

**Collection Ownership:**

Huntsville-Madison County Public Library (HMCPL) Special Collections owns these digital images, and has been given permission by the donor to provide access for research, teaching and other educational purposes, as well as for publication and other means of dissemination.

St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church (Huntsville, AL) owns and maintains the original records.

Restrictions:

At the request of the donor, all information deemed private (addresses, phone numbers, birth dates, anniversaries, etc.) of individual church members has been redacted. This is for the protection of those individuals' privacy. Redactions may present in incomplete records, skipped pages, or darkened passages.

Record Duplication:

These images are low resolution reference copies. Contact HMCPL Special Collections to obtain higher quality images.

Email: specialcollections@hmcpl.org or Phone: 256-532-5969.

A duplication fee may apply.

Citation:

St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church (Huntsville, AL) Digital Collection, HMCPL Special Collections, Huntsville, AL.

ST. JOHN A.M.E.N NEWSLETTER



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 18 Issue 1

January 2013

Pastor's Meditation

God's Anointing for the New Year



Reverend and Patrick D. Clayton

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing."
Isaiah 10:27 KJV

The year of 2012 was filled with great highs for us. A number of people gave their lives to Christ and joined our church. We provided meals for those who were hungry and counsel for those who were lost. We celebrated birthdays and anniversaries. Bishop Davis reappointed me as the pastor, and I completed one full year here at St. John. On the national level, President Barack Obama was re-elected.

As well, this year had moments of heartache. Two members of our congregation went home to be with the Lord. Many of us had a close relative to pass away or become very ill. We all had to come to grips with the change that comes with new church leadership. Furthermore, five hundred people were murdered in Chicago. Trayvon Martin and Jordan Davis (two African American boys) were killed in Florida with the alleged murderers using the Stand Your Ground law. Twenty-eight people - including twenty elementary school children and six teachers - were killed in Newtown, Connecticut.

Isaiah 10:27 declares that God's anointing destroys the yoke. It is easy to locate God's anointing in moments of celebration. However, one could ask, "Where was God's anointing in the midst of our trials and tribulations?"

I believe that God's anointing was present in 2012 and will be with us in 2013! The anointing's destruction of the yoke is actually an indirect action. In the translation of the Hebrew, Isaiah 10:27 says that the yoke will be destroyed because of fatness. The ox has a yoke placed around its neck in order to pull its load. The anointing, according to Isaiah, will cause the ox to get so fat - to prosper or grow in such great ways - that the yoke will be destroyed by the growth of the ox!

Therefore, we cannot conclude that God's anointing is not present because we have struggles and conflicts. God's anointing is not attempting to touch those issues. Rather, God's anointing is concerned with touching us in the midst of our difficulties. When God anoints us, we grow. We change. We become who God calls us to be. Though our problems may not change, they become smaller to us because we become larger in God! Vision gets larger. Dreams become larger. Hope gets larger. We become "fat." Consequently, our growth destroys the yoke.

Let God's anointing lead you in growth this new year. Let us grow in spiritual formation, stewardship, service, evangelism, and education. Let us grow in forgiveness, love, prayer, study, work, tithing, vision, hope, peace, joy, and faith. Grow for the glory of the Lord! As we grow, the yoke will be destroyed. Happy New Year!

"The Gift" Focuses on the True Christmas Gift

By Lydia Owens

"The Gift"

Oh Come All Ye Faithful, Joyful and Triumphant.
 Oh Come Ye, Oh Come Ye to Bethlehem.
 Come and behold him, born the king of Angels,
 Oh Come Let Us Adore Him, Oh Come Let Us Adore Him.
 Oh Come Let Us Adore Him, Christ the Lord!

After the opening hymn, the audience braced for a walk to remember. In this stage play, 'Momma D', (an angel on assignment at St John) single-handedly commanded the audience and cast members to focus on The TRUE Gift for Christmas. The plot highlighted real life challenges including; dealing with low self-esteem, marital troubles, financial turmoil, and raising children in today's society.



Momma D is elated to see Vicki operating in heightened self-esteem, as reflected through her external make over.

In the first Act, a St John AME employer was divinely persuaded to hire Momma D. As the story unfolded the audience also met and learned more about Momma D's protégé Mr. Brown, (an angel still in training); the Ross', and their financial woes; Vicki, (a single mother on the brink of a breakdown), and her wayward 'tween' son. "The church ladies", drew plenty of laughs gossiping and holding court about everything happening at St. John. In her edgy yet "motherly" way, Momma D helped heal each situation, one by one.

The dramatization included moving dance selections by the St. John Dance Ministry. Songs ministered include, *What If, Nobody but Jesus*, and *Take Me to the King*.

Act 2 proceeded with Momma D in counseling mode, providing sound advice to Mrs. Ross, and Vicki as they sorted through their turmoil. Mr. Brown earned his wings leading Vicki's son off the path of 'thug life' to seeking the Lord. Act 2 wrapped with the children "practicing", (but actually performing) their Christmas speeches. Momma D offered words of wisdom to the little ones as well. The finale featured Momma D in "preacher mode" as she sewed together the lessons learned through each family, with wise reflection, reminding persons present that "the best gifts don't always come in packages", and the best gift of all, is Jesus Christ.



Three Magi in "Take Me to the King"

(Continued on page 3)

"The Gift" Focuses on the True Christmas Gift

By Lydia Owens

(Continued from page 2)

The scene titled, "The Gift," included speeches from the children of St. John and a musical selection, "Away in a Manger," by the Children's Choir. The final scene was a present day Church service that included the sermon by Pastor Clayborn. His message was entitled "There Is Joy" with text from Philippians 4:4-7. The sermon was appropriate for the Sunday after the tragic Newtown, Connecticut school shooting.



The children are focused on Momma D's message to them.



Pastor Clayborn delivers morning message.

Pastor Clayborn stated that "in God's presence there is joy, yet it does not negate the pain and suffering." He continued by sharing that there is no situation that can keep one from tapping into God's joy. He listed ways of maintaining the joy of the Lord as having appropriate relationships with other brothers and sisters, pray to empty one's self before God, and by giving God thanks. He also reminded congregants that Paul was in prison when he wrote Philippians but he was still able to encourage others to "rejoice."

Congratulations to the dedicated and talented team who made this celebration of Christmas possible. Mrs. Donna Gullatte was Executive Producer and Co-writer, Ms. Janette Smith was the Director/Writer and Mrs. Cheryl Anders on was Production Manager / Assistant Writer. A host of other St. John members participated as the staff, crew, vocalists, dancers and the band. It was a refreshing approach to ministering hope and healing through drama, dance and song.

Truly, "The best gifts don't always come in packages."

Watch Night Service Concludes Yoke Release Month

By The Reverend Charles Glover

Watch Night Service was held at Saint John African Methodist Episcopal Church on Monday night, December 31, 2012. This service culminated the 2012 calendar year in which numerous challenges as well as victories were experienced. That being said, the month of December was designated as "Yoke Release Month" by the Right Reverend James L. Davis, Servant Bishop of the Ninth Episcopal District. The Ninth District members were encouraged to release those yokes and shackles that continued to keep us in bondage, so that we could move upward and forward in God in 2013. We all can attest that it's hard to rise to any level with emotional and spiritual weights holding you down.

Pastor Clayborn opened the service by extending a hearty welcome to those in attendance. A special greeting was extended to St. John's sister church, Grady-Madison AME Church of Madison, Alabama, where the Reverend William Slade is pastor.



Praise team members Justin York, Dennis DeLoach, Shay Williams-York, Janette Smith, Cheryl Anderson, Christina Sanders and Karman Latimore minister in song.

The Saint John AME Church Praise Team enthusiastically led those assembled in a medley of congregational songs in our opening. Their enthusiasm was contagious and those in attendance could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit. Reverend Slade of Grady-Madison AME Church conducted the prayer which encouraged our hearts to not be weary in well-doing, for we shall reap if we faint not. He reminded us that we stand on the shoulder of our ancestors who prayed some of the same prayers we pray today and we are, today, the recipients, of those prayers. So we too, must pray unceasingly, for others, as well as our families. Reverend Merriam Garrett of Saint John AME Church read the scriptural passage of Isaiah, Chapter 20, verses 20-27. The Praise Team followed the scripture with a very uplifting rendition of the contemporary song, "He Is Able". The congregation was moved to join in as the words of the song ministered to our souls.

"God is able to do just what He said He will do. He is going to fulfill every promise made to you. Don't give up on God and He won't give up on you. He is able!"

Dr. Jennifer Patterson, Leader of Saint John Dance Ministry, performed a very moving dance presentation, accompanied by the song, "Be Free". Decree and declare ourselves to be free in 2013. Free from all strongholds, both seen and unseen.



Dr. Patterson ministers in dance.

The Praise Team rendered the sermon hymn entitled, "I Can't Go Back To The Way It Used To Be" which prepared us for the Watch Night sermon. The sermon was delivered by Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn, the pastor's spouse and the Executive Minister of Saint John AME Church. The text was taken from Acts, Chapter 27, verses 42-44. The subject was "Making It On Broken Pieces". Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn told the story of how Paul, accompanied by Luke and others, set sail for Rome. Paul was under guard by a Roman centurion. Paul, just like us some-

(Continued on page 5)

Watch Night Service

(Continued from page 4)



Rev. Sheri delivers the Watch Night message.

times, was in a rough situation. He was in a ship in the winter with storms raging, under guard and with other prisoners. Paul warns of danger if they set sail in this environment and tells the others you may lose something but you will not lose your life. The centurion in charge of the party set sail anyway and just as Paul had warned, they were caught in a terrible storm and driven for days. Passengers threw portions of their ship load overboard to lighten their load. On the fourteenth day, Paul is given a vision, through the visitation of an angel that God will keep the ship safe and they will arrive at their destination. The centurion orders all to stay with the ship, and the next day the ship runs aground on the island of Malta. As Paul had promised, everyone reaches shore safely. Reverend Smith-Clayborn highlighted three main characterizations of Paul's assurance:

1. Paul knows he belongs to God and he puts his situation into perspective. Paul affirms he "believes God" and not just "in God." Paul believed what God said about his circumstances and did not allow fear or peer pressure to convince him otherwise. We are not defined by our broken pieces, but by God. When we are open with who we are and where we are, we can move forward in God.
2. Paul serves God and knows the depth of his relationship with Him. He is honest about his location. To overcome any obstacle, we must "face it" to be able to "fix it". We must submit to the God and "good (the Holy Spirit)" that is within us. God's truth (1 John 2:27) provides the right path to follow, and God's light (1 John 1:5) provides the clear vision to follow it. If you feel surrounded by darkness and uncertainty, follow God's light and truth. He will guide you. It is our light and not our darkness that frightens us. "We were born to manifest the glory of God in us." (Marianne Williamson) Even though we walk through some valleys, we trust our pathways will be lit and our hearts comforted by Jesus, the Light of the World.
3. Paul has faith that God will keep His Word. Let what worked in the past go. The way you got to your blessing before may not be the way God gets you there this time. Weigh your options, but walk in the completeness of your relationship with Christ.

In summation, Paul made it to shore and believers will also with Jesus on their side. Even if you only have broken pieces...you can make it. As Christians, we are reminded each time we partake of Holy Communion that we can make it on broken pieces.



The burning of Yoke Release Forms, the yokes that members committed to not take into 2013, brought an end to the month long appeal to release whatever was binding them. Members of both congregations, St. John and Grady-Madison, watched via live broadcast as officers burned the yoke release forms outside of the church. Everyone rejoiced as they welcomed the new year, free of the yokes that bound them in 2012.



AME Church Founder's Day to be Celebrated Across the Connection

The African Methodist Episcopal Church will celebrate Founder's Day on the second Sunday in February. All churches in the Ninth Episcopal District will use a special bulletin designed to highlight the history of this great Zion.

St. John will observe Founder's Day at both the 8:00 a.m. and 10:50 a.m. services on February 9, 2013. The guest preacher for the 10:50 a.m. service will be The Right Reverend C. Garnett Henning, the 112th elected and consecrated bishop of the AME Church. Bishop Henning served as an active bishop from 1992 to 2012. He retired at the 2012 General Conference in Nashville, Tennessee. He now resides in Los Angeles, California. Please make plans to celebrate Founder's Day at St. John for both the 8:00 a.m. and 10:50 a.m. services.

Message Inspires Lay to Be Active



Ms. Tamara Bonner

St. John's Lay Organization held a "Lay Roundup" on Saturday, December 8, 2012. Ms. Tamara Bonner was the guest speaker. Her message provided both inspiration and instruction. In an entertaining presentation style, she told lay persons who were present what the responsibilities of the Lay Organization are, how meetings should (and should not) be conducted, and how important it is for every non-clergy member to be active in the Lay Organization.

A delicious lunch from Carrabba's Italian Grill was served and members were able to fellowship with one another and the speaker.

Watch the church calendar for meeting dates of the Lay Organization as well as other special events that are sponsored by the organization. Ms. Cassandra Ingram is the president of the St. John Lay Organization.

Let IT Go

By Paulette Bargon

Dr. Phil says, "Get over IT!"

Rev. Dr. Patrick Clayborn says "Let IT Go!"

IT, Burdens your soul. Satan says "burdens keep me alive."

IT, Makes you angry. Satan says "anger makes me happy."

IT, Keeps you stressed. Satan says "That's a good thing."

IT, Lets you hold on to pain, mentally and physically. Satan says "I love pain."

IT, Is always disappointing. Satan says "I feel stronger every time you feel that way."

IT, keeps you in despair, Satan says "Good! Why are we giving Satan so much power? He hates us. He knows that not forgiving will always keep us close to him. Evil is alive and well and we don't need to help IT survive in any way.

God says, we must forgive others when they have wronged us and to seek forgiveness when we have wronged others. If you can't forgive, then take IT to God and He will do the forgiving. Just pray and leave IT on the altar. You will be surprised how much better you will feel.

...if My people...will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways: I will hear from heaven and forgive their sins and heal their land.

- 2 Chronicles 7:14



St. John's Soup Kitchen

OPEN-HANDED HELP

"You shall open your hand wide to (the poor).
Deuteronomy 15:8



ST. JOHN A.M.E. CHURCH
SOUP KITCHEN

3rd and 4th Tuesdays
11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m.

228 Church Street * Huntsville, AL
(on the corner of Church and Monroe Streets)
ALL ARE WELCOME

When encountering homeless people one can't help but gratefully think of all God has given to them. They may even consider what more they can do to help those who are less fortunate. Moses' instructions on providing for the poor are clear. He told the Israelites "Do not shut your hand from your poor brother, but . . . open your hand wide to him. (Deuteronomy 15:7-8). An open hand symbolizes the way God wanted His nation to provide for impoverished people, giving willingly and freely. No excuses no holding back (v.9). When open-handed help is extended to the poor, God blesses for the kindness.

(Psalm 41:1-3); (Proverbs 19:17)

The St. John Soup Kitchen Ministry continues to extend warm nutritious meals to the hungry on the 3rd and 4th Tuesdays of each month. Thank God for the grace of giving.

Nursery Ministry Coming Soon

Mission:

The **Nursery Ministry** will provide a safe, caring, inviting, nurturing, spirit-filled environment for infants and toddlers that will meet their needs and put at ease the concerns of parents/guardians as they participate in corporate worship.

Beginning

Sunday, February 3, 2013

10:50 a.m. Worship Service

Infants through 4 year olds

If you are interested in volunteering, please see
Rev. Sheri Smith Clayborn or Mrs. Rickshel Love

Academics Meeting Excellence Tutorial Ministry

By Barbara Johnson

Do you need academic assistance? Are you failing a course and need help.. NOW? St. John is organizing the **Academics Meeting Excellence Tutorial Ministry** to meet the needs of students in the 8th-12th grades. We want you to succeed! The tutorial program will be comprised of two components. The first will be a partnership with Davis Hills Middle School, where Mrs. Jill Burwell is principal. The second component will be tutoring at St. John A.M.E. for 9th-12th grade students.

The graduation rate for minority students continues to decrease, additionally the drop-out rate for this group continues to increase. The use of the Alabama High School Graduation Examine (AHSGE) has not helped the situation. Senior high school students must pass all five parts of the test (Mathematics, Reading, Language, Social Studies and Biology) in order to fulfill the graduation requirements for an Alabama Diploma. Students are allowed several opportunities to take each section until they pass. If you have taken the AHSGE and have not passed all five sections, we can help you with the sections you still need to pass. The next administration of the AHSGE is in March.

Prevention is the key. Our partnership with Davis Hills Middle School will prepare 8-8th grade students for the new changes in testing. This is the last year for the AHSGE. However, the incoming high school students of 2013 will be challenged with a different graduation assessment. Tutors are needed for these students in reading and math.

Registration forms for tutoring sessions are located outside the church office. Tutors are needed for both locations, St. John and Davis Hills. Volunteer forms and tutor registration forms should be submitted to either, Rev. Sheri, Barbara Johnson or Lauretta Teague. Additional information regarding times and dates for tutoring can be found on the registration form.

Let's get to work!

Dr. King Holiday and Historic President Obama Inauguration Represent A Dream (Work) in Progress

By Bridget J. Floyd



Eighty-four years ago, on January 15, 1929, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was born and on April 4, 1968, he was struck down by an assassin's bullet. The accomplishments in those thirty-nine (39) years surpass those of many who have lived ninety years or more, not to mention the legacy of the scholar, minister, civil rights leader/ activist, Nobel Laureate, husband and father.

While he is said to have had a delayed and/or reluctant course in terms of embracing the areas in which he would excel; he became an early entrant to Morehouse College, completed seminary training and became a pastor as well as what would become the quintessential civil rights leader at a time when major social and legal changes occurred in the United States. He garnered national and international attention for efforts

to eradicate racial injustices via his nonviolent protest movement (based on Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy). Although it was challenging to be spat upon and physically brutalized, King and others endured. Dr. King made numerous speeches and wrote letters "from a Birmingham jail" that chronicled the movement and the man.

His accomplishments were not without controversy and he had many who disagreed with the issues as well as his approach to remedy the inequities in the segregated South. There were those who felt the status quo was fine and others who felt a more militant and even violent approach was the preferred method to effect change. Clearly the controversy and resistance to his activism/leadership, particularly as it took on economic as well as political issues such as the Vietnam War, resulted in Dr. King making the ultimate sacrifice. He was embracing the economic concerns of striking Memphis sanitation workers at the time of his death. He made what seemed to be a prophetic speech the night before his death; invoking the Old Testament "emancipator", Moses, who was given the view from the mountaintop of the positive outcome that would come to those who were freed from Egypt's hold, but Moses would not reach the promised land with his people.

Rather than dying with him, "The Movement" lived on and his legacy continues. One of the most quoted speeches of Dr. King is the "I Have a Dream" speech which occurred during the March on Washington with over 200,000 persons in attendance. Of all the many examples of progress and fulfillment of "The Dream", none seems to stimulate more discussion or speculation, not to mention comparisons, than the accomplishments of the first, and now re-elected, African American President of the United States of America, Barack H. Obama.

Many speculated about the reaction of the Civil Rights Leader, were he to be able to comment on President Obama's election, as well as other significant strides in racial and economic opportunity. The election, and now re-election is clearly more than an impassioned movement by those who would embrace the historical significance, "embodiment of the dream" or even newcomers to the political/voting arena. That is, this was not a flash in the pan.

So, it appears sufficient to say that the Dream is "in progress" and continuous strides are being

(Continued on page 9)

Dr. King Holiday and Historic President Obama Inauguration Represent A Dream (Work) in Progress

By Bridget J. Floyd

(Continued from page 8)

made. The focus on President Obama highlights "Dream components" of education, character rather than surface or demographic characteristics, resistance to geographic limitations (e.g. Red or Blue States) and how the youth of this country (and the world) when allowed to be untainted by negative teachings, can "lead them" and bring the dream to full fruition "one day". While President Obama is the focus, there are numerous examples at the national, local, and personal levels that many in this country can reflect upon and even cite personal examples of making strides.

While Dr. King received the Nobel Peace Prize at the young age of thirty-five (35), President Obama became a recipient of the Peace Prize as he transitioned into the position of leader of the free world and demonstrated an effort to reposition the United States as a consensus builder rather than an elite unilateral operation, which one could argue, sets the stage for "peace".



President Obama has in many ways paid homage to Dr. King and his legacy, sometimes in very subtle ways. The significance to those who participated in the Civil Rights Movement as well as to those who read about its history, was clear when at the first inauguration, Reverend Joseph Lowery, on the steps of the Capitol, would offer a prayer that invoked the spiritual, historical, (and Dream) significance of this event. For his second term, President Obama will take the oath of office using two Bibles. In addition to the Lincoln Bible which was used in 2009, Mr. Obama will also have atop the Lincoln Bible, that of Dr. King. This is reportedly Dr. King's "travel Bible" from which he prepared sermons and has notations of significance in it. Mr. Obama will take the oath of office with his left hand on the Bibles of Dr. King and President Lincoln, as he and others can view the completed Martin Luther King Memorial, on the official Martin Luther King national holiday, January 21, 2013.

The Dream in Progress!

A few famous quotes from Dr. King

"...I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character..."

"A genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus."

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

"Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle. And so we must straighten our backs and work for our freedom. A man can't ride you unless your back is bent."

Parent Wisdom

By Sister Vanessa Glover

A Heart of Wisdom

Psalm 90:12



The term wisdom is most often associated with the elderly and aged, mature person or someone who has experiences in life and someone who has achieved what we call success. According to the Book of James in the New Testament—the wisdom God gives is neither earthly, nor unspiritual, nor seeks selfish ambitions; but rather the wisdom God gives comes from heaven which is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. James 3: 13-17 NIV

Furthermore, the wisdom of God gives us balance, strength, and insight none of which is a natural trait. In other words, we do not get these traits just because we are human beings; it comes from God. The more we glean God's wisdom, the more strength we gain to live with questions and tensions of life. Thank God He does not issue us rules and regulations for every turbulent moment, yet He provides in the Holy Bible guidelines and principles, then He allows us to make decisions. The good news is that the wisdom of God works on our behalf and we begin to learn how to walk through the valley of life—which is full of subtle and unseen "land mines." God's wisdom is necessary for it provides the "sixth sense" we need. God's wisdom is what matures us to press on in spite of the unanswered questions and tension.

When it comes to God's wisdom, there is no such thing as instant maturity or instant wisdom. We are to seek God's wisdom daily in prayer. God's spiritual insight is not measured by our scholastic accomplishments as time and numbers, but rather it zeros in on the Proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel—"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For through me your days will be many and years will be added to your life." (Proverbs 9:10-11) Likewise, we are to get wisdom, keep wisdom, and embrace wisdom that we too may gain Godly insight and knowledge that produces a heart of wisdom, a fountain of joy, and sufficient grace that sustains our heart. Wisdom is like a treasure that is found only when we seek God's guidelines and principles. AMEN

Prayer: O Lord, Our God you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. From everlasting to everlasting you are God. For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, so Lord teach us to seek your Divine instructions. Teach us Lord, to set our affections on

things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

As a Thoughtful Parent: Godly wisdom may not give us great popularity and wealth as society defines it. However, when we line up God's will for our lives, and submit to God, we will be successful!



*The Lord will provide your going out
and your coming home
From this time forth and for all time.*

Psalm 121:1-6

Church School Lesson Overview – February 2013

The Church School reviews for this month were written by Kenneth Parham.

February 3, 2013

Lesson Title: Awed by His Greatness

Lesson Scripture: Colossians 1:15-20

Print: Colossians 1:15-20

Devotional Songs: #68 [], #251 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell" (Colossians 1:19).

The four lessons to be presented in February 2013 are a review of Paul's letter to the people of Colossae. Paul had come to know of the new believers and their quest to follow the teachings of Jesus. Paul became concerned when he heard of strange pagan theories that were creeping into the church. The views that were troubling the Colossians were a mixture of astrology, magic and Judaism which downgraded the status of Jesus to an angel.

Paul's letter, for this lesson (verses 15-19), corrects the misstatement that Jesus is just another angel by describing the presence of Jesus Christ, in verses 15-20, as none other than God, himself, and as one who possesses the fullness of the eternal God. The Matthew Henry commentary states: "He was born or begotten before all the creation, before any creature was made; which is the scriptural way of representing eternity, and by which the eternity of God is represented to us. All things being created by Him, were created for Him; being made by His power, they were made according to His pleasure, and for His praise and glory. He not only created them all at first, but it is by the word of His power that they are upheld. Christ as Mediator is the Head of the body, the church; all grace and strength are from Him; and the church is His body."

In verse 20, Paul explained that Jesus also made atonement for mankind - redeeming mankind by shedding of His blood on the cross; which brought peace between God and mankind.

February 10, 2013

Lesson Title: Complete in Christ

Lesson Scripture: Colossians 2:6-15

Print: Colossians 2:6-15

Devotional Songs: #364 [], #258 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power" (Colossians 2:10).

Paul's letter to the Colossians, verses 6-8, acknowledged false teachings/philosophies which were vain and deceitful; and while it pleased man's fancies, it hindered his faith. Examples noted were curious speculations about things above us, or no concern to us. Those who walked in the way of the world, were turned from following Christ.

Paul asked that the Colossians be steadfast in their belief knowing that their faith in Jesus was complete. By this one word "complete," an acknowledgement was made that in Christ believers have everything required. Faith in Christ, as pointed out in verses 10-15, is grounded in the circumcision of the heart, the crucifixion of the flesh, the death and burial to sin and to the world, and the resurrection to newness of life, set forth in baptism, and by faith formed in ones heart. These fundamental blocks of Christian faith prove that sins are forgiven, and that they are fully delivered from the curse of the world. Through Christ, persons who were dead in sins, are now alive. Christ's death was the death of sins; Christ's resurrection is the assurance that souls of believers will live eternally.

February 17, 2013

Lesson Title: Clothed in Christ

Lesson Scripture: Colossians 3:1-17

Print: Colossians 3:1-17

Tentative Devotional Songs: #390 [], #272 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "Above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness" (Colossians 3:14).

Paul's letter continues to provide instructions to the Colossians concerning Christian living.

Paul indicated that to be followers of Christ one must give up the "old" self or the flesh. Some of the qualities of the flesh were noted as: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desires, greed, anger, wrath, malice and slander. Paul indicated that those who dwell in the flesh will receive

(Continued on page 12)



Church School Lesson

(Continued from page 11)

the wrath of God. However, Paul instructed the Colossians to continue their walk in the spirit of Christ. Spiritual qualities are noted as: compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Paul reminded the Colossians that in Christ there is no distinction of nationality, all are of Christ's likeness.

In settling disagreements amongst one another, Paul instructed the Colossians to deal with one another with love and forgiveness. Paul points out that the greatest quality that exemplifies Christ's walk is that of love. Each person should interact with others in the spirit of love. Paul noted that love leads to perfect harmony or peace.

Paul also instructed the Colossians to teach with wisdom and gladness of the spirit. He asked that whatever one does for others, do it giving thanks unto God through Jesus. Only in this manner will works be a blessing.

February 24, 2013

Lesson Title: Reaching the World

Lesson Scripture: Colossians 4:1-17

Print: Colossians 4:1-8

Tentative Devotional Songs: #221[]; #412[]; and #243 []

Key Verse: "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time" (Colossians 4:5).

Paul concluded the letter to the Colossians by requesting that they stay prayerful; always remembering to thank God for their many blessings. Paul asked that the Colossians pray for him that he could continue to profess Christ and do Christ's work as commanded.

Lastly, Paul gave instructions for dealing with outsiders or non-believers. He indicated that the Colossians should always be graceful in speech. Their speech should be seasoned (continuously seeking spiritual knowledge and guidance) so that one can answer correctly to any man.

Make Church School a part of your regular Sunday schedule!

There are classes for all ages.



Church School Book Club

January 2013

Discussion Date: 19 January 13
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

A Man's Worth, Nikita Lynnette Nichols, 2008

February 2013

Discussion Date: 18 February 13
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Amen Sisters, Angela Benson, 2015

Francine Amen: When I became a ministry leader, I renounced my family, friends, and church because I felt they didn't believe "enough." Then a terrible thing happened and I felt so responsible, I had a breakdown. Now I'm living back home with my sister, and trying to make things right. But I don't know if I can ever forgive myself – or if anyone else will.

Dawn Amen-Ray: I stuck by my sister because it was the right thing to do. I didn't believe that Francine could turn things around for herself. But she surprised me, and helped the most unlikely people come to grips with their own mistakes. The secrets she uncovered about us would force me to grow up (finally!) and discover what I was truly made of.

Insightful, unforgettably real, and compassionate, *The Amen Sisters* is about confronting the difficult truth, facing our painful mistakes, and reclaiming God's abundant hope and promise.

GO GREEN in 2013!

- Maximize Fuel Efficiency
 - Keep tires inflated at the maximum safe pressure
 - Keep your car in good working order.
 - Replace dirty air filters
 - Use the correct viscosity oil for the season.

Reference: <http://www.green2013.com>

February 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 9:00 a.m. Usher Board Meeting 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 10:00 a.m. Office Board Meeting 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal 12:00 p.m. Quarterly Conference
3 COMMUNION 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship AMEN Deadline	4 50+ Meeting 9:30 a.m.	5 6:00 p.m. Stewardess Board  Voices In Praise Rehearsal	6 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study 5:00 PM Steward Board	7  6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	8 Kohona Sweet In Sassy 7:00 p.m.	9 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry AMEN Staff Meeting 10:30 a.m.
10 FOUNDER'S DAY 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship	11	12 6:00 p.m. Sons of Allen Mtg.  Voices In Praise Rehearsal	13 12:00 p.m. Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Ask Wednesday Service	14	15  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	16 9th District YPD LTI 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
17 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship YPD Meeting	18	19 6:00 p.m. Trustee Board Mtg. 11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	20 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	21  6:00 p.m. Mass Chorus Rehearsal	22  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	23 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry Women's Ministry 10:30 a.m. WMS Meeting
24 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship	25  6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	26 11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN 8:30 p.m. Church School Meeting	27 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study LOVE FEAST	28  6:00 p.m. Mass Chorus Rehearsal		

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

Non-profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Huntsville, AL
Permit No. 240

Return Service Requested

E-mail: stjohnameh@aol.com

Website: stjohnamehsv.org

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



me2

Important Dates to Remember

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| January 18, 2013 | Connectional Lay Empowerment Workshop,
Friday Worship, St. Paul AME Church (Smithfield) Birmingham
Pastor Clayborn, Preacher |
| February 2, 2013 | Official Board, 10:00 a.m.
Quarterly Conference, 12:00 p.m. |
| February 3, 2013 | Opening of St. John Nursery, 10:50 a.m. |
| February 10, 2013 | Founder's Day, Bishop C. Garnett Henning, Guest Preacher |
| February 13, 2013 | Ash Wednesday, 12 noon & 6:30 p.m. Worship Service |
| February 16, 2013 | Ninth District YPD LTI, Mobile, 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 18 Issue 2

February 2013

Pastor's Meditation

Interpreting Stones

Joshua 4:1-7



Reverend Patrick D. Clayton

The ancient Israelites realized the importance of keeping their history alive. When they crossed over the Jordan River, they took twelve stones to serve as a memorial of how God delivered their people. This would allow the story of God's deliverance to flow from one generation to the next. Joshua predicted that their children would ask the elders to interpret the meaning of the stones: "What do these stones mean to you?" Joshua told the people to give their children the account of how God helped them cross over into the Promised Land. They needed to interpret the stones for the next generation.

In like manner, we will be interpreting our own stones this month. February is Black History Month, and February 10, 2013, was Founder's Day for the African Methodist Episcopal Church. To help us interpret the stones of our past, we invited Bishop C. Garnett Henning to be our keynote preacher for Founder's Day at our 10:50 A.M. worship service on Feb. 10th. Bishop Henning is a native of Memphis, TN (God's country)! He earned his high school diploma, undergraduate, and seminary degrees from Booker T. Washington High School (Memphis, TN), Wilberforce University (Wilberforce, OH), and Payne Theological Seminary (Wilberforce, OH) respectively. He also did further study in the doctoral program of Eden Theological Seminary.

Bishop Henning has served as a pastor across the breadth of the denomination. A key pastoral appointment for him was at St. Paul A.M.E. Church in St. Louis, MO. There, he established the Committee for Equal Justice, which investigated dishonest practices in the Bail Bond system. Bishop Henning also founded the Black Clergy Coalition that focused on developing a system of religious, political, and economic partnership within the African American community. Additionally, he served as Executive Director of Block Partnership - which partnered urban and suburban churches. As a result, Bishop Henning's congregation joined Parish Partners, an interchange program between city and county churches.



Bishop Henning was an activist pastor and took that activism into the episcopacy. He became one of our most progressive bishops. Bishop Henning believes in moving forward as we honor our history. He said, "I do value tradition, but I also believe that when tradition locks you up in your past and denies you access to the future, you have to confront it." With this kind of progress in mind, he built A. M. E. University in Liberia during a civil war, started a host of churches in South Africa, contributed to the Women in Ministry as he supported the election of Vashti McKenzie as our first female bishop, and gave leadership to both Wilberforce University and Payne Theological Seminary while serving in Ohio. In his tenure (1992-2012), Bishop Henning served the 14th, 19th, 8th, and 3rd Episcopal Districts of our denomination as the 112th elected and consecrated bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Bishop Henning brought these experiences of an activist pastor, progressive bishop, and a Civil Rights worker to us. He not only brought them to us in the preaching moment, but we heard of

(Continued on page 6)

¹Joshua 4:1-7 (NKJV).

²http://www.cantonrep.com/news/576548943/Bishop-AME-Church-joins-modern-concerns-with-a-sense-of-history?c_p=1 (as of January 31, 2013).

Lay Connectional Workshop Focuses on Christ-Centered Leadership



On Friday and Saturday, January 18 and 19, the 4th Regional Seminar-Workshop was held at the Sheraton Hotel and St. Paul AME Church in Birmingham. The theme was the Connectional Lay Organization theme, "Building on Our Global Legacy of Christ-Centered Leadership and Training." The workshop was led by the Connectional Lay Director, Mrs. Edith Bartley Cartledge (1st Episcopal District). She worked closely with 9th District Lay officers, Mr. James C. Bonner, 9th District Lay President, and, Ms. Veronica Wiley, 9th District Director of Lay Activities, to organize this outstanding workshop. Other Connectional Lay officers present were Dr. Willie C. Glover, Connectional Lay President (3rd Episcopal District), Mrs. Starr Battle, Connectional Corresponding Secretary (2nd Episcopal District), Mr. Darwin K. Eldridge, Connection Lay Treasurer (13th Episcopal District), and Mr. Richard Bowden, Connectional Lay Financial Secretary (9th Episcopal District). Most of these persons were also workshop presenters. Other guest presenters from outside the 9th Episcopal District were Attorney Patricia Mayberry, Director of Lay Activities for the 5th Episcopal District Lay Organization, and Mr. Lionel Merritt, Director of Lay Activities for the 11th Episcopal District. Bishop and Mother Davis, Host Bishop and Supervisor, were present, as well as Bishop T. Larry Kirkland.

The workshops began on Friday afternoon at the Sheraton. The first workshop, by Mrs. Edith Bartley Cartledge, set the tone for the series of presentations. She did an outstanding job on the presentation entitled "Roles and Duties/Responsibilities of Officers."



The Worship Service was held at St. Paul, Smithfield, where the Reverend Ronald D. Sterling, is pastor. Ninth District Lay officers and Presiding Elders participated in the service and music was rendered by the 9th Episcopal District Northwest Alabama Conference Choir. The highlight of the service was the sermon delivered by the Reverend Doctor Patrick D. Clayborn. A delegation of over 20 members was present to support Pastor Clayborn. Presiding Elder Oliver Allen introduced Pastor Clayborn. The sermon was entitled "Clean House" and the scripture was from Matthew 12:44-45. He began the message by listing persons in history and today who have said that it is time to clean house. He noted Dr. Martin Luther King was saying in 1963 that it is time to clean house, President Obama is saying it is time to clean house with legislation on gun control, and Richard Allen in 1787 was saying it is time to clean house when he led the delegation out of St. George's. He then stated that Jesus was saying in the sermon text that it was time to "clean house." Dr. Clayborn emphasized the fact that once the house is cleaned, it must be kept clean.

He used the analogy of the television show "Hoarders" to make his points on how believers can "clean house" and keep it clean so that the demons do not return.

1. Bring in an expert. God is that expert because He is the only one who can cast out demons. Believers need God, His mercy and grace, His Son and His Spirit.
2. Face issues and address "the mess" that the unclean spirit left behind. When the inside is clean the unclean spirit is uncomfortable. When lives and the church are cleaned up, the unclean spirit will have no place.

3. Fill the house. The Pharisees said that they loved the Lord, but they were empty. Believers

Pastor Clayborn preaches at Lay Connectional Workshop.

(Continued on page 3)

Lay Connectional Workshop Focuses on Christ-Centered Leadership

(Continued from page 2)

must fill the house by doing God's will, following their calling, and giving God their devotion.

He concluded by summarizing what is needed to clean house with the statement "Nothing but the blood of Jesus."



Mrs. Cartledge leads workshop.

From the responses of the worshippers, this powerful message was a blessing and an inspiration and it most likely encouraged many to "Clean House." St. John was proud of the way that Pastor Clayborn was used of God to deliver such a timely and powerful message.

Workshops continued on Saturday morning. Mrs. Starr Battle presented a workshop entitled "From Church Membership to Christian Discipleship." She used scenes from the movie *The Matrix* and her personal experience to show that one must make the decision to move from membership to Discipleship. She shared her experiences that led her to choose to exercise her Discipleship in the AME Church in the Lay Organization.

Mr. Darwin K. Eldridge presented a workshop on "Budget and Finance." This comical, yet factual, workshop discussed procedures for creating and managing budgets as well as proper handling of income and expenses of the church. Using a sample of a financial statement and budget from a church in the 13th Episcopal District, he explained the importance of keeping proper records and following procedures.

The keynote presentation (and most requested, per Mrs. Cartledge) was "Duties and Responsibilities of Stewards and Trustees." This workshop was presented by Attorney Patricia Mayberry, who in addition to being an officer in the 5th Episcopal District Lay Organization is the president of the Judicial Council of the AME Church. Attorney Mayberry added "meat" to the duties and responsibilities listed in *The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* for Stewards and Trustees. As she discussed each point she shared her personal experience as a Steward, her legal expertise as an attorney for the government, and her involvement in the judicial matters of the AME Church.

Mr. Lionel Merrit of the Bahamas (11th Episcopal District) gave a moving presentation entitled "Experiencing Anvil Love – I Need You and You Need Me." In this presentation Mr. Merrit connected the history of the anvil with the important role of today's Lay in supporting one another and working together.

The final presentation was from the Reverend Rodney D. Smith, pastor of Parks Chapel AME Church, Dothan, Alabama, 9th Episcopal District. The workshop was "Effective Leadership in Difficult Times." He used the movie *The WZ* and John Maxwell's book *Five Levels of Leadership* to provide insights on leadership and the 5 P's of leadership (position, production, permission, people development and personhood).

The workshop was well planned, the worship service was spirit-filled, the presenters were outstanding, and the 9th Episcopal District was well represented by attendance of lay and clergy. Gratitude is expressed to the Connectional Lay leadership, Ninth District Lay leadership and the host church for an outstanding leadership enrichment weekend.

"We the People" Our Experiences at the Second Inaugural of President Barack Obama, The First African American President

By Andrew and Abbiegail Hugine

In this nation in which we live, the inauguration is a visible symbol of our republic in action. The inauguration shows how we peacefully transfer power from one president to another. While the inauguration is a celebration of "we the people," for us, as African Americans, the past two inaugurations have taken on even greater meaning. When we think of the inauguration of the first African American President, it is the fulfillment of the words of the Negro National Anthem, "God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, Thou who has brought us thus far on the way; Thou who has by Thy might, Led us into the light . . ." The inauguration of President Barack Obama as the first African American president is truly a testament that He "has brought us thus far on the way and by His might, Led us into the light" the light of the fulfillment of the dreams, hopes, and aspirations of our ancestors.

We were fortunate to attend the first inauguration in 2009. There was a record crowd then and because of our unfortunate experience of getting stuck in the tunnel, we thought about not attending again. However, something just said to us that if you are able and God provides, then go again. Inauguration tickets are very, very limited. To obtain tickets you must go through the members of your congressional delegation. In addition to the inaugural tickets, we were able to get tickets to the Inaugural Ball.

Obtaining the tickets is one thing but picking them up is another. When you go to the inauguration you should be ready to walk a lot and stand in lines. You should also be ready to ride the Metro System, which by the way is quite efficient, safe, and fun to ride. Andrew stood in line about two hours to pick up the Inaugural Ball tickets at the Convention Center.

After picking up the tickets for the Ball, we had to pick up tickets for the inauguration from the congressional offices. There we had lines again, but not as long. To enter the building required going

through screening, but once through the screening we were able to pick up our tickets. We picked up tickets from Senator Shelby's Office in the Russell Building. We then walked another 10 minutes to the Longworth Building to pick up tickets from Congressman Brooks' Office. Congressman Brooks hosted a reception for constituents in his district who came to pick up tickets. We had an opportunity to spend about 20 minutes with Representative Brooks and his wife Martha.

Then on Monday, January 21, 2013 the day we had been anxiously awaiting arrived-- the day of the inauguration. We started early that morning to be certain that we could go through screening and arrive in time to claim our spaces. When we arrived at our location for check point, the lines were short. We made our way to our seats to find that people were there when the doors opened at 6:30 am. We were able to find great seats. We were in the center of people from all over the world. There were people who came

(Continued on page 5)



Dr. & Mrs. Hugine wait for the Inauguration to begin.

"We the People" Our Experiences at the Second Inaugural of President Barack Obama, The First African American President

By Andrew and Abbiegail Hugine

(Continued from page 4)

from Europe, Africa and other continents to witness this event. Everyone was excited. We sat for about two hours before the program began. I know that people watching on TV had a better vantage point, because they could hear the comments, but we were also able to hear comments from the crowd around us. We even met a college classmate from South Carolina. There were people in the crowd who talked politics, shared stories and people who led chants "Obama, Obama, Obama." President Obama's speech, although heard around the world, was different for us because we could feel the pounding hearts, hear the cheers and hear the words not transposed over the air! The atmosphere was one of patience, kindness, respect and love for each other. This shows how "we the people" can co-exist for the common good.

After the ceremony, it took 30 minutes or more to exit our area, but there was not one negative comment made. We walked fourteen blocks to the office where we were invited to observe the parade. It was worth the walk, because this was one of the areas where President and Mrs. Obama got out of the car as well as Vice President and Dr. Jill Biden. The security was extremely tight!!! Everyone going to the parade had to be screened!!

On Monday night we attended one of the Inaugural Balls. The two hour wait the previous day to get the Ball tickets was all worth it. We witnessed President Obama and First Lady Michelle's first dance in person, although we waited for almost another three hours for their arrival at the Ball. We were entertained by Smokey Robinson, the group Black Violin, Alicia Keyes, Katy Perry, Stevie Wonder, and others. Jamie Foxx serenaded Vice-President and Dr. Jill Biden and Jennifer Hudson serenaded the President and Mrs. Obama to the Al Green song, "Let's Stay Together." What an evening! Again, "we the people," Black, White, Asian, Hispanic and others enjoyed an evening of music, fun fellowship and the opportunity to be in the same room with the President and First Lady of the United States of America.

Experiencing the inaugural event first hand event was worthwhile. We cannot express in words what we saw with our natural eyes and felt in our hearts. Growing up, we never thought that we would live to see an African American as

President of the United States during our lifetime. But thanks to God Almighty we were able to experience, not once, but twice, the inauguration of the first African American President of the United States of America.

Editors Note: Dr. & Mrs. Hugine are members of St. John and Dr. Hugine is President of Alabama A&M University in Huntsville, Alabama.



The Hugine's at the Inaugural Ball.

Interpreting Stones



Bishop Henning shares during Heritage Moments.

(Continued from page 1)

these experiences in an afternoon program entitled "Heritage Moments." Bishop Henning, along with other Civil Rights workers in our congregation, helped us to interpret the stones of our African American history.

Let us be willing to talk about all of our stones — those stones we like and those we would rather avoid. Let us commit to lead Godly lives in light of the interpretation. Let us give God praise for what the stones ultimately mean — that God delivered our people in times past. If God did it for our foremothers and forefathers, then God can do it for us! What do these stones mean to you?

Black History Nugget



John Hope Franklin, historian, professor, and author, is worthy of research and further reading, especially by young people. Knowledge of history (from whence one has come) is important in determining one's future. Professor Franklin was a graduate of Fisk University and earned a master's degree and Ph.D., from Harvard University. He was on the faculty of both institutions as well as several other colleges and universities. He authored several books, the most well known being *From Slavery to Freedom*. He was an advisor to President Bill Clinton, was on numerous boards, and received many awards and accolades.

Nursery Opened on February 3, 2013

The St. John Nursery is now open each Sunday during the 10:50 a.m. service. Mrs. Rickshel Love is the nursery ministry coordinator.

The committee worked tirelessly over the past two months to define and implement the newly organized Nursery Ministry. Here are a few pictures from the first day of ministry.



Mrs. Love reads to students.



Mrs. Love and Mrs. Rankin pose with the first two students.

St. John's Soup Kitchen

GRACED BY GOD

"He took bread; and giving thanks to God in the presence of all, he broke it and began to eat." - Acts 27:35



ST. JOHN A.M.E. CHURCH
SOUP KITCHEN

3rd and 4th Tuesdays
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

228 Church Street * Huntsville, AL
(on the corner of Church and Monroe Streets)
ALL ARE WELCOME

From breakfast to dinner, meals are a time to bless and give thanks. By saying grace, silently or aloud, we acknowledge that God is our source, and his gift of vitality, energy and strength is fueled by food as well as His Word.

We sometimes take for granted when grabbing a purchased snack prepared by someone else or when sharing a delicious meal at home how blessed we are. Anytime our bodies are nourished we praise God for the gift of nourishing bread.

Thank God for St. John's Soup Kitchen as well as others who provide meals to feed the homeless and less fortunate of our community. St. John's Soup Kitchen is open from 11:30 - 1:00 p.m. the 3rd and 4th Tuesday of each month. Please join us! You are needed!

AME Proud

Our Name

African Methodist Episcopal



The word African means that the church was organized by people of African descent and heritage. It does not mean that the church was founded in Africa, or that it was for persons of African descent only.

The church's roots are of the family of Methodist churches. Methodism provides an orderly system of rules and regulations and places emphasis on a plain and simple gospel.

Episcopal refers to the form of government under which the church operates. The chief executive and administrative officers of the African Methodist Episcopal denomination are the Bishops of the church.

Academics Meeting Excellence Tutorial Ministry

By Laretta Teague

Updates on Tutoring at St. John

Tutors are available for students who want the service. Please contact Laretta Teague or Barbara Johnson to be assigned someone. Arrangements for meeting(s) will be between the member (tutor) and the student being tutored. The church office will need to know of plans to meet to have space available.

Also, please note there is new information on the table in the narthex and on the church announcement bulletin board. Students who will be entering high school in the fall of 2013 will be following new high school graduation requirements.

Black History Nugget

NAACP Founded in February 1909

The National Association for The Advancement of Colored People is a civil rights organization founded in 1909 by 60 black and white citizens. It helps prevent unjust acts, and set equality for all minorities. It achieved major success in the arts, business, and other fields.

Women's Ministry Met for "Chat and Chew"

By Laretta Teague

The Women of St. John met on Saturday, January 26th and had a great meeting. There were team building activities, led by Mary Rankin, and small group discussion(s) on the question "what can we do here at St. John, to facilitate better working and personal relationships between the women of St. John?"

The groups generated great ideas that will be shared at the next meeting on Saturday, February 23rd at 9:30 a.m. The question being presented will be "How do you work through the PIECES of your life and still find PEACE?" The meeting will be another "Chat and chew" meeting. All ladies of St. John are invited to participate in this wholesome discussion.

See you on the 23rd!!!!

Reconstruction 2.0: *Reviving Black Male Progress in the Age of Obama*

By Darrell Ezell, PhD

As we enter into a new liberal progressive era, led by the re-election of America's first African American President, Barack H. Obama, it is essential we re-evaluate our present social condition and the state of black male progress in the twenty-first century. By taking a look back into a lost segment of our history, the Reconstruction era, we discover a body of progress that is capable of enriching the minds of black males in this Age of Obama, a period in American history where King's conception of the "beloved community" has boldly intersected with American democracy.

Remembering an era

Historians define the Reconstruction era as a vital period in American history, between 1865 and 1877, when America's ex-slaves were integrated into public life and democracy was restored to the nation. During this period after the Civil War, the south would soon be readmitted to the Union following it insured the emancipation and political rights of African slaves turned Freedmen. But why has this essential period been discounted and rarely emphasized as an inspirational testament to African American history? A simple answer applies. A contradiction is present in that *progress* emerged from *great suffering* immediately after the emancipation of African slaves on American soil. This legacy overturns the thesis held by 19th century racists that, "the darker people of this country are incapable of producing anything beyond labor." As great strides were employed, ex-slaves would slowly regain their basic humanity through education and social services, as provided by U.S. President Abraham Lincoln's Freedmen's Bureau Bill in 1865.

However, the most disregarded accomplishment during Reconstruction would include the commission of the nation's first African American political representatives between 1865 and 1876. As many are proud to lift Barack Obama as the first African American president, his ascension into the Oval Office was, in fact, layered by the tireless efforts of ex-slaves turned public servants soon after emancipation. Their sheer self-discipline and work ethic speak volumes to their ability to translate physical labor into scholarship. Nearly 2,000 black men during Reconstruction held public offices in the United States. Several most notable figures include: Sen. Hiram Revels (MS), Sen. Blanche K. Bruce (MS), Rep. Benjamin S. Turner (AL), Rep. Robert DeLarge (SC), Rep. Josiah Wells (FL), and Rep. James T. Rapier (AL).

Losing the future

By discounting our historical progress and assuming we were derived from lesser beings, black America has assumed a twisted posture in just under a century and a half. Our condition has worsened as our productivity has declined in the midst of great opportunity. From the mass incarceration of young black males to the destabilization of the contemporary black family structure, collective silence has contributed to the abnormality of our present state.

For example, from 1998 to 2008, the number of incarcerations in the United States increased four-fold from 500,000 to 2.3 million. African Americans constitute nearly 1 million of the total 2.3 million inmates incarcerated. While African Americans make up only 13.6% of the U.S. population, 1 in every 15 African American men is incarcerated in comparison to 1 in every 106 white men.¹

Studies indicate that a black male child born in the U.S. after 1991 has a 30% chance of

(Continued on page 9)

Reconstruction 2.0: *Reviving Black Male Progress in the Age of Obama*

By Darrell Ezell, PhD

(Continued from page 8)

spending time in a correction facility. According to the NAACP, young black males represent 26% of all juvenile arrests, 44% of youth detained, 49% of the youth who are judicially waived to criminal court, and 58% of the youth admitted to state probation.² It is nearly impossible to deny a correlation does not exist between the absence of fathers in black households and the likelihood that children from these homes will fall victim to criminal activity, leading to arrest and sentencing. In 2013, the National Fatherhood Initiative reported that 24 million American children live apart from their biological fathers. Nearly 64% (2 in 3) of those are African American children living in father-absent homes.³

Reconstruction 2.0

If we are to reconstruct our communities, we must invoke the progressive vitality of the past, which includes promoting a conscious effort to encourage the survival of black males by *Any "Legal" Means Necessary*. The staggering statistics above command we pause and take serious the opportunity to reflect on how we as Christians might rescue and preserve our "black sheep," who are an endangered species. Reviving black male progress in the Age of Obama necessitates that we be inspired by the many advancements of the Reconstruction era, but transcend those accomplishments by educators, such as William Hooper Council and public servants such as Senator Hiram Revel, into a modern framework—Reconstruction 2.0. This will entail speaking candidly to "young brothers" about the frailties linked to their inception and the fragile state of their existence.

W.E.B. Du Bois reminds in the "Talented Tenth":

*The Negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men. The problem of education, then, among Negroes must first of all deal with the Talented Tenth; it is the problem of developing the best of this race that they may guide the masses away from the contamination and death of the worst, in their own and other races!*⁴

Rarely do we speak candidly in the public square about the health, welfare, and survival of young black males. The mysterious assumption that it is taboo to do so teeters on the notion that silence about their social condition will exonerate one from lending a hand. In order to help move black males from a state of "endangered species" to "progress" requires we reassess our current condition, produce new models that reach both the corner and classroom, and that we be inspired by the great progress exercised by diligent men of color during Reconstruction, an era that witnessed black excellence and progress on unprecedented levels.

As a people, we have come far by faith, but as Atlanta hip-hop artist, Andre 3000 reminds in Gwen Stefani's song on inter-racial relations, "We have a long way to go...it's beyond Martin Luther, we must upgrade [our] computer..."

Darrell Ezell is the author of Beyond Cairo: U.S. Engagement with the Muslim World (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). He currently teaches International Relations at both Louisiana State University and Tulane University.



Tell Our Stories

By The Reverend Marcia Allen Owens, PhD

Recalling Our Stories: Spiritual Renewal for Religious Caregivers was written by Dr. Edward Wimberly from his experience in facilitating religious retreats. He noticed certain patterns in the issues and problems raised by retreat participants. He stated that there are "themes, deeply rooted and ingrained, that appear to inform everything that we do in our lives." Likewise, in churches, families and communities, there are themes and patterns to our successes and failures. For the month of February, let us be reminded to recall our own stories from a number of perspectives. February is the month in which AMEs celebrate Black History, AME Founders Day, and Valentine's Day. And each is relevant in our multiple contexts.

Tell the stories of our history and accomplishments. There are those who think that Black History Month has outlived its necessity in a nation that is now being labeled "post-racial," and due to the fact that there is an African American President of the United States sitting in office for a second term. Many people believe that slavery is over, Jim Crow is over, the Civil Rights Movement is over, and that one needs to just forgive, forget, and "keep it moving." That kind of thinking focuses on present results, rather than a centuries-long process watered with blood, sweat and tears. The children of the present need to have some idea of the costs of the still limited freedoms that they enjoy. Many have stories that children and grandchildren need to hear so that they may grasp the fortitude to persist through difficult circumstances. Many of those "forgotten" stories are buried deep in our individual and collective psyches, and the pain still persists on some subconscious level. Not wanting to face that pain again, we remain silent on our history. If this silence persists, then our deep historical roots will loosen, and lose their grounding, resulting in an individual and collective death.

Tell the stories of our great institutions, starting with the AME Church. This month we celebrate AME Founders Day, as well as the birth of the founder Bishop Richard Allen. We need to know more than "AME Born, AME Bred, and When I Die, I'll Be AME Dead." We need to tell the stories of how we came to be, why we believe what we believe, and why we are still relevant in "post-racial" America. Perhaps some need to learn those stories before they can actually tell themselves.

And finally, February is the month of the "Hallmark Holiday" called Valentine's Day. Tell our youth our great love stories, the stories of Black love in all of its forms. We have stories of romantic love, stories of family love, as well as stories of love of God, church and community. We come from a great lineage of love. In telling our great love stories, we remember and restore our own faith in relationships, one with another, with family, with community, and last but not least, with God.

During this month of February, as we go into the Lenten season, let us make a conscious and collective effort to recall our own stories and identify the patterns in the issues and problems that we faced and continue to face. Then we must make peace with our own stories and dispel the pain, fear, and even embarrassment that those stories unearth.

Finally, we must TELL our own stories. When we do, a new generation will learn from the strength of the elders, and our deep historical roots will grow deeper resulting in our own spiritual renewal.



The Reverend Doctor Marcia Allen Owens, PhD

Edward P. Wimberly, *Recalling Our Stories: Spiritual Renewal for Caregivers*, Josey-Bass (1997), Page xi

Habitat 2013 Build Schedule

This year St. John will partner with Church of the Nativity Episcopal, First Christian, St. Mathew's Episcopal, First Presbyterian, Aldersgate Methodist, United Church Of Huntsville, and Covenant Presbyterian. Members are welcome to participate throughout the schedule; however our focus days are March 2, 9 and 16.

DATE	DAY	ACTIVITY
Feb. 26, 28, Mar. 2	Tue, Thur, Sat	Cut lumber & mark plates, build walls in warehouse
Mar. 5, 7, 9	Tue, Thur, Sat	Deliver walls to site, Erect walls and trusses, HOUSE RAISING CEREMONY 9:00 AM Sat.
Mar. 12, 14, 16	Tue, Thur, Sat	Apply blueboard to walls, deck roof, install windows, ext. doors, hurricane clips, and dead wood
Mar. 19, 21, 23	Tue, Thur, Sat	Install porch beams, barge rafters, fascia, attic access, electrical rough-in, (plumbing, HVAC rough-in by others) start vinyl siding
Mar. 26, 28, 30	Tue, Thur, Sat	Install wall insulation, (sheetrock by sub)
Apr. 2, 4, 6	Tue, Thur, Sat	Paint walls, continue vinyl siding, install shutters
Apr. 9, 11, 13	Tue, Thur, Sat	Clean floors and windows, install vinyl tile, landscape
Apr. 16, 18, 20	Tue, Thur, Sat	Install and paint interior doors and trim, install cabinets, (plumbing by others) and electrical fixtures
Apr. 23, 25, 27	Tue, Thur, Sat	Install closet hardware, window blinds, storm doors, bathroom accessories
Apr 30, May 2, 4	Tue, Thur, Sat	Catch up work, touch up paint, clean and wax floors
May 7, 9, 11	Tue, Thur, Sat	Work punch list, DEDICATION CEREMONY: Sat 11th

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, safety glasses if you have them.

Directions to site: Go North on Parkway to University Dr. Go west on University to Pulaski Pike. Go North on Pulaski Pike to Stringfield Rd. Go west on Stringfield pass Alabama Concrete. Look for Banks on the left opposite the last rock quarry. Turn left onto Banks.

Parent Wisdom

By Sister Vanessa Glover

Be Strong and Courageous

Deuteronomy 31:6

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified
because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you;
*He will never leave
you nor forsake you.*
Deuteronomy 31:6

No matter what we face, there is nothing like a Word from God—Be Strong and Courageous. We are reminded of God's strength and His promise of victory—"He will never leave you nor forsake you." So often we feel our enemies are too great for us to overcome on our own; yet God promises to be with us in our turbulent times, broken relationships, and the threat of loss of hope for the future. We must obey and learn to trust God alone, for He is greater than any of the enemies we encounter. With all the demands and distractions of life, the decision to follow and surrender our lives to the obedience of God's Word even with the convictions to do as He has called us, is courageous.

Just as the Israelites were told by Moses, "I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. For I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live." Deuteronomy 30: 15-19 We too must surrender and obey God's plan for our lives, for our children and our children's children. God gives us the courage to tackle the difficult situations so that our lives will be a living testament of God's promise that portrays courage.

Be Strong and Courageous—no matter what even more importantly, let it spill over, run out, bubble up so that our life with God and His Word are naturally transmitted to others. God instills courage on the inside which starts with doing what is right. For we are never alone when doing what God wants. Our strength is in the Lord! No matter what, we must draw on the inner strength of the Holy Spirit and believe the Promises of God that have been given and spoken in His word—"He will never leave you nor forsake you." Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Ephesians 6:10

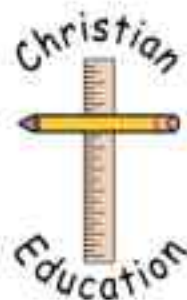


Prayer: God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way; Thou who hast by Thy might, led us into the light, keep us forever in the path, we pray: Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee. Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee. Shadowed beneath Thy hand, may we forever stand, True to our God, true to our native land. —James Weldon Johnson

Wisdom for Daily Living: For the Lord gives wisdom, and from His mouth comes knowledge and understanding. He holds victory in store for the upright; he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless. For wisdom will enter your heart and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. Proverbs 2:6-7, 10.

As a Thoughtful Parent: Black History—"Black is Beautiful" of the 60's and "I'm Black and I'm Proud" of the 70's have not died, and are yet applicable. For our blackness is targeted, and ever a target. Our black history reveals a catalyst (of faith mostly) that has propelled so many of us to rise above non-entity status. —James Thomas Jackson

Church School Lesson Overview – March 2013



The Church School reviews for this month were written by Willie Sandifer, Claudinette Purifoy-Fears and Kenneth Parham.

March 3, 2013

Lesson Title: Daniel's Vision of Change

Lesson Scripture: Daniel 7

Print: Daniel 7:1-3, 9-14

Devotional Songs: #384 [], #272 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "He was given authority, glory and sovereign power, all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed" (Daniel 7:14).

The prophet Daniel opened the eyes of Jews in the sixth century B.C. so they could see what God was and would be doing. What Daniel saw was the ultimate triumph that God's followers today still long to see.

Some Jews conspired to take matters into their own hands. They believed that the best way to push forward was to rebel against the Babylonians. They did not believe the prophecies of Habakkuk, Jeremiah, and others that God had decided to allow the Babylonians to triumph over the Israelites for their own wickedness.

Other Jews gave up completely. They stopped following Israel's God and turned to false gods. They assumed that if their God was the one true God, they should always triumph over enemies. To them, Babylon's victory over Israel's God was a victory of Babylon's gods. So they transferred allegiance.

March 10, 2013

Lesson Title: Daniel's Prayer

Lesson Scripture: Daniel 9

Print: Daniel 9:4-14, 17

Devotional Songs: #307 [], #375 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him" (Daniel 9:9).

Daniel's prayer in this lesson is best understood when looked at through a wide-angle lens. The national identity of the Israelites had its roots in God's promise to Abraham that he would become a great nation and that through him all nations would be blessed.

An important part of this promise was God's deliverance of Abraham's descendants from slavery in Egypt, bringing them into the Prom-

ised Land. The people's well-being depended on their keeping God's law. Should the Israelites fail in that, God vowed to deliver them into their enemies' hands.

By Daniel's time many centuries later, that is what happened. The Israelites had forsaken God's ways, and God had kept His word to judge them. Judgment was not God's last word though He also foretold that should the Israelites return to Him wholeheartedly, then He would restore their fortunes. This is the key background to Daniel's prayer in this lesson.

March 17, 2013

Lesson Title: Gabriel Interprets Daniel's Vision

Lesson Scripture: Daniel 8

Print: Daniel 8:1, 15-26

Tentative Devotional Songs: #215 [], #258 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given you is true" (Daniel 8:26a).

In this lesson, Daniel was visited by a spiritual entity in the form of a mighty man and the angel Gabriel. The spiritual entity asked Gabriel to explain the vision to Daniel. Before an explanation was given, Daniel became afraid and collapsed (fell prostrate). Gabriel needed to convey the meaning of the vision to Daniel, so Gabriel awakened Daniel and put him back on his feet.

Gabriel indicated that the vision was not meant for the current king of Daniel's time but the vision it foretold of the wrath to come at the end of time. The vision as interpreted, indicated that a two horned ram would battle a one horned goat. The goat would defeat the ram. The two horned ram is symbolized as being the Kings of Media and Persia; and the goat is symbolized as being the King of Greece. It is highlighted that the goat's victory would be short lived. After the death of the goat (broken horn), four horns will emerge. These four horns are identified as being the captains that served under the King of Greece. Gabriel indicated that one of the four little horns would become noticeably strong in power, wicked and even destroy the holy people. The mighty little horn's reign is climaxed by his ultimate defeat.

Gabriel ended the interpretation by indicating that the vision was true but the things noted in

(Continued on page 14)

Church School Lesson Overview – March 2013

(Continued from page 13)

the vision would not happen for a long time, and he asked Daniel not to tell it to others.

Thinkers and researchers of historical events tend to read more into passages such as this one. They attempt to parallel past events to future events. They wonder if Daniel's vision is applicable to current global political climate and, also wonder where they are on the time line to the end of time. Based on the encounter of Daniel, it may be a blessing that God's workings are shielded from mortal minds ("not hidden from us, but hidden for us").

March 24, 2013

Lesson Title: The Lord's Supper

Lesson Scripture: Luke 22:1-38

Print: Luke 22:14-30

Tentative Devotional Songs: #530 []; #251 []; and #243 []

Key Verse: "The greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves" (Luke 22:26b).

Luke's version of the Passion of Christ describes the moments before Jesus' death and His farewell meal with His disciples. It is during this meal that Jesus attempted to prepare the disciples for His pending death, predicted that He would be betrayed by one of His own, explained the power of greatness and offered a word of thanks to the disciples.

Jesus explained the meaning of the communion meal of bread and wine. He explained that the bread and wine represented His broken body and His blood that would soon be shed on the cross of Calvary. During the meal, Jesus revealed that a traitor was in their midst which greatly confused the disciples. They questioned themselves and were in disbelief. The fact that the disciples were puzzled by this strange announcement shows that they did not know Judas' true character.

Following the meal, an argument broke out among the disciples as to which one of them should be thought of as the greatest. One interpretation is that they were arguing about who should sit in the place of honor at the table. Jesus explained that the one who is deserving of honor is one who sacrifices, provides selfless service, and puts others first.

Jesus thanked His disciples for following and staying with Him through His trials. He further

told them, "*That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom*" which meant that they would have a place of honor and distinction.

March 31, 2013

Lesson Title: The Lord Lives

Lesson Scripture: Luke 24:1-35

Print: Luke 24:13-21, 28-35

Tentative Devotional Songs: #156 []; #282 []; and #243 []

Key Verse: "Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight" (Luke 24:31).

Luke gave an exhaustive account of the days following Jesus' crucifixion and His initial appearance after the resurrection. Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary the mother of James visited Jesus' tomb on the Sunday morning following the crucifixion and found it empty. They reported their findings to the disciples who were in disbelief and Peter ran to the tomb to investigate for himself. He was amazed to find that the Lord was not present and confirmed that the tomb was indeed empty. On the same day, two men who were traveling to Emmaus were discussing Jesus' death and the phenomenon of the empty tomb. A stranger appeared, who would later reveal Himself to be Jesus, who walked along side of them and asked what they were talking about. The men recounted the story of Jesus, who they believed to be a prophet, one who would redeem Israel, and a person considered by God and all people to be powerful in everything He said and did. They told of Jesus' sentence of death and the events at the empty tomb. Jesus scolded them for not believing the prophets and then recited the Scripture noting that what took place was part of God's plan and promise.

It was getting dark as they arrived, so Emmaus and the men invited the stranger to stay with them. The stranger stayed with them, broke bread, revealed Himself as Jesus to the men, and disappeared.

At that point, they realized that they were communing with Jesus. They stated that when Jesus spoke to them about the Scriptures it felt like a fire was burning within. They then got up, returned to Jerusalem, told the eleven remaining disciples and all that would listen that the Lord is risen. They then recounted the events on the road to Emmaus.

Dr. Butts Speaks for GHIMF MLK Service

The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Emancipation Proclamation Service was held January 15th, 2013 at Progressive Union Missionary Baptist Church. This area-wide service is sponsored by The Greater Huntsville Interdenominational Ministerial Fellowship (GHIMF) and is held annually on the birthday of Dr. King. GHIMF consists of ministers from the Huntsville community.

Program participants were members of the GHIMF, a city-wide choir composed of choir members from many of the churches who participate in GHIMF, and ushers from member churches. The Special Guest for the service was the Reverend Doctor Calvin O. Butts, III, Pastor, Abyssinian Baptist Church, New York, NY and President, State University of New York (SUNY) College at Old Westbury. He was introduced by Dr. Wayne Snodgrass, who is the immediate past president of GHIMF and pastor of Progressive Union Missionary Baptist Church. Dr. Snodgrass described the speaker as one who has labored faithfully for the cause of righteousness, one who is committed to civil rights and social justice, and one whose church's involvement in the community has led to a turnaround in the Harlem community.

Dr. Butts spoke from the text of Revelations 12:1-11. Through the message he highlighted that "We are not free, yet." He emphasized that persons today cannot sleep because they are not yet free and should be troubled by the mourning of ancestors who have struggled to allow them to be where they are today. "There's no salvation without the shedding of blood."

Dr. Butts noted that prophets words are of no good without programs. Foreparents built schools and churches because they heard the voice of freedom. They sang the songs of hope.

He spoke of Dr. King's involvement in the civil rights movement and noted that there was no freedom without the shedding of blood of Dr. King and others. All of the gains in a transformed America came as a result of the freedom movement but people are not free yet. He noted that there must be a change in the way people think and that communities must be empowered.

Church School Book Club

February 2013

Discussion Date: 24 Feb 2013
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Amen Sisters, Angela Benson, 2007

March 2013

Discussion Date: 17 Mar 2013
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Nowhere is a Place, Bernice L. McFadden, 2006

Nothing can mend a broken heart quite like family. Sherry has struggled all her life to understand who she is, where she comes from, and, most important, why her mother slapped her cheek one summer afternoon. The incident has haunted Sherry, and it causes her to dig into her family's past. Like many family histories, it is fractured and stubbornly reluctant to reveal its secrets, but Sherry is determined to know the full story. In just a few days' time, her extended family will gather for a reunion, and Sherry sets off across the country with her mother, Dumping, to join them. What Sherry and Dumping find on their trip is far more important than scenic sites here and there—it is the assorted pieces of their family's past. Pulled together, they reveal a history of amazing survival and abundant joy.

Dr. Butts Speaks for GHIMF MLK Service

Turning to the text, he related the story of the woman whose child was ready to be delivered to the fact that the struggle is not over. It is the forgiveness of sin and God's grace and mercy that continue to encourage those in the struggle. He concluded with a statement of hope, "And the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Christ."

Although the weather outside was cold and wet, inside a spirit-filled service provided hope and empowerment.

March 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Read Across America Day 6:00 p.m. "Aulse" Young Women's Straight Talk	2 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 1:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal HABITAT FOR HUMANITY
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
WMS NATIONAL WEEK OF PRAYER						
COMMUNION SAT DAY 8am & 10:50 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School Worship AMEN Deadline	50+ Meeting 9:30 a.m.	6:00 p.m. Stewardess Board  Voices in Praise Rehearsal	12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study 5:00 PM Steward Board	 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	6:30 a.m. Family Fun Night	9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry AMEN Staff Meeting 10:30 a.m. HABITAT FOR HUMANITY
10 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	11	12 6:00 p.m. Sons of Men Mtg.  Voices in Praise Rehearsal	13 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	14 Ninth District Mid-Winter Meeting	15  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	16 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry HABITAT FOR HUMANITY
17 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship YPD Meeting	18	19 6:00 p.m. Trustee Board Mtg. 11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	20 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	21  Mass Chorus Rehearsal 6:30 a.m. Trustee Training	22  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	23 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry Women's Ministry 10:30 a.m. WMO Meeting
24  8:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship PALM Sunday	25 HOLY WEEK REVIVAL, 6:30 pm, nightly	26 11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	27	28 MAUNDY THURSDAY Worship Service 6:30 p.m.	29 GOOD FRIDAY	30 HOLY SATURDAY
31 6:00 a.m. Sunkie Service Breakfast 8:45 a.m. Easter Program 10:00 a.m. Worship						

POTPOURRI



Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you.
He will never leave you nor forsake you.
 Deuteronomy 31:6

We know it [Black History Month] is here when suddenly our children are writing reports on African-American inventors and our local library puts up a special display of books by or about notable African Americans. As parents, it is entirely possible we can learn something new and valuable during Black History Month, too.

The most important thing we can do, however, is make this month of tribute work for us by ensuring that it is more than a change of pace at school. On this day, I will take five minutes to discuss Black History Month with my child and help him draw inspiration and motivation out of our history, and use it to fuel his efforts to achieve his dreams. *Black Pearls for Parents*, Eric V. Copage 1995

Chelsea Carter received an invitation to attend the 34th Annual Honors Convocation, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Huntsville Alumnae Chapter. She will be recognized for her academic achievements during the first semester. The program will take place on March 3, 2013 at Progressive Union Missionary Baptist Church, Huntsville AL. She has also been asked to participate in the Chapter's "Education Empowerment Day" scheduled on Saturday March 2, 2013. Chelsea is the daughter of Lt. Col. Felicia Carter. Congratulations Chelsea!

About St. John Members



After 10 weeks of physical and mental training to prepare him to become a soldier in the United States Army, PFC Kalon (Anderson) graduated from Basic Training, Ft Jackson, Columbia, South Carolina on January 17, 2013.

He has now moved on to 10 weeks of Advanced Individual Training (AIT) in Ft Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas

where he will receive specific job training. His chosen job title is Mental Health Specialist where he will primarily be responsible for providing mental health treatment to patients, under the supervision of an Army psychiatrist, social worker, psychiatric nurse or psychologist.

Kalon is the son of Tommy and Cheryl Anderson and the grandson of the Reverend Meriam Garrett. Congratulations Kalon!



Seirra D. Fitchard is a 2008 graduate of Butler High School and studied at University of Mobile. She joined the Air Force on March 18, 2012. She completed her basic training in San Antonio, Texas. She is currently stationed in Virginia. Her rank is A-1-C.

Seirra is the daughter of Tony and Sorina Fitchard.



PRAY FOR OUR MILITARY

Pray without ceasing —

Eric Thomas II
 Kalon Anderson
 Seirra Fitchard
 Christopher Butler

Please continue to pray for our military persons who are deployed overseas as well as those stationed within the United States.

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

Non-profit
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Huntsville, AL
 Permit No. 240

Return Service Requested

E-mail: stjohnameh@aol.com

Website: stjohnamehsv.org

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



AMEC

Important Dates to Remember

February 13, 2013	Ash Wednesday Service, 12 noon & 6:30 p.m.
February 16, 2013	Ninth District YPD LTI, Mobile, Alabama
February 26, 2013	Lay Organization Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
March 14-16, 2013	Ninth District Mid-Winter Meeting
March 25-26, 2013	Holy Week Revival, 6:30 pm, nightly
March 27, 2013	Maundy Thursday Service—Bring a Friend!
March 29	Good Friday
March 31	Resurrection Day, Sunrise Service 6 a.m., Breakfast 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. Easter Musicales 8:45 a.m. Morning Worship 10:00a.m.
April 5-6, 2013	Connectional YPD Meeting, Birmingham, Alabama
April 13, 2013	South Birmingham-Huntsville-Bessemer District Conference, New Seed of Faith AME Church, Birmingham-Tarrent

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 18 Issue 3

March 2013

Pastor's Message

Resurrection People

Acts 2:32

When the apostle Peter preached to a crowd about the miracle of the resurrection, he said, "This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses." Peter and his fellow apostles were witnesses of the resurrection. They were resurrection people.

The apostle Paul discovered in his conversion that one did not have to be at Jesus' empty tomb or see the physical presence of the risen Lord to be a resurrection person. He saw a vision of Jesus and was called by Jesus to preach the gospel. That vision, according to Paul, qualified him to be an apostle (1 Corinthians 15:8-11). Thus, Paul is a resurrection person.

Paul informed the church at Corinth that when he preached there, he communicated to them what he had received - the miracle of Christ's resurrection, which is in agreement with the scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). By receiving this message in faith, Paul's hearers become saved - spiritual witnesses of the resurrection (Romans 10:9). They become resurrection people.

Therefore, the church is a collection of resurrection people. Our identity as such is most felt now - as we take our Lenten journey to Holy Week and Resurrection Sunday. This Lent we have established a weekly prayer call; are fasting from negative thinking and speaking; praying at least twice a day; spending time with our families; serving our community through Habitat for Humanity; and preparing for our Holy Week Revival, Maundy Thursday Communion service, and our Resurrection Sunday worship services and musical. We will affirm our identity as resurrection people in our celebration of the risen Lord Jesus.

Our revivalist will be the Reverend Bankole Akinbinu. He is the pastor of Baptist Grove Church in Raleigh, North Carolina. The Reverend Akinbinu began preaching at the age of sixteen. He followed his calling through academic preparation and church ministry. He earned a bachelor's degree in Bible Theology from Washington Bible College and the Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary. He served as the young adult assistant pastor at Community Bible Baptist Church in Lanham, Maryland, and later as the minister to youth and young adults at St. James A.M.E. Church in Newark, New Jersey. The Reverend Akinbinu is no stranger to St. John. He led spring revival last year, and God so blessed his preaching that our souls were set on fire. We are excited to welcome him back this year for Holy Week! Let us be sure to pray for him and for the revival.

This year's Lenten journey is bittersweet. On March 12th, two of our church family members went home to be with the Lord: Mr. Willie Jones and Mrs. Antoinette Snodgrass Wilson. In an upcoming edition of AMEN, we will pay a proper tribute to both of them. For now, we ask your prayers for their families and our church.

It is no coincidence that our revival will take place just one week after their burials. God knew that we would need restoration. God foresaw that we would be grieving at this very moment.

(Continued on page 5)



Reverend Patrick D. Clayton



Bishop Henning Emphasized Faithfulness In Founder's Day Commemoration

By Bridget J. Floyd

St. John celebrated Founder's Day at the 10:50 a.m. worship service on February 10, 2013. The preacher for this special day was Bishop C. Garnett Henning, Sr. Members of the Lay Organization led the congregation in following the AME order of worship, with the addition of the welcome/occasion and litany. The Gospel Choir offered inspirational worship in song.



The Gospel Choir renders a musical selection.



Mrs. Claudinette Purfoy-Fears gives the occasion.



Bishop Henning delivers the morning message.

Pastor Clayborn introduced the preacher for the service. The sermon was entitled, "Are You Faithful?" taken from the text Luke 12: 37 - 48.

Bishop Henning began by paying tribute both to former pastor and his faithful helpmate, Dr. Homer L. and Mrs. Mable McCall, and current pastor and his wife and executive minister, Dr. Patrick and Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn. In his sermon, Bishop Henning emphasized the importance of commitment and knowing "our history"; having an institutional memory or history which can "spark our enthusiasm". That is, it is important to know "AME stories... about the road we traveled". He noted the correlation of the Exodus story in the Bible with any oppressed or identified group that needed (needs) liberation. "In the sight of God, we all have value", according to Bishop Henning.

He noted that the text examines the consequences of faithfulness and faithlessness, and encouraged

(Continued on page 9)

Bishop Henning Featured During Heritage Moments Program

By Bridget J. Floyd



Bishop Henning leads discussion on his experiences.

Bishop C. Garnett Henning was featured during the African American History and Founder's Day Program highlighting "Heritage Moments". After offering the sermon for the 10:50 a.m. Founder's Day Service, Bishop Henning returned at 5:30 p.m. to give an overview of his experiences in the ministry and particularly during the times in Africa as Bishop and as founder of The AME University in 1988. This school has expanded from a small number to an enrollment of eight thousand (8,000), according to Bishop Henning. He spoke of times when he and Bishop David Daniels (elected in 2004) worked with parishioners in war-torn areas. Additionally there was the challenge of working in a political environment that was less than supportive of education while parents of the young people were open to efforts to establish an educational system that provided more than "second-hand" books, supplies and facilities. Bishop Henning told of the times when he was not only pastor of St. Paul AME, St. Louis, but involved in community activism. While presiding over the 8th Episcopal District, he served on the Bush-Clinton Katrina Committee. Additionally he fielded questions and reflected on the Civil Rights Movement and his involvement in



Dr. Pearson discusses art with attendees.



Ivy Mylan, Sr. explains the African drums.

(Continued on page 8)

Ash Wednesday Service Begins the Season of Lent

By Nina Johnson

An exceptional Ash Wednesday worship experience was held at Saint John African Methodist Episcopal Church, February 13, 2013. The worship experience was subtle yet carried a great sense of the Holy Spirit. The dance and song ministries were amazing, scriptural readings and prayers motivating, and the delivered message most certainly brought. The service took flight at 6:30 p.m. with a powerful and inspirational hymn, "Lead Me Guide Me," led by Brother Dennis DeLoach and members in the sanctuary followed.



Jennifer Patterson prepares to minister in dance.

Plenty of grace and mercy was demonstrated through the ministry of dance that was beautifully choreographed by the very talented Dr. Jennifer Patterson. The music selection played by Brother Souffrant set the tone for the service. Vocals performed by Brother DeLoach exemplified devotion to the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Saint John A.M.E. church is known to carry a plethora of talent, faith, and an immense amount of love and support for each and every one of its members inside and outside the congregation.

The opening prayer was led by Ms. Nedra McDaniel. The Reverend Miriam Garrett read the moving scripture of II Corinthians 5:20-6:10, and Reverend Charles Glover continued with Isaiah 58:1-12. Both scriptures were in reference to not accepting God's grace in vain (or empty), not for others but for yourself, and serving others in Jesus' name. Afterwards Reverend Sheri gave the call to altar prayer for those who needed some clarity and alleviation from the weeks' barricades.

Bearing the meditation was Pastor Clayborn who gave those in attendance something to truly think about. The message was entitled "Preparing for Easter" and the text was 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:1 and Isaiah 58:4. Pastor mentioned how Ash Wednesday is the preparation for Easter and how persons should inspect relationships and incorporate changes in lifestyle.



Pastor Clayborn delivers Ash Wednesday message.

He highlighted the following ways to prepare for Easter. Prepare by being pure, having a holiness of spirit (keep one's spirit from all that is negative), and loving God and neighbors. Pastor Clayborn also mentioned that the transition will not be as simple as one may think; however, the Lord is there in the midst of the matter. Concluding, he said that all sorts of preparations are made for Christmas, why not prepare for Easter?

In closing the Ash Wednesday worship service, the ashes were placed on the foreheads of the members who attended the service; which Pastor Clayborn indicated would serve as the benediction.

Lenten devotionals were distributed after the service. Members were instructed to use these as a means of spiritual cleansing and praying for areas such as family, body, spirit, and the church, as Easter approaches.



The imposition of the ashes.



Pastor's Message

(Continued from page 1)

God also knew that we needed to be reminded that we are resurrection people. Even though Mr. Jones and Mrs. Wilson have left us, we will see them again! Praise God for God's wisdom and compassion!

We are a resurrection people. This Jesus God raised up, and we all are witnesses. Let us witness to His resurrection. Let us praise Him on Palm Sunday. Let us worship Him through Holy Week. Let us commune with Him on Maundy Thursday. Let us reflect on His sacrifice on Good Friday. Let us wait patiently for Him on Holy Saturday. Let us celebrate His triumph on Resurrection Sunday! Let us reaffirm His identity as risen Lord — not only during this season but throughout the remainder of your days. That is the calling of resurrection people. For a day is coming when the dead in Christ will rise, and those who remain will be caught up to meet Him. Then, we will be fully the *resurrected* people!



The Storm



God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea. Psalms 46: 1-2

My son lives on Florida's Gulf coast in a vacation resort. Needless to say we visit him quite often. And if you have ever been in Florida you have witnessed at least one sign that states torrential rain storms.

One time on our way home we ran into one of those storms. This one was extremely bad. It was raining so hard it looked as if buckets of water were pouring on the windshield of our car. You couldn't see a thing in front of you. But my husband refused to pull over and wait until the storm passed. He said that we were going through a band of storm clouds and it would soon be over. I was very afraid and anxious. All I could say was "Lord Help!"

As I was trying to see for him (smile) I heard someone singing. "The storm is raging all around me." It was a choir singing "Hold Back the Night", on the radio. I thought that was a conscience. As I was listening to the song and still keeping my eyes on the road, I calmed down a little. By the time that song ended it was just raining very hard. The next song was, "Peace Be Still", by Vanessa Belle Armstrong. I was amazed. I thought that God was telling me to have faith and He would get us through this rain storm just like He got us through all of our personal storms in life. "Just be still and know that I am God." Well the rain stopped, the sun came out and it looked as if there was never a storm. That happened about the same time the very next song on the radio was, "MY God is Awesome!"

You see God always has a message for us. Even in times of fear we just have to sit still and listen.

iTHRIVE launches EMERGE and ARISE

By Janette R. Smith

iTHRIVE is a new ministry at St. John AME aimed at supporting existing youth programs by creating events and experiences that will nurture, feed and heal the minds, bodies and spirits of the young people in the church. The first event was *Friday Night Live!* The success of that event and the Vacation Bible School sessions of 2012 highlighted the need within the church for more "hands-on" mentoring and straight-talk sessions for the youth.



Young men engage in discussion at dinner.

At the end of 2012, iTHRIVE held its first young men's session through the entity known as *Emerge*. The Reverend Patrick Clayborn, Dr. Darrell Ezell, and Youth Pastor Willie Diggs from Beacon Hill Worship Center in Madison, Alabama, were warmly received as the guest speakers. The meeting took place at Ryan's Restaurant on University Drive. Members of the Sons of Allen were invited to observe the launch of *Emerge* to offer a smooth transition into their own mentorship efforts for 2013. The young men left encouraged to reach out whenever they needed advice and extra support. One-on-one meet-ups and phone calls continue to yield positive results.

Setting the tone for Women's History Month, on March 1, young ladies of St. John AME Church were hosted at the first *Arise* event. The Reverend Patrick Clayborn shared the heartbeat of the church to support and nurture youth, while The Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn shared the specific heartbeat of *Arise*. The young ladies in attendance were treated to a first-class affair in the fellowship hall that had been transformed into a formal dining room with three activity stations.

The first station was the *Arise* Scripture wall where young ladies read posted scriptures that serve as the foundation for the organization. The next station was the *Arise* "Making of Me" table. There, the mentoring adult women including Ms. Janette Smith, Ms. Nedra McDaniel, Mrs. Pamela Whitehead, Mrs. Mary Rankin and Mrs. Cheryl Anderson shared artwork, books, DVD's, artifacts and other items that helped shape them as women. The young ladies heard the stories behind these items, asked questions, and took down the names of those things that interested them.



The transformed fellowship hall.

The *Arise* group was then treated to a special presentation by Ms. Katina Walton, a well-known spoken word artist in the Tennessee Valley. She performed an original piece specifically written for the young ladies of *Arise* titled, "Girl on Fire." A print of the work will be provided to the young ladies.

(Continued on page 8)



Holy Week **Revival**

THEME: VISION DRIVEN
Purpose . Passion . Power



REV. BANKOLE AKINBINU
PASTOR, BAPTIST GROVE CHURCH
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

Monday *Wednesday*
March 25th - March 27th
6:30 p.m.

You are invited to enjoy this
highly spirited revival full of
prayer, powerful preaching,
and praise.

St. John A.M.E. Church
229 Church Street
Huntsville, AL 35801.

The public is invited to attend.
For more information
call (256) 534-3265
or visit www.stjohname-hsv.org



Holy Week Schedule

PALM SUNDAY

March 24th
8:00 am and 10:50 am Services

HOLY WEEK REVIVAL

March 25th—27th
8:30 pm, nightly
The Reverend Bankole Akinbinu, Revivalist

MAUNDY THURSDAY

March 28th
8:30 pm

GOOD FRIDAY

March 29th
Northwest Alabama Conference
Seven Last Words Service
St. John AME Church, Birmingham
12:00 pm

RESURRECTION DAY

March 31st
8:00 am Sunrise Service
7:30 am Breakfast
8:30 am Easter Musicals
10:00 am Easter Morning Worship

"You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen!" Mark 16:6

ITHRIVE

(Continued from page 6)

at a later date. Dinner was then served. The menu for the evening was baked chicken, orzo salad on a bed of mixed greens, wheat rolls, assorted cake pops and strawberry lemonade. Table discussions centered on cultural interests, travels and options for college and vocations. Fine dining tips were shared and everyone enjoyed the meal prepared by our own secret in-house chef, Ms. Nedra McDaniel, assisted by her sous chef for the evening, Mrs. Eva Smith.

As dessert was served, the young ladies took part in the "Imagine You" board where they shared their dreams and where they imagined themselves in the future. The evening then shifted to the workshop portion on the event. Ms. Janette Smith gave an inspirational message on "Using Your GPS: God Positioning System". The interactive session included a video presentation from Eva Bunkley, a multi Emmy Award winning make-up artist and Indie Film Maker, who shared her stories of struggle with self-esteem and growing in God confidence. The follow-up discussion on self-acceptance was passionately engaging and each young lady had an opportunity to share her 'take away' from the night.

Throughout the evening strategic activities centered on refining the "woman of God" in them. As such, the young ladies helped prepare thank you cards to those who served to make the night a success. They also recorded a 'thank you' video for Mrs. Bunkley for her time and insights. The evening successfully concluded with a charge by The Reverend Sheri to not be afraid to stand alone as they stand for what is right. Other *Arise and Emerge* events are already in the works.

Membership Canvas Is Being Conducted

The Steward Board is conducting the annual membership canvas during the month of March. Stewards will contact members who did not complete the canvas forms on the 2nd or 3rd Sunday in March. Please support the Stewards as they seek to contact every member of the congregation.

Founder's Day Commemoration

(Continued from page 2)

the congregants to be faithful in service and worship and not focused on a title or amount of contribution to the church or organization. He encouraged self-assessment in terms of posing the question, "Am I in God's Will?" and that according to the text, in order to be blessed one should be about God's business.

Bishop Henning then transitioned to Bishop Richard Allen's conversion as he "stretched the borders of religion and economic empowerment" and noted that Bishop Allen "had to buy his own freedom...but set others free religiously". The preacher then expounded on the church of today and the need to speak out on political issues of the day as African Methodism has a proud history of rapid growth in earlier times as well as a foundation of political and economic activism. Bishop Henning noted that "our value is based on the presence of God in us...we have power when Jesus is at the center...you're never beyond the reach of Jesus Christ". If knocked down, Bishop Henning challenged those listening to "get up...Jesus still loves us and is in control". He emphasized the imperative that "African Methodism must make disciples" of those who are members; and the church should not merely focus on placing their names on the role. He encouraged that as an "AME disciple...take up your cross...persevere and preserve...know and love the Lord...know our heritage". He indicated that an inheritance is more than a gift; it is an investment and that "Jesus is invested in us". He emphasized patience because victory does not always occur when desired or expected but "Jesus is never late". Bishop Henning closed on that encouraging note by quoting familiar scripture promising victory/triumph for "those who wait upon the Lord..." and the ultimate praise of "...well done thy good and faithful servant".

After the invitation to Christian discipleship, Pastor Clayborn gave remarks and the inspirational service came to a close. The message of faithfulness to God and to the AME Church was well-received.

Heritage Moments

(Continued from page 3)

same. He emphasized that it is important for youth (and others) to realize that "you are not what someone calls you, it's what you answer to". He also offered the advice, "Don't get mad, get determined" when facing obstacles, such as were encountered during the Movement.

The reflection and sharing of wisdom occurred in a relaxed setting, and, with a refreshing combination of confidence and humility given the unique and significant contributions made by Bishop Henning. The well-attended event, despite inclement weather, was off to a good start.

Prior to Bishop Henning's discussion, the welcome and devotion were offered. Participants were made aware of how to access the documentary, "Bishop Richard Allen- Apostle of Freedom", via the Internet (<http://www.motherbethel.org/allen/version2/index.html>). Ms. Lula Rochelle offered a spirit-filled solo after Bishop Henning spoke with the group, which served as the perfect send-off on "The Wak". For this phase of the event those in attendance could spend a few minutes at each station to "experience history through the stories of several St John AME Church members".

The persons and topics/demonstrations were as follows: Mr. Ivy Joe Milan – African Drums; Mr. William Bell – Buffalo Soldiers; Colonel James Heyward – Military Experiences; Ms. Mattie Ezell – Marching as a College Student; Dr. Clifton Pearson – What is Black Art? Chronicle of Friend and Black Female Artist who fought the odds to pursue her passion; Dr. Lee Williams – Professor/Experiences of Academe; Mr. Clifton Miller – Farming; Mrs. Mary Rankin – The Desegregated Classroom. The presentations were intriguing and entertaining. St. John members clearly have a wealth of experiences and information to share.

Light refreshments were served in the Fellowship Hall. Pastor Clayborn offered the closing prayer. The event was very special and many comments and compliments suggested that this should be the first of many such events.



Habitat 2013 Build Schedule

This year St. John will partner with Church of the Nativity Episcopal, First Christian, St. Mathew's Episcopal, First Presbyterian, Aldersgate Methodist, United Church Of Huntsville, and Covenant Presbyterian. Although our focus days were March 2, 9, and 16, members are encouraged to participate throughout the schedule.

DATE	DAY	ACTIVITY
Mar. 19, 21, 23	Tue, Thur, Sat	Install porch beams, barge rafters, fascia, attic access, electrical rough-in, (plumbing, HVAC rough-in by others) start vinyl siding
Mar. 26, 28, 30	Tue, Thur, Sat	Install wall insulation, (sheetrock by sub)
Apr. 2, 4, 6	Tue, Thur, Sat	Paint walls, continue vinyl siding, install shutters
Apr. 9, 11, 13	Tue, Thur, Sat	Clean floors and windows, install vinyl tile, landscape
Apr. 16, 18, 20	Tue, Thur, Sat	Install and paint interior doors and trim, install cabinets, (plumbing by others) and electrical fixtures
Apr. 23, 25, 27	Tue, Thur, Sat	Install closet hardware, window blinds, storm doors, bathroom accessories
Apr 30, May 2, 4	Tue, Thur, Sat	Catch up work, touch up paint, clean and wax floors
May 7, 9, 11	Tue, Thur, Sat	Work punch list, DEDICATION CEREMONY; Sat 11th

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, safety glasses if you have them. St. John provided lunch on March 16th and will provide lunch again on April 27th.

Directions to site: Due to limited parking at the build site, a shuttle is available from West Maskin Lake Elementary School. The school is located at 5308 Mastin Lake. From 7:30 to 9:30 am the shuttle runs continuously back and forth from the school. The wait will be about 5 - 10 minutes. After that the shuttle will run every 1/2 hour.



Prayer Time

Join us for Weekly Prayer Time each Tuesday at 8:00 am.

Conference Call Credentials

US Toll Number [\(530\) 881-1212](tel:5308811212), Meeting ID: 876-863-940

If you are not able to join the call at 8:00 am, you may listen to the playback anytime.
Playback Number [\(530\) 881-1219](tel:5308811219), Meeting ID 876-863-940,
Press # to ignore any requests for reference number when calling for playback.

AMEN Staff Serves YPD



Every year members of the St. John YPD are servers for the Annual Taste Tea that is sponsored by the AMEN Staff. They patiently serve everyone before they are served. Often there is little remaining of the most favorite dishes when it is time for the YPDers to eat.



This year the AMEN staff expressed their appreciation to the YPDers by serving them after their February meeting. The table as set and the YPDers were served at their seats. The snack included turkey burger sliders, apple sauce, assorted cookies and hot chocolate.

Vision Driven: Service



ST. JOHN AME 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

Opening Our Church Home

"Share with God's people who are in need.
Practice hospitality' — Romans 12:13

"Hospitality" comes from the same Latin word as *hospital*; they both lead to the same result "healing". When we open our doors to someone we are sending this message, "You matter to me and to God." When we invite our guest to visit, he/she hears: "I'm worth the effort" and "they care for me."

As we open our doors to feed the hungry, as God wishes, we welcome the needy, the hungry and the exhausted.

We pray as we open our doors to provide a spiritual oasis for all who come by providing them Christian hospitality.

During this HOLY SEASON, let us serve as a "hospital" helping those who are going through life's storms and need restoration. We can be used by the Lord because He provided for us.



AME Proud
Our Motto

"God Our Father, Christ Our Redeemer,
the Holy Spirit Our Comforter, Humankind Our
Family."

Easter Meditation

Submitted by the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn

Walk in the Light

While I love the Christmas season, Easter has always been my favorite. Not the Easter of bunnies, eggs, candy, toys and Easter baskets, but the Easter of Resurrection Sunday! From a young age, I have anticipated Sunrise service on Resurrection Sunday. There has always been something special to me about meeting at church with sinners saved by grace, grateful for what Jesus Christ endured for us. I am always excited to meet with people, like myself, who bring special praise and worship to celebrate the risen Christ.

After all, liturgically speaking, the last time we would have seen each other at church circumstances would have been significantly different. I'm a visual person...so when I think...I see...look with me...

If we last met on Maundy Thursday- Jesus was still praying about His decision, agonizing over His future in ministry; His will was being conformed to the will of His Father. He was betrayed by one who had walked with Him, talked with Him, and learned from Him. His support system fell asleep on Him when all He asked them to do was pray. He was denied by the one who wanted to have His back so badly that he would cut off a soldier's ear in defense of Jesus. Yet, Jesus was able to put it all in God's hand and move forward.

Friday- Jesus was judged and crucified even though He was innocent. He was buried in a borrowed tomb where a proper burial could not be performed due to Sabbath restraints. His body would have to wait to receive proper ointment for burial. The literal atmosphere grieved His death.

Saturday- He was still in the grave. People were grieving wondering if hope was a viable option. The disciples were lost.

But early Sunday morning, the women went to the tomb to find that God had already worked the situation out.

That's why I love Easter Sunday! It is a constant reminder of Good Friday. There would be no resurrection without there having been a crucifixion. On Easter Sunday, we are reminded that our sacrifices are not in vain, and they are not permanent. God always has the final word.

Even in the midst of the worst situations we may find ourselves in... God is still working on our behalf. There is no situation that God cannot work out. In the times that were so dark you could barely see your way to pray for yourself or encourage yourself, God was moving to cover you.

A friend of mine, Dr. Raquel St. Clair Lettsome, has a sermon where she talks about God working things out while it's still dark. That's what God did for Jesus. We want to celebrate Easter in our lives, and God wants us to celebrate Easter in our lives. However, there are those of us who want to jump over the agony of Thursday, the fear of Friday, and the darkness of Saturday. What we don't realize is that God starts working before we know we need God.

Isn't that just like God? God has a track record of working in the dark. The darkness of life often tempts us to wallow in worry instead of wading in worship. The uncertainties of life often tempt us to check out instead of pressing on. The heartbreak of life often leads us to fret instead of faith. But know that God is already at work in your situation.

Just in case your situation is dark right now, don't worry. Don't be afraid. God still works in the dark. In case it's not a situation but it's you that's living in the dark...I offer you Jesus...the Light of the World. His light still transcends all darkness. You don't have to stay in darkness. You don't have to stay in darkness~ you can walk, talk, live in the light.

*Walk in the Light. Beautiful Light. Come where the dew drops of mercy shine bright.
Shine all around us by day and by night. Jesus the Light of the World.*

HERSTORY OF WOMEN IN MINISTRY IN AFRICAN METHODISM

Rev. Sandra E. H. Smith Blair*

Associate Minister, St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church, Berkeley, CA
Immediate Past President, Connectional A.M.E./Women in Ministry

This article covers the evolution of leadership roles for Protestant women with specific reference to African Methodist churches. Although the Second Great Awakening in the mid-19th century created greater opportunities for women to be involved in worship, social norms and Biblical injunctions were generally used in antebellum society to justify the exclusion of women from public roles or offices in Protestant churches. In the late 19th century, women began moving into new arenas of lay leadership in home and foreign missions as well as religious education but barriers to ordained ministry remained. Denominations with free church polity and religious groups of a more charismatic nature were more amenable than the more hierarchical churches to permitting new forms of female leadership. Antoinette L. Brown became the first American woman to be fully admitted to the Christian ministry when she was ordained in 1853 to serve the Congregational Church at South Butler, New York. Anna Howard Shaw was the first Methodist woman to be ordained. After being denied ordination by the Methodist Episcopal Church Conference in 1880, she was ordained in the Methodist Protestant Church but was so disillusioned she did not remain active in the church. It was not until 1924 that the Methodist Episcopal Church began granting women ordination as local preachers.

Among the African Methodist denominations¹, the AMEZ Church was the first to ordain a woman. Julia A.J. Foote was ordained a deacon in the New York Conference in 1894 and an elder in 1900. Mary J. Small was ordained a deacon in the Philadelphia/Baltimore Conference in 1895 and an elder in 1898. The AME and CME Churches did not begin to ordain women until the mid-20th century. Women with callings to ministry emerged soon after the inception of the AMEC in 1787.

- Jarena Lee, the first preaching woman, was allowed by Richard Allen to preach and was licensed but was refused ordination.
- Sophie Murray and Elizabeth Cole of Bethel, Baltimore
- Rachel Evans of New Jersey
- Harriet Felson Taylor of Union Bethel in Washington

Both women and men sought to persuade the church to recognize the call of women to the preaching ministry.

- An 1844 petition to the General Conference to license women was rejected
- In 1848 the Daughters of Zion Women's Society petitioned the General Conference and faced opposition led by Bishop Daniel Payne
- In 1852 Bishop Paul Quinn tried unsuccessfully to get a resolution approved to license women
- In 1864 the General Conference let a resolution to license women die
- In 1885 Bishop Henry McNeal Turner ordained Sarah A. Hughes a deacon in the North Carolina Conference but this was overturned by the 1888 General Conference

Not until 1888 did the AMEC General Conference approve the licensing of women as local preachers but it prohibited them being assigned and defined their role as evangelists.

(Continued on page 14)

* Only excerpts of Rev. Blair's article are featured here. To see her full work, visit http://www.sedwim.org/Documents/Herstory_of_WIM_in_the_AMEC_8-07.pdf.

HERSTORY OF WOMEN IN MINISTRY

(Continued from page 13)

The AMEC began ordaining women as local deacon in 1948 and local elder in 1958 but not until 1960 were women ordained to itinerant orders. [Rev. Gertrude Bryant of Louisville in the 13th Episcopal District who was ordained in 1958 into her 80's carried around with her a 1952 Disciple which read: "Women are included in the provisions for the ordination of local deacon. In no case shall they (women) be given itinerant relationship."]

In the late 19th century the African Methodist Churches established the first official position for women with the creation of the office of stewardess for women to assist the pastor and male stewards and class leaders in certain capacities, as well as to attend to females in the church. This was done by the AMEC in 1868. The revival of the Early Church order of deaconess created an additional arena of lay service for Protestant women. In 1900 the AME General Conference set up the office of deaconess as a position of special status for women to perform full-time church and charitable work.

Women also served as exhorters, missionaries, and evangelists. In 1878 the Women's Parent Mite Missionary Society was organized, and in 1898 the Women's Home and Foreign Missionary Society was established. However, these were structural alternatives to ordination that kept women in a subordinate role subject to strict male control and authority, and did not allow for full inclusion and equity in the leadership of the church. Some women left the church for denominations that accepted their calling. For example, Rebecca Cox Jackson joined the Shakers. Though women today are ordained for the deaconate and elder's orders and comprise approximately 20% of the clergy across the Connection, we still experience opposition, denial of our gifts for ministry, and questioning of the validity of our calling.

The reality that women in ministry face is the glass ceiling that limits our upward mobility in the church. Female pastors have demonstrated their capability for church building and church growth. However, most women are assigned to small to medium size churches. Location at a church that pays a smaller budget excludes women from certain positions such as preaching or leading worship at some events, membership on the finance committee, election as General Conference delegate/alternate, membership on the General Board and major commissions. WIM are engaged in a diversity of ministries — teaching, chaplaincy, counseling, evangelism, etc. — but in a hierarchical clerical setting, opportunities for leadership are generally given to pastors of larger churches who are predominantly men.

The first female Presiding Elder in the AMEC, Rev. Dorothy Morris of the Guyana Conference (16th District) was appointed in 1973 by Bishop Frederick H. Talbot. The first in the U.S., Rev. Cornelia Wright of the West Virginia Annual Conference (3rd District) was appointed by Bishop Vinton R. Anderson in 1983. The first on the African continent, Rev. Esther Ntinda of the Northeast Zambia Conference (17th District), was appointed by Bishop Richard A. Chappelle in 1990. To date, a total of some 30 appointments have been made, and approximately 19 women actively serve as Presiding Elders. Only until recently female candidates for Bishop have been taken seriously on a connec-tional level. Increasing acceptance of the fact that it was time for women to sit on the Bench of Bishops led to the herstoric election of Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie in 2000, and of Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry and Bishop Sarah Francis Davis in 2004.

With our struggles and accomplishments, we can celebrate the increasing number of women in ministry in the AMEC, the diversities of ministries which they are performing, the number of women clergy holding Annual Conference offices such as Dean of the Board of Examiners, the growing number of female Presiding Elders, the seating of women in the General Board, and the greater presence of women in the Episcopal District delegations to the General Conference.

Editor's Note: The AMEN staff thanks the Reverend Blair for her article and Dr. Teresa Fry Brown for her consultation.

Did You Know? What We Don't Know IS Hurting Us: Information Leads to Influence

Submitted by The Reverend Doctor Marcia Allen Owens
11th Episcopal District

Assistant Professor of Environmental Science & Policy - Florida A&M University

Reprinted (with permission) from *The Anvil*

Earth Day is April 22, and for many people of color, it will be just another Monday. But Earth Day began in 1970 as an annual celebration to promote awareness of taking care of all of the resources of God's creation.

EARTH DAY



APRIL 22

In its Ecumenical Statement on the Environment, the National Council of Churches USA (NCC) describes the current path of ecological destruction as a theological crisis caused by the proliferation of a false gospel "that God cares for the salvation of humans only and that our human calling is to exploit the earth for our own ends alone."¹

Many of today's leading pollution problems are the result of actions and decisions made by individual citizen consumers. However, many Americans do not feel that small personal sacrifices are meaningful in terms of global environmental stewardship. This attitude is indicative of a lack of environmental knowledge. There is an adage, often used when individuals and groups don't want to face an unpleasant reality—"What They Don't Know Won't Hurt Them." Knowledge about environmental issues runs contrary to that adage. In the case of environmental issues, What We Don't Know IS Hurting Us.

Climate change is an issue where citizens do not understand the importance of their individual decisions and consumption practices on climate change. Climate change refers to the way that the Earth's climate is changing over time. Scientists are now 90 to 95 percent certain that the changes they're seeing in the climate are the result of human activities. In general, these activities are causing the Earth's average temperature to rise, which is why the problem is often called "global warming." But because higher temperatures will lead to a wide variety of changes in the climate, not just warmer temperatures, experts prefer to call the problem "climate change."

Why should we know about climate change? As individuals who hold positions of authority and respect in the black community, pastors and leaders in historically Black denominations such as the AME Church should be equipped with specific knowledge in order to inform their congregations and to influence public policy. In fact, because of the historical and contemporary importance of the AME Church in the lives of many people of African descent, the approach of the AME Church must be adjusted to recognize the interconnectedness of everything. We must bridge the gaps of science, religion, and culture in order to become environmentally literate. In order to influence public policy, we must become familiar with and knowledgeable of environmental issues. Further, as global citizens, we must become fluent in speaking about them and their impact on individual, local, national, and global levels, because what we don't know IS hurting us.

Climate change and other environmental issues must be incorporated into our regular faith discourse. What is taught in the AME Church should equip its members with key concepts, skills, and particular values and dispositions toward issues such as creation, ecology, and issues of social justice. For example, many churches focus lessons and sermons on stewardship, but the operational definition of stewardship is often limited to financial or economic stewardship. However, environmental stewardship, that is, "voluntary commitment, behavior, and accomplishments that result in

(Continued on page 16)

¹ National Council of Churches of Christ Eco-Justice Programs (NCCC), *God's Earth is Sacred: An Open Letter to Church and Society in the United States*

Did You Know? What We Don't Know IS Hurting Us: Information Leads to Influence

(Continued from page 13)

environmental protection or improvement,² is lacking, as is an emphasis on and acceptance of personal responsibility for actions to improve environmental quality and sustainability.

All over the United States, there are battles over whether to teach the theory of evolution, because Christians believe that God created heaven and earth. If that is what we believe, then why don't we act like it by respecting, conserving, protecting and caring for ALL of God's creation? We must seek to be informed Christians because information and knowledge can lead to influence and our people indeed are perishing for lack of knowledge. What kind of knowledge are we lacking?

- Did you know? The nation's largest hazardous waste landfill is located in Emelle, Alabama (Sumter County).
- Did you know? Higher temperatures of global warming are expected to decrease overall air quality.
- Did you know? Over 70 percent of African Americans live in counties in violation of federal air pollution standards.
- Did you know? Climate change is expected to increase the incidence of asthma in the general population.
- Did you know? African Americans are nearly three times as likely to be hospitalized or killed by asthma than whites.
- Did you know? Climate change is expected to increase the range of many diseases, as warmer conditions will allow disease-spreading insects such as ticks and mosquitoes to live in places they previously couldn't live.
- Did you know? Scientists estimate that the potential for a malaria epidemic could increase by up to 27 percent as a result of climate change. Warmer and wetter conditions in the US are likely to increase malaria rates in the United States.
- Did you know? African Americans are one and a half times less likely than White Americans to have medical insurance and are less likely to have regular access to medical care. As a result, increases in diseases put African Americans more at risk than other communities.

Our communities are directly affected by policy decisions made at the federal, state, and local levels, and we have a right to participate in the decision making process. We bear a disproportionate share of the environmental burdens, but our voices are virtually silent in the process of making decisions which impact the quality of our lives. Information and knowledge lead to influence. Let us pray for access to knowledge, and courage to take appropriate actions with the reminder that in the case of environmental issues and their impacts, what we don't know IS indeed hurting us:

O God our creator, who by your own design, fearfully and wonderfully made heaven and earth and all its inhabitants, we, as part of humanity, humbly thank you for the privilege of being named stewards of your creation. May this your Zion, equip the saints with the awareness that reminds us that stewardship is not dictatorship, that dominion is not destructive domination, that worship and witness are not wasteful, and that we, too, are part of an ecosystem designed to live in interdependence, harmony, and balance. Forgive us for our sins against the rest of creation, and let us, as part of transforming the world, begin to live with the recognition that You made the earth to sustain our need, not our greed. O Lord, through Jesus Christ, the salvation of all creation, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, we give you all the honor, glory, and praise. Amen.

Editor's Note: The AMEN staff is thankful for the contribution of the Reverend Doctor Owens to this issue of the AMEN as well as for her contribution last month, *Tell Our Stories*.

² U.S. Environmental Protection Agency





March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Submitted by St. John A.M.E. Health Ministry Team
Written by Jennifer Patterson, Rosemary Wells, and Charis Chambers

Colon cancer is the third leading cause of death in the U.S. and affects over 1 million people a year. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that 50,830 people will die from colon cancer. However, 80% of these deaths could be prevented by regular screenings and diet and lifestyle changes. Contrary to what people believe, according to the CDC, colon cancer IS 90% treatable if discovered early. Here are some basic facts about colorectal cancer.

What is colon cancer? Colorectal cancer, often referred to as colon cancer, occurs in the colon (large intestine) or rectum (the area connecting the colon to the anus). Most colon cancers develop first as colorectal polyps, which are abnormal growths inside the colon or rectum that may later become cancerous.

What causes colon cancer? No one knows exactly the cause of colon cancer. You certainly cannot catch it from your neighbor. Research has shown that people with certain risk factors are more likely to develop colon cancer.

What is a risk factor...and how do I know if I am at risk? A risk factor is a factor that increases one's chance of getting a disease. Risk factors can be described as non-modifiable and modifiable. Non-modifiable risk factors include age, personal history of colon cancer, personal history of colorectal polyps, personal history of IBS (inflammatory bowel disease), family history of colon cancer, ethnic background, and race. **Age:** Over 90% of people diagnosed are over 50 and their chances of developing colon cancer increases after age 50. **Personal history:** If colon cancer has occurred and was completely removed, a person is still more likely to develop cancers in other areas of the colon. Individuals with numerous and large polyps are at an increased risk of developing colon cancer. Individuals with a history of IBS (Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis) are also at risk. **Family History:** A person who has close relatives with a history of colon cancer are somewhat more likely to develop this disease themselves, especially if the relative had the cancer at a young age. Approximately 15% of colon cancers are familial. Two major conditions caused by inherited genetic mutations are Hereditary Non-Polyposis colorectal Cancer (HNPCC) and Familial Adenomatous Polyposis (FAP). **Race/Ethnicity:** African Americans have the highest colon cancer incidence and mortality in the US compared to all other races. Modifiable factors include diet, physical activity, obesity (BMI), smoking, alcohol intake, and diabetes. In general a diet high in animal fat, red meat, processed meats, and low in fruits and vegetables, cereal/grain products, and beans will increase one's risk of developing colon cancer. This can be controlled. *Research shows that 70-80% of colorectal cancers are diet-related.* The prevention can be done through diet and lifestyle modification. Consuming a diet high in fiber, vegetables and fruits, antioxidative vitamins (A, C, E), essential nutrients (folates, calcium, Vitamin D) and low saturated fat and simple sugars will decrease the risk of developing colorectal cancer.

What are the symptoms?

It is important to remember that colon cancer can be present without any symptoms. Once the symptoms begin it may be a sign of more advanced disease and they may include:

- Blood in or on your stool (bowel movement)
- Stomach aches, pains, or cramps that do not go away.
- Losing weight and you do not know why.

When and how should a person get screened?

Current guidelines recommend colon cancer screenings for women and men ages 50-75. Talk to your doctor about which test or tests are right for you. The decision to be screened after age 75 should be made on an individual basis. If you are older than 75, ask your doctor if you should be screened. Screening is usually preferred using high-sensitivity fecal occult blood testing (stool test), sigmoidoscopy, or colonoscopy. These tests may also be used in combination. Colorectal cancer screening prevents more deaths due to EARLY detection.

For more information of colorectal cancer prevention and screening go to www.cdc.gov.



Parent Wisdom

By Sister Vanessa Glover

God's Word

Hebrews 4:12

There are some things in life that will never be fully understood. One must recognize some things will remain a puzzle; not a puzzle that must be solved. The truth is, there is no better way than God's way in every area, in all things, and at all times. Trust that God will love and care for His children through the difficult and heartbreaking problems with which they must deal. Not only do they search God's Word, but God's Word searches them also. God's Word is a mirror in which one often sees things that are hidden during the course of life. As persons read and study God's Word, it causes them to reflect on their motives, inner thoughts, and the unspoken assumptions that this life affords.

Regardless of what may have been lacking in the past and no matter how long the journey, God provided guidance in His Word. When we face the truth about life, relationships, and maturity, that leads to joy and contentment of who we really are; then His Power and His Living Word examine us and shape us for now and eternity. For there is no privacy—no one is righteous. Romans 3:10

God is all-powerful and all-knowing. He wants us to realize how precious we are to Him. He wants us to see ourselves in the light of His love—in His Word through His Son, Jesus Christ, who gave His life for us—"He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities; and the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are Healed!" (Isaiah 53:5) He is Sovereign over every situation. "Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandment, for this is the whole duty of man, For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil." (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)



Almighty God, Father of Our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ, thank you for Your promise to guard our children against any weapon formed against them. When our children face temptation, make them strong enough to resist and say "no" when facing lies, protect their minds with the powerful truth of Your Word, when facing deception, keep their feet on Your pathway of righteousness and peace for Your name's sake. Help them to say "yes" to draw closer to you. As they grow in their walk with You, keep their courage strong, keep their obedience complete, and keep their lives true unto You. AMEN

Wisdom for Daily Living: Our greatest struggle is not in the realm of understanding the will of God, it is in the realm of *obeying God's will*. To be honest, tests are never wasted. We groan and we hurt; we weep and we pray; we grow and we learn; through it all we learn to depend on God and His Word... our steps are God-ordained. Read Proverbs 20:24, Psalm 37:23, and Psalm 119:105.

Thoughtful Parent: The "common thread" in parenting - look for the extraordinary in our children with a shift in our perspectives. We still change diapers, but focus on raising Godly children—we still do laundry, but as we do it, "godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into this world and for certainly we can take nothing out of it" (1 Timothy 6:8)—we still do business, but it is about our Father's business.



"As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.' And immediately they left their nets and followed him." Mark 1:16-20

Church School Lesson Overview – April 2013

The Church School reviews for this month were written by Willie J. Sandifer.



April 7, 2013

Lesson Title: The Lord Appears

Lesson Scripture: Luke 24:36-53

Print: Luke 24:36-53

Devotional Songs: #424[], #272 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you – that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled" (Luke 24:44).

This lesson shows how Jesus fulfilled in every detail what the prophets had foretold about Him. The prophets of old pointed forward in time to the coming of the Messiah and the things that He had to undergo. These things were fulfilled just as they said. God keeps His word and therefore He can be trusted. The lesson looks at five of the key promises the resurrected Lord made to His original followers and to all who claim Him as Saviour:

1. I bring peace. Just as the grave could not stop Jesus, so nothing today can stop Him from bringing peace.
2. I am alive. When the post resurrection Jesus first appeared to His disciples, they thought He was a ghost. They were frightened. He had them examine His body, His feet, His hands, and His wounds. He also ate a meal with them to prove His claim.
3. I fulfill all the Old Testament prophecies. His death and resurrection were part of God's eternal plan that was revealed in the Old Testament.
4. I have a task for you. The resurrection of Jesus Christ gave all believers a great responsibility. That task is telling the world about Jesus and what happened on the cross and in the grave.
5. I will be with you. He promised to send the Holy Spirit to equip His followers with power.

April 14, 2013

Lesson Title: The Holy Spirit Comes

Lesson Scripture: Acts 2:1-36

Print: Acts 2:1-13

Devotional Songs: #196[], #258[], and #243[]

Key Verse: "All of them were filled with the

Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability" (Acts 2:4).

In this lesson we see how God transformed ordinary fishermen and peasants into bold and powerful evangelists who were willing to stand up against the religious and political rulers to proclaim the truth about the crucified and resurrected Lord.

Luke tells readers that Christ had appeared to His disciples over forty days. Before He ascended, however, He urged them to stay in Jerusalem and "wait for the promise of the Father", namely, the coming of the Spirit.

With the descent of the Spirit, these men would be "endued with power from on high," equipped to be special witnesses for Christ. Their mission would begin in Jerusalem and spread to the "uttermost part of the earth", in keeping with the Master's Great Commission.

April 21, 2013

Lesson Title: Living with Hope

Lesson Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

Print 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

Tentative Devotional Songs: #221[], #251 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

This lesson shows that believers can arm themselves with a hope that stands the test of time. The focus is especially on the fact that they have been delivered from the wrath of God to experience the hope that He offers all who believe in Him.

Death and issues associated with death are not readily welcomed, even for some mature believers. They prefer to talk about the pleasant side of Christianity, like how Jesus will help them to pay their bills and prosper. Yet, and this is a paradox, the more one reflects on life after death, the stronger their Christian hope and walk become.

It is exciting and reassuring to see how scripture proves scripture on this issue of the after-

(Continued on page 20)

Church School Lesson

(Continued from page 19)

life. Here are a few references which are consistent with this lesson's background scripture. The "thief in the night" language of 1 Thessalonians 5:2 is reminiscent of Jesus' words in Matthew 24:42 and Luke 12:39. II Peter 3:10, Revelation 3:3, and Revelation 16:16 echo the same concept of a glorious life after physical death for the believer. There is ample reason for believers to live in hope.

April 28, 2013

Lesson Title: Hope Comes from God's Grace

Lesson Scripture: 2 Thessalonians 2

Print: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, 9-17

Tentative Devotional Songs: #364 []; This Little Light of Mine; and #243 []

Key Verses: "Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and through grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, comfort your hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word" (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17).

This lesson shows how to stand firm in the hope that one has in Jesus, especially in times of turmoil. Persons are challenged to stand firm in the hope they have in Jesus no matter what transpires before the Day of the Lord comes.

The Bible reminds readers that troubling times will come before Jesus' coming. They will be gathered together to meet Him at the rapture. Paul did not want the faith of the Thessalonian believers to be shaken because some were telling them that their current troubles were an indication that the Day of the Lord had already come.

Paul went on to explain these rumors. Some claimed to have received revelations declaring that the rapture was past and that the day of divine judgment was upon them. They were not to believe such rumors and certainly not to be fooled by those who were bent on deceiving them, even if they appeared to be religious. The lesson for today's readers is that while chaos might reign around them, they must not let this lead them astray. They are to stand firm in the truth and the hope that Jesus showed in the Bible.

Church School Book Club

March 2013

Discussion Date: 23 Mar 2013
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Nowhere is a Place, Bernice L. McFadden, 2006

April 2013

Discussion Date: 20 Apr 13
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Sittin in the Front Pew, Parry EbonySatin Brown, 2006

Death brings about strange emotions, and people's true colors start to show. Glynda Naylor discovers this when she gets the call that her father has died suddenly and she must fly from Los Angeles to Baltimore to bury him.

Her beloved daddy, Edward Naylor, raised his four young daughters after their mother's death, and was the perfect father, brother, fiancé, and friend to those who loved him. As friends and family gather to pay tribute to this pillar of the community, Glynda and her sisters begin to search for answers about who the real Edward Naylor was. Their father was a good man, without question, but he also took a secret to his grave. What happens when his secret shows up for the funeral?



April 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 50+ Meeting 9:30 a.m.	2 6:30pm Church School Mtg	3 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Prayer Service 5:00 PM Steward Board	4  6:00 p.m. Mass Chorus Rehearsal	5 Connectional YPD LTI Film Program, Alabama	6 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 10:00 Official Board Mtg 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
7 COMMUNION 8am & 10:50 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School Worship AMEN Deadline 6:00-8:00 p.m.	8	9 6:00 p.m. Sons of Men Mtg 6:00 p.m. Steward's Board  Voices In Prayer	10 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	11  6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	12 Line Dancing 6:30-8:30 pm	13 SBHB District Conference 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry AMEN Staff Meeting 10:30 am SBH District Youth Young Adult Luncheon
14 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	15 6:00 p.m. Koinonia Ministry	16 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN  Voices In Prayer Rehearsal 6:00 p.m.	17 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	18	19  6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	20 Clergy In Bible 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
21 Clergy In Bible 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	22 6:00 p.m. ITHR/ME EmERGE	23 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN 6:30 p.m. Lay Organization Mtg	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. Dance Ministry Women's Ministry 10:30 a.m. WMO Meeting
28 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	29 6:00 p.m. ITHR/ME Arise	30 6:30 p.m. Church School Mtg				

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

Non-profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Huntsville, AL
Permit No. 240

Return Service Requested

E-mail: stjohnameh@aol.com

Website: stjohnamehsv.org

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



- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| March 25-26, 2013 | Holy Week Revival, 6:30 pm, nightly |
| March 27, 2013 | Maundy Thursday Service—Bring a Friend! |
| March 29 | Good Friday |
| March 31 | Resurrection Day, Sunrise Service 6 a.m.,
Breakfast 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.,
Easter Musicals 8:45 a.m.,
Morning Worship 10:00a.m. |
| April 5-6, 2013 | Connectional YPD Meeting, Birmingham, Alabama |
| April 13, 2013 | South Birmingham-Huntsville-Bessemer District Conference,
New Seed of Faith AME Church, Birmingham-Tarrent |

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. Ro mans 10:9

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



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 18 Issue 4

April 2013

Pastor's Message

God's Ambassador

2 Corinthians 5:11-21



Reverend Patrick D. Clayton

The last few weeks have been bittersweet at St. John. On one hand, we have had wonderful times of ministry during the close of Lent, a spectacular Holy Week, a grand Resurrection Sunday, and a marvelous celebration of 128 years of ministry in St. John. On the other hand, three persons from our church family went home to be with the Lord. I mentioned two of them in last month's issue of AMEN: Brother Willie Jones and Sister Antoinette Wilson. When you peruse the following pages, you will see tributes to each of them.

On Holy Saturday (March 30th), the Reverend Kenneth D. Johnson passed away. He was a faithful member of our ministerial staff. He suffered from a stroke on June 30, 2012, and never fully recovered. He will be sorely missed.

As we go through these losses, let us be sure to support and pray for each other. Let us pray that we have the necessary space to grieve and that our grief is healthy. Grief is a part of life. To grieve in a moment of loss is natural and healthy. Yet, grief can become unhealthy when it continues for an extended duration without any care or treatment. Some signs of unhealthy grief are prolonged isolation, self-neglect, substance abuse, persistent suicidal thoughts, and mental illness. If you see these (or similar) signs in yourself or someone around you, seek professional help for yourself or for those who are suffering.

Healthy grief, however, is a temporary space, where we express the pains of our hearts. It is also the place where we begin our healing from whatever loss we have experienced. True and healthy grief is the starting point for growth beyond the pain. This time of year reflects that truth. After Resurrection Sunday, the church normally concentrates on many of the post-resurrection accounts of Jesus. In those pericopae, the disciples are growing through their grief (from the horrors of the crucifixion and their missteps in those moments) to the joy of being reunited with the risen Christ.



My prayer is that St. John – like the disciples of two millennia ago – will grow through its grief into the joy of serving Christ, community, and each other. Let us begin this growth by honoring those who have transitioned from labor to reward. Again, Brother Jones and Sister Wilson are being honored by other writers. Allow me to honor the Reverend Johnson with the words I expressed in his eulogy:

The Reverend Kenneth Donald Johnson was God's ambassador. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 5:20, calls himself Christ's ambassador. So, I am calling the Reverend Johnson God's ambassador. An ambassador is selfless and represents someone else. An ambassador does not seek to lift up him or herself; rather, an ambassador lifts up the person he or she represents. An ambassador is loyal. An ambassador is committed.

(Continued on page 2)

Pastor's Message



(Continued from page 1)

When I first met the Reverend Johnson (in September 2011), I was coming to St. John to preach for the Fall Revival. I noticed that he served the Reverend and Mrs. McCall tirelessly. All they had to do was ask, and he made it his mission to accomplish the task. For over 30 years, he served them and this church. He represented them and this church...because he was committed. He was an ambassador.

The Reverend Johnson was God's ambassador. For, an ambassador is committed and convicted. The Reverend Johnson was so convicted by his beliefs that he would engage you in vigorous debate if you disagreed with him. His conviction made him hold to his beliefs and way of life firmly.

On the Sunday that Bishop James L. Davis appointed me to be the pastor of St. John (December 4, 2011), the worship service was packed with people and with liturgical elements. As the choir began to sing the sermonic selection, the Reverend Johnson leaned over to me and said, "Reverend, Church School is supposed to begin at 9:45 this morning." I replied, "Okay. What time is it now?" With a grin, he said, "9:40." And, we also needed to celebrate Holy Communion!

The Reverend Johnson had a conviction about how things should be done...the AME way! He was an ambassador through his conviction. The Reverend Johnson eventually stepped down from being the Assistant to the Pastor. He felt his calling was to serve under the Reverend McCall and to help me during the transition. When that had passed, he was ready to move on (not from the church — just the position). He was an ambassador, through his conviction, to serve at the time during which he served. No more and no less.

During the General Conference, he had the stroke. The Reverend Garrett, the Reverend Sheri, and I went to visit him as soon as we got back. We told him that he needed to take care of himself and that he needed to follow the doctor's orders. In response, he cried. He said to me, "I didn't understand what you were trying to do (the changes you were making). But, I get it now." I did not know to what he was referring at first. After he repeated himself several times, I understood. He added, "You were trying to show us a new way... a new thing. I get it now!" So, we all cried, and we prayed.

An ambassador is committed, convicted, and CONVERTED. The Reverend Johnson got a new revelation and was converted. Paul said it like this, "If any person is in Christ, she or he is a new creation. Old things are passed away; and, behold, all things become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). God did something new in the Reverend Johnson's life, and he was converted. From that day forward, he tried to get every person he met to attend St. John and to have me be their pastor. He kept witnessing in the hospital and the rehabilitation facilities. One nurse told me, "If Rev. Johnson would focus

(Continued on page 3)

Reverend Akinbinu Inspires During Holy Week Revival

By Bridget J. Floyd



Male Dance ministry members minister in dance.

The Reverend Bankole Akinbinu, pastor of Baptist Grove Church in Raleigh, North Carolina, returned this year as the evangelist for revival. The Holy Week revival was held at St. John AME on March 25th – 27th at 6:30 p.m. nightly. Each night the call to worship was led by the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn and various members of the ministerial staff offered prayer and read scripture. Enhancement of the worship experience was provided by ministry through dance and music. The choirs featured were: Monday, Voices of Triumph of Oakwood University; Tuesday, Voices in Praise, St. John AME Church; Wednesday, Alabama A & M University Gospel Choir. The male members of the Dance Ministry offered praise on Monday evening with a dance ministry to "I Am" by Kirk Franklin. The dance ministry on Tuesday was to "More Than What I Wanted" by CeCe Winans and on



Rev. Sheri greets worshipers.



Mr. & Mrs. Stanley joined St. John during revival.

(Continued on page 4)

Reverend Akinbinu Inspires During Holy Week Revival

By Bridget J. Floyd

(Continued from page 3)

Wednesday the dance was a dramatic praise to "Break Every Chain" by Tasha Cobb. Pastor Patrick D. Clayborn introduced the evangelist, his friend and former colleague, nightly.

The Reverend Akinbinu was inspirational each night, and while difficult to imagine, inspired to greater levels each night. On Monday, the Reverend Akinbinu preached on the topic, "Just Be Ready", taken from the text Acts 1: 15-26. He emphasized that God has an omniscient plan for His people (and the world) and that while God desires that believers walk in His plan (both good and bad experiences); this requires a planful approach to living one's life. As it can be frustrating, given the limits of human knowledge and understanding when dealing with God's plan, a person might wonder when they can break through to use their God-given gift. The Reverend Akinbinu noted that "we live forward but

understand backwards... the reflection in the rear view mirror" allows one to learn, as well as vicarious learning (through others).



Referring to the text, the Reverend Akinbinu noted that Matthias was not mentioned in the Bible prior to this time of "promotion" to replace Judas and speculated that Matthias likely was "living forward" and had no idea of what was to come but was ready for his "new assignment". The question was posed to the congregants, "Will you be prepared when the assignment, position, promotion is given by the Lord?" He indicated that there is sometimes an extended period between the "promise and fulfillment". He likened the waiting period to that of a "cocoon phase"; that is, God building the person to the butterfly

phase. He encouraged, "don't give up" while building spiritual muscles and strength to fly as a butterfly.

He also gave the cautionary note to not wait for people to affirm what God has already affirmed. He classified "delay" as "God's Divine Protection... If God releases you too early people may assassinate what God has planned for you." He urged each person to be ready when God elevates them and to use their gift in the right way. He encouraged, "God has a way of lifting you up no matter where you come from...JUST BE READY!"

On Tuesday, the Reverend Akinbinu preached on the topic "Passionate Worship: Holy, Holy, Holy", taken from the text Isaiah 6:1-8. He began with the origin and definition of "worship", meaning to make a value statement (appraisal) based upon its condition. He hastily noted that the only one worthy of the ultimate allegiance/devotion is God, "because He can give you life." He noted that God said, "I have created you for myself".

From the text, the evangelist noted that Uzziah was a great king who had become prideful to the point that he did not feel he had to obey God, resulting in his "living as a legend but dying as a leper". He noted that God allows negative experiences so that one can realize God's greatness. The Reverend Akinbinu expounded on the vision in the text, particularly the praise that was being given and the hierarchy of the angels. He so eloquently explained that the Seraphs covered their eyes, so HOW POWERFUL AND HOLY MUST OUR GOD BE?!! Certainly humans who are "nine places below the Seraphim," according to varied Jewish theology, should recognize the inappropriateness of an elitist attitude and must come into the presence of the Lord and realize how holy He is.

(Continued on page 5)

Reverend Akinbinu Inspires During Holy Week Revival

By Bridget J. Floyd

(Continued from page 4)

The Reverend Akinbinu indicated that fire was in the worship of the Seraphs who "didn't hold anything back because God manifests Himself in fire...we should bring fire into our worship... don't complain of boring worship... did you bring a fire with you?!!" The fire does not have to be "fancy", note that in the text there were simply three words, "Holy, Holy, Holy". He indicated that during Holy Week it must be realized that "He died for me", and that He should be worshiped in spirit and truth. The revivalist proclaimed "I WILL BLESS THE LORD AT ALL TIMES" and asked, "Aren't you glad you have a Savior that cleanses you?!!" He built to a crescendo as the evangelist, congregation and choir exclaimed "Holy, Holy, Holy".

While the benediction was again saved for the final night of revival, the closing prayer was one welcoming and responding to a couple who answered the invitation to discipleship.

On the third and final night of revival, the choir selections included "He Kept Me" and "Your Majesty" and the St. John Dance Ministry selection was "I Hear the Chains Falling". The sermon was entitled "God Expectations" from the text Ephesians 3:20-21. The Reverend Akinbinu began with a quote from Michaelangelo, "The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low, and achieving our mark." He noted that when the target is low it makes one complacent. In the midst of setting low expectations, "God comes and speaks vision, hope and new expectations. God, by grace, intends to use us, even though the vision can sometimes be intimidating". The preacher gave biblical examples of Moses, Jeremiah, Abraham, Israel and Esther and noted that if God has given a vision the confirmation is that it is intimidating. He instructed that when tempted to pare down the vision, one should go to Ephesians 3:20 to discern that "any vision that is God-given must be God-driven. Expectations are in line with the power of God and because of His power we do not have great expectations, but God Expectations".

The revivalist indicated that the text is a benediction/doxological statement that is in the middle of book of Ephesians, after a prayer. He noted that in the first three chapters Paul completed the discussion of God's vision and then said a prayer that was rational because of who God is. According to the evangelist, the "now" in the verse is a transition of focus from the Ephesians to God; hence, "to see your faith grow you have to have a 'now' moment when you direct your attention to God."

Further, God's ability goes beyond humankind's ability to express. That is, He is a "more on top of that God", in that God's ability goes beyond one's capacity to ask or think. The Reverend Akinbinu emphasized that at the end of every petition should be "God have your way" and God will bless beyond the request. The revivalist concluded with the challenge to "raise your expectation". The text ends with the phrase "according to the power that works in you". Congregants were left with the encouragement to "Believe God can do it and give God the glory".

The Benediction for the revival was given by the Reverend Akinbinu who truly brought spiritual enlightenment, inspiration and revival to those who attended the Holy Week Revival. One can hope that he will again return to bring his intellectual and spiritual gifts to St. John.



The Reverend Akinbinu and Pastor Clayborn

Easter Sunrise Service 2013

By The Reverend Charles Glover, Itinerant Elder



Praise Team members DeLoach, Justin York, Shay York, Janelle Smith and Kamea Lattimore minister in song.

With a central theme of "Celebrate Resurrection Sunday 2013", congregants assembled at Saint John African Methodist Episcopal Church, Huntsville, Alabama to proclaim "Our Savior Is Risen." Service began at 8 a.m. to the historic hymn #5, "All Hail The Power of Jesus Name." Those assembled sang with triumphant voices "All hail the power of Jesus' Name! Let angels prostrate fall. Bring forth the royal diadem, And crown Him, crown Him, crown Him, crown Him Lord of all."

The Reverend Sheri Clayborn was the liturgist for the early morning service. She stated that resurrection is about life and not death. She enthusiastically led the call to worship entitled "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today", which was taken from hymn #158- "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today." The Saint John Praise Team and congregation followed with opening hymn # 168, "Low in the Grave He Lay". The

morning scripture was read from the gospel of John, Chapter 20, verses 1-10. As the recognition of guests for the morning was extended, it was very moving to witness the numerous visitors who were in attendance early Sunday morning to share in this great occasion. Worshipers were blessed by the Dance Ministry's dramatic and moving rendition choreographed to Kirk Franklin's "Don't Cry, He is not dead, He is risen".

After the sermon hymn by the Praise Team, Pastor Clayborn came forth to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. His subject was "Rules for Resurrection". The sermon text was John, Chapter 20, verses 11-18. These verses reinforce the fact that Jesus' resurrection is the key to our Christian faith. If we believe in Jesus, He resurrects us, regardless of the storms swirling within us or the winds howling outside of us. He has resurrected us from many of our challenges and circumstances, but also into a new life in Him. God strengthens us using the elements of adversity. Just as He said he would, Jesus rose from the dead. We can be confident, therefore, that He will accomplish all He has promised. Resurrection means we get a "comeback". When resurrection comes, there should be a celebration. Mary did not meet the risen Christ until she had discovered the empty tomb. She responded with joy and obedience by going to tell the disciples. We cannot meet Christ until we discover that He is indeed alive, that the tomb is empty. Pastor Clayborn emphasized that often we can't celebrate because many are full of fear and confusion. The Word of God tells us that love will actually flush fear out of our souls. 1 John 4:18 says, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear". In order to fully celebrate, we have to let go of the limitations we place on God. Mary had to let Jesus go so as to not limit the blessing she received.

Pastor Clayborn's focus areas were:

1. Anticipate life in your empty tomb! Your empty tomb is a signal and symbol of life. God empties our tomb to show us "new life" is on the way. God has a vision beyond the vision we have for ourselves. As Jesus ascends in our life, we grow. As we grow, the more we can appreciate and love ourselves as Christ loves us.
2. Keep looking for Jesus! Mary did not want to lose Jesus again. She had not yet understood the resurrection. Perhaps, she thought this was His promised second coming. Jesus did not want to be detained at the tomb. If He did not ascend to heaven, the Holy Spirit could not come. Mary didn't let the empty tomb stop her from looking for Jesus. Mary found angels sitting waiting on her in her place of ministry. If you keep looking, Jesus will show up.
3. Let Jesus be free in your life! Mary didn't recognize Jesus at first. Her grief had blinded her.

(Continued on page 8)

Pastor's Message

(Continued from page 2)

on his rehab like he focused on taking, he would be doing pretty well!"

Yes, the Reverend Johnson was God's ambassador! Yet, the question becomes this: how do we move forward with this loss in our lives? What Paul said to the Corinthians is what I say to each of you: "[since] we are ambassadors for Christ...be reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:20). Since the Reverend Johnson was God's ambassador, be reconciled to God. Be reconciled to God's will. Be reconciled to God's plans for your life. Be reconciled to God's people – the church, your friends, and your family. Be reconciled to God's image that is in you. Get rid of any and everything that takes you away from God. Sure, these words are easy to say. Being reconciled to God is a mighty undertaking. But, think about God's ambassador. That stroke took away the function of the left side of the Reverend Johnson's body; yet, he did not stop witnessing for Christ. He talked to anyone who would listen. He said, "I may not get back in the pulpit, but this hospital bed will be my pulpit. I may not get back to the sanctuary on Church Street, but this hospital room will be my sanctuary."

He was God's ambassador. He was not living for his agenda. He was not lifting up his agenda. He was not lifting up my agenda. He was not lifting up your agenda. Instead, he lifted up God's agenda...he was God's ambassador. Hallelujah!

You do not have to worry about the Reverend Kenneth Johnson anymore. There are no more doctors and there is no more rehabilitation. There is no more pain and there are no more tears. For, the Reverend Johnson got a promotion! God said that if we would be faithful over a few things, God would make us ruler over many. The Reverend Johnson just got promoted. He went from ambassador to ruler!!! Usually, when we change jobs, we change locations. In a promotion, we usually move to a nicer place. "For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Corinthians 5:1). The Reverend Kenneth Donald Johnson was God's ambassador. Now, he has moved on to become a ruler...in a building not made by hands!



Vision Driven: Stewardship

The core values of St. John's vision are Spiritual Growth, Service, Stewardship, Education, and Evangelism. The current series of bible study lessons focuses on the core value of Stewardship. This article is a summary of the bible study lessons. Prayerfully consider your Stewardship as you read this article.

The series began with a two week study on "The Aim of the Steward" and was based on scripture texts of 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 1 Peter 4:7-11; Matthew 24:45-51; and Matthew 25:14-30.

Definition of Steward

"*oikonomos*. In Greek this word means 'steward.' It may then denote the head of a particular branch of a great house, e.g., the chief cook. As a loanword it can denote a city official. (cf. Rom. 16:23) It may also be used for an estate manager or accountant as well as a housekeeper. In the rabbi Moses is God's steward. In parables the loanword usually has the sense of treasurer."

Key traits of a steward were identified as a person who puts God first serves others, is faithful with God's blessing and is grateful for opportunities.

Next, the series theme focused on "Bringing the Full Tithe" with texts from Malachi 3:6-12; 2 Corinthians 9:8-15, and Haggi 1.

Tithing is a form of worship that is an outgrowth of one's relationship with God (love for God), and deepens one's walk with God. Jesus affirmed the idea of financial giving as worship in Matthew 6:21 and the first two biblical examples of tithing were acts of worship prior to the establishment of the law, Genesis 14:17-24, Genesis 28:10-22.

Tithing as Holistic Giving (Full Tithe) means giving one-tenth; it is an act of worship (or spiritual discipline) in which the worshipper gives one-tenth of her or his treasure (income), time, and talent to God by giving it to her or his church. Treasure is income. Genesis 28:22 addresses the question of tithing from the net vs,

(Continued on page 12)

¹ Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (678). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.

Easter Sunrise Service

(Continued from page 6)

She couldn't see Him because she did not expect to see Him. The cares of this world have blinded us to the miraculous power of Jesus. Mary wasn't afraid to go where others had failed. We too must have that determination in our Spirit. Jesus taught Mary to let Him be free so He can bless in a radical way. Through the resurrection, Jesus was set free and we are now free also in Him. God will only be as big as we "let Him" be. Many of us are waiting on God to do something, but He is actually waiting on us. If we do not put something in ourselves for God to work with, then He is limited in what he can do. We have to give Him something to work with. Be free in Jesus and doers of the Word and not hearers only.

4. **Testify!** We need to testify of the resurrection in our life with others. Pastor Clayborn encouraged everyone to try sharing Jesus with those we come into daily contact with. Share Jesus instead of sharing our drama and troubles. If we have true resurrection power within us, no one has to pump us up to tell others of our victories in Christ. Just as Jesus passed the job to his disciples of spreading the gospel around the world, He has commanded us to do the same.



Pastor Clayborn delivers Sunrise Service message.

After we have done all, celebrate! When Jesus is in it, there is no limit in Christ!

We can be certain of our own resurrection because Jesus was resurrected. Death is not the end—there is future life. That same divine power that raised Jesus from the dead is now available to all who believe on Him with "complete faith." If you have complete faith in God, you will make it through whatever comes. Partial faith is not good enough for these times. Extraordinary times call for extraordinary faith! Zechariah was right when he wrote these words: "Not by power, or by might, but by my spirit, says the Lord." Experience with the Lord can be anywhere or anytime, late at night or early in the morning. It may even be an experience similar to that of one of the church's hymn writers who pinned his personal testimony:

"I come to the garden alone,
While the dew is still on the roses,
And the voice I hear, falling on my ear,
The Son of God discloses,
And He walks with me, and He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own,
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known."

"CHRIST OUR LORD IS RISEN!" Amen.

A delicious breakfast was served after the Sunrise Service. The meal was sponsored by the Steward Board and Trustee Board and was prepared by the men of St. John.

Holy Week Observances Included Maundy Thursday Service

Following a spiritually invigorating Holy Week Revival, St. John continued its observance of Holy Week with a Maundy Thursday Worship Service. 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, mandatum 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.

While different denominations observe Maundy Thursday in their own distinct ways, two important biblical events are the primary focus of Maundy Thursday solemnizations: Before the Passover meal, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. By performing this lowly act of service, the Bible says in John 13:1 that Jesus "showed them the full extent of his love." By his example, Jesus demonstrated how Christians are to love one another through humble service. For this reason, many churches practice foot-washing ceremonies as a part of their Maundy Thursday services.

During the Passover meal, Jesus took bread and wine and asked his Father to bless it. He broke the bread into pieces, giving it to his disciples and saying, "This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." Then he took the cup of wine, shared it with his disciples and said, "This wine is the token of God's new covenant to save you--an agreement sealed with the blood I will pour out for you." These events recorded in Luke 22:19-20 describe the Last Supper and form the biblical basis for the practice of Communion. For this reason, many churches hold special Communion services as a part of their Maundy Thursday celebrations.

Music for the service was led by the Mass Choir, prayer was offered by Ms. Patricia Grier and the scripture was read by the Reverend Meriam Garrett. The messenger for the service was the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn. The sermon was entitled, "The Sifting Test" and the text was from Luke 22:31-34. She focused on the after dinner conversation that followed the Passover meal. In this conversation Jesus was preparing Simon for what was to come and to warn him "Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat." The warning did not end with the despairing message of what Satan wanted to do, but with hope as Jesus said, "But I have prayed for you." There will be "sifting tests" for believers and sometimes they may fail the test.

The Reverend Sheri explained that Satan is looking to pull believers apart. She compared their sifting to the sifting of wheat where that which is stable will not be blown away. She stated that Satan has come to deter their faith through trials in families, on jobs, and in the church.

Continuing to expound on the text, she told how Jesus gave Peter grace even though He knew Peter would fail the test. He told him to strengthen his brothers. In concluding she said that Jesus knows what is coming next and He sends warning signs. He has already prayed, and that is a reason for hope.

Following the message, communion was served. Each person was given communion individually, by Pastor Clayborn.



Prayer Time

Join us for Weekly Prayer Time each Tuesday at 8:00 am.

Conference Call Credentials

US Toll Number (530) 881-1212, Meeting ID: 876-863-940

If you are not able to join the call at 8:00 am, you may listen to the playback any time.

Playback Number (530) 881-1212, Meeting Id 876-863-940.
Press # to ignore any requests for reference number when calling for playback.

A Tribute to Antoinette S. Wilson "Let the Church Say, Amen"

By Mary Goode Rankin
Picture by Sister Vanessa Glover



We do not know when our last moment of life on this earth will be. However, we do know that death is a part of life and that it touches everyone in one form or another. Most of us are ill-prepared when this debilitating event in our lives leaves us with only memories, but knowing that *"The Lord Will Make a Way Somehow"*, guides us through the grieving process, because *"He's Just That Kind of God"*.

As our interrupted lives unfold, and we struggle with experiencing a loss, *"Nobody but Jesus"* can strengthen our painful heart. As each day presents new challenges, He assures us *"There's a Bright Side Somewhere"* and that *"God Never Fails"*. With each passing day, our grief-stricken souls can begin to heal, believing that *"The Holy Ghost Power"* affords us a peace that passes all understanding.

When we lose a friend or family member who has enriched our lives beyond measure, they will be sorely missed. However, *"When You are Burdened"*, your heart "skips a beat" as you *"Look Back Over Your Life"*, knowing that weeping may endure for a night, but joy will come in the morning.

We know that *"The Lord Will Make a Way Somehow"*, because the St. John A.M.E. Church family and Gospel Choir is heavy-burdened with the loss of our friend and musical leader, Mrs. Antoinette LaFayette Snodgrass Wilson. God sent Antoinette and her husband Murphy to us for a reason...to meet our musical needs, through their spiritual God given gift as a master pianist and director. With every song that she played, each choir member year after year, became a stronger emotional and spiritual vessel to be used by God. With every song that she played, Antoinette would literally set the tone for our hearts and voices to receive the message of song and praise. She believed that in order for God's praises to go up and His blessings to come down, we the Gospel Choir members must understand each song's message as it relates to God's Holy word. It was also no surprise to us when Antoinette would softly play the piano to tell us about her health trials and would acknowledge how the Lord supplied all of her needs and healed her body, giving her the strength to get through, *"Just for Today"*. Knowing that *"He'll Make a Way"*, Antoinette acknowledged that when *"It's Your Season"*, *"He's an On Time God"*, who blesses us with His infinite wisdom and power.

"Let the Church Say Amen" as we at St. John A.M.E. Church honor Antoinette S. Wilson, a divine woman of God whose favor with the Lord, placed her in our lives for a season.

"Let the Church Say Amen" as *"We Offer Christ"* a devoted and humble choir, who is faithfully committed to continue Antoinette's legacy to musically inspire God's people.

"Let the Church Say Amen" to thank Antoinette and Murphy for leading the Gospel Choir to a new level so that through their anointed music ministry, we can acknowledge God's Holy Word, understand God's Holy Word and sing God's Holy Word 'til that great gettin' up morning. *"When You've Done All You Can Do"* to *"Give God Your All and All"*.

"Let the Church Say Amen", because Antoinette lived a life of obedience to God, *"Walking in the Light"* until she was *"Safe in His Arms"*.

"Let the Church Say Amen", because Antoinette passed our way, anointed our hearts to receive God's Holy word, used her God given gift to lead us in song and lived her life sharing her testimony to *"Pattern My Life After Jesus"*.

So that Antoinette's living will not be in vain...
"Let the Church Say Amen!"

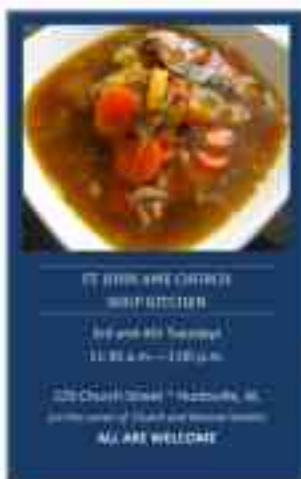
Habitat 2013 Build Schedule

This year St John will partner with Church of the Nativity Episcopal, First Christian, St Mathew's Episcopal, First Presbyterian, Aldersgate Methodist, United Church Of Huntsville, and Covenant Presbyterian. Although our focus days were March 2, 9, and 16, members are encouraged to participate throughout the schedule.

DATE	DAY	ACTIVITY
Apr. 23, 25, 27	Tue, Thur, Sat	Install closet hardware, window blinds, storm doors, bathroom accessories
Apr 30, May 2, 4	Tue, Thur, Sat	Catch up work, touch up paint, clean and wax floors
May 7, 9, 11	Tue, Thur, Sat	Work punch list, DEDICATION CEREMONY: Sat. 11th

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, safety glasses if you have them. St John provided lunch on March 16th and will provide lunch again on April 27th.

Directions to site: Due to limited parking at the build site, a shuttle is available from West Mastin Lake Elementary School. The school is located at 5308 Mastin Lake. From 7:30 to 9:30 am the shuttle runs continuously back and forth from the school. The wait will be about 5 - 10 minutes. After that the shuttle will run every 1/2 hour.



The YPDers of St. John worked with the Soup Kitchen Ministry during their Spring Break. This was an excellent opportunity for service to those who are in need.

Our Work Continues After the Resurrection

"Therefore my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 15:58 KJV

"What is it to be alive?" Norman Vincent Peale answers: "There is a distinction between living and existing." He continues, "Some people only exist, but to live is something very different." He defines being alive as "touching" as many points of life as possible."

St. John's Soup Kitchen strives to touch as many lives as possible. We pray that this church ministry serves as an inspiration to all and will help resurrect those who may be in self-centered tombs. Through us, may the light of God shine and Resurrection come for those who are fed.

A Tribute to Brother Willie C. Jones

Praise the Lord! He is good.
God's love never fails.
Praise the God of all gods.
God's love never fails.
Praise the Lord of lords.
God's love never fails.

Psalm 136:1-3



Brother Jones was a compassionate member of St. John. He is most remembered by St. John members for his warm hugs and friendly greetings. He was always very positive and encouraged others.

The Reverend Dr. Homer and Mrs. Mable McCall remember the shirts that Brother Jones gave them as an anniversary gift when they celebrated 40 years at St. John. The printing on the shirts read "God Never Fails." The McCalls remember that after worship service, Brother

Jones gave each of them a warm hug and said "Hang in there."

Brother Willie Jones was an active member of the Sons of Allen at St. John. He held the office of secretary under the presidency of Brother Guy Ginn and the office of treasurer under the presidency of Brother Tommy Anderson. Whenever possible he worked with the Sons of Allen on their community service projects. Brother Jones also provided the services of his printing company for many items for the Sons of Allen's Annual Men's Retreat. Brother Jones was very highly respected by the SOA and will be missed by all who knew him.

Pastor Clayborn remembers Brother Jones' willingness to help in any way and his love of family.

St. John continues to pray for the family of Brother Jones and his presence will be missed. A trust fund has been established in memory of Brother Jones at Redstone Federal Credit Union.



Vision Driven: Stewardship

(Continued from page 7)

gross. Stewardship of time and talent are supported by Ephesians 5:16, Romans 12:3-7, Ephesians 4:1-16, and Matthew 25:31-46. The tithe belongs to God (Leviticus 27:30-33) and it goes to God's storehouse. (Deuteronomy 14:22-29) The tithe should be given cheerfully and willingly. (2 Corinthians 9:7)

True Sources for Tithing come from a relationship with God (Malachi 3:7-10; Matthew 6:19-21), a desire (Psalm 51:16-17, 1 Corinthians 9:7, 2 Corinthians 9:13), prayer (Luke 22:39-46), gratitude (Psalm 118:12-19), faith (Malachi 3:10), and obedience, discipline, and faithfulness (1 Samuel 15:22).

Who can tithe? Who should tithe? Persons who should tithe are those who have a relationship with God, see tithing as an act of worship, want to tithe, see tithing as deepening their relationship with God, are willing to make sacrifices, see their income, time, and talent as belonging to God, are thankful for God's blessings, are willing to reprioritize their lives to tithe, believe that God will take care of them, are willing to follow God's word in tithing, and are willing to grow into tithing.

CURSED?!?!? (THIS IS NOT A FEAR TACTIC---JUST AN EXPLANATION!!!!) -- Malachi 3:9 Curse means to bind, snare, or hem in with obstacles. God is not doing the cursing. Those who do not tithe curse themselves. The curse is the result of a violation to one's relationship with God. This curse **DOES NOT MEAN** that those who do not tithe are going to hell, or that God stops loving those who do not tithe, or that those who do not tithe never have a chance for redemption, or that bad things will continually happen to those who do not tithe, or that those who do not tithe will die as a result of not tithing, or that the time, talent, and treasure of those who do not tithe will necessarily evaporate. The curse **DOES MEAN** that those who do not tithe limit their relationship with God and limit themselves. (Haggai 1) To be cursed is to live a life of unnecessary limitations!

The next bible studies will look at the benefits of tithing and how to start tithing.

Contact the church office if you would like more information on Stewardship.

Count It All Joy, 'Cause It's Not Over!

By Lydia Owens and Donna Gullatte

The Easter Story Musicales creatively included something for all ages. From the smallest to the tallest, they graced the audience with their recitations, songs, dances, and spoken word. The program was presented on Easter Sunday morning at 8:30 a.m.



Combined ministry of the Mass Choir and Dance Ministry.

The program opened with the St. John AME Mass Choir and the Dance Ministry joining forces to worship and minister to "Anthem of Praise." The "Easter Story Musicales" was uniquely carved into five chapters as well as four Spoken Word segments. The first spoken word was read by David Wells. That was followed by words from the hostess, Daisha Rembert, with the assistance of Ashley Lewis. The singing of "Were You There" by the Children's Choir completed this segment.

Participants in the first chapter, Christ's Resurrection, were Jayla Mack, Jordan Patterson, Blake Johnson, Curtis Mayes, Jr. (saxophone solo), and Kathryn Buckram-White. Participants in the second chapter, God's Grace, were Cambridge Wilson, Jessica Harbin, Anthony Mack, Tyler Williams, and McLeod Buckram-White. Participants in the third chapter, God's Sacrifice, were Channing Ransom, Michael Clark, Caylon Mayes, and Kennedy Rankin-Crutch. Participants in the fourth chapter, The Cross, were Josiah Gullatte, Anthony Harbin, Reagan Lawson, and Jayla Mack. Participants in the fifth chapter, Jesus' Love, were Channing Ransom, Patrick Clayborn II, Breeyanna Rochelle, Jasmyne Rochelle, and Callynn Williams.

The Children's choir, under the direction of Mary Rankin, rendered two beautiful spirit-filled selections; the second of which was "Jesus Loves the Little Children" and the children's Easter Story scene ended with Zaria York wishing everyone a Happy Easter!

Each chapter represented the events from The Crucifixion to The Resurrection and each participant delivered, in their own way (some of the children even wrote their own speeches), what Jesus' love, grace, resurrection, sacrifice and the cross meant to them.

"The Story" continued with The St. John Mass Choir delivering their version of "Just for Me". The

(Continued on page 14)

Count It All Joy, 'Cause It's Not Over!

By Lydia Owens and Donna Gullatte

(Continued from page 13)

selection was followed by more Spoken Words. The second Spoken Word was passionately recited by Kaitlyn McClung and that featured the likenesses of Jesus as a Carpenter, Wallace Parham; a Peace Maker and Healer, Delorin Carpenter; and Jesus The Teacher, Xavier Rembert. The St. John Mass Choir followed this word with the singing of "Precious is the Blood."

Dance Ministry members Jennifer Patterson, Mariah Gullatte and Jason Gilmore graced the audience with moves to bring to life each word as Justin York powerfully delivered the third spoken word that was a rendition of "Hosanna". This was followed by ministry in song and dance to the song "Celebrate."

In the fourth, and final, spoken word, Michael Clark let everyone know that even though Christ died for them, He died so that they may live and they should know that "The Story" is not over....in fact it is just the beginning. "The Story" presentation ended in an AMAZING, beautifully choreographed dance to "It's Not Over" as the Mass Choir joined in to make it an astounding enactment to give believers hope and inspiration.

In his remarks, Pastor Clayborn summed up The Easter Story by stating that the children, the Choir and the Dance Ministry took the story to a higher level.

This outstanding production was a joint effort of the drama, dance and music ministries. The Musicale was written and directed by Donna Gullatte, Cheryl Anderson, and Dennis DeLoach. Ashley Lewis coordinated props and costumes. Musicians were Lawrence Suffrant, organist, Swain Dennis, pianist, and Brandon Prigg, percussionist. Jenifer Patterson was choreographer for the Dance Ministry.

What A BEAUTIFUL EASTER MORN!!!



The children participate in the Easter Story Musicale.

Ninth District Plans Pentecost Weekend

The Ninth District's plans for Pentecost include a Saturday "Feeding of the 5000" gathering in Birmingham and Sunday "Pentecost Scattered—Witnessing from Door to Door" outreach in local communities.

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
9th Episcopal District

PENTECOST SCATTERED

DOOR TO DOOR WITNESSING

ALL AME CHURCHES
in the
State of Alabama
- MAY 19, 2013

2101 Daniel Payne Drive
Birmingham, AL 35214

The Feeding of the 5,000

SATURDAY, MAY 18, 2013
(11:00 a.m.)

**DANIEL PAYNE COLLEGE
LEGACY VILLAGE**

Adult Admission - \$50.00
Child Admission - \$25.00

James C. Davis, Servant Bishop - Ardie B. Davis, WMS Supervisor

Message from the Bishop's Office:

You, your household, and your friends are invited to a Front-Page Event on Saturday, May 18, 2013, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on the campus of Daniel Payne College, 2101 Daniel Payne Drive, Birmingham, Alabama. To celebrate, accentuate and accelerate the ongoing renovation and resurrection of this property, the members of the AME Churches in the 9th Episcopal District will host a phenomenal event guided by the theme, **GLORY WEEKEND! "God Still Speaks: Connecting an Ageless Message to a Digital World."** It is The Feeding of the 5,000 in this present age; yes, a dramatic reenactment of the original biblical miracle. This is another event as we steadily progress toward the realization of the Daniel Payne College Legacy Village, a vision of the people of the 9th District that will bless the AME Church and the entire local and global community for years to come.

Just as reflected in Mark 6:30-44, we will all be filled at this great gathering. Our spiritual "appetizer" before the Word will be an exciting and inspirational dramatic reenactment of the actual event! You will also enjoy music by a live band, choral groups, Gospel rappers—something for EVERYONE! Come and hear the prophetic message of Pastor Jamal Bryant of Empowerment Temple AME Church in Baltimore, Maryland. Come and listen as God uses him to proclaim "The Same Message for a New Age" that is recorded in Mark's account. Read this passage again and again and hear the modern-day message with your heart; and then rejoice that the Gospel is never outdated and that this message still applies to day!

Come and be one of the 5,000 and be fed spiritually by God's Word proclaimed by a young prophet to God's people of all ages and walks of life. Come and be fed physically as we see with our hearts how Jesus will multiply the fish and the bread from Mark's gospel into 25,000 pieces of fish (17,000 pounds); hundreds of loaves of fresh "light bread"; 10,300 bottles of water; and hot sauce, ketchup, and

mustard galore!

Can you see yourself among the masses at the Construction Site leaning forward to hear God speak? Can you see us rejoicing afresh about the goodness of the Lord? Can you see yourself among the "21st Century 5,000" going away filled and recommitted to live a better life and to make Legacy Village become the (no-longer-dormant) phenomenal asset to bless and honor our God? Come and see what God will do as our vision unfolds to bless YOUR church now and for generations to come! And they that will eat of the loaves will be about 5,000 on the future site of Daniel Payne College Legacy Village!

Tickets for the "Feeding of the 5000" are available from the church office. Tickets for adults are \$50 and \$25 for children. Transportation will be provided by the church. If you have not purchased your ticket, please do so today.

On Pentecost Sunday, May 19, from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. all local churches will witness in the community. Worship Service will be held at 8:00 am and Church School at 9:45 am. Please sign up in the church office if you plan to participate in the witnessing or if you plan to be among those who are in prayer at the church during the time that the witnessing is occurring in the community.

Training sessions are scheduled for April 17 at 11 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. and April 18 at 8:00 p.m. Pre-Pentecost events are witnessing on April 26 at 5:30 p.m. and prayer walk on May 11 at 9:45 a.m.

Remember to wear red on Pentecost Sunday.

Hat Sunday Was March 10th



Vestibule Display

As part of Women's History Month, the ladies of St. John wore hats the second Sunday in March. The wearing of hats for church has been a long custom, especially in the black church. The introduction to the book *Crowns: Portraits of Black Women in Church Hats* states "Countless black women would rather attend church naked than hatless. For these women, a church hat, flamboyant as it may be, is no mere fashion accessory; it's a cherished African American custom, one observed with boundless passion by black women of various religious denominations."

While the tradition of wearing hats at St. John has declined over the years, it was a beautiful site to see so many ladies and young ladies in hats on March 10th. The pictures on this page capture some of the ladies in their hats as well as the hat display that greeted worshippers as they entered the vestibule.



Ladies pose for picture after 8 am service



Ladies pose for picture after 10:50 am service



Announcements

April is the Month of the Military Child! This special celebration is a legacy of former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger - established to underscore the important role children play in the Armed Forces community. Please join us in celebrating our military youth and the sacrifices that they make daily.

April 21st is Alabama A&M University recognition day. Help spread the Bulldog pride by inviting past or present AAMU students, supporters and friends to church!

The Northwest Alabama Conference Women's Missionary Society Conference Institute will be held on Saturday, April 20, 2013, 8:00 a.m. at Grant Chapel AME Church - Birmingham, AL. The sign-up sheet is up by the main office.

The next WMS Meeting will be held on Saturday, April 27 at 10:30 am. The compassionate outreach project for April is St. John Soup Kitchen & First Stop Homeless Food Pantry. Members are asked to support this effort by bringing toiletry items: deodorant, lotion, toothpaste, toothbrush, socks, soap, hand wipes, individually wrapped tissue. Please note: Razors and mouth wash are not permitted.

Get Ready! The 2013 Summer Meeting that will include Christian Education, Ministers' Institute, and Leadership Congress will be held July 22- 25 at Troy University. There will be workshops, activities, and tons of fun for all ages. Please plan to attend. See Rev. Sheri Smith Clayborn for further information.

GET READY FOR THIS YEAR'S PENTECOST EVANGELISM EXPERIENCE. The 9th District Prayer Books, which will be used as we walk and pray over various communities in our area are available for \$10 in the Church Office. They feature powerful offerings from AME members throughout the District. Get your copy today.

PRACTICE SHARING YOUR TESTIMONY. Training for the Pentecost Evangelism experience is set for

Wednesday, April 17th at 11am & 5:30pm

Thursday, April 18th - 8pm

Friday, April 19th - 5:30pm (Trial run in nearby neighborhoods)

The next EMERGE- Young Men's Group (ages 13-21) get-together will be Monday, April 22 at 8 p.m. Young men interested in being a part of the organization of activities should see Sister Janette Smith in the main church office. The Emerge Young Men's Group and Arise Young Ladies Group (ages 13-21) are both scheduling upcoming events, if you'd like more information please contact Sis. Janette Smith, in the main church for information. [256-534-3285](tel:256-534-3285).

THE 50 plus Auxiliary is holding a canned-food drive to help replenish the food pantry for those in need. They are requesting any canned items with easy to open tops. Please bring your donations to the church office.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: The 2013 Women's Day Service is set for June 30th. The Reverend Raquel St. Clair Lettsome, Ph.D., New Testament Scholar, Minister and Author from New York, New York will be the guest preacher.

THANK YOU for your offerings toward the Daniel Payne Legacy Village. Please continue to support this effort with your financial contributions. Those who have made pledges, please continue to be faithful to your promise. Please send all donations directly to the Ninth Episcopal District Office.

Please place your tithes and offerings in an envelope; include your name and the amount of the offering on the envelope. To give online visit www.stjohname-hsv.org, click on Online Giving. Follow the instructions from there. You may also give directly via PayPal by sending your donation to stjohnameh@aol.com. Giving made easy!

Coming soon... a new church pictorial directory. More information will be provided.

Parent Wisdom

By Sister Vanessa Glover



Mustard Seed Faith

Matthew 17:14-21

Because we live in a demanding world, all of us have mountains to climb and mountains to move. However, moving those mountains requires faith. Yet even the dedicated followers of Christ may find their faith tested.

In every life there is a series of successes and failures, celebrations and disappointments, joys and sorrows. That is the test of faith. Faith says that every step of the way, through triumph and tragedy, God is right there ready and willing to strengthen us. After all, the ultimate battle has already been fought and won on the Cross at Calvary.

He said to them, "Because of **F** your unbelief,
I or most, **A** assuredly I tell you,
if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed,
you will tell **I** the mountains,
'Move from **H** here to there,'
and it will move,
and nothing will be impossible to you.

— Matthew 17:20 NKJV
— Pastor B. B. Brown

We have heard the saying, "Little faith, little power" and repeatedly in the scriptures Jesus scolds "Oh ye of little faith." In this particular scripture Jesus admonishes, "faith the size of a mustard seed can move mountains." (Matthew 17:20 NKJV)

The size of the mustard seed is not the focus. The determination of the mustard seed to grow is the focus. Therefore, our Faith should be like a mustard seed, unwavering, not deterred by what we see, or what conditions exist, no matter where we are. Nothing is impossible with mustard seed Faith.

Whatever the challenge, whatever the trouble, know that it can be handled by God. The next time mountain-like obstacles present a test of your faith, remember to take your fears to God. Call upon Him and He will comfort you. When you place your faith, your trust, and even your life in the hands of Almighty God, the blessing that results will not only bless you, but will also bless your family and your community. As a parent, having faith affects our children and our children's children because God's blessing will not just fall on the parent. So strengthen your faith through praise, through worship, through Bible Study, and through prayer. Trust God's plan, with Him all things are possible. In so doing, not only will you be blessed, but those who you hold most dear, your children, will be blessed.

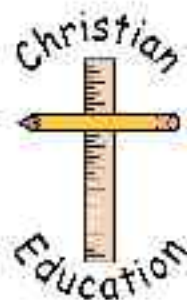


Just a closer walk with Thee, Grant it, Jesus is my plea. Daily walking close to Thee, Let it be, Dear Lord, let it be! Lord Jesus, help our unbelief. Increase our Faith to trust your Holy Word, for indeed; mustard seed FAITH is for Your Glory and for Your Kingdom. I pray this prayer in Jesus Name the only name that matters. AMEN

Wisdom for Daily Living: There is a constant process in the Christian life. God exchanging His presence for our loneliness—God exchanging His power for our weakness—God exchanging His healing for our illness—God exchanging His hope for our despair—God exchanging His peace for our anxiety—God exchanging His love for our bitterness—God exchanging His Grace for our suffering—God exchanging His comfort for our sorrow.

As a Thoughtful Parent—Although the 2012-2013 school year is coming to an end, plan for summer learning opportunities that are fun and enriching. Make the connections early to ensure summer learning enrichment is gain rather than summer loss.

Church School Lesson Overview – May 2013



This month's Church School Lesson reviews were written by Kenneth Parham.

May 5, 2013

Lesson Title: A Living Hope

Lesson Scripture: I Peter 1:1-12

Print: I Peter 1:3-12

Devotional Songs: #364 [], #272 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (I Peter 1:3).

In this lesson, Peter greeted and offered encouragement to the scattered Christians located in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. Research indicates that these groups of new Christians were being persecuted. His encouragement dealt with an afterlife reward. He indicated to the group that by keeping their faith in Jesus Christ (whom they had not seen) while living through their trials, their rewards would be much greater.

This reviewer was reminded of several songs while composing this review. Some of the songs that came to mind were: "I Don't Believe He Brought Me This Far" (The Reverend James Cleveland), "Coming Up on the Rough Side of the Mountain" (The Reverend F. C. Barnes), "Let the Church Say Amen" (The Reverend Andre Crouch). These classics provided and may continue to provide believers the resilience to continue looking forward in a positive direction even through one's personal trials and to keep one's eyes focused on what is promised on the other side.

May 12, 2013

Lesson Title: Equipped for Godliness

Lesson Scripture: II Peter 1:1-21

Print: II Peter 1:3-14

Devotional Songs: #414 [], #258 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (II Peter 1:3).

Peter summarized that once the Christians succeeded in overcoming sin they would take on new characteristics that would make them fruitful in the knowledge of Jesus. He indicated that the qualities acquired would come in the following order, and each was a building

block to the next: diligence, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity.

He also indicated that, if it be God's will, he would continue to encourage his fellow Christians of the qualities even up until his impending death.

May 19, 2013

Lesson Title: Serving One Another

Lesson Scripture: I Peter 4:1-19

Print: I Peter 4:1-11

Tentative Devotional Songs: #283 [], #251 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (I Peter 4:10).

Peter reminded Christians that they should be good servants, remembering that Jesus put on mortality and suffered for humankind as atonement for their sin. He indicated that they should walk in Christ's likeness (having a desire to do the will of God) and not follow the example of Gentiles who, at that time, were continuing to worship the spirit of the flesh: lust, excessive drunkenness, idol worshipping, etc. The Gentiles were surprised that the Christians did not follow their lead and were unaware that at any moment, they stood in judgment.

Peter's instruction to the Christians was to stay alert and prayerful because, as he indicated, the end was near. He requested that the Christian practice being hospitable, that they love each other deeply (noting that love conquers all sins), and that if one had a talent he/she should share it amongst his/her fellow man for the glory of God.

May 26, 2013

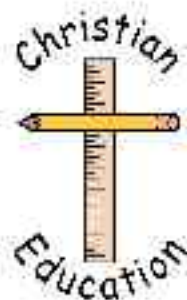
Lesson Title: The Hope of His Coming

Lesson Scripture: II Peter 3:1-18

Print: II Peter 3:1-15a

Tentative Devotional Songs: #77 [], This Little Light of Mine; and #243 []

Key Verses: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that and should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9).



Church School Lesson

(Continued from page 19)

Peter reminded the Christians of what the prophets spoke, that in the last days there will come mockers who were full of themselves (knowledge, power, etc.) that will question that since things have been a certain way since the beginning of creation all things will continue.

Peter reminded the Christians of how the earth was totally destroyed by water and how God was reserving the second ending of the world to be by fire. Even though God sees the wickedness of man, He is slow to anger, giving man a chance to repent. But once God has determined that enough is enough, it is noted that with a great noise and smoke the earth will be destroyed making way for a New Heaven and a New Earth where the righteous will dwell.

He concluded by asking that the Christians stay watchful. That upon Jesus' return, may He find the believers at peace and without sin. Peter indicated that the reward for their long suffering will result in salvation because the Lord's patience brings salvation.

Church School Book Club

April 2013

Discussion Date: 27 Apr 13
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Sittin in the Front Pew, Parry EbonySatin Brown, 2008

May 2013

Discussion Date: 18 May 13
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Makes Me Wanna Holler, Nathan McCall, 1995

This book examines the complexity of the problems of black youths from an insider's perspective. An African-American journalist recalls his own troubled childhood, his rehabilitation while in prison, and his successful Washington Post career. Though he has made a successful career, against great odds, he makes it plain that he does not feel completely at ease with his peers in the establishment and of those on the streets. His difficult story is told in such an immediate and compelling fashion that young people will be caught up in this strong narrative and gain real insight into McCall's growth and change and, thus, contemporary urban issues.

Glory Weekend!

GOD
Still Speaks

Connecting an Ageless Message to a Digital World

The Feeding of the 5,000
Mark 6:30-46

Saturday, May 18, 2013

Daniel Payne College • 2101 Daniel Payne Drive • Birmingham, AL 35214

May 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Prayer Service and Love Feast 5:00 P.M. Steward Board	2  choir practice 6:00 p.m. Mass Chorus Rehearsal New Life Christian Center 7:00 p.m.	3	4 9:00 a.m. Usher Board Mtg. 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 10:00 Officers Meeting 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
5 COMMUNION 8am Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship AMEN Deadline 6:00-8:00 p.m. ITHRIVE	6	7 6:00 p.m. Stewardess Board  choir practice Voices in Praise Rehearsal	8 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	9  choir practice 6:00 p.m. Gospel Chorus Rehearsal	10	11 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 9:45 a.m. Prayer Walk AMEN Start Meeting 10:30am
12 MOTHER'S DAY 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	13 6:00 p.m. Historia Ministry	14 6:00 p.m. Sons of Allen Mtg.  choir practice Voices in Praise Rehearsal	15 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	16	17 6:00 p.m. Family Fun Night  choir practice 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	18 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal Feeding of the 5000 Daniel Payne College
19 PENTECOST 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School Door to Door Ministry 11:00 a.m. — 3:00 p.m.	20	21 11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN 6:00 p.m. Trustee Board Mtg.	22 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	23  choir practice 6:00 p.m. Mass Chorus Rehearsal	24  choir practice 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	25 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry Women's Ministry 10:30 a.m. WMBS Meeting
26 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	27 MEMORIAL Day	28 11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN 8:30 pm Church School Mtg	29 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Prayer Service and Love Feast	30  choir practice 6:00 p.m. Mass Chorus Rehearsal	31	

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

Non-profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Huntsville, AL
Permit No. 240

Return Service Requested

E-mail: stjohnameh@aol.com

Website: stjohnamehsv.org

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



me2

Important Dates to Remember

April 21, 2013	AAMU Recognition Day
April 26, 2013	Pre-Pentecost Witnessing, 5:30 p.m.
May 11, 2013	Prayer Walk, 9:45 a.m.
May 12, 2013	Mother's Day
May 18, 2013	Feeding of the 5000, Daniel Payne College Legacy Village, Birmingham, Alabama
May 19, 2013	Pentecost Sunday, 8 am Worship, 9:45 am Church School, 11:00 a.m. Scattering to Witness *Wear 9th District Red Shirt
June 3-7, 2013	Vacation Bible School Jesus Family Reunion; The Remix
June 7-8, 2013	Church School Convention, Greater St. Paul AME Church, Scottsboro

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 18 Issue 5

May 2013

Pastor's Message

Preparing for Pentecost

Acts 1



Reverend Patrick D. Clayborn

St. John is buzzing with activities this month as we prepare for Pentecost. A number of our members graduated from college (we will highlight them in next month's issue). Our second oldest member and one of our deaconesses – Sarah "Granny" Bell – turned 94 years old this month. In addition, Alabama A&M celebrated its Founder's Day. In that celebration were Ms. Debra Clark-Russell, great-great granddaughter, and Bianca Clark and Elijah Russell, great-great-great children of Rev. Dr. William Hooper Council, the founder of Alabama A&M and St. John AME Church, visited St. John. Their presence with us on the first Sunday made for an overwhelming moment. As well, we had a glorious time on Mother's Day weekend. On the Monday prior, the 50+ Auxiliary had a luncheon for Mother's Day. The day before Mother's Day, St. John went on a prayer walk to the various communities where we will go to witness on Pentecost Sunday. To honor Mother's Day, my mother – Mrs. Lois Clayborn – has contributed "Thoughts of a Mother" to this issue of AMEN. She outlines the characteristics of a godly mother. In other areas of the church, the Christian Education Department is getting ready for next month's Vacation Bible School and Church School Convention. We are also taking time to honor Memorial Day the last Sunday of this month and with an article in the following pages. Both are being spearheaded by Col. (Ret) James O. Heyward.

Again, we are bustling with various programs; but, our gaze is fixed upon Pentecost. We will travel to Birmingham on the Saturday prior to Pentecost to celebrate the Feeding of the 5,000. The entire Ninth Episcopal District will gather for worship, fellowship, food and enthusiastic anticipation on the grounds of Daniel Payne College. We are coming together not just to eat fish and bread; but, we are assembling to eat fish and bread as a symbol that God can do much with our little. Bishop James Davis has a vision of revitalizing the campus of Daniel Payne into a thriving area for the district – with a convention center, hotel, dormitory housing, and so much more. In order to make this vision live, we all will have to make sacrifices; we have to give our two fish and five loaves of bread. When we do so, God multiplies in miraculous ways. To set the atmosphere for our celebration, Bishop Davis has invited the Reverend Doctor Jamal Bryant to be the guest preacher. We invite you all to be a part of this wonderful day. Let us pray that Feeding of the 5,000 accomplishes everything that God has purposed for it to do.

The completion of this "Glory Weekend" takes place on Pentecost Sunday. After we will have reached within at Daniel Payne on Saturday, we will reach out to various communities on the following Sunday. All of the AME Churches of the Ninth District will scatter at the 11 o'clock hour on Pentecost Sunday for door-to-door evangelism in their surrounding communities. St. John will have its normal 8 AM worship service and 9:45 AM Church School in addition to our witnessing activities.

This is a moment for which we have been preparing. We held witnessing training seminars. We conducted a prayer walk. We asked our members to sign up for witnessing in advance. We have prayed. When we reflect on the events of Pentecost found in Acts 1-2, we should not fail to recognize that the Day of Pentecost took preparation. The apostles did not just fall into the Holy Spirit. They did not stumble into speaking in tongues. They did not meander into sermons that saved thousands of listeners. They did not wander into mega-church growth. They did not bump into the ability to perform all kinds of miracles. NO! NO! NO! Instead, the apostles pre-

(Continued on page 2)

Pastor's Message

(Continued from page 1)

pared themselves for Pentecost. Acts 1:3-5 says that Jesus stayed with the apostles for forty days and taught them about God's kingdom. The Risen Lord then instructs them to wait in Jerusalem for God's promise – the baptism of the Holy Spirit. For, the Holy Spirit will give them the power they need to accomplish their evangelical mission (Acts 1:8). Even though the apostles have no idea when the promise will come (Acts 1:6-7), they realize that they must continue the preparations that Jesus began. After Jesus ascended, the early church stayed in Jerusalem, met in the upper room, devoted themselves to prayer, and found a replacement for Judas (Acts 1:12-28). **THEY PREPARED!**

We, too, must prepare for Pentecost. We must prepare for God's promise for our lives. We must prepare for the promises of healing, deliverance, financial increase, revelation, new vision, greater purpose, restoration of relationships, employment opportunities, and protection from enemies. We prepare by feasting on the teachings of Jesus. We prepare by learning more about God's kingdom. We prepare by putting our lives in harmony with God's kingdom. We prepare by waiting as God directs. We prepare by going where God sends us. We prepare by not forsaking the assembly of the saints. We prepare by getting around like-minded people for mutual encouragement. We prepare by devoting ourselves to prayer. We prepare by yielding our wills to God's will. We prepare by fixing what is broken around us. We prepare by getting on one accord – with God's agenda, with our brothers and sisters in Christ, and with our God given identity (Acts 2:1).

Let us prepare!

Let us prepare! Let us prepare!! Let us prepare!!! Let's prepare our thinking. Let's prepare our speaking. Let's prepare our actions. Let's prepare our relationships. Let's prepare our habits. Let's prepare our vision. Let's prepare our expectations. Let's prepare our willingness to serve. Let's prepare our work ethic. Let's prepare our submission to God's will. Let's prepare our giving. Let's prepare our love for each other. Let's prepare for Pentecost! When we prepare for Pentecost, the Day of Pentecost fully comes!

Scenes from AAMU Founder's Day Observance



Dr. Hugine, AAMU President, addresses the congregation.



Descendants of Dr. Council at marker for the original site of AAMU.



(at left) March from St. John to original site of AAMU.



Thoughts of a Mother

By Lois Clayborn

Mother's Day is one Sunday that many churches are filled to capacity. It does not matter if the lady you consider as a mother figure is your actual birth mother. Whoever nurtured you and helped you to remain focused, is basically your mother. She may be called Mother, Mom, Mommy, Big Momma, Madea, Maw, Muh or perhaps a nickname like Girlie. It matters not whatever the title, the love for her is still great.

I do know that mothers are those who are in charge and possess no fear establishing law and order. A hairbrush in the left hand of my Mother struck fear into my heart. If she promised me punishment, it was coming. Her word was her bond. One may not agree with corporal punishment. That is acceptable. However, children should know the difference between right and wrong and that there are consequences for misbehaving. Mothers often set that tone.

Mothers help to provide for the household. In addition, clothing, shelter, school supplies and transportation may be included in her daily fare. That is followed by establishing hours for homework, chaperoning sports events, attending PTO meetings and other scheduled or unscheduled events such as band/choir concerts, piano recitals or even cheerleading competitions.

As a preacher's lid, it was established early that God was the center of my life. I did not always agree with or find joy in attending Sunday services or other church meetings. I had no choice. For that I am grateful. Your mother, like mine, probably made sure that you were involved in church school and YPD during the younger years; an early stage of establishing one's focus on the importance of giving service.

Proverbs 31 talks about the role of women and I know that mothers fit the scriptures. They are virtuous, provide for the household, invest in life, are girded with strength, care for the husband and children, provide for others and above all are God-fearing. They are to be praised for their works.

What Does Memorial Day Mean to You?

By James O. Heyward



What does Memorial Day mean to me? I am glad you asked.

So many citizens do not know why our nation and communities celebrate Memorial Day. Memorial Day is a day of remembrance for those who have died in our nation's service. It was originally called Decoration Day and was started in the South. However, that claim was challenged by other communities, stating that it was started in their respective communities. In 1966, President Lyndon Johnson officially declared Waterloo, NY as the birthplace of Memorial Day.

Since 1866, communities all over the country have celebrated Memorial Day. Regardless of where it started, the fact is that we as a nation tapped into the human need to honor the war dead. Many celebrate in different ways. Some close businesses, which most do not any more. Some have parades which most do not have any more.

Some have public programs, which most do not have any more. The traditional observance of Memorial Day has diminished over the years; however, there are many towns, cities and individuals that have not forgotten the meaning or the reason for Memorial Day. Think of the sacrifices many men and women have made to keep our nation free and to allow us to enjoy the freedoms that we do. Many gave the ultimate sacrifice. They wrote a check to the nation with the amount left blank and many were filled in with their lives. When one thinks of the upheavals around the world with nations where there are unstable governments, we can appreciate this great nation of ours. It began back in 1776 in Boston, MA. with Crispus Attucks who was killed by British soldiers. Incidentally, he was a man of color and it is said that he was the first person to lose his life in the American Revolutionary War.

There is a tremendous amount of history of leading citizens of early Huntsville in Glenwood Cemetery. In this cemetery, in March 2010, a marker was placed at the grave site of Pvt. John Reed Porter, a member of the First Alabama Cavalry who served in the U.S. Civil War. He was the great grandfather of one of our church members, Mrs. Sarah AIs who received the U.S. flag at that ceremony as the next of kin.

In 1951, the Boy Scouts of America in St. Louis, Missouri began placing flags on the grave sites of all veterans in selected cemeteries. But, regardless of how it is celebrated, it is one of our most significant national holidays. In Huntsville, this year on Memorial Day at Glenwood Cemetery, the Boy Scouts of America, Urban Emphasis Scout Leaders Council will sponsor the Annual Ceremony of Commemoration at 3:00 p.m. The guest speaker will be Colonel Martha K. Brooks, Director of Public Affairs, U.S. Army Expeditionary Contracting Command, Redstone Arsenal, AL. Colonel Brooks is a graduate of Alabama A&M University and its ROTC Program. Additionally, the U.S. Army Materiel Command Band, Brass Ensemble will provide music. The program usually ends with the firing of a military salute and the playing of Taps.

Lets come out and show our patriotism. Because this is just as much your country as that of anyone else. Our fore-parents also made tremendous sacrifices for the freedoms that we enjoy. We believe in the statement that "Freedom is Not Free." There will be tents to protect you from the elements, chairs, fans, water and toilet facilities for your comfort.

We trust that all of us will have a greater appreciation of Memorial Day and for the sacrifices made by those who gave their all and those who returned with broken bodies and went home early to be with God. May God bless the memory and legacy of the men and women of our Armed Forces who paid the ultimate price.

South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer District

Northwest Alabama Conference-Ninth Episcopal District-AME Church
District Conference Meeting-April 13, 2013

by The Reverend Charles Glover, Itinerant Elder



The District Conference convened at New Seed of Faith AME Church, Tarrant, Alabama, where the Reverend Eric Walker and congregation were the gracious hosts. The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder enthusiastically greeted all those assembled and stated the theme of the conference which was, "The Goal of Discipleship; Witnessing, Working, Worshiping."

The District Conference's opening morning worship service was off to a grand start with the Reverend Vernita Farness, Saddler's Chapel, AMEC, delivering a very thought provoking message entitled, "What's Love Got To Do With It." The text was John, Chapter 13: verses 34-35. The Reverend Farness adeptly aligned modern day societal tendencies as exhibited in our social media to the text. She further elaborated on the goals and aims of the Ninth Epis-

copal District and the love Bishop Davis possesses for the work of the Lord and the AME Church. Reverend Farness stated that love is one of our most misunderstood words. She defined love as a deep affection, a strong kindred liking. The Bible Dictionary defines love as the attributes of God. God is the total definition of love. If we truly loved as God does, we would exhibit more love toward others. The Reverend Farness stated that the Old Testament commanded us to love our neighbors as ourselves. The New Testament love focus is on the lateral—brotherly love first, then vertical love to the Father. To truly exhibit godly love, one must serve (Jesus washed the disciple's feet). Love is patient, kind, not bitter and believes the best is in everyone. Reverend Farness, in closing, emphasized that in the New Testament Book of John, Chapter 3: verse 16, the "Ultimate Example" of love is exhibited. God "so loved" the world that "He gave" His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. It is not about us, but ALL about Jesus. ALL efforts and "doings" should be, must be, to "glorify" and uplift the name of Jesus.

An aggressive agenda was slated with numerous workshops on the schedule. Workshop session number one was entitled, "The Call to Discipleship" with the Reverend William Slade as the presenter. The Reverend Slade was very exciting and captured the attention of delegates with his presentation style and content material. He emphasized the need to answer God's call with spiritual enthusiasm. Several Old and New Testaments scriptural references were provided to support his position. Points to remember included: "We must be disciples to make disciples;" "Folks want to see who you really are after the benediction;" and "Don't be afraid to answer the call." Workshop session number two was entitled, "The Goal of Discipleship" with the Reverend T.L. Franklin as the presenter. He gave many memorable strategies on discipleship including, "True discipleship is a matter of the heart; Always represent Christ; Discipleship is not a course, it requires both the pursuit of knowledge and intentional action." Discipleship should be a daily process, a daily commitment. True discipleship involves a transformation, not only increasing in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, but actually becoming more like Jesus Christ, in our thinking and our actions. Other morning presentations included "Money Matters" by the Reverend Roosevelt Harden; "Administration Matters" by Sister Thomasine Jackson and Sister Charlie Evans. Key topics included in the administration summary were "report deadlines" and "Tithes and Offering

(Continued on page 6)

South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer District

Northwest Alabama Conference-Ninth Episcopal District-AME Church
District Conference Meeting-April 13, 2013

by The Reverend Charles Glover, Itinerant Elder

(Continued from page 3)

as they relate to IRS Compliance".

The twelve noon "Hour of Power" worship celebration was truly inspirational. The Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn of Saint John AMEC, Huntsville was the preacher. The text was Matthew, Chapter 28, verses 18-20. The subject was "Moving Beyond Doubt". The Reverend Smith Clayborn was very effective in bringing the text alive. The Holy Spirit was present and manifested during the sermon delivery. She stated that when Jesus shows up on the scene in the text, some doubted while others worshipped. Some worshipped, but others doubted the "effectiveness" of their own worship. In the text, the disciples were wondering how much Jesus knew about them. Often the issue is not with God, but with people. They doubt themselves. They turn the focus to their faults, which produces doubt. The Reverend Smith Clayborn defined doubt as "wavering between two opinions, uncertainty of your own ability". Key focus thoughts included:

- 1) Some worshipped and others hesitated. Their doubt did not stop their worship. They worshipped through their doubt.
- 2) Jesus is able to move beyond doubt. Jesus understood their doubt and His authority. It was revealed and made manifest "on earth as it is in heaven". Jesus gave the disciples purpose in the midst of their uncertainty. Likewise, believers should accept their purpose in God and speak truth to power.
- 3) Jesus gives us what we need for the journey. Jesus gave a "blessed assurance" for the journey in the person of the "Holy Spirit". Jesus assured that He will never leave us nor forsake us.
- 4) Be open to Jesus and the move of the Holy Spirit. "Lift up your heads oh ye gates and be lifted up and the King of Glory shall come in." As Christians, move beyond doubt and have faith in God and learn to trust Him and His Word.

After the noon service, a hearty lunch was served. Following lunch, several District and informational updates were presented. Among these were the report from the Board of Examiners, Christian Education, Sons of Allen, Koinonias, Voter Registration, WMS, YPD, and Laity. Presiding Elder Allen made closing comments on the upcoming major Ninth District projects, highlighting the Daniel Payne Legacy Village Feeding of the Five Thousand events. Pastors and Laity were encouraged to "tak-up" and be active participants in this event.

Presiding Elder Allen offered the prayer for rededication and recommitment as well as the benediction.

Information about the District Conference*

The District Conference is one of five (5) conferences in the AME Church. The presiding elder of the district shall be the chairperson, unless a bishop is present. The District Conference is composed of all traveling ministers, local preachers, evangelists, presidents of missionary societies, and one steward from each Quarterly Conference within a presiding elder district. Presidents of lay organizations and a youth representative from each church, circuit or station are also members.

The District Conference shall meet once each year at the time to be set by the presiding elder and the place to be set at the annual planning meeting of the presiding elder district.

* Taken from *The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2008*.

Vacation Bible School



Sunday, June 9

2:00—5:00 p.m.

**Monday
through
Thursday,
June 10-13
5:45—8:30 p.m.**

Classes for all ages!

Bringing the family together.

Joshua 24:15

LIGHT



ST JOHN A.M.E. CHURCH
SOUP KITCHEN

3rd and 4th Sundays
11:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

229 Church Street * Hurricane, AL
(at Entrance of Church and Home Street)
ALL ARE WELCOME

"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid."

— Matthew 5:14

We all have an inner light seeking outward expression. We want to make a positive difference in the world. Jesus told His followers; "You are the light of the world." As we reflect on this teaching and remember that we shine as a light to others who can benefit from our gifts and sharing.

We pray, as we approach Pentecost that the Spirit shines in us as individuals and as a church family, so that we make this world a better place.

Our outreach ministries, including our "soup kitchen," shine as we show love and consideration for those in need. When we share we pray to make a positive difference. Simple acts of kindness express to others the truth: We are the light of the world.

No More Heavy Loads

By Paulette Bargon

I always wonder when I hear someone saying, "God only gives me what He knows I can bear" or "I have a 'heavy load'" when their problems are mostly caused by themselves. I am not talking about people who have really heavy burdens like death, terminal illness, caretakers of elderly parents, homeless, or jobless.

I am referring to drama kings and queens who proceed to pray for hours about the problems in their lives; all the troubles family members or friends are giving them; 'why am I always sick?' or 'my job has me all stressed out.'

We are so busy worrying and complaining that we cannot sit still and listen to God. The bible says: *Give your burdens to the Lord and He will take care of you.* (Psalm 55:22a) Stop consistently praying and trying to fix it the way you want it to go. Then you blame it on God because it does not go the way you want. Go to your closet; pray and listen. You may not get an answer right away but it will come. You may not like what God has to say, but if you do what He says things will turn out fine.

Yes, some of these "heavy loads" we can lighten ourselves. But sometimes we need to make some hard choices. Do not keep enabling someone because it only makes you feel good for a moment and the problem still exists. When somebody comes to you with a problem, do not make it your problem and something you worry about. Pray with them, take it to God. Do whatever is in your power to help and let it go. Stop blaming your family or friends for all the troubles in your life.

Forgive, forgive, forgive! Manager or coworkers are giving you problems? You have to be spiritually prepared for work just like you prepare for church. Put on that armor. Have yourself a Holy Ghost party while you are driving to work. You pray, you sing His praises, you thank Him for all the good things He has done for you. As a matter of fact, you should be doing that as part of your daily routine whether you are going to work or not. God loves praises and prayer.

Give your worries to God for he cares about you. 1 Peter 5:7



Vision Driven: Stewardship

Core values of St. John's vision are Spiritual Growth, Service, Stewardship, Education, and Evangelism. The current series of bible study lessons focuses on the core value of Stewardship. This article is a summary of the bible study lessons for the past few weeks. The focus was on the benefits of tithing and New Testament giving.

Prayerfully consider your Stewardship as you read this article.

The bible study lessons on the benefits of tithing posed the following questions to the students. What does it mean to be blessed through tithing? Should this be our aim in tithing?

The answers are found in the key points of the discussion and the supporting scriptures.

- Tithing puts food in God's house (Malachi 3:10) to bless the Levites (Numbers 18:20-24; Deuteronomy 28:12-15), bless widows, orphans and the poor (Deuteronomy 14:22-29; 28:12-15) and supplies the needs of the saints (2 Corinthians 9:12); tests God (Malachi 3:10).
- Tithing tests God (Malachi 3:10) by allowing the tither to see a new dimension of God's glory and to experience overflowing blessings.
- Tithing rebukes the locusts (Malachi 3:11) because the produce of the soil is not destroyed, the vine of the field is not barren, and although there is no promise to hold back all problems, that which is most essential to the tither's being is protected.
- Tithing brings a blessed future (Malachi 3:12) because tithers will become a land of favor and seen as blessed, tithers enjoy closer fellowship with God, and there are abundant returns for tithers.
- Tithing should be the aim because it praises God (2 Corinthians 9:11-13).

Next, the lessons focused on "New Testament Giving" with the key scriptures from Matthew 23:23-28 and Luke 18:18-30. The questions posed from these scriptures were "What do you believe Jesus thought about Tithing?" and "What do you believe Jesus thought

(Continued on page 11)

St. John Celebrates 128th Church Anniversary

By Bridget J. Floyd



The Gospel Choir renders a musical selection during the anniversary service.



Pastor Clayborn was the preacher for the Anniversary Service.

On Sunday, April 14th, St. John celebrated its 128th anniversary at both the 8 a.m. and 10:50 a.m. worship services.

St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church is in the South Birmingham-Huntsville-Bessemer District of the Northwest Alabama Conference of the Ninth Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. St. John Huntsville was organized in 1885. The first church services were held in a barber shop on the corner of Miller and West Holmes Streets.

In 1971 the church moved into a newly erected facility at 229 Church Street. From this location at the corner of downtown Huntsville, St. John opened its doors to the community. St. John has numerous active ministries serving members and the community. The church purchased 53 acres of land in northwest Huntsville in 2008. Strong emphasis is placed on the WORD - through preaching, teaching and Christian living.

Pastor Patrick Clayborn was the preacher for this celebration. The chairperson for the program was Mr. Hodges Washington. The St. John Gospel Choir, directed by Brother Dennis DeLoach, facilitated worship through song. The St. John Praise Dance Ministry enhanced the service with a homage to the signature Alvin Ailey performance "Revelations". Members of St. John were featured as the AME Order of Worship was followed with the addition of the 128th Church Anniversary Litany.

Pastor Clayborn's sermon was entitled "Overcoming Nothing"

(Continued on page 10)

St. John Celebrates 128th Church Anniversary

By Bridget J. Floyd

(Continued from page 9)

from the text John 21: 1-19. He began by comparing the 5th chapter of Luke, where the disciples had also failed in their fishing efforts, but Pastor Clayborn noted the difference was at that point they had not followed Jesus, while in the text they had followed, experienced Jesus, and witnessed His return. He differentiated between "nothing" as being with and without Jesus in one's life. Through Jesus the disciples became "fishers of men" and as such Pastor Clayborn pondered the reason they would go back to fishing after Jesus had directed them to leave such; then posited that the disciples likely had regret (e.g., Peter denied Jesus three times). He indicated that believers today sometimes ask why God would forgive or help them given their transgressions.

According to Pastor Clayborn, "Jesus shows up even after we go in the wrong direction", (i.e., fishing on the wrong side of the boat). He urged an honest answer to the query "what did you catch?" that being, "nothing." The right side of the boat was characterized as fellowship, love, and positive focus; that is, "wherever God tells you to be." Returning to the text, Pastor Clayborn indicated that although the disciples were in the wrong place, at the wrong time, doing the wrong thing they still received a blessing (full nets) after they transitioned to the right side of the boat (followed Jesus' directions). The preacher gave a litany of blessings that will come from God "when you get on the right side."

Another comparison was made to Luke 5 where the net broke, while in John 21 it did not. That is, Peter was ready to catch fish, but in John 21 he was ready to keep fish! Pastor Clayborn stated, "When you're ready, God will make sure your net won't break" and "it is only by His Grace that the net doesn't break – then and now." Pastor Clayborn indicated that God has a vision for St. John and listed numerous ministries that have grown and continue to grow as well as newly developed ministries. In the text Jesus ultimately revealed Himself to the disciples and Pastor Clayborn noted it may take a third encounter until the revelation occurs. He indicated that God can /will fill you even in the midst of your struggles (e.g. fill your grief with comfort). Returning to the text, Pastor Clayborn closed by stating that Peter needed redemption as he had denied Jesus three times, and Jesus asked three times, "Do you love me?" and gave Peter instructions each time he responded. Pastor Clayborn compared Peter's status pre- and post- encounter with Jesus, from *nothing* to *everything*.

It is clear that "overcoming nothing" comes from adhering to God's instructions and thankfulness in accepting His redemption when mistakes are made. The message was well-received and three persons answered the call to discipleship. St. John has been blessed and will continue to move forward in an effort to bring people to Christ and serve the community.



Ministry in dance by the St. John Dance Ministry



Texting Teen News!

By Mariah L. Gullatte

En ete', IL Fait beau! (In summer, It is beautiful) This is one of the many things I have learned this school year! Although I have grown in my studies, kids are SUPER excited for the summer, not so much the bugs... But the youth here at St. John are even more excited about the volunteer work we are doing this summer and what they have already done! The YPD has started the work by helping pack and deliver the AIDS outreach basket. During spring break, they assisted with packing and serving lunch at the monthly soup kitchen.

Congratulations to Marissa, Patrick II, Wallace for an exceptional job at Mr. Gilmore's Piano Recital. Congratulations to Nina Johnson who was part of the J. F. Drake State Royal Court. Last, but not least congratulations to Christina Sanders and Geoffrey Brown on their graduation from UAH!

New ministries. ARISE and EMERGE, are empowering young men and women 13-21 to restore and refine young people of the church, community, and the world! Wrapping up the school year, I wish all kids, children, teens, young adults, and college students the best on exams (Do your BEST, ON THE TEST). Until next time, TTYL (tak to you later)!

The News Text for this month is:
All who cleanse themselves of the things I have mentioned will become special utensils, dedicated and useful to the owner of the house, ready for every good work (2 Timothy 2:21).

Easy Ways to Give Online

1. Simply go to the St. John AMEC website www.stjohnamec-hsv.org then click on Online Giving. Follow the instructions from there.

2. Use your PayPal account to send directly to St. John at e-mail address stjohnameh@aol.com. Transfer from your banking account and specify donate/friends and family.

Use one of these giving options to contribute, even when on vacation.



Vision Driven: Stewardship

(Continued from page 8)

about Giving?" The conclusion from the scriptures studied was that Jesus was FOR tithing. However, tithing was a minimum standard for giving. From the scriptures one sees that the act of tithing and giving beyond the tithe is an expression of love for God and is to be done in conjunction with acts of justice and love for others. Those who followed Jesus gave much or all as a byproduct of their love for God and their giving was in harmony with how they treated others.

Full outlines for each of the bible study sessions are available from the church office. Join us for weekly bible study on Wednesdays at noon and 8:30 pm.

Bible Studies © Patrick Clayborn.

St. John to Host Conference Lay Meeting



The quarterly meetings of the Northwest Annual Conference Lay Organization are held on the 5th Sundays. The next meeting will be held at St. John, Huntsville, on Sunday, June 30th at 4:00 p.m.

All lay persons are invited to assist in hosting this meeting and to be present to support this meeting. Ms. Cassandra Ingram is the president of the St. John Lay Organization, Dr. Waymon Shivers is the president of the Northwest Conference Lay, and Mr. J. C. Bonner is president of the Ninth District Lay Organization.

The next local meeting of the St. John Lay Organization will be Tuesday, May 21, at 8:00 p.m.

Announcements

The MEDIA MINISTRY is offering CDs and DVDs for sale. Titles include Pastor Clayborn's "Breathe" and "Breathe Again" sermons as well as CD's and DVD's from Holy Week. CD's are \$5, DVD's are \$10 each. Series of 3 CD's or more are discounted. For more options, call the church office. CDs and DVDs of each Sunday Service will now be offered immediately following each service. Payment can only be made at the media table in the vestibule.

The Vacation Bible School decorations committee is asking families to submit a copy of a family photo, no larger than 4x6. In addition, please bring in freshly laundered Family Reunion T-shirts. (If you would like them back, please tag them so they can be returned to you.) For more details see Sister Mary Rankin or Sister Donna Gullatte.

The next Lay Organization meeting will be held May 21st at 6 pm.

Smile for the camera! Photo sessions for the new church directory are being scheduled with LifeTouch. Please visit the table in the vestibule to make your appointment or pick-up instructions for scheduling your appointment online. Please contact Sister Paulette Williams, Deidre Walton or call the church office at 256.534.3265 for details.

The WMS compassionate outreach project for June is the Regional Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) located at Huntsville Hospital. Each member is asked to bring fruit such as apples, oranges, tangerines or individually wrapped snack items to the June 22nd meeting. The food supports family members of patients at NICU. NOTE: The WMS will NOT meet in May as the meeting date falls on a holiday weekend.

Women's Day will be observed on the 5th Sunday in June. The guest preacher will be the Reverend Raquel St. Clair Lettsome, Ph.D. of New York, New York. Dr. Lettsome is a New Testament Scholar, Minister, and Author.

Travel with us to New Cedar Grove AME Church in Autaugaville, Alabama on the fourth Sunday in June. Pastor Clayborn will preach and St. John's choir will render music. The Reverend Ruby Heard-Bustamonte, a former member of St. John, is the pastor of New Cedar Grove. Let us support our sister church with our presence and financial contributions on Sunday afternoon, June 23, 2013, at 4:00 p.m.

Graduates and retirees will be honored at a special program on Friday, June 21 at 6:30 pm at St. John.

Be sure to inform the church office of any address or telephone number changes. You may call the church at 256.534.3265 or e-mail the updates to the church at stjohnameh@aol.com. Also, if you are not receiving the church telephone call outs, please notify the office.

To ensure you receive proper credit for your contributions, please place tithes and offerings in an envelope and include your name and the amount of the offering on the envelope.



Prayer Time

Join us for Weekly Prayer Time each Tuesday at 6:00 am.

Conference Call Credentials

US Toll Number (530) 881-1212, Meeting ID: 876-863-940

If you are not able to join the call at 6:00 am, you may listen to the playback any time.

Playback Number (530) 881-1219, Meeting ID 876-863-940,

Press # to ignore any requests for reference number when calling for playback.

Parent Wisdom

By Sister Vanessa Glover



Jesus Loves the Little Children
Mark 10:13-16

Children hold a special place in Christ's heart. To understand Jesus' perspective, one must view children through His eyes. Since children's matters seem so insignificant when compared to adult size problems and responsibilities, we as parents tend to discount them as unimportant. Yet Jesus granted little children honor and respect. When the disciples saw the little children as a nuisance and hindrance to ministry, Jesus rebuked the disciples sharply and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth; anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." (Mark 10:13-16 NIV)

Parents are called to emulate childlike humility and obedience. They are never too old or too young to learn something new. But sometimes parenting may seem overwhelming with children's concerns. Nevertheless, the opportunity is missed to invest in their lives and learn valuable spiritual lessons from them. One of the greatest advantages of such dependent obedience is the liberty of leaving the consequences to Jesus. When people obey and believe, God assumes full responsibility for what happens when they are following in the will of God. Children show the secret of trust and obedience. Just as children learn, believe, and depend on their parents, parents too must have that humble dependence on Christ for both strength and righteousness to receive the kingdom of God as little children.

As long as parents live, they should continue to learn and encourage children to do likewise. When it comes to learning life's most important lessons of trust and obedience one can either do things the easy way or the hard way. The easy way can be summed up as follows: Read God's Instruction Manual—The Bible.



Merciful Lord, great is Your mercy towards us. You have given us so much. Teach us the joy of giving without the thought of reward. Lord, thank You for Your compassion, for Your love, for Your faithfulness, and Your kindness towards us. Lord, our hope is in You. We do not give up in despair, for You O Lord, are able to do exceedingly, abundantly, above all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us. To Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. AMEN (Ephesians 3:20)



Wisdom for Daily Living: So that parents do not become numb to the joy and awe of children and family let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for He is faithful (Hebrews 10:23). Take off the shoes of worry and hurry. Seek quiet time and fellowship with God to better love, understand, and to nurture children, even our children's children, regardless of the circumstances. Put on the invitation to relationship and make a difference.

As a Thoughtful Parent—Happy Mother's Day! Go easy on yourself, MOM. We cannot be 100 percent perfect 100 percent of the time, no matter how much we would like to be. We are only human. We make mistakes. We ask for forgiveness. We learn to do better, and move on!

May is Mental Health Month:

Pathways to Wellness

By Bridget J. Floyd

The theme for 2013 is *Pathways to Wellness*. For over sixty (60) years May has been designated as mental health month during which the mental health community facilitates educational events and screenings to raise awareness of the impact of mental illness and encourage assessment and treatment. This year's focus on wellness highlights overcoming the stressors that impact most individuals and the goal of achieving the balance needed for one's emotional, physical, spiritual and mental health. Wellness is more than the absence of disease, but refers to the complete general, mental and social well-being of the person. Steps to achieve wellness include balanced diet, regular exercise, sufficient sleep, a sense of self-worth, good coping skills which promote resiliency, emotional awareness, and connections to family, friends, and community or social support.

In past years, the goal of Mental Health Month has been to reduce stigma and in this vein, it would be helpful to monitor or assess emotional well-being in the same way blood pressure and blood glucose levels are monitored or cancer screenings are done. Fully embracing the wellness concept not only leads to a healthy mind, body, and spirit but increases the likelihood of living a productive life.

The first week in May was designated *Children's Mental Health Week*. This year's focus was on young children from birth to eight years old, with the emphasis on building resilience in young children dealing with trauma. Childhood exposure to trauma is a major public health problem in that this contributes to negative effects during childhood and can extend into adulthood. Residual effects can persist well after trauma has ended. Examples include physical and sexual abuse, violence in families and communities, loss of a loved one, refugee or war experiences, having a caregiver who is impaired, and life-threatening injury or illness. Youngsters who receive age-appropriate and early intervention can be successful academically, socially, and emotionally.

Student Recognitions 2013



Parents are asked to submit student honors information to the church office by June 2. This request is for students pre-school through high school. Forms will be available in the church office.

The deadline for submitting information is June 2. Students will be recognized in the Student Honors section of the AMEN in June.



Church School Book Club

May 2013

Makes Me Wanna Holler, Nathan McCall, 1995

June 2013

Discussion Date: 22 June 13
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

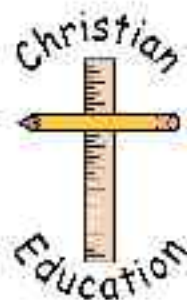
A Piece of Mine, J. California Cooper, 1992

"Her style is deceptively simple and direct, and the vale of tears in which her characters reside is never so deep that a rich chuckle at a foolish person's foolishness cannot be heard." – Alice Walker

"The label 'short story' is a woefully inadequate description of these intensely, explicitly moral tales. 'Parables' is more appropriate. Cooper's stories are rich in wisdom and insight." – Belle Lettre

"J. California Cooper is indeed an extraordinary writer... She has the rare quality of a natural storyteller, and her work must carry the highest recommendation. Definitely a book that's worth reading." – African Concord (Zimbabwe)

Church School Lesson Overview – June 2013



This month's Church School Lesson reviews were written by Willie J. Sandifer.

June 2, 2013

Lesson Title: Holy, Holy, Holy

Lesson Scripture: Isaiah 6:1-12

Print: Isaiah 6:1-8

Devotional Songs: #25 [], #272 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isaiah 6:3).

The first of these prophecies emphasizes the Lord's holiness, for without recognizing this primary attribute, one cannot worship Him in an acceptable manner.

This lesson looks at one of the most important passages about true worship. The prophet Isaiah is given a rare glimpse of worship in heaven. When giving the model prayer in Matthew 6:10, Jesus said, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." God is worshipped in heaven according to His will.

Isaiah lived in wicked days in the history of Judah, when the majority fell woefully short of God's laws. Though they went through the motions of worship, the Lord rejected their observances because their hearts were unclean. Isaiah could minister to his generation only after he saw God's glory and was cleansed from his sin.

June 9, 2013

Lesson Title: Sing and Shout

Lesson Scripture: Isaiah 12:1-6

Print: Isaiah 12:1-6

Devotional Songs: #97 [], #258 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted" (Isaiah 12:4).

Believers are called to praise and rejoice in the Lord because He has saved them and has given them the joy of salvation. They are called to sing and shout His praises and to make Him known throughout the whole earth.

As much as persons dread failure, disgrace, and humiliation, they are often necessary ingredients in God's recipe for mature, sincere worshippers. This was very apparent in the history of Israel. Though warned repeatedly by

their prophets, the people of Israel too often took credit for their own successes, forsook true worship, and served other gods. Only after they had passed through the disciplines of defeat and dispersion did Isaiah portray them as singing and shouting for joy because the Lord had redeemed and transformed them.

In this lesson the prophet looked forward to "that day", meaning the millennial kingdom of Christ, when God's people will be praising Him. This is so certain that Isaiah used the phrase "though shalt say" to introduce the very words with which the people will praise God.

As the book of Isaiah records, the Israelites had a lot to be happy about, especially in light of their circumstances. Judah and Jerusalem had been in complete rebellion against the Lord; yet He still chose to pour out His goodness upon them.

June 16, 2013

Lesson Title: Meaningless Worship Condemned

Lesson Scripture: Isaiah 29:1-24

Print: Isaiah 29:9-18

Tentative Devotional Songs: #390 [], #251 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "This people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men" (Isaiah 29:13).

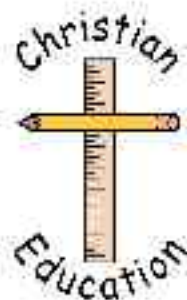
This lesson explores what God will do when people invent false ways of trying to honor Him.

Scripture focuses on worship of the true God from Genesis through Revelation. We cannot read far in any part of the Bible without seeing God the kind of worship He deserves.

The Bible also gives examples of persons who engaged in meaningless worship. They mistook the external forms for the essence of worship. Their outward observances did not please Him because their hearts were not attuned. Isaiah found spiritual impostors who tried to substitute ritual for reality.

The cause of this problem and its solution should be so available so that meaningless worship can be avoided. This meaningless

(Continued on page 16)



Church School Lesson Overview – June 2013

(Continued from page 15)

worship is a spiritual problem stemming from wrong spiritual teachings, attitudes, and behaviors.

June 23, 2013

Lesson Title: The Glorious New Creation

Lesson Scripture: Isaiah 65:1-25

Print: Isaiah 65:17-21, 23-25

Tentative Devotional Songs: #412 []; 282; and #243 []

Key Verses: "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create" (Isaiah 65:17-18).

This lesson looks at the blessing the Lord will bring to His people in the creation of a new heaven and a new earth. Scripture foretells a day when God will make all things new and both humans and their earth will fulfill His purposes for them.

For the unsaved person, this life is as good as it will ever get; and after this life it will get much, much worse for him/her. For the saved person, this life is as bad as it will ever get; and after this it will get far better. The difference is really whether one obeys the Lord. Even on the subject of being saved, scripture speaks of salvation as obeying the Lord. A life of obedience to the Lord will be rewarded here and now, and the reward will be much greater in the hereafter. The reward of the Lord follows the principle of sowing and reaping. Reap what is sown; reap it later, and reap it multiplied.

It is common to see the ungodly rewarded in this life while the godly are often put down. Those who disregard God prosper while godly people seem slighted and persecuted as they endure all kinds of struggles. Only God can see the spiritual truth of what is going on, and only He can sort it all out and make sense of it.

June 30, 2013

Lesson Title: Joyful Worship Restored

Lesson Scripture: Ezra 3:1-7

Print: Ezra 3:1-7

Tentative Devotional Songs: #77 []; Alleluia; and #243 []

Key Verses: "They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily

burnt offerings by number" (Ezra 3:4).

The Hebrews had been exiled to Babylon for their neglect and abuse of worship of the Lord. Their temple had been destroyed. Only then did they treasure the heritage they had despised. Now some of them had been permitted to return. As this week's lesson shows, they wasted no time restoring true worship.

God had moved the heart of Cyrus, king of Persia, to send the Israelite captives back to Jerusalem to rebuild the house of God. Over forty-two thousand of them walked some nine hundred miles, taking with them whatever they could. They had not been able to worship God as He had ordained, since they had had no altar or temple. Once they returned to Jerusalem. They had to build houses, raise crops, and start a new life in the Promised Land.

When it came time to rebuild the house of the Lord, they gave a freewill offering. God provided the leadership and the workers to begin their work. It was also time to resume the sacrifices and feasts God had prescribed for Israel. The joyful worship they had missed for seventy years was to be restored to them.

Church School is held each Sunday at 9:45 a.m. All are welcome!

Know Your Church

Church School and
Christian Education Convention

"Know Your Church" is the theme for this year's South Birmingham—Huntsville—Bessemer District's Church School and Christian Education Convention. The convention will be held in Scottsboro, Alabama at Greater St. Paul AME Church.

The conference begins on Friday at 7 pm and Pastor Clayborn will be the guest preacher for the Friday evening worship service. The conference will reconvene for workshops on Saturday morning at 8 am.

All are welcome to attend the convention. The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr. is the Presiding Elder and Brother Willie Sandifer is the District Superintendent.

June 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 9:30 am. Dance Minis by 11:00 am. Children's Choir Rehearsal
2 COMMUNION 8am Worship 9:45 am. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship AMEN Deadline	3 9:30 a.m. Fifty-Plus Meeting	4 6:00 p.m. Stewardess Board Visitors in Prayer Rehearsal	5 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	6 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	7 IBHS Church School Convention Greater St. Paul, Scottsdale 7 pm	8 9:30 am. Dance Minis by AMEN Staff Meeting 10:30am
9 8:00 am. Worship 9:45 am. Church School 10:50 am. Worship VBS Kickoff 2:00 pm	10 Vacation Bible School	11 Vacation Bible School	12 Vacation Bible School	13 Vacation Bible School	14 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	15 9:30 am. Dance Minis by 11:00 am. Children's Choir Rehearsal
16 FATHER'S DAY 8:00 am. Worship 9:45 am. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	17	18 11:30 am. — 1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN 6:00 p.m. Trustee Board Mtg.	19 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	20 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	21 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal 6:30 pm Graduate Retiree Recognition	22 9:30 am. Dance Minis by Women's Ministry 10:30 am. VBS Meeting
23 RECOGNITION DAY 8:00 am. Worship 9:45 am. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship 4:00 p.m. New Cedar Grove AME	24	25 11:30 am. — 1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	26 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	27 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	28	29 9:30 am. Dance Minis by Women's Ministry
30 8:45 am. Church School 10:00 am. Worship WOMEN'S DAY 4:00 p.m. NWA Lay Meeting						

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

Non-profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Huntsville, AL
Permit No. 240

Return Service Requested

E-mail: stjohnameh@aol.com

Website: stjohnamehsv.org

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



AMEC

Important Dates to Remember

May 18, 2013	Feeding of the 5000*, Daniel Payne College Legacy Village, Birmingham, Alabama
May 19, 2013	Pentecost Sunday*, 8 am Worship, 9:45 am Church School, 11:00 a.m. Scattering to Witness *Wear 9th District Red Shirt
June 7-8, 2013	Church School Convention, Greater St. Paul AME Church, Scottsboro
June 9-13, 2013	Vacation Bible School Jesus Family Reunion: The Remix
June 16, 2013	Father's Day
June 23, 2013	Worship at New Cedar Grove AME Church, Autaugaville, Alabama, 4:00 p.m.
June 30, 2013	Women's Day, The Reverend Raquel St. Clair Lettsome, Ph.D., Guest Preacher

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 18 Issue 6

June 2013

Pastor's Message

Blessings Delayed

Daniel 10:2-14

Praise God! St. John is still basking in the glow of Pentecost. We are in a time of receiving God's word and will for our lives. St. John is "catching the Pentecost vision!"

We are doing that in a number of ways. We celebrated homecoming with Round Hill AME Church in Lynnville, TN, with the Reverend Deborah Peppers (June 2nd), and we will be celebrating New Cedar Grove's church anniversary in Autaugaville, AL, with the Reverend Ruby Heard-Bustamonte (June 23rd). Our Presiding Elder and his staff put together a wonderful church school convention (June 7-8) that included a service of music and word and workshops on knowing the church, leadership, health, and financial literacy for all ages. St. John followed that with an exciting vacation bible school, which included exhilarating classes, food, family games, and loads of fun! We will also celebrate three segments of our congregation: Our graduates, retirees, and members who are sick or shut-in. On June 21st, we will have a special service for graduates and retirees. The Reverend Ruby Heard-Bustamonte, a former member of St. John, will be the guest preacher. Let us welcome her with open arms. As well, St. John will have a church-wide day of visitation with members who are sick or shut-in on June 22nd (10AM-1PM). The Pentecost vision involves meeting the needs of all of our members. Please feel free to join us as we spread love and joy to members who cannot be present with us physically.



Reverend Patrick D. Clayton



As we catch the Pentecost vision, we want to welcome some special guests to St. John. On Father's Day (June 16th), the Reverend A. Nevell Owens, Ph.D., and the Reverend Marcia Allen Owens, Ph.D., will be our guest preachers. They are itinerant elders in the AME Church, and they both serve as professors at Florida A&M University. The Owens are tremendous preachers who have hearts for justice and education. In addition to their presence on Father's Day, my own father has become a guest writer for this month's AMEN. He offers us a reflection on Father's Day. Be sure to read it as you peruse the entire newsletter. On June 22nd and June 30th, we will host meetings for the Northwest Alabama Women's Missionary Society executive board and the Northwest Alabama Lay Organization, respectively. Also on June 30th, we

will celebrate Women's Day at St. John. Our guest preacher will be Rev. Raquel St. Clair Lettsome, Ph.D. She is a New Testament scholar who preaches with passion, anointing, and excellence. Please join us for any and all of these occasions as we receive our guests with the expectation that God will be in the midst of our gatherings.

In Daniel 10, Daniel waits three weeks for God to answer his prayer. When the angel appears and explains the delay, he tells Daniel that a demon blocked him. However, the angel informs Daniel that God heard him when he first prayed. Though Daniel's blessing was delayed, it was not denied. This month we celebrate Juneteenth (June 19th). On June 19, 1865, the slaves in Texas were told that President Lincoln had freed them...two and a half years earlier! A blessing delayed is NOT a blessing denied. Many difficulties we face are the result of delayed blessings. Our wondering if God hears us, our heartache over unfair circumstances, and our frustration with wanting the best now – all come as a result of blessings delayed. When a blessing is de-

(Continued on page 5)

Diligent Fathers or Father Figures

By John Clayborn

Fatherhood is tough and requires a lot of giving. All fathers do not stay the course of fatherhood. My Father was not in my life after my sister was born. Perhaps it was due to the death of our Mother at childbirth. He went no further than across the Mississippi River to West Memphis, Arkansas. Carol and I never saw him again.

There were Father figures in our lives. We had a grandfather, the husband of an aunt who later adopted us, and a brother-in-law. The men in our lives worked; therefore, we learned about work ethics. They set the example for going to work each day. It was inexcusable to be absent without a good reason.

As a child and young adult, I attended Centenary United Methodist Church. The church became an integral part of my life. Many times I walked there because the church was so important to me and it offered a place for the young to have social gatherings. Ms. Myrtle Gentry wore out her car, shuttling us to various Youth Ministry Fellowship (YMF) meetings, to keep us from walking.

These life experiences and Father figures taught me what it means to be a diligent Father. A diligent Father makes no excuses for not caring for his child or children. Sacrifices must be made. God has set the example for us. He sacrificed Jesus for our sins. Therefore, we follow suit by giving to our children their basic needs and some reasonable desires of the heart. Before Patrick was born, Lois and I belonged to the choruses of the Memphis Opera and Memphis Symphony. However, after his birth, we decided to give them up because too much time was being spent away from him. The sacrifice was worth spending time with our son. Love was greater than what we sacrificed.

As a diligent Father I can recall going to track meets when Patrick came in dead last. I encouraged him by saying, "You finished the race." I consider the meetings at school, making calls (even in college), saying no when unpopular, paying for school trips and buying school materials that seem too expensive. How many times did I stand in line for Star Wars action figures or planes and Transformers? Those are nerve-wracking experiences.

Many schools have dress codes. However, mothers and fathers established the dress codes during the earlier days; casual wear for the school week and suit, shirt and tie for Sundays or a nice dress. So the battle was on in our house, especially on first Sundays. As a diligent Father, I won! Hair combing sometimes caused friction because I was vigorous in my duty. It got done!

A diligent Father (along with a great Mother) helps to set the tone in the house and in the lives of the children. When that tone is established, children cannot pit one parent against the other. That tone blocks any interference by them and provides a solid foundation for their growth.

We are here because diligent Fathers and Father figures laid a foundation of instruction, discipline, and love. That foundation offers us wisdom and guidance. That foundation keeps us from falling away from our purpose. Praise God for diligent Fathers and Father figures!

The King James translation of the Bible states in Proverbs 4: 1-2, 11-13
"Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law." (v.1-2) "I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble. Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: for she is thy life." (v.11-13)

Happy Father's Day!!!!!!



Glory Weekend: Pentecost 2013

Glory Weekend was the celebration of Pentecost 2013. Both the Feeding of the 5,000 and Pentecost Scattered were Ninth District sponsored observances of Pentecost.



More than 40 members of St. John attended the Feeding of the 5,000. What a blessing! Some are pictured here as they prepare to board the bus to return to Huntsville.

On a rainy Saturday morning thousands of persons gathered on the grounds of Daniel Payne College in Birmingham, Alabama for The Feeding of the 5,000. People came by motor coach, church vans and cars. Even though heavy rains the night before and the morning of the event resulted in muddy and soggy grounds, the spirit of those attending was not dampened. This was a spiritually enriching experience of song, preaching, food and fellowship.



Attendees over 80 years of age received a special gift bag.

The devotional period included music from the choirs of the conferences of the Ninth District. Greetings were extended by several public officials of the city of Birmingham and Jefferson County. The preacher for this special service was the Reverend Doctor Jamal Bryant, pastor of Empowerment Temple AME Church, Baltimore, Maryland.

The sermon was entitled, "I Can't Stay this Size!" (Numbers 13:30-33). This message was appropriate for the day and for the Vision Driven theme at St. John. The Reverend Bryant spoke of the need to grow. He used several examples from his experience of founding Empowerment Temple and growing the church from 42 members to thousands of members. He urged listeners to believe "This is the smallest my faith, church, bank account will be." He also shared information from the bible study series he was teaching on "Jewish Wealth." He stated that

(Continued on page 4)

Glory Weekend: Pentecost 2013

(Continued from page 3)



The Reverend Jamal Bryant delivers the message.

"Jews practice their faith; AMEs profess their faith." He also shared statistics on tithing and compared the tithing of Jews to Protestants. Jews tithe 20 percent of their income while 85 percent of Protestants do not tithe.

This message was fitting for the vision the Ninth District has to develop the Daniel Payne College site into Daniel Payne Legacy Village and Pastor Clayborn's preaching and teaching on vision and stewardship at St John.

A dramatic enactment of the scripture on the feeding of the 5,000 was presented. The scripture is the passage from the synoptic gospels where Jesus blessed the five loaves and two fish and fed over 5,000. The dramatization, "The Miracle Feeding" was written by A. J. Edwards, director, and Byron Thomas, musical director and arranger. The Reverend Doctor Homer McCall played the role of Jesus in this dramatization.

Following the service, attendees enjoyed hot fried fish, bread and water. Each Presiding Elder's District had a tent set up where they fried 500 pieces of fish each. Comments from those attending indicated that the food was delicious and the fellowship was great.



Dance Ministry and Praise Team Minister during service.

The Pentecost celebration continued on Sunday morning. The St. John Pentecost worship service began at 8 am. Music was rendered by the praise team. The children's message was presented by Dr. Thalia Love-Brown and Mrs. Mary Rark in directed the children's choir. Prior to the sermon, the St. John Liturgical Dance Ministry ministered in dance to "Even Me," accompanied by the Praise Team. Pentecost was the 13th anniversary of the Dance Ministry at St. John. The sermon for Pentecost was the last in the series on growth, "Growth Spurts." Pastor Clayborn used the text Acts 3:1-13, with focus on verses 1-4 and 11-13. Throughout the message he made analogies of the text to growth spurts in children and growth spurts in the church. He noted that to handle "spiritual" growth spurts one has to identify the growth spurt, constantly feed on God and recognize the impact of the growth spurt. In closing, he urged St John to become more of who God called them to be, acknowledge the growth spurt, and to be a witness by telling somebody that

Jesus gave a growth spurt.

The normal 11 a.m. worship service was suspended and members went out into the community to share their faith. A group of prayer warriors stayed in the sanctuary to pray for those who were wit

(Continued on page 5)

Glory Weekend: Pentecost 2013

(Continued from page 4)



nessing. In the short span of four hours, the teams covered much of the Edmontan Heights community and Lincoln Park. Four (4) persons confessed Christ, five (5) persons recommitted their lives to Christ, prayer was offered for twenty-six persons/homes, and over eighty homes were visited. District-wide over 700 persons gave their lives to Christ! Teams returned to the church at 3 pm to share their experiences and a meal. The witnessing was not only a blessing for those who were visited, but to those who witnessed.

Praise God for the moving of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost 2013. Pray that the visions for Daniel Payne Legacy Village and St. John, Huntsville, will be fulfilled according to the will of God.

"And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved." (Acts 2:47b)

Pastor's Message

(Continued from page 1)

layed, we must hang on. We must keep believing, keep working, keep serving, keep humble, keep studying, and keep honoring God. When God deems the timing to be in divine order, God will convert a delayed blessing into a received blessing. God knows what we need, and God knows when we need it. Trust God. God heard us the first time we prayed! Just know that God will use the time of the delay to strengthen us, to heal us, to educate us, to expand us, and to challenge us. When we are ready, God will bless us. Thank God for blessings delayed. For God makes sure we are mature enough to handle blessings received!

Stock the Clinic!

A St. John Stewardess Board
Community Project

By Barbara Johnson,
St. John Stewardess Board President



Schools in many districts are being challenged when it comes to adequate funding. Additional funds raised by Parent-Teacher Associations are just insufficient to support all the projects and all the needs of the schools. School clinics are the last areas to receive any type of assistance.

When St. John's adopted school, Davis Hills Middle, shared the need for clinic supplies with a stewardess, who was also a tutor at the school, St. John knew they had to help. The proposal was shared with the Stewardess Board and a plan of action was initiated. The St. John A.M.E. Stewardess Board and the Women's Missionary Society partnered to collect approximately 1,400 items for the clinic. Ten huge gift bags of clinic supplies were presented to Mrs. Jill Burwell, the principal of Davis Hills Middle School, on April 4, 2013. The principal, teachers, and students were very appreciative of the donation. The Stewardesses and the WMS were even more pleased that they were able to meet a need in the community.

To God be the Glory!

Women's Prayer Breakfast

June 28th, 8:00 a.m.
Huntsville Marriott

Women's Day 2013

June 30th, 10:00 a.m.
The Reverend Raquel St. Clair Lettsome,
Ph.D., Guest Preacher

All ladies are asked to wear white, with a touch of purple.

"The Help"



So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. —Romans 14:12-13 (NIV)

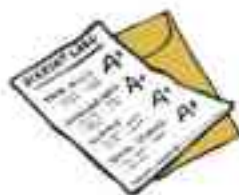
Many have read "The Help" by Kathryn Stockett or saw the movie rendition. The book looked into the lives of black maids in 1960s Mississippi and the white women who employed them. One of the recurring plotlines has to do with the unceasing efforts of doyen Hilly Holbrook to set boundaries and establish the superiority of herself and those who are like her. She succeeds handily.

Aren't we glad that we are nothing like Hilly. But, do we deceive ourselves? In different ways do we unconsciously do the same thing: inch away from the homeless person on the street, judge the outfits of people who ride the elevator with us, puff up the importance of self-created boundaries to thoughts that some are so insufficient that we can't possibly associate with them?

It may be human nature to feel as we sometimes do. However, there is one person who never gave into the temptation to feel this way: JESUS. He is the one who embraced the Samaritan, the tax collector, the woman at the well, and all manner of have-nots. Ultimately, His example is all the help we need to erase the artificial boundaries we have drawn—and to focus on the ones He drew with His generosity and grace.

As members minister in the "Soup Kitchen" the prayer is "Jesus, help us to see people as You do. Amen."

Student Recognitions 2013



Alicia D. Brownlow

- ◊ A-B Honor roll

Emerson Brooks

- ◊ A Honor Roll
- ◊ Principals List Honor Certificate
- ◊ Delta Sigma Theta Honor Scholar
- ◊ Jack and Jill of America Community Service Award
- ◊ Kappa Alpha Psi High Scholastic Achievement Award
- ◊ Kappa Alpha Psi Exemplary Citizenship Award
- ◊ Varsity Football Achievement Award – Varsity Letter
- ◊ Varsity Basketball Achievement Award – Varsity Letter
- ◊ University of Alabama Capstone Leadership Academy
- ◊ Mu Alpha Theta
- ◊ National Honor Society
- ◊ Art Honor Society

Evan Brooks

- ◊ A Honor Roll
- ◊ Perfect Attendance
- ◊ Principals List Honor Certificate
- ◊ Jack and Jill of America Oratorical Competition Medal
- ◊ Numerous Football medals

Michael James Clark

- ◊ Excellence awards in Language Arts, Reading, and Spelling;
- ◊ Improvement award in Arithmetic
- ◊ Citizenship Award;
- ◊ Superior Excellence Award in Piano

Patrick Clayborn II

- ◊ A/B Honor Roll
- ◊ Kindergarten Diploma
- ◊ Good Conduct
- ◊ Excellence in Reading

Josiah Gullatte

- ◊ A-B Honor Roll
- ◊ Selected for the 2013-2014 Football Team

Mariah Gullatte

- ◊ A member of SGA (student Government Association)
- ◊ Received 14th Year of Dance Award
- ◊ Launched new designer line -Princess Closet

Anthony Harbin

- ◊ A Honor Roll
- ◊ The Bookworm Award (read the most books in 3rd grade)
- ◊ A Honor Roll for four (4) consecutive years

Kennedy Harris

- ◊ A/B Honor Roll
- ◊ Member of Dance Team and Choir
- ◊ Girl Scout
- ◊ Mentor for Alpha Kappa Alpha Inc.'s Emerging Young Leaders (EYL)
- ◊ Selected to attend AAMU's CETPS Summer STEM Academy

Blake Johnson

- ◊ A/B Honor Roll
- ◊ Kindergarten Diploma
- ◊ Cultural Heritage Achievement Award

Kennedy Ranlin- Crutcher

- ◊ "A" Honor Roll
- ◊ Excellence in Bible Studies
- ◊ Athletic Award for Cheerleading

Congratulations!



Texting Teen News!

By Mariah L. Gullatte

Schools out!!! I'm pretty sure every student is glad to be out!! I pray everyone stays safe from the sun during this heated summer!

Before school was out, the young people began their YPD duties. They have helped serve at the soup kitchen with cheerful hearts! Selling cupcakes for Mother's Day was a very tasty fundraiser! But parking cars, I must say, is tiring. Collecting money, counting spots, and running around the parking lot is no easy job. But it's worth it to get to be around racks of barbeque at the Whistle Stop!

Congratulations to the graduates of 2013! You have a bright future ahead of you!

That's all this month's news!

TTYL (Talk To You Later)

Online Giving Is Easy

1. Simply go to the St John AMEC website www.stjohnameh-hsv.org then click on Online Giving. Follow the instructions from there.

2. Use your PayPal account to send directly to St. John at e-mail address stjohnameh@aol.com. Transfer from your banking account and specify donate/friends and family.

Use one of these giving options to contribute, even when on vacation.



Vision Driven: Stewardship

For the month of May the bible study lessons continued to focus on stewardship, with emphasis on what the New Testament teaches about stewardship.

Using numerous New Testament scriptures, students were taught what the New Testament says about giving in the church's inception, giving of treasure, giving of talent and giving of time. The homework assignment for the following week was to answer the question, "How would you introduce the lesson on New Testament Giving?" The responses given in answer to this question included skits, illustration, songs, and movies. The final lesson from Pastor Clayborn on stewardship addressed the question, "What are the first steps to tithing?" The answer was to reflect, pray and act.

To assist members in managing the 90% that remains after the tithe, the final bible study was a presentation by Mr. Lester Jones of Primerica Financial Services. He explained financial management as building a financial house God's way. He prefaced his plan with the fact that God expects persons to be good stewards of the resource they have been given. He listed the foundation of the financial house as income protection/emergency fund, income diversity. The next level consists of educational plans, debt elimination and retirement plans. After this, the next level is a Roth IRA followed by mortgage acceleration. The top level of the house is financial independence.

Prayerfully this Stewardship series has been informative and spiritually enriching. Remember, "The earth is the Lord's and all of its fullness." (Psalm 24:1a)



Prayer Time

Join us for Weekly Prayer Time each Tuesday at 6:00 am.

Conference Call Credentials

US Toll Number [\(530\) 881-1212](tel:5308811212), Meeting ID: 876-863-940

If you are not able to join the call at 6:00 am, you may listen to the playback any time.

Playback Number [\(530\) 881-1219](tel:5308811219), Meeting ID: 876-863-940,

Press # to ignore any requests for reference number when calling for playback.

St. John to Host Conference Lay Meeting



Northwest Alabama Conference Lay Quarterly Meeting

June 30, 2013
4:00 p.m.

St. John AME Church
Huntsville, Alabama

Ms. Cassandra Ingram, Local Lay President

Dr. Waymon Shivers, Northwest Conference
Lay President

Mr. J. C. Bonner, Ninth District Lay President

All members are invited to attend!



Final Call

Do not miss the opportunity to be part of the new church pictorial directory.

The final dates for the LifeTouch Photo sessions are June 26 & June 27. Contact the church office for an appointment or register online on the website.

MS Walk 2013 Thank You!

On March 9th and April 6th, 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 24th year that the team had the opportunity to participate in this worthy MS 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. MS is a chronic, often disabling disease that attacks the central nervous system (CNS). Symptoms may be mild, such as numbness in the limbs; or severe, such as paralysis or loss of vision. The progress, severity, and specific symptoms of MS are unpredictable and vary from one person to another. 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 fifteen teams for the Huntsville MS Walk for funds raised. The 'PJ's Partners' team members participating this year were: Ann McCelvy, Rod McCelvy, Agnes Gilmore, Jackie Grier, Bonnie Inmon, Lonnie Trenton, Vellry Grier, Pat Grier, Kenneth Parham, and Phyllis Barrett.

FRIDAY NITE

St. John's amazing power-packed praise and worship event "Friday Nite Live" releases its summer event dates.

July 12th - 7pm

August 16th - 7pm

September 8th - 7pm

The unique worship experience incorporates all genres of Christian music, dance, and drama in an effort to minister to youth, young adults and the young at heart in creative and innovative ways, so that they know God is relevant today. Visit www.FNLHsv.com for more information.



Parent Wisdom

By Sister Vanessa Glover

God's Promise God's Presence
Matthew 14: 22-34 NIV



No one gets through life without storms. We have heard the saying, "You are either in a storm, just getting out of a storm or you are about to enter a storm." The Good News is Our Heavenly Father gives us His promise; He will never leave us nor forsake us! (Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5)

It is amazing when we recognize the Father's Provision during storms. This is, perhaps the greatest gift because from this awareness, Our Heavenly Father offers a sense of comfort, courage, and confidence. He is in total control of our storms and He will use the storm for His will and purpose for our lives. We may not understand, but we can trust His Words, "In all things God works for the good." (Romans 8:28) Although stopping the storms may be our goal, remember to be thankful for God's hand in our life.

The text states, "During the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified, 'It's a ghost,' they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: 'Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.' 'Lord, if it's you,' Peter replied, 'tell me to come to you on the water.' 'Come,' He said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, 'Lord, save me!' Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. 'You of little faith,' he said, 'why do you doubt?' And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'" (Matthew 14:25-33)

Even though the disciples had spent much time with Jesus, they did not recognize Him in the storm. Sometimes we do not recognize God's presence in the midst of our storms. We begin to focus on the circumstances of the wind and the waves of life rather than fixing our eyes on Jesus. But when we cry out to Jesus, "Lord save me!" Immediately, Jesus catches us by the hand and saves us. He raises us above what seems to be impossible. Storms and hardships are exercises of our trust in God's promise and faith in God's presence. We may never walk on water, but we will go through difficult storms—faith-testing circumstances; nevertheless, "Take courage, do not be afraid" look to Jesus and the storms of life will be calmed. "God is our refuge and strength an ever-present help in trouble." (Psalm 46:1)



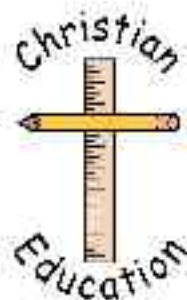
Prayer: Great is the Lord and Greatly to be Praised! We give You Praise for You alone are Worthy. O Lord, we pray that our eyes are fixed on You, the Creator and Sustainer of life. Lord, often we do not know what the purpose is for enduring storms, but we do know God is the source of our strength and His power keeps us from falling. Lord, help us not to lose heart for You have told us these things, "In this world you will have trouble, but be of good cheer, for you O Lord have overcome the world." (John 16:33)



Wisdom for Daily Living: So that we do not become numb to the joy and awe of children and family, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for He is faithful." (Hebrews 10:23) Take off the shoes of worry and hurry. Seek quiet time and fellowship with God to better love, understand, and to nurture children even our children's children, regardless of the circumstances. Put on the invitation to relationship and make a difference.

As a Thoughtful Parent: It is important to remind our children that God's plan is not limited to the ups and downs of everyday life. In fact, the ups and downs are quite often impossible to understand, yet God's Grace is sufficient. Remind them Jesus Christ offers the Gift of Eternal Life, the rest is up to them. "And this is the testimony. God has given us Eternal Life, and this life is in His Son." (1John 5:11)

Church School Lesson Overview – July 2013



This month's Church School Lesson reviews were written by Willie J. Sandifer.

July 7, 2013

Lesson Title: The Temple Restored

Lesson Scripture: Ezra 3:8-13

Print: Ezra 3:8-13

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

Key Verse: "All the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid" (Ezra 3:11).

In this lesson the people are full of joy because they honored the Lord by starting construction of the temple.

The captives had been back in the Promised Land for just over a year. They had experienced the seasons of planting and harvest. They had seen the faithfulness of the Lord in providing for them. Now it was time to begin the real reason for their return to the land: rebuilding the temple and restoring the worship of Almighty God, the God of the Jews. The joy of the Lord was to be their strength.

There is usually a starting point. For the Jews in this lesson, it was necessary to rebuild the temple. For a Christian or congregation today, revival may be necessary to take one back to the cross – back to the basics – to start over.

July 14, 2013

Lesson Title: Celebrating with Joy

Lesson Scripture: Ezra 6:13-22

Print: Ezra 6:1-22

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

Key Verse: "The children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy" (Ezra 6:16).

In this lesson the temple was completed and there was joyous celebration that honored the Lord for what He had done for the Israelites.

God had now moved the hearts of secular rulers and of His own people to get them back to the Promised Land and out of captivity. They were to reestablish the temple and the prescribed worship at Jerusalem.

The exiles who returned to Judah had to learn

the importance of a second try. The original group who came back under Zerubbabel's leadership had much reason for a positive outlook. They had quickly rebuilt their altar of sacrifice and laid the foundation of the temple.

Their progress, however, ended suddenly when local adversaries, having been excluded from the project, began to oppose them. Construction stopped for at least sixteen years. But this lesson shows how, when given a second "try," the Jews succeeded in their task.

July 21, 2013

Lesson Title: Fasting and Praying

Lesson Scripture: Ezra 8:21-23, 31-32

Print Ezra 8:21-23, 31-32

Tentative Devotional Songs: #488 []; #251 []; and #243 []

Key Verse: "So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was entreated of us" (Ezra 8:23).

This lesson concerns an incident that worked out well. It is the account of Ezra calling Israel to fast and seek the Lord for His guidance and protection. It was a call to get serious about obeying God's command, which, in this case, meant making the long and hazardous trip on foot from Persia to Jerusalem. It was about putting faith into action, too, as a demonstration of God's power.

Ezra was conscious that God was the unseen force in all that happened. Ezra saw God's presence and control in the great adventure he undertook to lead a large party of people and possessions from their old homes in Babylon back to their ancestral home in Jerusalem.

July 28, 2013

Lesson Title: Gifts for the Temple

Lesson Scripture: Ezra 8:24-30

Print Ezra 8:24-30

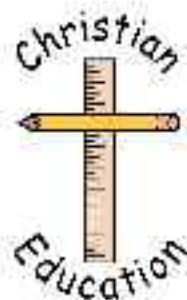
Tentative Devotional Songs: #412 []; 282; and #243 []

Key Verses: "Ye are holy unto the Lord; the vessels are holy also; and the silver and the gold are a free will offering unto the Lord God of your fathers" (Ezra 8:28).

This lesson looks at the gifts given to the Lord.

God had prepared the temple, which had been

(Continued on page 12)



Church School Lesson

(Continued from page 11)

rebuilt earlier. Now He was sending a portion of His people who were still in captivity in Persia back to the land. They were to carry the heavy and very costly precious metal temple equipment back with them so that worship could again go forth. The sacrifices and feasts He had prescribed would be reestablished.

The lesson ends with a statement that the mission assigned was eventually fulfilled. The twenty-four assistants Ezra had chosen accepted and fulfilled their responsibilities. They took "the weight of the silver, and the gold, and the vessels." This means that they accepted the three kinds of items whose values had been determined by weight. How they planned to protect them is not stated. They, however, willingly submitted to Ezra's charge.

Church School Book Club

June 2013

Discussion Date: 22 June 2013
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

A Piece of Mine, J. California Cooper, 1992

July 2013

Discussion Date: 27 July 2013
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Goodness and Mercy, Vanessa Davis-Griggs, 1992

Gabrielle Mercedes has dreamed of being a dancer since she was a little girl. But when her life takes a very different turn, it's not the future she'd envisioned for herself. Feeling a void she can't fill, she finds the salvation she's been seeking in church and decides to start anew. Learning that her church has a dance ministry, she's thrilled to have her first love back in her life. Then she meets the handsome and professionally accomplished Zachary Wayne Morgan, and finally everything seems to be falling into place--until a past secret threatens to tear it all apart, and her newfound faith is put to the ultimate test.

Find Summer Fun in the Park

Are you looking for ways to stay fit this summer and for a little something to do on Saturdays?

The place to be is Big Spring Park, each Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

There is a menu of FREE physical activities for the entire family including Zumba, yoga, boot camp, tai chi, piloxing, hula hooping, runner's yoga, pilates, ballroom dance and TRX. Deep Roots of Alabama is also offering a 5K walk/run at 10 a.m. The Saturdays in the Park kick off also includes a farmer's market, cooking and gardening demonstrations, and healthy vendor booths. Children's activities feature kid-friendly fitness, a moon bounce, face painting and magic! Come dressed to participate! Also check out all the healthy vendors and giveaways and enjoy a day of healthy food, fun, and fitness in the park.

For more Healthy Huntsville events, visit www.ourvalleyevents.com/healthy-huntsville.

Electronic AMEN

The AMENewsletter is available in electronic form. Receive the AMEN in this form so that it is readily available from your laptop, tablet or smart phone. You may also easily share the electronic copy with friends and family.

If you prefer to receive an electronic copy of the newsletter, please notify the church at stjohnameh@aol.com.

Go Green

Buy Locally Grown Fruits and Vegetables

Summer is a great time to buy locally grown fruits and vegetables from farmers markets. Huntsville and Madison have several markets. Some of the markets are the Madison County Farmer's Market on Cook Street, The Greene Street Market at Nativity (open 4-6 pm every Thursday during the summer), and the Madison City Farmers market on Hughes (next to Discovery Middle School).

July 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Prayer Meeting & Love Feast		5	6 9:30 a.m. Dance Minsky 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
7 COMMUNION 8am Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship AMEN Deadline	8	9 6:00 p.m. Stewardess Board Voices in Praise Rehearsal	10 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	11 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	12 Friday Wife Live 7:00 p.m.	13 9:30 a.m. Dance Minsky AMEN Staff Meeting 10:30 am
14 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship Nichols Chapel Florence, AL 3:00 p.m.	15	16 11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m. SOUP KIT CHEN 6:00 p.m. Voices in Praise Rehearsal Thurs. Board Mtg.	17 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	18	19 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal 	20 9:30 a.m. Dance Minsky 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
21 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship 	22	23 11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m. SOUP KIT CHEN	24 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	25 6:00 p.m. Bless Chorus Rehearsal	26 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	27 9:30 a.m. Dance Minsky Women's Ministry 10:30 a.m. WOMEN'S Meeting
Ninth District 2013 Summer Meeting Christian Education, Ministers Institute, Leadership Congress Troy University - Troy, Alabama						
28 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship	29	30 8:00 p.m. Church School Board Meeting	31 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Prayer Meeting & Love Feast			

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

Non-profit
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Huntsville, AL
 Permit No. 240

Return Service Requested

E-mail: stjohnameh@aol.com

Website: stjohnamehsv.org

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



AMEC

Important Dates to Remember

June 16, 2013	Father's Day, The Reverends A. Nevell and Marcia Owens, Guest Preachers
June 21, 2013	Graduate/Retiree Service, The Reverend Ruby Heard Bustamonte, preacher, 6:30 p.m.
June 22, 2013	Church-wide Visitation Day, 9:30 a.m. Northwest Alabama WMS Executive Board Meeting, 10:00 a.m.
June 23, 2013	Worship at New Cedar Grove AME Church, Autaugaville, Alabama, 4:00 p.m.
June 29, 2013 June 30, 2013	Women's Prayer Breakfast, 8:00 a.m., Marriott Hotel Women's Day, The Reverend Raquel St. Clair Lettsome, Ph.D., Guest Preacher, 10:00 a.m.
	Northwest Alabama Conference Lay Organization Meeting, 4:00 p.m., St John, Huntsville
July 12, 2013	Friday Nite Live, 7:00 p.m.
July 14, 2013	Worship at Nichols Chapel AMEC, Florence, Alabama, 3 p.m.
July 19-21, 2013	Sons of Allen Retreat
July 22-25, 2013	Ninth District 2013 Summer Meeting, Troy University

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



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 18 Issue 7

July 2013

Pastor's Message



Reverend Patrick D. Clayborn

The Master Plan

Acts 9:22-25

On July 13, 2013, at 10PM – George Zimmerman was found not guilty of 2nd degree murder or manslaughter in the death of Trayvon Martin. Many people were hurt by this verdict. Many others were pleased. Some feel that the prosecutors fumbled the case. Others say that a mostly white jury was biased – or culturally uninformed. Still, others suggest that this case was not about race, but self-defense. There are some who think this is just some random case – that this is unusual. They say that African American children are more likely to be killed by African Americans than by one who has the ethnicity of George Zimmerman.

Well, I believe that this is not random. Seeing a threat in an African American child walking through a neighborhood – who is minding his own business and not doing anything illegal – is not random. Following that same child after the 911 operator gives the order for standing down is not random. Killing that same child is NOT random.

It is not random because there are too many other stories just like Trayvon Martin. Last November, Jordan Davis – 17 year old Black boy – was in the back of a truck at a gas station. Michael Dunn – a 45 year old white man – told Davis and his friends to lower their music. When they refused, he shot and killed Davis – believing that his life was threatened. That trial is coming very soon.

Again, there are too many other stories just like Trayvon Martin and Jordan Davis. Last year, Marissa Alexander was given a 20 year prison sentence. She fired her gun at a wall to scare off her abusive ex-husband. She did not kill or hurt him. She believed she was standing her ground in Florida. This man had punched and choked her while they were married. She had every reason to believe that he would do it again. He admits that he was going to lay hands on her, and that she shot at him to scare him. Yet, she was convicted of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon!

If you are still not convinced that this is a pattern within our justice system, then read Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow*. You will find that minorities (particularly African Americans), women, children, and the poor are regularly given unfair treatment. Just go back into African American history, and you will find that there is a track record of unfair practices by officials of justice toward Black people!

Therefore, it is not a coincidence that congress does everything it can to stop President Obama. It is not happenstance that congress seeks to take away reproductive rights from women. It is not an accident that congress is pushing hard to redefining rape so women have less voice.

The Voting Rights Act (VRA) being severely limited is a part of this pattern. The Supreme Court took section b of part 4 of VRA, and ruled that it is unconstitutional. Thus, states and counties held by the formula in that section no longer have to get pre-clearance to change their voting procedures. Chief Justice Roberts said that the 40 year old formula was outdated. He insisted that our country does not have any real race problems at the polls; so congress needs to get a

(Continued on page 2)

Pastor's Message

(Continued from page 1)

new formula. Justice Ginsburg provided some clarity in her dissenting opinion. She said that Roberts and the four judges who agreed failed to see that over 700 cases of racial discrimination in voting came before the Department of Justice between 1982 and 2006. These issues came to light using that 40 year old formula! Congress did an investigation and found that the formula was still working. The FBI went undercover in the Alabama state senate and found many senators used racist language as they discussed manipulating an election to exclude African Americans ... in 2010!!

I am convinced that this is not a coincidence. Now, in order to prove racial discrimination at the polls - as long as there are no poll taxes, literacy tests, or signs that say a person cannot vote because of his/her race - one has to wait after the election (or several cycles of elections) to collect evidence. By the time one can prove it - if one has enough money and time to stay in court - the damage will already be done! Even if one says that all these things are by the books and the "law" is being followed, I cannot help but feel like the law is bending to one side - the side devoid of African Americans!

Perhaps, this is what Saul faced in Acts 9:23. The Jews plotted to kill him. There was a master plan being formed to take him out. Saul was targeted because he was deemed a threat. Verse 22 says Saul became increasingly more powerful and confounded the Jews. Hence, they plotted to kill him because he was becoming too powerful and too intelligent.

The protests that are breaking out across the country in response to the Zimmerman verdict are based in part on a feeling that the outcome of this case signifies the existence of an unwritten master plan targeted at keeping African Americans in a subservient position. Protests are springing up because many feel the result of this case is a miscarriage of justice. Marches are being organized now because so many people are tired of being stepped on and thrown to the side politically, economically, and socially.

Yes, those of us who are disappointed with the verdict should express ourselves. We should speak truth to power. We should hold the performance of the prosecution accountable. We should push congress to get a new formula for the VRA. We should push for more responsible and safer gun laws. We should demand changes to the stand your ground legislation. Let us do this and more with fierce passion, bold determination, vision, a heart for serving those in need, God as our focus, and love as our guide. Let us not succumb to violence and rioting that will bring no positive gain. As we protest, let us speak with dignity and love. As we march, let us do so with peace. As we rally, let us gather with a focus on creating healthy solutions.

These days are highly charged with emotion around differences in race, ethnicity, gender, and class. It is possible to find ourselves just as Saul did - the target of a master plan. We do not need to worry. Just as God blessed Saul, God will bless us. Saul - though a target of a plot - was doing God's will. As a result, God made a way of escape for him. The enemies' plot became known to Saul, and Saul's disciples helped him escape through a hole in the wall. If we keep ourselves in God's will, God will send us people for support. God will show us paths to take. God will direct us to supplies that will aid us. God is able to cancel out murderous master plans with His Divine Plan! The plans of racism, classism, and sexism will be cancelled by God's plan for justice, deliverance, healing, and empowerment! God's plan will lead us through the hurts of the unjust justice systems and unequal treatment in society. God's plan will inspire us to work for peace and righteousness. God's plan will give us a hope on which to focus.

"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).

Pre-Women's Day Breakfast Features Information and Inspiration

By Bridget J. Floyd

The Women of St. John came together on Saturday, June 29th at 8 a.m. at the Marriott Space and Rocket Center for a delicious buffet breakfast, fellowship and presentations. The theme was "Christian Women Passionately Serving God" (Joshua 24: 15). The coordinators of the program were Mrs. Lauretta Teague and Mrs. Barbara Johnson. Program participants included Sister Vanessa Glover, opening prayer and Mrs. Janice Hereford, scripture (1 Thessalonians 5: 17-25). Presentations were made by Ms. Lauren Teague (Creating an Excellent Vision for Health) and Ms. Jean Owens (Renewing Your Spirit, Finding Balance in the Midst of Life-Colossians 1:9-11). Mrs. Lauretta Teague introduced the program participants and Reverend Sheri Clayborn gave closing remarks.

After the prayer and scripture, breakfast was served. Then Ms. Teague shared information facilitating an excellent vision for health with biblical texts undergirding the health and nutrition information. Ms. Teague indicated that God has a vision for each person and encouraged that participants renew their minds and come into alignment with God's vision which will result in wellness in body as well as soul. She urged participants to "stay in prayer, maintain an attitude of praise and worship". She highlighted the difference between a stewardship and ownership mentality. The former involves realization that one's body is not her own and that she has been "bought with a price", while the latter involves the view that one "owns" her body and she can "do what I want", and the lack of openness to God's direction. Additionally she gave the building blocks to physical, mental and emotional wellbeing: Word of God; Diet/Nutrition; Adequate Rest; Physical Exercise.



Ms. Teague share information during the

There was a fifteen minute break and the group reconvened to focus on achieving balance and renewing one's spirit in the midst of a busy life. Mrs. Owens used humor to cite examples and make recommendations such as: Realize that one cannot be "everything for everybody"; Serve God rather than each other; Avoid guilt for not doing something for someone who can help themselves; and always consult God regarding what He would want one to do. Additionally she encouraged helping others without taking or seeking credit, realizing that God has control, and learning how to like oneself. She noted that women need to reserve time alone in order to enjoy her particular interests (e.g., bookstore, shopping, a cup of tea). It is ok to make oneself happy and to have friendships that are

mutually satisfying. She encouraged using technology to give respite – e.g. turn off the cell phone, allow voice mail to take the calls. It is important to accept help when it is needed – "you're not supposed to do everything". She ended by noting it is important to "Trust God in all things, He is able take care of you".

Both ladies shared handouts and enjoyed "audience participation". The room was filled with laughter and smiling faces as the presentations and fellowship lifted spirits. Reverend Sheri noted and the attendees enthusiastically expressed appreciation for the wonderful presentations and the breakfast in its entirety and to the coordinators.

Women's Day Worship Service Highlights Theme: Christian Women Passionately Serving God

By Bridget J. Floyd



St. John women, dressed in white with a touch of purple, pose for picture after the service.

On June 30th St. John celebrated Women's Day with a 10 a.m. combined worship service. Reverend Dr. Raquel A. St. Clair Lettsome of New York, New York was the preacher for the morning. Dr. Lettsome, the first African American to earn a Ph.D. in New Testament Studies at Princeton Theological Seminary, is a minister, author and lecturer with ministerial and academic appointments to her credit. In his enthusiastic introduction, Pastor Clayborn highlighted her preaching, praying and scholarship.



Dr. Jeanette Jones makes special presentation to Judge Sherrod.



Dr. Jennifer Patterson ministers in dance during the worship service.

(Continued on page 5)

Women's Day Worship Service Highlights Theme: Christian Women Passionately Serving God

By Bridget J. Floyd

(Continued from page 4)

Inspirational music was provided by the Women's Choir and a Liturgical Dance by Dr. Jennifer Patterson. Mrs. Rosa Waker led the congregation in the reading of the Litany which she composed. A special presentation was made to St. John member, Judge Martha Lynn Sherrod, for her distinguished legal career and historic "firsts" in Madison County/North Alabama as an African American Assistant District Attorney, Municipal Judge and winner of an at-large election. Reverend Meriam Garrett was the worship leader and several women of St. John participated in the AME order of worship.



Dr. Lettsome delivers the Women's Day message.

Dr. Lettsome spoke on the topic, "Be Yourself" from 1 Samuel 17: 38-40. The text describes the process by which David, a youth who served as a shepherd, was preparing to go into battle with Goliath. She urged the congregation to grasp the courage to see and accept who they are, to "take what you've got to do what you are called to do, with the courage of David." She indicated that everyone is called by God and that while a person may feel they do not have the "giant" weapons, experience, education to accomplish a task, the "perceived lack keeps us down". She emphasized the importance of using "what you have even if it doesn't seem like enough", being the best that one can be.

in the manner that suited him so that he might achieve the victory. That is, the armor and weaponry that had served Saul on the battlefield, would not help David, in fact it would hamper his efforts in confronting Goliath. However, when David used his sling shot and a few small pebbles as he stepped into battle, he was uniquely suited as a shepherd boy, to use these tools / weapons to conquer what was viewed as a formidable foe. Dr. Lettsome noted that Jesus did not look like, or function as the world expected; that is, he healed and did not "stay dead". This eloquent and inspired preacher prompted, "It is time to be who God called us to be... the real us... a new creation... redeemed and not rejected". She differentiated between the vernacular and the godly terminology that more accurately reflects who God is calling His followers to be. She concluded in the encouragement to "Put on your gospel shoes, wak your gospel wak with Jesus. Be yourself, the only one God wants you to be!"

Dr. Lettsome provided an outstanding message and the basis and inspiration for the Christian Women of St. John (and all within the sound of her voice) to passionately serve God in their own unique ways.

BE YOURSELF!

Graduates and Retirees Honored in Special Service

"Prepared for a New Beginning" was the theme for a special worship service that was held on Friday evening, June 21st, at St. John. This service honored graduates, retirees, and youth who received honors during the school year. It was a celebration of a new beginning in their lives and a new beginning for St. John because this was different than the way recognitions were made in the past.

The order of worship included song, prayer, scripture, liturgical dance, the preached word and recognition of honorees. Following the Call to Worship by the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn, the opening hymn, "Great is Thy Faithfulness," was led by Pastor Clayborn. Prayer was offered by Sister Agnes Gilmore and scripture was read from Isaiah 43:18-19 by the Reverend Meriam Garrett. Special musical selections were solos by Brother Clifton Pearson, "I Believe," and Sister Mary Rankin, "My Tribute." The liturgical dance was offered by Mariah Gullatte to the music of "Nobody But Jesus." Prior to the introduction of the preacher, Pre-K through 12 students were recognized for their honors (these persons were listed in last month's AMEN).

Pastor Clayborn introduced the preacher, the Reverend Ruby Heard-Bustamonte. She is no stranger to St. John because she was a member when she lived in Huntsville in the late 90s. Currently she serves as pastor of New Cedar Grove AME Church in Autaugaville, Alabama. In his introduction of the preacher, Pastor Clayborn noted that the Reverend Bustamonte could relate to both groups who were being honored because she graduated from Beeson Divinity School of Samford University in May 2012 with a Master of Divinity degree and she retired, after many years of service with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, in 2006.



The Reverend Ruby Heard-Bustamonte delivers the message.

The message was entitled "Prepared for New Beginnings, But It Is a New Day." The text was the same as the theme's text. After explaining the background for the text, the Reverend Heard-Bustamonte told the honorees and attendees how God was preparing the Israelites for a wonderful restoration and how He told them to prepare. She related these points to the lives of the honorees. First, the Israelites were to not look back. This meant that they should not be so burdened down with the past that they cannot see the "new thing" in the future. Honorees were told to "live by using the references of the past to aid your journey in the future." Second, look at the present situation (v 19a). There is nothing like experiences that prepare us for what is ahead. Although one may not see God's hand in the current situation, He is working behind the scene. God has redeemed believers with the blood of Jesus. Third, look to the future. God told the Israelites "I will make a way in the wilderness and make straight in the desert." God custom made them to give Him praise. The same applies to believers today

and God holds the future; therefore, honorees were told to walk by faith. The Reverend Bustamonte concluded the messages with encouragement to "walk and live in Christ day by day", "do not let the opportunities of today pass you by," "in Christ you are a new creation," "God has brought you to this point and will not leave you." The final challenge was to receive the life story that is being written in this season.

Following the spiritually enriching message, graduates and retirees were recognized, presented gifts from the church, and prayer was offered by Pastor Clayborn. The Benediction was given by the Reverend Bustamonte.

A reception was held in the S.S. Hereford Fellowship Hall. Decorations were beautiful and depicted the occasion. The Kitchen Ministry prepared and served refreshments that included chicken salad, fresh fruit, nuts, cake and punch.

(Continued on page 7)

Graduates and Retirees Honored in Special Service

(Continued from page 6)



Graduate and Retiree Honorees

High School Graduate:

Daishy Dupri earned an Advanced Diploma from James Clemens High School. She is currently attending Calhoun Community College and has joined the United States Navy. Daishy's family members at St. John are Lula Rochelle, Jeff & Lillie Rivers, Kitina West, Lenita Rochelle and Sapphire Rochelle.

College Graduates:

Mr. Geoffrey Morgan Brown earned the Bachelor of Science degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of Alabama Huntsville. He plans to pursue a master's degree in Chemical Engineering. Geoffrey is the son of Mr. Jason Brown and Dr. Thalia Love-Brown and the brother of Michaela Brown.

Mr. Dennis DeLoach earned the Bachelor of Science degree in the area of Early Childhood Education from Alabama A&M University. He will be teaching in the Huntsville Public School System beginning in the fall of 2013 and also plans to attend seminary to earn the Master of Divinity and the Master of Administration degrees. Dennis is a native of Birmingham, Alabama and his family are members of Grant Chapel AME Church in Birmingham.

(Continued on page 8)

Graduates and Retirees Honored in Special Service

(Continued from page 7)

Ms. Kiara Ford earned the Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University. She plans to attend Dental School. Kiara was an affiliated member of St. John and she and her family are members of St. Andrew AME Church in Memphis, Tennessee.

Ms. Tamela Elizabeth McGraw earned the Bachelor of Science degree in Biomedical Sciences from Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama. She is attending the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences where she will earn the Doctor of Pharmacy degree and become a nuclear pharmacist. Tamela is the daughter of Ridkey McGraw, Sarah McGraw and the sister of Phillip McGraw.

Ms. Christina Sanders earned the Bachelor of Science degree in Business Marketing from the University of Alabama Huntsville. She plans to attend graduate school to earn the Master Degree. Christina's family members who are familiar to St. John are Herman and Margaret Ballard (grandparents), the Reverend Vicki Mayberry (mother), the Reverend Debra Ballard, Janelle Woods and Bobby Rice.

Graduate School Graduate:

Ms. Shannon R. Lott earned a Master of Business Administration degree from Alabama A&M University. She is employed at the US Army Garrison Redstone Arsenal Alabama, as a Management and Program Analyst. She is also establishing her own business in Make-Up Artistry. Shannon is the daughter of Johnny and Brenda Lott, the mother of Derryn Goode, and the sister of Erin Lott.

Retirees:

Mr. Carol Cooper retired from the US Army Contracting Command, and PEO Missiles and Space Command service at Redstone Arsenal, after providing significant service as Director.

Mrs. Zelda Goggans retired from The US Army AMCOM, Redstone Arsenal.

Mrs. Regina Pippen retired from the US Army – Civilian after thirty years of service.

Mrs. Marie Sanchez retired from the Huntsville City School System after 37 dedicated years of service.

Judge Martha Lynn Sherrod retired from the position of District Court Judge of the 23rd Judicial Circuit after a legal career that spanned 30 years.



VBS Celebrated with a "Jesus Family Reunion" Theme

"Jesus' Family Reunion" was the theme for this year's Vacation Bible School, held Sunday, June 9, through Thursday, June 13. All of the components of a family reunion were included. The stage was set by the elaborate "family reunion" decorations through the church. The focus was on the two "trees" that were designed and displayed by Dr. Clifton Pearson. The decorations committee added pictures provided of members' family reunions and also displayed t-shirts from member family reunions throughout the hallways.

Everyone came home, to Big Daddy's (God's) House, for the reunion. There was food, fellowship, games, learning, and the opportunity to share thoughts and experiences with old and new family members (brothers and sisters in Christ). Nightly attendance ranged from 110 to more than 130. Attendee ages ranged from infant to 90 plus.



Members enjoy "pot-luck" Dinner on Sunday.

VBS began on Sunday afternoon with a celebration of Jesus' word and a potluck dinner at "Big Daddy's House". Members shared in food and fellowship around the greens, beans, macaroni and cheese, corn bread, chicken, ham, a plethora of desserts and much more. Next, attendees were inspired to get ready for a week of learning how to love, believe, pray, grow and encourage with a skit by Timmy, Tonya, Mr. Brown and, of course, Mama D. They even invited the "Sanitations" to help get everyone excited.

"Royal" classes were available for all ages. The youth also participated in family crafts in the fellowship hall and fun games in the parking lot. Each night the reunion included healthy family competition as classes played a game of Family Jeopardy and Family Feud. Each class competed to see who knew God's word best.

Each night led to more exciting activities. Each evening session began with a light family dinner and fellowship. Meals included spaghetti, pizza, Subway® sandwiches, and, on the final night, grilled hot dogs and hamburgers. In the opening sessions, attendees were ministered to by the St. John Dance Ministry on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday nights and became physical with some stretching exercises on Wednesday night, led by Mrs. Claire Philadelphia.

(Continued on page 10)

VBS Celebrated with a "Jesus Family Reunion" Theme



(Continued from page 9)

Timmy, Tanya, Mr. Brown and Mama D. closed out Vacation Bible School on Thursday as they summarized the family week. Awards and prizes were presented to persons who traveled the farthest and to those members who brought the most guests. Special thanks certificates were given to all who helped make this year's Jesus' Family Reunion a success. The excitement was so great that the lessons not covered during the Vacation Bible School were taught during the Bible Study hour (classes for all ages) this summer. VBS attendees rejoiced on the last night as one of the teens gave her life to Christ.

(Continued on page 11)

VBS Celebrated with a "Jesus Family Reunion" Theme



(Continued from page 10)

Summary reports are printed below for some of the classes to share their lessons/experiences during the week.

Sister Lillie Rivers, "Kings and Queens" (adult) class

The Gift of Love
Ruth 1:8-9, 16-18; 4: 13-17

The first lesson for this class explored "The Gift of Love." The main point was to show the importance of love and kindness in family relationships. In the lesson scripture, a Jewish matriarch's faith in God was the spiritual link to her Moabite daughter-in-law's conversion to the God of the Hebrews. As the class defined the word love, they found that although love is usually thought of as a feeling, in reality, love

is a "choice and an action." Jesus put that love in action when He died on the cross for all of humankind. In Corinthians 13, Paul said that love is the greatest of all the spiritual gifts believers have. Why? It is because people have different gifts, but love is available to everyone. Love also aids in using all of the other gifts more effectively. In this lesson of Ruth and Naomi, even in her desperate situation, Naomi displayed a selfless love. She considered the needs of her daughters-in-law, not just her own. Ruth's love for her mother-in-law was sincere, even to the point that she would leave everything familiar to her and risk a future of uncertainty. Because of Ruth's loving kindness and bravery Boaz became Naomi's kinsman redeemer. Ruth became a great-grandmother of King David and a direct ancestor of Jesus. The story of Ruth is a beautiful picture of family unity. Let us commit to showing loving kindness to all family members. Just as Naomi's faith had a positive influence on

Ruth's decision to accept Naomi's God, we can also lead members of our families to our God.

Sister Pamela Whitehead, "The Super Sprouts" class

Wow...what a family reunion! You know there is absolutely nothing better than going to Big Daddy's House. There is always plenty of family, food, fellowship, and of course the one and only Big Daddy Himself... God.

The Super Sprouts, youth age 7 thru 9, beamed with excitement each day of Vacation Bible School - Jesus' Family Reunion. The energy boosting meals fueled their enthusiasm as was evident during the opening ses-

(Continued on page 12)



Mrs. Pamela

VBS Celebrated with a "Jesus Family Reunion" Theme

(Continued from page 11)

sions where they prayed, sang, and moved with synchronized rhythm to the up-tempo "VBS Slide". Like a bee buzzing in a flower garden, the reunion experience fluttered its way into the classroom. In the spirit of family, participants took the time to get to know each other. The Sprouts were excited to fellowship with existing friends and make new ones. They giggled and wiggled with youthful exuberance, but more than anything they were eager to learn more about Christ.

They began the week by exploring the lesson, "We Love", for love is the foundation of a Godly relationship. The discussion focused on the family love demonstrated by Ruth & Naomi. Both were widows and Ruth had been given the option to return to her family. However, she chose to remain with her mother-in-law, Naomi, in spite of the bleak prospect of finding a husband. Additionally, both acknowledged that life would be incredibly difficult without the support of a husband. However, because of Ruth's love for her mother-in-law, she chose to remain. As evident in the Bible story, love is an action word that requires commitment, sacrifice, and often difficult choices. Love is essential to establishing a closer relationship with Christ and building strong relationships with fellow Christians.

They continued to bond as a family as they focused on the lesson, "We Believe". They conversed about the importance of sharing their belief in God. The Bible lesson highlighted Paul's letter to Timothy and how Paul encouraged Timothy to be bold in his faith. The Super Sprouts were reminded of their spiritual heritage as believers in God and the importance of sharing their faith. The decision to follow Christ means that one should not only encourage others, but, as individuals, must break through the strongholds of fear and the personal inhibitions that limit worship and restrict the expression of praise. Christians should be courageous in living for Christ and often times that means moving beyond the comfort zone of blending into the crowd. As reminders, the children made bracelets to remind themselves to be brave in their faith.

Continuing the reunion, the next lesson the Sprouts examined was "We Pray". In the lesson, Hannah earnestly and fervently petitioned God to bless her with a son. Rather than responding to life with bitterness and unyielding resentment for her deficient predicament, she took her request to God. Her unusually earnest appeal was noticed by the priest, Eli, who reassured Hannah that God heard her prayer. Bottom line, God hears prayers. The Sprouts learned the five finger prayer method and each child volunteered to make individual appeals to God. What a poignant moment! The presence of God was felt as each child prayed.

On the fourth day of VBS, the class explored "We Grow" by focusing on the importance of increasing the family of believers. They discussed the Day of Pentecost, Peter's sermon, and the fact that many people were filled with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost with more than 3,000 being baptized. The discussion focused both on the importance of individual spiritual growth and increasing the body of believers. It is important to witness to others so that they too may be saved. The children were challenged to think beyond the limits of what they see and ponder "what if" scenarios. What if every Super Sprout brought a friend who decided to give their life to Christ? What if next time, the friend brought a friend and so forth? If only each one would commit to reach one, exponential growth would be experienced in record time. When persons choose to share their faith, it is possible to turn hypothetical preponderance into reality. As Christians, it is important to continue to reach out to lost souls so that Jesus' family continues to grow.

The final lesson examined the topic, "We Encourage". There was avid dialogue geared towards how family members encourage each other. The Biblical lesson explained how Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, observed that Moses was inundated with the numerous concerns of the people. He counseled Moses and advised him to appoint wise men to assist with some of the leadership responsibilities. Moses was open to Jethro's advice and incorporated a system of leaders that benefited not only the Hebrew people but also created a personal balance that was healthy for his well-being and his family. The big takeaway was that younger people encourage their elders with respect while elders encourage the younger generation with support and advice, when needed. Encouraging each other in the faith helps build family unity and trust.

(Continued on page 13)

VBS Celebrated with a "Jesus Family Reunion" Theme

(Continued from page 12)

As is typical with all great family reunions, the class discussed EVERYTHING and then some. The children's comments were very insightful and they truly kept everyone on their toes. Mrs. Yvonne Sanderson and this writer were a tag-team duo ensuring that the Super Sprouts remained actively engaged throughout the week and had fun. The children were absolutely delightful and it was both a privilege and a pleasure to serve as a VBS teacher. It is this teacher's hope that each child will continue to learn and proclaim the word of God today and always!



Dr. Thalia Love-Brown, instructor for the Royal Court (Young Adults) The study lessons were entitled "Reunion Revival: Rediscovering Faith, Family, and Community with Jesus." The opening lesson was "We Love." This lesson focused on Ruth and the love and commitment shown by Naomi towards her mother-in-law. Boaz honored the covenant and law requiring the kinsman redeemer to care for the widows and orphans by taking Naomi as his wife. The community shared by leaving enough grain in the fields for the widows and orphans to reap and be fed. The class discussed how they must take every opportunity to share their faith with the next generation through loving-kindness towards one another.

Monday's lesson, "We Believe," focused on Paul's instruction and guid-

ance for Timothy. Families must develop a strong faith legacy. They must not be ashamed of the faith they have. They must remember the strength of their ancestors and pass on the legacy of faith to their families and communities. The importance of prayer was the central point of Tuesday's lesson, "We Pray." The focus was on understanding the importance of praying for others, especially when difficulties and challenges cause hardships for our families and us. If one has ever overcome great odds in their personal, spiritual, financial, political, or social life, they recognize that God will give that unshakeable faith that permits persons to survive, even in the face of difficult days. When people have rooted themselves in love, developed a faith walk, and learned to pray, they are ready for Wednesday's lesson, "We Grow." While most people understand the importance of sharing their faith, many neglect to do so. Three thousand souls were saved at Pentecost because of faith sharing. Students were told they must be bold enough to witness to their families so that they can see the growth of God's kingdom. The final day of Vacation Bible School rallied families to encourage one another. Moses fled Egypt, but was encouraged by his father-in-law, Jethro. Jethro's wisdom and experience allowed Moses to make the difficult decision to return to Pharaoh and carry out God's orders. To do this, Moses had to delegate responsibility. Every family has an obligation to support and encourage the others in the family. They must provide an objective perspective without judgment when loved ones need guidance, and, more importantly, they must be willing to accept and receive encouragement so that their actions bring honor and glory to God.

Often we get caught up in our day-to-day activities and forget to make our relationship with God a priority. This year's VBS lessons encourage and admonish us to reconnect and revive familial relationships. Take a step back from chaotic, turbulent, tumultuous lives and strengthen the bond through faith in God in order that families may grow healthier and stronger through a love that enhances the ability to serve families both through blood and through faith and to show love and support that is reflected throughout communities.

2013 ANNUAL CONFERENCE & PLENARY SCHEDULE

Fourth Northwest Alabama Annual Conference

Tuesday, August 27, 2013 – WMS Convention

Tuesday–Saturday, August 27–31, 2013 - Business, Training & Worship Sessions

(Opening Annual Service – August 27, 2013 at 7 pm)

All sessions will be held at the Fairfield Civic Center

Bryant Chapel AME Church, Birmingham, Host Church

The Reverend Damien Littlejohn, Host Pastor

The Reverend Willis N. Huggins, Sr., Host Presiding Elder

Fourth Southeast Alabama Annual Conference

Tuesday, September 10, 2013 – WMS Convention

Tuesday–Saturday, September 10–14, 2013-Business, Training & Worship Sessions

(Opening Annual Service – September 10, 2013 at 7 pm)

Parks Chapel AME Church

1053 E. Selma Street

Dothan, Alabama 36301

The Reverend Rodney Smith, Host Pastor

The Reverend David E. Reddick, Host Presiding Elder

Fourth Alabama River Region Alabama Annual Conference

Tuesday, September 24, 2013 – WMS Convention

Tuesday–Saturday, September 24–28, 2013-Business, Training & Worship Sessions

(Opening Annual Service – September 24, 2013 at 7 pm)

St. Paul AME Church, Montgomery

706 East Patton Avenue

Montgomery, Alabama 36111

The Reverend Dr. Farrell Duncombe, Host Pastor

The Reverend Albert Hyche, Host Presiding Elder

Fourth Northeast Alabama Annual Conference

Tuesday, October 8, 2013 – WMS Convention

Tuesday–Saturday, October 8–12, 2013-Business, Training & Worship Sessions

(Opening Annual Service – October 8, 2013 at 7 pm)

Gaines Chapel AME Church, Phenix City

921 10th Avenue

Phenix City, Alabama 36867

The Reverend Richard Carter, Host Pastor

The Reverend Samuel Smith, Host Presiding Elder

Fourth Southwest Alabama Annual Conference

Tuesday, October 22, 2013 – WMS Convention

Tuesday–Saturday, October 22–26, 2013-Business, Training & Worship Sessions

(Opening Annual Service – October 22, 2013 at 7 pm)

Samuels Chapel AME Church, Prichard

717 W Prichard Avenue

Prichard, AL 36810

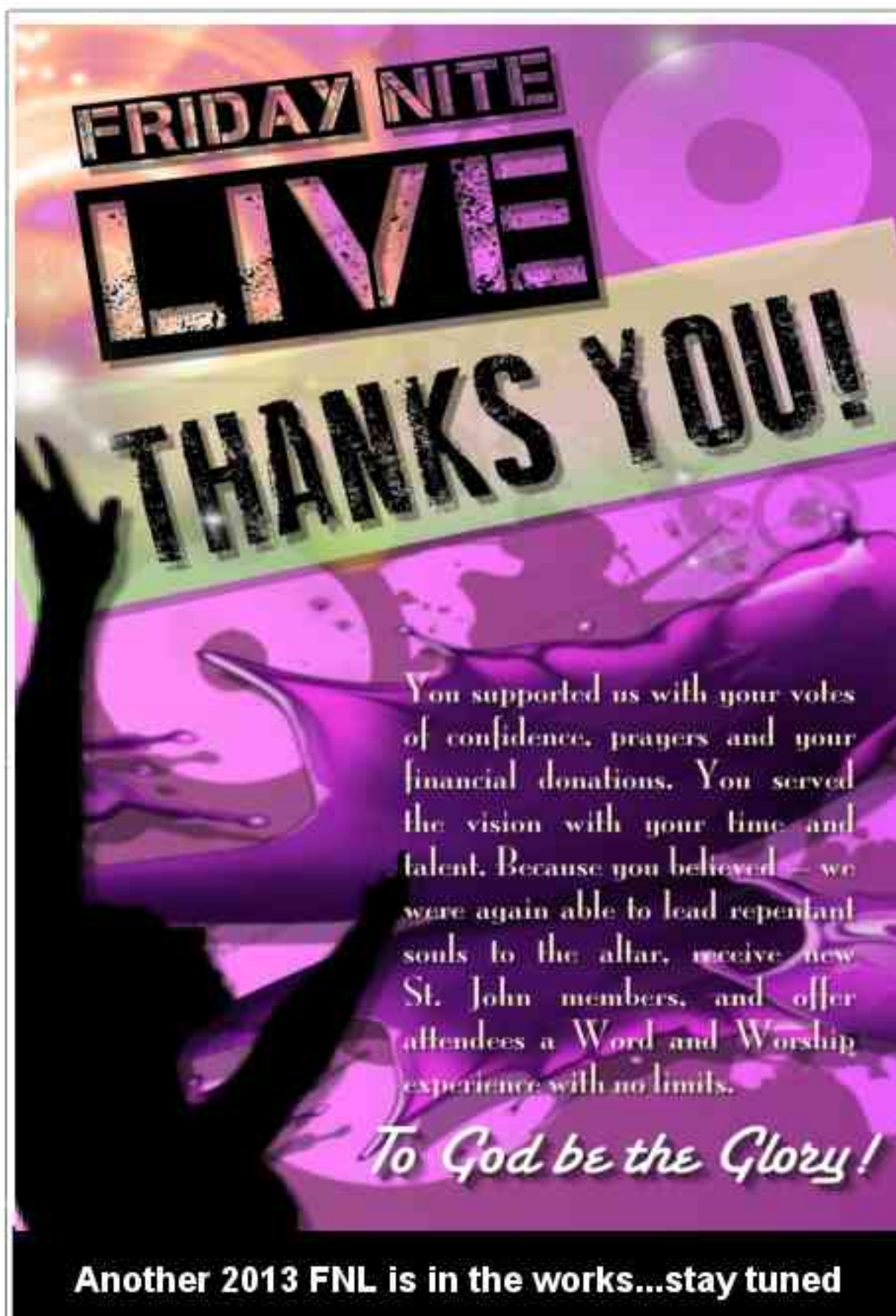
The Reverend T. W. Parker, Host Pastor

The Reverend Johnnie Bryant, Host Presiding Elder

General Planning Meeting

Saturday, November 7-9, 2013

TBA



**FRIDAY NITE
LIVE**

THANKS YOU!

You supported us with your votes of confidence, prayers and your financial donations. You served the vision with your time and talent. Because you believed – we were again able to lead repentant souls to the altar, receive new St. John members, and offer attendees a Word and Worship experience with no limits.

To God be the Glory!

Another 2013 FNL is in the works...stay tuned

Church Visits Sick and Shut-in Members

Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

Matthew 25: 34-36



Members receive instruction from Pastor Clayborn before nursing home visit.

On Saturday, June 22, members of the church visited members who are unable to attend church. The visitations were scheduled and led by the Steward Board. All persons who participated visited St. John members who are in nursing homes and then the group was divided into teams to visit homes of other members who are convalescing at home.

Everyone was well received and it was a blessing to see how much the members appreciated the visits. Gift baskets or flowers were given to each person visited. During the visit members offered prayer, read scripture, sang and just enjoyed the fellowship.

The Stewards conduct quarterly visits and annually lead this church wide visit. Persons who have a calling to ministry through visitation are welcome to join the Stewards on their quarterly visits. Dates will be announced in church.

Soup Kitchen

"Let God Bless You"

"This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people, but is also overflowing in any expressions of thanks to God."

2 Corinthians 9:12 (NIV)

A homeless man approached a traveler who was waiting for a bus. The traveler turned an ear to hear his story—the same story we have all heard from many who live on the streets: drugs, crime, the loss of a loved one and a life in disarray. The homeless man was just looking for some food. The traveler felt moved to help him and gave him an exceptional amount of money, enough for safe, clean lodging and several meals as well. The homeless man was strikingly shocked as the stranger bid him "Let God Bless You."

God had brought two paths together—one where a blessing was needed and one where many blessings had already been given. The traveler was incredibly thankful that he had been blessed to be a blessing to another.

As members serve in the weekly "Soup Kitchen", their prayer is that God will continue to use them to convey blessings to homeless and less fortunate brothers and sisters.

The Soup Kitchen is open on the third and fourth Tuesdays from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm. Volunteers are welcomed.

Media Ministry

Now Available from the Media Ministry!

CD's/DVD's

Pastor Clayborn

- Breathe 4/28/2013
- Breathe Again 5/5/2013
- Who Moved My Jesus? 5/12/2013
- Growth Spurts 5/18/2013

Women's Day 6/30/2013

Holy Week Revival (3 Night's)
2013 Easter Musicales

More titles are available.

The Word is Better

By Paulette Bargon

I have to admit that sometimes I like to watch a little trash TV in the mornings but today I was disgusted with what was on. I started watching this "you are /are not the father" show. A Black man was denying that he was cheating on his wife. Lie detector said he was lying. NO BIG DEAL to him. He thought it was cool. Wife acting like a fool. She was yelling, screaming, crying and falling on the floor. I turn channels.

A Court show. Black man and woman fighting over an intimate video tape that they made of themselves. Woman wants it back so she can show them off to friends and family. NO BIG DEAL. They thought it was funny. Laughing and smiling. I was so embarrassed. I turn channels.

Music TV. I see a black woman. She was so proudly dancing in her string bikini. The Black man was dressed like it was 20 degrees below zero. He was rapping about all the revolting things he could do to her. NO BIG DEAL. I start thinking about all the 3 to 5 year old children whose parents let the TV and the remote control babysit for them. I turn channels.

BET TV. This was a show starring a famous black comedian in the early years of his career. I don't know what the storyline was about, but he and his coworkers were in a lawyer's office. The lawyer was so stupid, walking and talking like he was some ignorant high school dropout. NO BIG DEAL. I turn channels.

CNN. Black athlete complaining about all the negative media coverage he is getting because he is black. Not because he did something that got him in the news in the first place. NO BIG DEAL. I'm still channeling. A movie channel. A black girl showing another sister how to be suggestive while dancing on a pole.

The final straw was when I turned to a religious station and there was this preacher trying to sell me a gallon of so-called holy water. He said that when I drink it then I will become healthy and wealthy. And he called that being blessed?

Keep in mind that this was all between 9 and 10 in the morning. What a fruitless hour! Think of all the brain cells I wasted watching that mess. Satan was having himself a good time on my behalf because I allowed him too. He knows that I don't like seeing my people in

Church School Book Club

July 2013

Discussion Date: 27 July
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Goodness and Mercy, Vanessa Davis-Griggs,
1992

August 2013 Discussion Date: 24 August
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Savannah Blues, Mary K. Andrews; 2012

Meet Weezie (aka Eloise) Foley, a feisty antiques "picker," banished by her spiteful ex-husband from the house she herself restored in Savannah's historic district, who must come to terms with a life that has suddenly changed... and not, it seems, for the better. In Mary Kay Andrews's delectable *New York Times* bestseller, *Savannah Blues*, readers will feel the sultry Georgia breezes and taste sea salt in the air, as they lose themselves in a wonderful, witty tale brimming with sass and peopled by a richly endearing cast of delightfully eccentric characters. Revenge is sweeter than sweet in Mary Kay's capable hands, and readers of Fannie Flagg, Adriana Trigiani, Emily Giffin, Rebecca Wells, and Jill Conner Browne will definitely want to spend some quality time in Savannah.

The Word is Better

such a negative way, but I continued to watch.
(continued)

And he knows that when I watch mindless TV shows I miss God's plan for me that day. If I wanted to be entertained, all I had to do was read my bible. It contains the most exciting and some of the best stories ever written. You cannot wait to read what happened to Job, Daniel or other people in the bible. These accounts are true, not some reality junk. And there is always a message for us. God's Word is Alive!

*Your words are what sustain me. They
bring me great joy and are my hearts delight..*
Jeremiah 15:16

I am the vine; you are the branches.

Whoever abides in me and I in him,
he it is that bears much fruit,
for apart from me you can do nothing.



John 15:5

Parent Wisdom

By Sister Vanessa Glover

Stay Connected, the Vine and the Branches: John 15:1-17 (NIV)

It is summertime, time to slow down and listen. No matter what we do, no matter what season it is, no matter what time it is, if we are not connected to the vine we will not yield a harvest. What is the harvest? According to Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is—love joy,

peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." God wants our lives to be fruitful in the same manner as branches are connected to the vine. In the text, John 15:1-5 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 'I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.'"

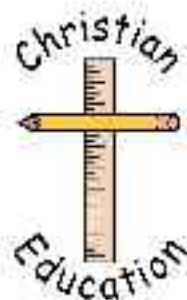
To stay connected to the vine, pruning the branches is essential for it helps the healthy branches grow stronger and bear fruit. Likewise, lifeless branches and dead branches get in the way and the branches are less productive. Too many unresponsive branches "sap" the strength of the fruit. Think about it, fruit does not instantly appear on trees. As trees grow and seasons pass, fruit slowly develops by God's silent work behind the scenes. So it is in our lives, God, the Father, does the drawing, (John 6:44; 14:6) the Gardener, we accept His Son, Jesus Christ, as our Savior, and the Holy Spirit's responsibility (John 14:26) is to produce fruit in us. When the Holy Spirit begins to produce fruit in our lives, *sin loses its power*. Therefore, with the fruit of joy and peace we overcome the pain of our broken past. With the fruit of love, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and gentleness we restore broken relationships and make restitution. With the fruit of patience we persevere through difficult times. With the fruit of self-control we stand against temptation. Why? Because we are staying connected to God by the gift of His Son and the promise of the Holy Spirit.

God uses the hardships of our lives to strengthen our Faith and make us fit for the Master's use in the building of His Kingdom on earth. (2 Timothy 2:21 NKJV) The only way for us to be fruitful is to remain connected to Jesus, the vine, and let God, the gardener, prune our lives in ways that will stimulate growth and fruitfulness. God's ways of cutting and cleaning; weeding and pruning in our lives yield the peaceful fruit of righteousness so that we are able to give life to fruitless situations and circumstances. Just as nutrients come through the vine to give nourishment to the branches, so it is with our connection with God, life comes through faith in Jesus Christ. When we remain in Christ, He is the source of our spiritual growth, His love overflows from the Father and with the help of the Holy Spirit we can genuinely love others.

A word for the wise: "Stay Connected" with prayer, for prayer is our lifeline of faith. Prayer enables us to be in communion with God. "Stay Connected" by studying a passage of scriptures. Find a clear and self-evident passage that speaks directly to your life, situation, and circumstance that gives comfort and strength. All scriptures are given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NKJV) "Stay Connected" by not forsaking the assembling together (Hebrews 10:25) with the parishioners and congregations, as iron sharpens iron. Clearly this is evident in the early church (Acts 2:42-47). They devoted themselves to teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread and to prayer which provided opportunities for sharpening one another. We are to sharpen one another's gifts to promote usage to love and to do good deeds. (Hebrews 10:24) "Everyone was filled with awe when they fellowshiped together. They praised God for the favor they found with one another." (Acts 2:47) Finally, "Stay Connected" by serving others—go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. (St. John 15:8, 16)

As a Thoughtful Parent: "If we show—and not just tell—our children how hard work, energy, and perseverance are vital for success, our children are more likely to live by these values." (*Black Pearls For Parents*)

Church School Lesson Overview – August 2013



This month's Church School Lesson reviews were written by Kenneth Parham.

August 4, 2013

Lesson Title: Festival of Booths

Lesson Scripture: Nehemiah 7:73b-8:18

Lesson Print: Nehemiah 8:13-18

Key Verse: All the assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in them; ... And there was very great rejoicing. Nehemiah 8:17

In the first seven chapters of Nehemiah, Nehemiah recounts his time spent in Judah rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem. Nehemiah's heart was troubled after hearing that the Jews who escaped captivity from King Nebuchadnezzar were scattered in Jerusalem amongst the rubbish of the great wall (and the twelve gates within the wall) surrounding Jerusalem.

Nehemiah prayed to God that He would forgive the sins of the Israelites and the sins of their fathers. Nehemiah, a servant, then asks King Artaxerxes if he could be allowed to go to Judah and rebuild the Wall. Upon arriving at the wall, he saw the work that had to be done. With the assistance of his traveling band and the scattered Jews in and around Jerusalem, all were caught-up in the spirit and commenced rebuilding the wall. The rebuilding task was subdivided by the various descendants of the Israelites' twelve tribes and over a twenty year period. With great effort, including dealing with enemies of the region, the wall along with the gates was repaired. The Israelites in the region by tribe or genealogy moved back into the city.

Once inside the gates and after the city was sanctified, the Israelites returned to their atonement efforts by requesting that the chief priest read the law to them. In one such reading, it was noted (Chapter 8) that it was the month to observe the Festival of the Booths. The Israelites, being humbled and obedient, followed the custom by gathering palm leaves and branches and building the booths. During the building of the booths, it is recorded that there was great rejoicing in reliving a custom that had been lost since the generation of Nun. After living in the booths for seven days, a solemn assembly was held on the eighth day.

August 11, 2013

Lesson Title: Community of Confession

Lesson Scripture: Nehemiah 9:1-37

Lesson Print: Nehemiah 9:2, 6-7, 9-10, 30-36:13-18

Key Verse: Then those of Israelite descent separated themselves from all foreigners, and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their ancestors. Nehemiah 9:2

In this lesson, the Israelites seek atonement as a collected people for their transgressions of the past. The lesson indicates that the Israelites separated themselves from the foreigners in order to reflect on their history as a people, confess past sins and to recommit to the covenant established between GOD and Abraham.

To briefly recap the events of this lesson, the Levites stood between God and the resettled Israelites. The Levites recounted the history from Abraham to the present time. The Levites indicated that through leading the children out of Egypt through the wilderness and into the lands that were promised to Abraham, God never turned His back to His chosen people. The Levites recounted the many examples of God providing a cloud to lead the children of Israel through the wilderness by day and a cloud of fire by night. The Levites indicated that God provided spiritual nourishments as well as manna and water. The Levites recounted the time that the children wanted their own God and made a golden calf. Even during this time, the Levites indicated that God did not abandon His children. The Levites indicated that God continued to lead the children to the promise land while allowing the children to multiply as the stars. The Levites indicated that once the Israelites were in the promised lands, they threw away the Laws and became a sinful people.

During countless times, the Levites indicated that God allowed the Israelites to be captured by the enemies of the land but God was always ready to hear their cries of repentance and to rescue them from their captives. And finally, here the children of Israel stood again looking for forgiveness, to indicate that they would keep the Law of their forefathers and to prove their commitment, they wrote their new covenant and it was sealed by the princes, priests and Levites.

(Continued on page 20)

Church School Lesson Overview – August 2013

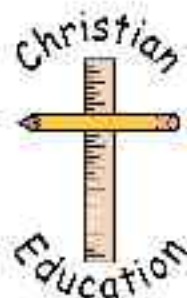
(Continued from page 19)

Aug 18, 2013

Lesson Title: Dedication of the Wall

Lesson Scripture: Nehemiah 12:27-43

Lesson Print: Nehemiah 12:27-38, 38, 43



Key Verse: They offered great sacrifices that day and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and children also rejoiced. The joy of Jerusalem was heard far away. Nehemiah 12:43

In restoring the Israelites foundation (the wall), Nehemiah had restored the Jewish people's sense of security and wellness. The wall was the symbolic link that connected displaced Jews looking for a connection of the past to their new future. And with the wall completed, a celebration to dedicate the wall was in order. The celebration was noted as being led by the who's who list of spiritual leaders.

This lesson highlights that whenever one presents a gift to God, it must be given with great reverence and with great celebration. Those that partake in the celebration must purify themselves before making the offering. The offering must be presented in a great celebration with great singing and use of musical instruments ("Make a joyful noise unto the Lord" - Psalm 100). And if the service pleases God, He will then accept the gift with gladness. Also if God is pleased, He in turn will enhance the celebration by overshadowing the presenters with an increased gladness, enabling the offerer to provide more praise.

Aug 25, 2013

Lesson Title: Sabbath Reforms

Lesson Scripture: Nehemiah 13:4-31

Lesson Print: Nehemiah 13:15-22

Key Verse: I commanded the Levites that they should purify themselves and come and guard the gates, to keep the Sabbath day holy. Nehemiah 13:22

This lesson summarizes some of the steps and efforts that Nehemiah undertook in ensuring that the Sabbath be reformed and maintained as a Holy day. Nehemiah, throughout these four lessons, demonstrated courage, conviction and constant confession for Israelites' sins and the sins of their forefathers.

Verses 1-14 describe Nehemiah's actions during his stay in Jerusalem as he is rebuilt the city and walls. He encountered a great chamber that was designed and built under the oversight of Priest Eliashib. Nehemiah noted that the chamber that was filled with nourishment for the Levites was not built to the standards meant for holy men. Nehemiah took charge and rebuild and resupplied the chamber to one that pleased God.

In verses 15-22, Nehemiah again confronted the misdoings of the religious leaders of Judah. While in Jerusalem, he noticed that the religious ones had allowed merchants to set-up shop within the gates of Jerusalem and allowed merchandise to be sold on the Sabbath. Nehemiah took matters into his own hands and commanded that the gates be shut on Sabbath. He threatened the merchants with bodily harm if they did not leave from outside the gates and commanded that they not return until the Sabbath was over. Finally, he ordered the Levites to sanctify the Sabbath and to take charge of the gates. Verses 23-31 speak of Nehemiah letting the Israelites know that what he was seeing was displeasing to both he and God. He saw the intermarriages of Jews and foreigners. He reminded them that King Solomon's downfall from grace was because of his love of women of all nationalities (noted as a sin before God – the Jewish race was to be pure). He confronted the priests and requested that they cleanse themselves of the foreign marriages and keep the Jewish law in so honoring God and their ancestors.

PayPal Online Giving Is Easy

1. Simply go to the St. John AMEC website www.stjohname-hsv.org then click on Online Giving. Follow the instructions from there.

2. Use your PayPal account to send directly to St. John at e-mail address stjohnameh@aol.com. Transfer from your banking account and specify donate/friends and family.

Use one of these giving options to contribute, even when on vacation.

August 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 6:00 p.m. Mass Choir Rehearsal	2	3 9:00 Usher Board Meeting 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 10:00 a.m. Official Board Meeting 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
4 COMMUNION 8am Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship AMEN Deadline	5	6 6:00 p.m. Stewardess Board Voices in Praise Rehearsal	7 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study 5:00 p.m. Steward Board Meeting	8 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	9 AMEN Staff Dinner Meeting 6:00 pm	10 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry AMEN Staff Meeting 10:30 am
11 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School WMS Sunday 10:30 a.m. Worship New Bethel Site Field, AL	12	13 6:00 p.m. 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 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
18 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship Pastor's Appreciation	19	20 11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m. SOUP KIT CHEN 6:00 p.m. Trustee Board Mtg.	21 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	22 6:00 p.m. Mass Chorus Rehearsal	23 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	24 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry Women's Ministry 10:30 a.m. WMS Meeting
25 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship AAMU DAY at 10:30 am	26	27 11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m. SOUP KIT CHEN	28	29	30	31 Northwest Alabama Annual Conference Fairfield Civic Center August 27–31, 2013

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

Non-profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Huntsville, AL
Permit No. 240

Return Service Requested

E-mail: stjohnameh@aol.com

Website: stjohnamehsv.org

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

July 19-21, 2013	Sons of Allen Retreat
July 22-25, 2013	Ninth District 2013 Summer Meeting, Troy University
July 29-August 1, 2013	33rd Biennial Session of the Connectional Lay Organization, Atlanta, Georgia
August 11, 2013	Missionary Day, 10:50 am
August 11, 2013	Worship at Bethel AME Church, Sheffield, Alabama
August 25, 2013	AAMU Sunday, 10:50 a.m. Service
August 27-31	Northwest Alabama Annual Conference, Fairfield Civic Center, 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 18 Issue 8

August 2013

Pastor's Message

Catching Vision

1 Corinthians 2:9



The Rev. Patrick D. Clayborn, Ph.D.

As we come to the end of our second annual conference year, I am so grateful for all that God has done at St. John. God has showered us with blessings this conference year: 42 people joining our congregation; the soup kitchen expanding its service and feeding close to 900 people this calendar year; 13 people giving their lives to Christ - including four (4) who gave their lives to Christ as we witnessed on Pentecost Sunday; power packed, anointed, creative, cutting edge, and fruitful Christmas play, Easter Musicales, and Friday Nite Live Services; families in need being supported; clothing donations for the neonatal unit of Huntsville Hospital; snacks given for family members of HIV/AIDS patients; our tutorial program birthed and operated at St. John as well as at Davis Hills Middle School; the revitalization of the nursery; the repaving of the parking lot; the launch of the iThrive Youth Ministry housing Arise for young ladies and Emerge for young men; the participation of youth in the soup kitchen and Christmas Charities; our supporting teachers with school supplies; our serving at Serving the City and Habitat4Humanity house building project; great VBS attendance - including one who gave her life to Christ; and growth in Bible study and church school attendance.

We also had a host of celebrations: Heritage Moments and Founder's Day with Bishop C. Garnett Henning; Spring Revival with the Reverend Bankole Akinbinu; the Mid-Winter meeting, the Feeding of the 5,000, and the Christian Education Congress with the Ninth District; Women's Day with the Reverend Raquel A. St. Clair Lettsome, Ph.D.; the graduation of high school seniors, college and graduate students, as well as the retirements of several people in our congregation; and Christian men in our Sons of Allen retreat. Every Sunday we lifted the name of Jesus! Praise God! On behalf of my family, I thank the wonderful people of St. John for their faithfulness, their prayers, and their giving - of time, talent, and treasure.

As this conference year comes to a close, we lift in prayer all students, faculty and staff who are beginning new school years. We pray for safe learning environments, a spirit of cooperation within all schools, and a constant striving for excellence at each level. St. John and the school systems have something in common at this point in time. Students, faculty and staff, as they start a new year, are trying to catch the vision for their success. Likewise, as we anticipate the new conference year at St. John, we are striving to catch God's vision for our lives and the life of the church. I still believe that eyes have not seen, ears have not heard, nor has it entered into the hearts of humans what God has in store! Let's catch the vision!

CATCHING *the*
PENTECOST
Vision

Sons of Allen Held Annual Retreat

By Karl Gullatte, Vice-President, St. John Sons of Allen

The Sons of Allen of St. John held their Annual Men's Retreat on July 19-20 2013. The retreat began Friday night at the Gunterville State Park pavilion, near the beach, with a delightful meal being served by Chef Theodore Tyson and assistant Tommy Anderson. The evening was highlighted by the presence of Elder Allen and stamped with a blessing prayer by Pastor Clayborn. The menu consisted of mouth-watering, southern style, slow-cooked ribs and chicken, pasta salad, baked beans and an assortment of cookies and cakes. Friday night ended with a "Night at the Movies" in the grand gathering room.

Saturday began with a hardy breakfast buffet made for kings at the Lodge's Famous Restaurant overlooking the great view of Lake Gunterville. Workshops were presented throughout the day.

Mr. Lester Jones of Primerica Financial Services kicked off the morning workshop with financial planning. This is a seminar all members of St. John A.M.E. Church should hear to give them a better understanding of money and the importance of saving. The next workshop was led by Dr. Ted Edwards on Men's Health. It was an entertaining experience, yet it contained powerful knowledge that all men should know about healthy living. He discussed what foods are good to eat and the foods that should be avoided. Dr. Ted Edwards really brought many issues about men's health to light and equipped the Sons of Allen with enough information to last until the next meeting. This lecture is another outstanding topic that the church should hear for better general health. Knowledge is power! The session ended in laughter and acknowledgement that significant others of the men at the retreat should also hear the information given about Men's Health!

Lunch time brought forth hunger excitement, the Lodge Restaurant is known for its famous fried golden brown catfish and they did not let the men's taste buds down. Also being served were baked seasoned chicken breasts, green beans, corn on the cob, seasoned pan potatoes, fresh garden salad, and a dessert desired by many.

The park is a site to see. It is nestled on top of the mountain with a view that is unbelievable. While getting in a little relaxation time, the men gazed at the beautiful views at Lake Gunterville and marveled at the creative works of God... it makes one wonder, "How can anyone not believe in God?"

Sessions continued after lunch with "Victory" by the Reverend Charles Glover. This session jump-started spiritual emotions. He spoke with power, grace and encouragement and stated that "God is pleased when we rally the troops for His good and claim our victory."

Next was the Sons of Allen mentoring program development workshop. Brother Gullatte recapped the prior objectives and goals from the March and April meetings. He then moved forward by providing the group with the reasons strong, positive, African American men are needed in the development of young black males. The Sons of Allen completed the workshop with a vote to move forward with developing the Sons of Allen mentoring program at St. John A.M.E Church.

The final workshop was conducted by Pastor Clayborn on Spiritual Training, Ephesians 4:1-16. He stated that "Paul is telling the church who they are in Christ. Paul's prayer is that they come to know who they are in Christ". His message was uplifting, inspiring, motivating, enlightening, powerful, hopeful, and most importantly, filled with the Spirit of God. He charged the Sons of Allen to be men of God, to let God's work be visible through them and to let His will be done through them and their families.

This retreat was a power packed, spirit-filled weekend for the men of St. John. Mr. Theodore Tyson III is the president of the St. John Sons of Allen. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of Each month. All men of St. John are welcomed to attend.

A Different Kind of Summer School, 9th District Christian Education Congress

By Kaitlyn McClung



The St. John AME church bus departed from the church parking lot early Monday morning, July 22, 2013, with twenty members (and Mr. Sandifer driving) and a full assortment of luggage, pillows, and blankets headed to Troy University for the 9th District Christian Education, Ministers' Institute and Leadership Congress, 2013 Summer Meeting, better known as CEC. The successful CEC was presided over by Servant Bishop James L. Davis and Mother Arelis Davis, July 22-25th.

With over 840 African Methodist Episcopal church members registered, CEC was full in many ways. It was full of anointed experiences, praises, songs, bible studies, preaching and blessings yet to come. It was not just learning about

Jesus, but, learning to apply Christ's teaching along the Christian Journey by focusing on walking daily through spiritual and mental growth. The CEC offered education for all age groups as the Christian's walk is continuous. Young people experienced the college Christian life by living in dorm rooms and worshipping God daily. Others experienced a return to college life that was filled with praise. Classes were both workshops and general assemblies. Workshops were held in lecture rooms, youth activities held in the gym, and meals in the dining hall. The general assemblies and worship services were held in Smith Hall Auditorium which seated 900.

The theme, *'Walking in Purpose'*, was defined and the CEC tone was set in Smith Hall Auditorium on opening night with a full house. Dynamic guest, Bishop John Bryant preached about walking on water. It was during this service that the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn and children ages 4-12 gave a special scriptural presentation emphasizing 'we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.' The following morning started with a morning glory walk.

Tuesday and Wednesday were filled with worshipping God morning, noon, and night: morning praise and worship, morning bible study, noonday worship service and Vesper Moments at night. General assemblies and workshops for all ages were scheduled around the morning, noon, and nightworship services. Although the daily schedule was full, the activities and the presenters varied each day.

This variety was of particular interest to the young people. Youth workshop topics were *Real Talk*, *Faith Lift*, and *a Knee Replacement*. Workshop sessions were taught by the Reverend Charlotte Greene, the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn, and the Reverend Christopher Reeves. These topics were about seeking God in a society that makes it hard for young people to stay in the church. St. John's Mrs. Mary Rankin directed children ages 4-7 with a unique presentation of the story of Daniel... and Daniel was his name O.

Both the young and young at heart were able to thoroughly enjoy the activities held after services: basketball and volleyball games for those who wanted to play, movies to watch, and "Jazz under the Stars" for the adults. The last night ended with the presentation of Lay of the Year, Mr. Lamar Higgins (a former member of St. John), Pastor of the Year, the Reverend Bobby Cox, pastor of Bethel AME

(Continued on page 8)

Friday Nite Live Kicked Off Second Season

By Janette Smith



Friday Nite Live: The Word and Worship Experience kicked off its second season raising expectations and eyebrows. The first event quickly became a topic of conversation in the AME's 9th District, as the innovative approach to ministry gained the approval and support of Presiding Elder, Oliver Allen and according to AME leadership Servant Bishop James L. Davis as well.

Over 200 attendees were again greeted by a transformed St. John AMEC sanctuary. Theatrical lights splashed special effects across the walls and added ambient lighting, a big screen was erected for video clips and sermon slides, and for the July event only - dozens of red Solo cups were hanging by strings from the ceiling. Red Solo cups?

The July 12, 2013 event theme was inspired by the urban slang phrase "Turnt Up". The term was first used to describe someone who was 'turning up' their cups drinking and evolved to describe being overly excited or enthusiastic about something. If you remember the term 'getting crunk' - this is what 'Turnt Up' has come to stand for, 'going all in', 'getting crazy.' St. John AMEC's Executive Minister, the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn, and one of the event's executive producers, Sister Janette Smith, wanted the youth, young adults and "young at heart" attendees to see that they can take their passion and refocus their energy on the things of God.

The cups held a double meaning. "The cups hung upside down is a type of code among young people to 'turn down' or 'turn away' from various indulgences in life," Sister Smith explains. "The cups also represented an old communication game, where you would tie two cups on opposite sides of a string and talk to friends. When attendees walked in and saw cups hanging everywhere, it got their attention. Then, the praise team, 'Word Nugget', (which is a message shared through a demonstration by Rev. Sheri and Sister Smith) and the Reverend Patrick D. Clayborn's message explained that if they would 'turn down' on the distractions of the world, they would be positioning themselves to better hear from God about the real purpose and call of their lives. Jesus used parables to preach the gospel, FNL used technology and props to bring those parables to life."

Friday Nite Live drew on the talents of musicians, actors and liturgical dancers from St. John AMEC-Huntsville, as well as Oakwood University, Lakeside Methodist Church, Madison Mission Seventh-day Adventist Church and All Nations Community Church. "FNL is a good example of how using gifts to glorify God can and should cross denominational, age and class boundaries. When we put first things first - God is exalted, people are equipped and the community is strengthened." The July event also included a video call with former pro-NFL turned arena football player, Trent Shelton, who encouraged the crowd to "...choose to do what's right, because it's right."

DJ Sam "Smite" Edwards, a nationally ranked turntablist and one of the few Christian DJs in the country, was back as part of the program and joined mural artist and community servant Dwight

(Continued on page 5)

Friday Nite Live Kicked Off Second Season



(Continued from page 4)

Pope, co-founder of the annual LoveFest at Lowe Mill that collects school supplies. Christian rap ensemble Unanimous, made a guest appearance, as did Christian rapper J4given.

What were the tangible results? FNL organizers admit it is hard to fully know how the Word of God shared in this unique and innovative way is impacting youth, young adults and others who attend. Still, iTHRIVE's ministry leadership reports a sustained increase in teens and youth attending regular Sunday Worship Services and joining the church. Several teens have led their siblings to Christ and one young man who joined the church after last year's Friday Nite Live event has been instrumental in getting his two sisters, mother, their mother's best friend and four other teens from his neighborhood to either join the church or be led to Christ. The iTHRIVE youth ministry has also been able to sustain a Wednesday night bible study throughout the summer.

The last Friday Nite Live event for 2013 is tentatively set for October 11, 2013. Visit www.FNLHs.v.com for information and updates.

Where Did Pastor Clayborn Preach This Summer?

If members were asked, the most common answer to the question "Where did Pastor Clayborn preach this summer?" would be at St. John (at 8 am and 10:50 am services). This is partially correct. However, the complete answer would be that he preached at St. John (at 8 am and 10:50 services each Sunday, except on Father's Day, Women's Day, and Missionary Day), in Lynnville, Tennessee, in Scottsboro, Alabama, in Autaugaville, Alabama, in Florence, Alabama, in Marietta, Georgia, in Atlanta, Georgia and in Sheffield, Alabama. Whew!

Indeed Pastor Clayborn and St. John have been on the road this summer. On the first Sunday in June, Pastor Clayborn, the Mass Choir and members journeyed to Round Hill AME Church in Lynnville, Tennessee, where the Reverend Deborah Peppers is the pastor. On Friday, June 7th, Pastor Clayborn was the preacher for the opening worship service of the South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer Church School and Christian Education Convention. The Dance Ministry and other members accompanied him to Scottsboro. Presiding Elder Oliver Allen, Jr. presided over the convention and the convention was hosted by Greater St. Paul AME Church where the Reverend Fredrick D. Sherrod is the pastor. On the fourth Sunday in June, Pastor Clayborn, the Mass Choir and members journeyed 200 miles south to New Cedar Grove AME Church in Autaugaville, Alabama, where

the Reverend Ruby Heard-Bustamonte is the pastor. The service was a celebration of the church's anniversary.

Travel continued in July and August. On the second Sunday in July, Pastor Clayborn, the choir and members traveled west to Florence, Alabama to celebrate homecoming at Nichols Chapel AME Church. The Reverend Vicki Ballard Mayberry (a daughter of St. John) is the pastor. The pastor, choir and church again traveled west on Sunday, August 11, to New Bethel AME Church in Sheffield, Alabama, where the Reverend Claudewell Campbell (a son of St. John) is the pastor, to celebrate the Reverend Campbell's Appreciation (and 10 year anniversary).

On July 28th, Pastor Clayborn was the Men's Day

preacher at Turner Chapel AME Church in Marietta, Georgia, where the Reverend Doctor Kenneth Marcus is the pastor. A few days later, Pastor Clayborn was the preacher in Atlanta, Georgia for the early morning worship service at the 33rd Biennial Session of the African Methodist Episcopal Church Connectional Lay Organization.

Praise God for the messages that were delivered by Pastor Clayborn, the churches who extended the invitations, and the members who supported the services with their presence and contributions.

To God be the Glory!



Pastor Clayborn prepares to preach at New Bethel AMEC, Sheffield.

Prayer Time

Join us for Weekly Prayer Time each Tuesday at 6:00 am.

Conference Call Credentials
US Toll Number (530) 881-1212,
Meeting ID: 876-863-940
For smart Phone Speed Dialing:
5308811212, 876863940

If you are not able to join the call at 6:00 am, you may listen to the playback any time.
Playback Number (530) 881-1219,
Meeting Id 876-863-940,
Press # to ignore any requests for reference number when calling for playback.



AME Proud

Bishops of the AME Church

The Bishops are the Chief Officers of the Connectional Organization. They are elected for life by a majority vote of the General Conference which meets every four years. Bishops are bound by the laws of the church to retire upon the General Conference nearest their 75th birthday.

Rev. Sheri to Preach at WMS Convention

The Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn, executive minister at St John, will be the preacher for the noon service at the Northwest Alabama Women's Missionary Society Convention. The Convention precedes annual conference and will be held on Tuesday, August 27th. Please support Rev. Sheri with your presence (if your schedule permits) and with your prayers.

Flowers on the Altar

If you would like to purchase altar flowers in honor of a special occasion or loved ones, please contact Sister Pearlean Myhand. The price is \$50. She is now taking orders for any Sunday date between September 2013 and August 2014.



AAMU Day Announced

AAMU Day will be held August 25th at the 10:50 am service. If you would like to volunteer for service that day please see Brother Ronald McIntosh or Rev. Sheri. Regular worship service will be held at 8:00 am on this last Sunday of the conference year and communion will be served.

St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church
Huntsville, Alabama

Annual Pastor's Appreciation

Theme: *Celebrating Visionary Leadership*

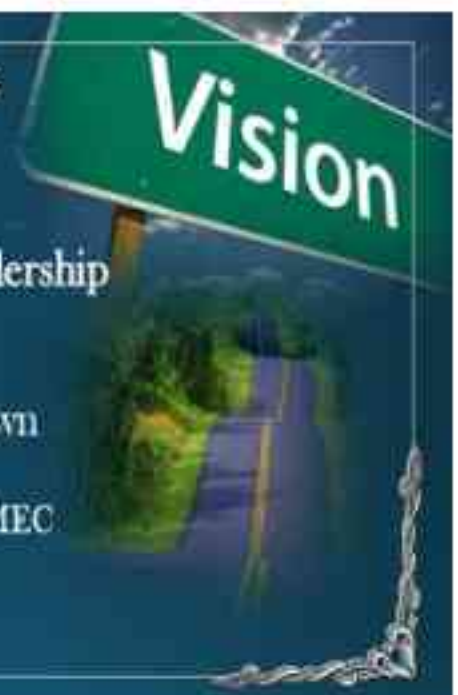
Guest Speaker

The Reverend Dr. Teresa Fry Brown
Historiographer/Executive Director
Department of Research and Scholarship, AMEC

Sunday, August 18, 2013
10:00 A.M.



Rev. Patrick Clayborn
Pastor



Book Added to Official Board Reading List

Pastor Clayborn has announced the latest book on the Official Board reading list. All Official Board members and interested church members are urged to read *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations* by Robert Schnase. The Official Board will begin discussing this book at the October meeting.

PayPal Online Giving Is Easy

1. Use your PayPal account to send directly to St. John at e-mail address stjohnameh@aol.com. Transfer from your banking account and specify donate/friends and family.

2. Simply go to the St. John AMEC website www.stjohnameh-hsv.org then click on Online Giving. Follow the instructions from there.

Use one of these giving options to contribute, even when on vacation.

Christian Education Congress

(Continued from page 3)

Church, Mobile, and Presiding Elder of the Year—St. John's own, the Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr. The presentations were followed by Christian comedy and a dance for all to enjoy.

All CEC committee members (including Rev. Sheri, who represented the South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer on the CEC committee), preachers, presenters, facilitators, participants and attendees are commended for making CEC 2013 a great success as all are a part of the Body of Christ.

On Thursday, after the closing worship service where the pastor of the year, the Reverend Bobby Cox preached, it was time to journey home. The group arrived safely back at the church around 8:00 pm after a leisurely lunch and dessert at the peach exit in Chilton County. Thank God.

Soup Kitchen

FREELY RECEIVE, FREELY GIVE

"By grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God." Ephesians 2:8 (NRSV)

"THERE ARE NO FREE LUNCHES"! We often hear this common expression in our daily lives. This merit-based society in which we live has taught us that we work for what we want to achieve. We study for good grades, we work hard for high wages, and we dress to impress are some of the expectations set before us. Yet, our Father in heaven offers a totally different standard. Yes He says work is essential, but the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ, was given to all of us, as unworthy as we are. He freely gave the best gift of the world to all who claim it for themselves.

People like you and me were taught to earn and not merely receive and we have a tendency to try to earn every good thing—including our salvation. Yes, we may be good people according to this world's standard, but we are all sinners and can never be GOOD enough.

As we remember this amazing grace we give freely to those who are less fortunate. We feed and clothe those who are in need, knowing that what we do will never be good enough. Even so, God loves us and wants us to be in relationship with Him and serve others. He gave His Son to make all of us, those who have and have not, to be His sons and daughters.

Dear God, thank you for your grace that saves us. As we freely receive it, help us give freely by praying for and serving others. Amen

Go Green

Green U Festival—August 24th

The annual Green U Home and Health Initiative will be held Saturday, August 24th, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Huntsville Botanical Garden Grisham Pavilion. This event will feature guest speakers presenting how our community can become more ecologically friendly. There will be fun activities for the kids. Admission is \$5 or five (5) recyclable items (cell phones, plastic bottles, aluminum cans). Visit greenualabama.com for more information.

FOURTH NORTHWEST ALABAMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

WEDNESDAY – SATURDAY, AUGUST 27-31, 2013

FAIRFIELD CIVIC CENTER

8509 EAST J. OLIVER ROAD, FAIRFIELD, ALABAMA 35064

BRYANT CHAPEL AME CHURCH, CO-HOST - THE REVEREND DAMIEN LITTLEJOHN, PASTOR
BETHEL AME CHURCH, CO-HOST, THE REVEREND DARRYL ERVIN, PASTOR
NEW MAGNOLIA AME CHURCH, CO-HOST, THE REVEREND ZACHARY WATKINS, PASTOR

THE REVEREND WILLIS N. HIGGINS, SR., HOST PRESIDING ELDER

THE RT. REV. JAMES L. DAVIS, SERVANT BISHOP
MOTHER ARELIS BEAVERS DAVIS, EPISCOPAL SUPERVISOR

TUESDAY WMS Conference (7 am – 5 pm)

ANNUAL CONFERENCE
04:00 PM Opening Session, Roll Call
07:00 PM WMS Night in White Candlelight Service,
The Reverend Doctor Glenda Hodges, Preacher

WEDNESDAY

8:30 AM Morning Glory Bible Study
9:00 AM Conference Institute
9:45 AM BUSINESS SESSION—(Reading of minutes, Financial Reports, Pastor's Report)
12:30 PM HOUR OF POWER WORSHIP SERVICE,
The Reverend Doctor William Campbell, Jr., Anderson Chapel AME, Killeen, Texas
3:00 PM BUSINESS SESSION—(Administrative Committee Reports, Pastor's Report)
7:00 PM OPENING WORSHIP SERVICE
Preacher: The Reverend Timothy Eric Nathan

THURSDAY

8:30 AM Morning Glory Bible Study
9:00 AM Conference Institute
9:45 AM BUSINESS SESSION—(Reading of minutes, Administrative Committee Reports,
Pastor's Report)
12:30 PM HOUR OF POWER WORSHIP SERVICE (Women in Ministry),
Dr. Pam DeVeaux, Supervisor, 2nd Episcopal District
3:00 PM BUSINESS SESSION—(Pastor's Report)
7:00 PM ORDINATION, COMMUNION, MEN'S EMPHASIS WORSHIP SERVICE
Preacher: Bishop William P. DeVeaux, Sr., Presiding Prelate, 2nd Episcopal District

FRIDAY

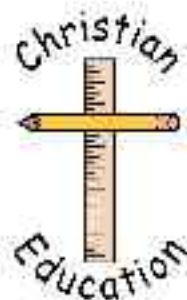
8:30 AM Morning Glory Bible Study
9:00 AM Conference Institute
9:45 AM BUSINESS SESSION—(Reading of minutes, Pastor's Report)
12:30 PM HOUR OF POWER WORSHIP SERVICE
2:30 PM Retirement Service
3:00 PM BUSINESS SESSION—(Literary Reports)
4:00 PM Memorial Service
4:45 PM Church School

7:00 PM NEW LIVES IN CHRIST CELEBRATION AND LAY NIGHT
Alabama A&M University Choir

SATURDAY

8:00 AM YPD Session
9:30 AM YPD Service
11:15 AM Praise Service
11:30 PM CLOSING and COMMISSIONING SERVICE
Preacher: Bishop James Davis

Church School Lesson Overview – September 2013



This month's Church School Lesson reviews were written by Willie Sandifer and Claudinette Purifoy Fears.

September 1, 2013

Lesson Title: God Creates

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 104

Print: Psalm 104:5-9, 24-30

Devotional Songs: #68, #272, and #243

Key Verse: "O Lord how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures" (Psalm 104:24).

Psalm 104 opens by praising God for His majesty in the heavens. God "wears" honor and majesty as people wear clothes. The psalm turns to describe how God provides for all His creatures and then describes His mastery over all the creatures of the earth.

Psalm 104 presents a glorious picture of God, a creator, and a sweeping view of the world God made. The main subject of the psalm is the order of the world and the sovereignty of the God who created and maintains it. This subject instills confidence that God can and will order the lives of those who seek Him by keeping them in His purpose and away from evil.

September 8, 2013

Lesson Title: God's Image: Male and Female

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 1-2, 5:1-2

Print: Genesis 2:18-25

Devotional Songs: #84, #258, and #243

Key Verse: "Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone, I will make him a helper as his partner'" (Genesis 2:18).

The last creatures God made were human beings, made in the image and likeness of God. The combination of the words "image" and "likeness" prevents the conclusion that humans look like God. What is clear about humans is that they have a special office in God's kingdom. God puts them in charge of the earth and its creatures. They are God's special representative on earth.

The seventh day, however, provides a check on the role of humans. Humans are obliged to cease their efforts to control the world on the seventh day in order to remember that God is ultimately in charge of the universe.

September 15, 2013

Lesson Title: Knowledge of Good and Evil

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 3

Print: Genesis 3:8b-17

Tentative Devotional Songs: #413, #251, and #243

Key Verse: "Then the Lord God said, 'See the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever' – therefore the Lord sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken" (Genesis 3:22-23).

Genesis 3 tells the story of the first human rebellion against God. Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command. In Christian theology the story is linked to the doctrine of original sin, the idea that human kind lost its opportunity to live without sin when Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command. This lesson focuses on the loss of innocence (3:7) and the loss of pristine life in the Garden of Eden (3:22-24). The story was also about God's grace in the midst of punishment and correction, as God covered the nakedness of the couple and sent them into the future (3:21).

September 22, 2013

Lesson Title: An Everlasting Covenant

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 6:9-9:28

Print: Genesis 9:8-17

Tentative Devotional Songs: #448, 282, and #243

Key Verses: "I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth" (Genesis 9:11).

It was clear to God that His people were not willing and able to live according to His laws. They were wicked and God resolved to destroy all living beings with the exception of Noah and his family. Noah was considered a righteous and obedient man. God instructed Noah to make an ark of cypress wood, to take his family and seven pairs of every clean species and two of every unclean species of animals, birds, and creeping things along with provisions for the duration of the flood. The rains lasted for forty days and nights, covered "all the high mountains under the whole heaven" and destroyed every living creature on land. Noah built an

(Continued on page 11)

Church School Lesson Overview – September 2013

(Continued from page 10)

altar and offered sacrifices to God when he and his family emerged from the ark after a year and ten days. God blessed Noah and his family and made a covenant that He would never again destroy the earth by flood. The rainbow is a visible sign of that covenant.

The significance of the flood:

- Demonstrates God's hatred of sin and the certainty of His judgment
- The sparing of one family demonstrates God's saving grace
- The flood reveals God's rule over nature, all mankind, and the earth.

September 29, 2013

Lesson Title: Gods Scatters the Nations

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 11:1-9

Print: Genesis 11:1-9

Tentative Devotional Songs: #221, 272; and #243

Key Verses: "So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left of building the city" (Genesis 11:8).

The earth was inhabited by the descendants of Noah and the whole world had one language-one common speech for all people. They settled in a plain in Babylonia, became skilled in construction, and decided to build a city with a tower that would reach to heaven. Their purpose in building the tower was not to honor God or to be closer to Him, but to make a name for themselves and prevent their city from being scattered.

The people chose to use brick instead of stone and tar instead of mortar. They used "manmade" materials, instead of more durable "God-made" materials. The people were building a monument to themselves, to call attention to their own abilities and achievements, instead of giving glory to God. God saw the proud and arrogant actions of His people. God came to see their city and the tower they were building. He perceived their intentions, and in His infinite wisdom, He knew this "stairway to heaven" would only lead the people away from Him. He saw the powerful force within their unity of purpose and He knew that when people are unified in a common purpose that they can accomplish the impossible. As a result, God confused their language, causing them to

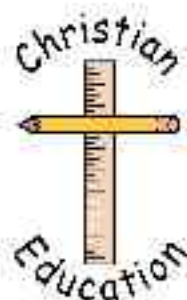
speak different languages so they would not understand each other. By doing this, God thwarted their plans, and scattered the people of the city all over the earth. God's intervention at Babel, dividing and separating people from each other, had a holy and loving purpose. We are to humble ourselves and remember that every good and perfect thing that occurs in our lives is due to God's will and not our own.

Church School Book Club

August 2013 Discussion Date: 24 August
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.
Savannah Blues, Mary K. Andrews, 2012

September 2013 Discussion Date: 28 September
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.
Daddy Was a Number Runner, Louise Merriwether, 2002

For Francie, childhood in 1930s Harlem means having one brother in the gangs and another who gives up his dream of being a chemist because "how many firms gonna hire a black chemist?" It's having a big, beautiful father who can't find legal work and a mother who defies her husband and hires out as domestic labor in order to keep the family from starving. Childhood for Francie is having household chores like attaching the jumper to get free electricity and facing the disdain of Mrs. Burnett when she buys groceries from her on credit. It's avoiding the groping hands of the butcher, the baker and the fat little white man who sits next to her in the theater, or maybe not avoiding them for the extra meat, rolls, or dime they might offer. It means reading "smutty" comic books and walking down 118th street where the prostitutes work, but not knowing what is happening when her period starts. Francie's Harlem is a powerful, pent-up place, where dreams and good people are changed and destroyed, a neighborhood with strength and beauty, love and friendship, all trying to grow like plants without soil or water. And for Francie, during the year she turns from twelve to thirteen, living in Harlem means exchanging her longing for the white-hatted cowboy in the movies for a feeling of kinship with the Indians and a realization of what it means to be black and female in the United States.



Tips for Developing Good Study Habits and Test-taking Strategies

By Bridget J. Floyd



As school resumes, it is time to purchase supplies as well as adjust to earlier bedtimes and wake-up calls. It is also time to get into a routine of good study habits. Because it is "that time of year" and we have had inquiries about the previously published article, following is a modification of an earlier published article. The focus is on strategies that can be helpful in learning information, studying, and test-taking strategies.

Repetition is the key to learning new information. This is the reason teachers often cover a subject several times and in different ways (e.g., class handout, video, homework, etc.). It may seem boring to students to review materials in class or several times before the typical time of study on the night before a test. However, *active learning* is the best way to transfer information into one's *long-term memory*. Essentially, this would involve daily review (repetition) of information covered in class and adding that

information to what has already been learned. Homework is important because it lets the student practice (repeat) what was covered/learned in class. When it is time for a test, the person can merely review, rather than "cram" the night before the exam.

Preparation is another key. This involves acquiring accurate information in an organized way. Taking good notes in a notebook is a good start. Keeping notes and assignments together and in order, is helpful when it is time to study. It is important to ask questions of the teacher if the student does not fully understand the information. Remember, preparation is on-going or repetitive, not just the night before a test. It is best to study alone and in a quiet area with no distractions. Some people can study with soft music or are able to "tune out" noise from the television, family members, street sounds, etc. Studying with others can be helpful as long as everyone stays focused on the subject matter. It is good to take brief breaks. *The typical attention span is approximately twenty minutes*. If focusing or concentrating becomes a problem, it is probably time for a break. It can be helpful to use break time as a reward for studying for a set amount of time. A break could also be taken after mastery of a specific topic or concept (once you definitely know the information).

A student needs to study in different ways, depending on the type of questions on the test. The appropriate study strategy depends on whether the student must *generate* or *recognize* the correct answer to a question. To recall or generate an answer, the student needs to fully understand the information (e.g., *the student could teach or explain it to someone who knew nothing about it*). This is the best study approach overall, and is necessary for *essay* or *short answer* questions, where the student must generate or fully develop an answer. Other types of questions or tests require the student to recognize and select the correct answer (e.g., *multiple choice, true/false, matching*). While recognition may seem easier, test items can be written in a way that the student must choose among answers that could all be right, but one is the *best* answer or "most correct". The capacity to generate an answer would be helpful in this situation.

The best performance occurs when the body and mind are well prepared and rested. Before a test, it is important to get plenty of sleep. Do not stay up all night studying because going without sleep can cause the student to forget what s/he has learned. Eat a good breakfast. Relax. Take deep breaths while waiting for the test to begin. Think positive thoughts, imagine yourself writing all correct answers (if you studied). Pace yourself as you take the test, especially if it is timed. Notice how many questions there are and figure out how long you have to work on each item. When you finish, go back and check your answers instead of turning in your paper. Prayer and preparation will result in optimum results.

September 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 COMMUNION 8am Worship 9:45 am Church School 10:50 am Worship AMEN Deadline	2 LABOR DAY	3 6:00 p.m. Stewardess Board Voices in Praise Rehearsal 6:00 p.m.	4 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study 5:00 p.m. Steward Board Meeting	5 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	6 	7 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
8 8am Worship 9:45 am Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship GRANDPARENTS DAY	9 	10 Voices in Praise Rehearsal 6:00 p.m.	11 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	12 	13 	14 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 10:30 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
15 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 am Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	16 	17 11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN 6:00 p.m. Trustees Board Mtg.	18 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	19 	20 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	21 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry
22 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 am Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	23 	24 11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN 6:00 p.m. Lay Meeting	25 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	26 6:00 p.m. Mass Chorus Rehearsal	27 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	28 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry Women's Ministry 10:30 a.m. WMS Meeting
29 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship MEN'S DAY	30 					

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

Non-profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Huntsville, AL
Permit No. 240

Return Service Requested

E-mail: stjohnameh@aol.com

Website: stjohnamehsv.org

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

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| August 17, 2013 | Harvest Home, 1:00 p.m., Allen Temple, Bessemer, Alabama |
| August 18, 2013 | Church School, 8:30 a.m.,
Church School Promotions, 9:30 a.m. |
| August 18, 2013 | Pastor's Appreciation, 10:00 a.m.,
The Reverend Doctor Teresa Fry Brown, Guest Preacher |
| August 25, 2013 | Worship Service with Communion, 8:00 a.m.
AAMU Sunday, 10:50 a.m. |
| August 27-31, 2013 | Northwest Alabama Annual Conference,
Fairfield Civic Center, Fairfield, Alabama |
| September 29, 2013 | Men's Day, 10:00 a.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 18 Issue 9

September 2013

Pastor's Message

Renovate or Die: A Mandate from Bishop James L. Davis

John 5:1-9



Pastor Patrick D. Clayborn, Ph.D.

I am thrilled and humbled to be appointed the pastor of St. John A.M.E. Church for the conference year of 2013-2014!!!! I am grateful for the ways God has blessed us this past conference year, and I am excited about what God will do for us in this year to come. My family and I thank all of you for your prayers and support over this last year, and we welcome the same as we launch into this new season.

As we begin this new conference year, I want to share with you a critical mandate that was given to the pastors of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference by Bishop James L. Davis. This mandate will serve as a guiding principle for St. John as we move forward. At the fourth session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference, Bishop Davis taught a series of classes on church growth. He based the teaching on a book entitled *Renovate or Die* by Bob Farr and Kay Kotan. The thesis of the book is simple: most mainline churches are in a state of decline. In order to reverse this, churches must renovate. If not, those churches will die.

The authors want to be clear about what it means to renovate because many often confuse renovation with redecoration. Redecoration is purely cosmetic; only the surface has been altered. Some new paint, new doors, new lighting, new fixtures and carpet, and some cleaning...that is cosmetic. That is redecoration. Shaking hands with someone in church and smiling at them after a disagreement - even though you keep hoping they fall into the pit of hell - that is cosmetic. That is redecoration. Shouting and dancing in church on Sunday but spending Monday through Saturday gossiping, finding fault, and tearing down others...that is cosmetic. That is redecoration. Dedicating more time to family at home, trips abroad, and family functions, but your mind and heart are not present...that is cosmetic. That is redecoration.

Renovation - on the other hand - is a change in the structure. We have to move the wall or remove it all together to get rid of termites. We have to do some mudjacking or piercing to raise the foundation. We have to really talk out our differences and be honest to find peace. We have to live the life Monday through Saturday that we sing about on Sunday - even if we fall short. We must put our heart and soul in our families, marriages, and relationships. That is a change in the structure. That is renovation!

However, many do not want renovation because it comes at a cost. We have to sacrifice something for renovation. We have to sacrifice time, money, blood and sweat. We must sacrifice ego, pride, pettiness and unforgiveness. We are required to sacrifice lust, materialism, power, and privilege. We have to sacrifice connections, influence, low self-esteem, and old hurts. We must sacrifice the need to be right and the need to be perfect. We need to sacrifice what is dear but has become irrelevant. We have to sacrifice our addiction to redecorating!

Bishop Davis said that he's most frustrated when churches are satisfied with redecorations, but they are in desperate need of renovations. He used as an example the difference between the numbers on a church's roll and that church's average attendance:

On roll - 223, but average attendance - 50

(Continued on page 2)

Renovate or Die: A Mandate from Bishop James L. Davis

(Continued from page 1)

On roll – 300, but average attendance – 73

On roll – 137, but average attendance – 22

On roll – 92, but average attendance – 17

Bishop Davis even shared his fear that the AME Church would fall while he is still an active bishop. He told us that we must **RENOVATE OR DIE!**

The bishop's teaching was quite similar to the question that Jesus raised with the man at the pool of Bethesda in John 5:6: "Do you want to be made well?" Many believe that the man sidesteps Jesus' question by saying: "Sir, I have no one to put me in the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me" (v.7). I believe that the man was making a confession. He wanted to be made well; he wanted to be renovated. Unfortunately, he felt that he lacked an effective strategy.

Renovate or Die calls for strategies, not programs, when renovating. A strategy is a time sensitive, contemporary action plan that helps us achieve vision. Strategies can change with time. When the strategy is frozen, it becomes a program. The over-inundation of sick people in John 5 is a program. This method of healing was not very effective. What was needed was a strategy.

Jesus gave the man the strategy he needed: "Stand up, take your mat and walk" (v.8). We – the church – can benefit from this strategy. When we stand up, we differentiate ourselves from death, decay, and decline. When we stand up, we resist the system of healing for only the few. When we stand up, we refuse to be defined by those who want to stay in sickness and dysfunction. When we stand up, we are willing to let go of those who do not want renovation. When we stand up, we assert that we are tired of redecoration. When we stand up, we accept that the pool is not the only place where God can heal. When we stand up, we affirm that our God loves us so much that God does not just throw blessings down at random times so that people will fight over them. Instead, God goes beyond the limits of the pool and meets us where we are! When we stand up, we say yes to the tasks of ministry and to the calling of God.

As we take up the mat, we testify that God can still bless us even if others step in front of us to snatch our blessing. As we take up the mat, we witness to the fact that God will give us strength over the things that have confined and defined us. As we take up the mat, we do "hands on" mission. We say yes to getting our hands dirty and serving in places where others do not want to travel. As we take up the mat, we show that God's will is more important than a sacred ritual. Carrying the mat on the Sabbath day was a violation; yet, Jesus knew it was the Sabbath when he commanded the man to do so. Jesus asserted that following the call of God was more important than resting on a Sabbath. When we take up the mat, we are not undermining the traditions of our church. Rather, we are reprioritizing those traditions in the light of God's word and God's calling on our lives.

In our waking, we find the goal of renovation. Jesus does not tell the man where to walk; he only tells the man to walk. In John 5:14, we find that the man walked to the temple. He walked to the heart of worship. He walked to where others worshipped. He walked to the place where he had previously been excluded because of his condition. When we walk, we must walk to worship. We must walk with God in our hearts. We need to walk to others. We have to walk with a love for people. We have to walk with an urgency to be in relationship with others. The only way the church can survive is in the creation of community. Our faith is not a lone ranger faith; we are called to be in covenant relationship with God and our neighbors. When we walk, let us walk to those who are grieving. Let us walk to those who are hurting. Let us walk to those who are in despair. Let us show them our mats and testify to God's saving power. Let us stand with our head held high – soaking in God's spiