marked the Sixteenth Annual Taste Tea sponsored by the A.M.E. Newsletter staff. It is with pride that the staff reached this milestone and with appreciation for the many persons who supported the previous events as well as this year's tea, including the Adult Praise Dance Ministry who co-sponsored the event for several years. The Taste Tea was held in the Fellowship Hall after the 10:50 a.m. worship service.

Again this year, church members brought a range of delicious items including chili, taco soup, gumbo, salads, casseroles, chicken and dressing, pulled pork sandwiches, desserts galore and refreshing selections of punch. The festive holiday colors and music facilitated a cordial environment in which to fellowship and reflect on this season that celebrates the birth of the Christ Child.

Members of the Young People's Department (YPD) again did an outstanding job of helping as servers, as did members of the church's food committee and others who graciously responded to the request for help. Assistance with setting up and decorating tables as well as the clean-up was generously provided. Staff photographer, Darwin Washington, inconspicuously photographed every detail.

The AMENewsletterStaff would like to say thanks to all for your participation in every way, including attending and partaking of the cuisine. Appreciation is extended to Pastor Patrick and Reverend Sheri Clayborn for their support in this effort as well. The coordinators, Claire Philadelphia and Bridget Floyd, would like to note the ongoing support of the editor of the AMEN, Nedra McDaniel, who participates in every aspect of the event and provides a quiet leadership that elicits unity in efforts in this event and in the AMEN ministry.

Look forward to the printing of many of the recipes in upcoming issues of the AMEN!

Scenes from the Sixteenth Annual Taste Tea

Darwin Washington, Photographer



Parent Wisdom

By Sister Vanessa Glover



It's the Season to Give! When we think of the Christmas season, it seems that God is telling us to share whatever we have; and, when it runs low, seek to get more. When there is no more, leave the rest to Him. Christmas is a time for other individuals' wishes (prayers) to come true; not only by buying things, but by doing things—things like putting the needs and desires of others before our own; offering assistance to those who struggle with life's challenges; being there for those who are in need of love, joy, hope and peace. We may say to ourselves, "If only I had more faith and time, I would be able to share and give myself for others just as Jesus gave Himself for us. How can I have faith in God and speak to someone else's mountain of problems?" What do we do when dealing with our own personal role as parents becomes the multitudes concerns? How much faith is enough to lift someone else's burden, to bring happiness, to provide hope and encouragement this Christmas season? Jesus said the "amount" of faith is not

important. In fact if we think about having a lot of faith, we may miss the mustard seed we do have! And Jesus said unto them, if ye have Faith as a grain of mustard seed, nothing shall be impossible for you." (Matthew 17:20)

What can be more beautiful and inspiring in response to the standard God Himself has set through the revelation of His Son? We also are to give with purity of heart and show love in our actions as well as our words. Jesus uses the example of a mustard seed to illustrate the principles of the Kingdom of God, although a mustard seed is very small inside—we do not need a huge quantity of it—just have it (FAITH) and nothing shall be impossible. Have Faith in God. What a wonderful opportunity we have this Christmas season to reach out and share His great love with others. Have Faith in God's Word—speak a word of faith, speak a word of healing, speak a word of encouragement and say to the mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. (Matthew 17:20) Time may have changed how we celebrate Christmas, but one thing time can never change—that is Jesus' birth. Jesus' birth is God's greatest gift to humankind. God and His love will never change. This Christmas, others are waiting for us to bring tidings of comfort and great joy. Share the Christ child's birth.

As the holidays approach, reflect on the real meaning of Christmas—no matter where we are and what we have in this life, right now; take the time to celebrate others, comfort others, strengthen others, and love others. Have patience, have compassion, and give the gift of everlasting value—LOVE. This Christmas, each gift we give, each ornament we place on the Christmas tree, each Christmas event we attend, and each preparation we make; may our hearts be filled with gratitude and joy and truly we will experience the reason for the season. LOVE explains why He came. LOVE explains how He endured. This is how we know what love is: "Jesus Christ laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for others." (1 John 3:16)

Prayer: I thank you, Almighty God, for your loving kindness is great towards us. For you have shown us through your Son, Jesus the Christ, what is truly valuable in this life and that is love for others. As we go through this Christmas season, help us to be examples of selfless giving—may we give to others without expecting anything in return. AMEN.

As a Thoughtful Parent: What we do is a product of the heart. What we say is evidence of what lies within the heart. Think of the heart as the womb where all of our actions, attitudes, and words are conceived. *Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is the Lord's faithfulness.* (Lamentations 3:22-23)



Church School Lesson Overview – January 2013

The Church School reviews for this month were written by Willie Sandifer.

January 6, 2013

Lesson Title: Proclaiming Christ

Lesson Scripture: Philippians 1:12-30

Print: Philippians 1:15-26

Devotional Songs: #217 [], #272 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice" (Philippians 1:18).

The book of Philippians is often called "the epistle of joy," a handle that one would not expect for a letter written from prison. It shows the dauntless faith of Paul, who determined that instead of feeling sorry for himself in his confinement; he would take advantage of every opportunity his confinement presented. This is evident from the attitude he portrayed in some of the early words of this letter. "But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear" (Phil. 1:12-14).

Paul knew that others were preaching the gospel. He had concerns that it be done properly, if it is preached selfishly it could confuse believers and have a negative effect on the cause of Christ. Paul wanted to calm their fears and encourage them in their faith by referring to his own experience.

January 13, 2013

Lesson Title: Reflecting the Mind of Christ

Lesson Scripture: Philippians 2:1-13

Print: Philippians 2:5-11

Devotional Songs: #112 [], #258 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5).

This lesson examines the quality of humility. The example is not Paul as he was following Christ, but Jesus Christ himself. We are not looking at something that we can accomplish merely by our own effort, but about some-

thing the Holy Spirit does in the heart of a person who is submitted to Him. We can expect God to make changes in us as we walk with Him. One of these changes should be that our pride is abandoned and we receive a gracious humility.

A brief look at the context of this lesson shows that some of the Philippians were not of the same mind or attitude. They were not maintaining the same love. A lot of selfishness and pride existed among these people. In contrast to this, Paul called on his readers to have the mind, or attitude, of Christ. Christ's attitude, that which characterized His, was that of humility, sacrifice for others, and exaltation of God the Father.

January 20, 2012

Lesson Title: Gaining Christ

Lesson Scripture: Philippians 3:1-11

Print: Philippians 3:7-11

Tentative Devotional Songs: #364 [], #251 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:4-5).

In this lesson we see the very heart of Paul as he followed Jesus.

Paul was a fearless missionary and he, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, wrote many of the books of the New Testament. He was also a very advanced scholar of the Old Testament. He was among the deepest and most spiritual disciples known. We would have a much deeper and more victorious Christian life if we really absorbed how Paul faced life and his relationship with Jesus.

The things the apostle said he came to count as loss were not wicked things. They were not things God disapproved of in themselves. They were admirable things – circumcision, being a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, being a Pharisee, living full of zeal, and obeying the law. The apostle's problem was not his accomplishments or his lifestyle. Rather, his failure was thinking he could make himself acceptable to God by means of his religious.

(Continued on page 12)

Church School Lesson

(Continued from page 11)

All of the things Paul claimed for himself were true of him before he met the Savior while he was on the way to Damascus to persecute more Christians. That experience caused him to realize that everything he had gained was loss.

January 27, 2013

Lesson Title: Straining for the Prize

Lesson Scripture: Philippians 3:12-4:1

Print: Philippians 3:12-16

Tentative Devotional Songs: #323[]; #282[]; and #243 []

Key Verse: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).

In this lesson we look at the instructions Paul gave to the believers in Philippi. What Paul said had nothing to do with cultivating corn, but it did have much to do with keeping our eyes on the goal ahead of us instead of looking backward. This life is filled with many disappointments and often failures, but our eyes need to stay on the goal of being with Christ.

Paul sought to respond to God's grace and to strive to become Christ-like in this life. Paul understood that faith without works is dead. He also knew that works in themselves are not only pointless but might even be blasphemous. Paul was zealous not only to spread the gospel but also to become all he could as a child of God. This was just as important to him as his work in spreading the gospel.

Make Church School a part of your regular Sunday schedule! There are classes for all ages.



Church School Book Club

Discussion Date: 15 December 12

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

***Scandalous Truth*, Monica Carter, 2012**

Discussion Date: 19 January 13

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

***A Man's Worth*, Nikita Lynnette Nichols, 2011**

Best friends Randall Loomis and Pastor Cordell Bryson are two peas in a pod, as close as blood brothers could ever be, but when Randall sets his eyes on the beautiful but unsaved Amaryllis Price, all heck breaks loose.

To pacify Amaryllis, Randall resigns from the sanctuary choir then soon after drops out of church altogether. But it's Pastor Cordell Bryson who continues to warn Randall that Amaryllis is a snake. Not only is he Randall's best friend, but as his pastor, Cordell must stay on the battlefield and war for Randall's soul.



Electronic AMEN and Announcements

The AMEN newsletter is available in electronic form. If you prefer to receive an electronic copy of the newsletter, please notify the church at stjohnameh@aol.com.

Also e-mail the church if you would like to be on the church's e-mail distribution list.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Luke 2:14

January 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 	2	3 Connectional Church Growth Conference Memphis, TN	4	5 9:30 am. Dance Ministry Rehearsal
6 COMMUNION 8:00 am. Worship 9:45 am. Church School 10:50 am. Worship AMEN Deadline	7 50+ Meeting 9:30 am.	8 6:00 p.m. Stewardess Board 6:00 p.m. Sons of Allen Mtg  Voices in Praise Rehearsal	9 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study 5:00 p.m. Steward Board Mtg	10  6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	11	12 9:30 am. Dance Ministry Rehearsal AMEN Start Meeting 10:30 am 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
13 8:00 am. Worship 9:45 am. Church School 10:50 am. Worship	14	15 11:30 am. — 1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN 6:00 p.m. Trustee Board Mtg.  Voices in Praise Rehearsal	16 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	17	18  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	19 9:30 am. Dance Ministry Rehearsal 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
20 8:00 am. Worship 9:45 am. Church School 10:50 am. Worship	21	22 11:30 am. — 1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN 5:30 p.m. Lay Meeting	23 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	24	25  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	26 9:30 am. Dance Ministry Rehearsal 10:30 am. WME Meeting
27 8:00 am. Worship 9:45 am. Church School 10:50 am. Worship	28	29	30 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study Love Feast	31		

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The Right Reverend James L. Davis, Servant Bishop

Mrs. Arelis B. Davis, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Patrick Clayborn, Ph.D., Pastor



web

December 1 -31, 2012 ~ YOKE RELEASE MONTH

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| December 16, 2012 | Early Morning Worship Service, 9:00 a.m.
Annual Christmas Program and Worship Service, 10:30 a.m. |
| December 25, 2012 | Christmas Day (no service) |
| December 31, 2012 | Watch Night Service, 10:00 p.m. |
| January 18-19, 2013 | Connectional Lay Empowerment Workshop, St. Paul AME Church, Birmingham, Pastor Clayborn, preacher (January 18th) |



INDNJC

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart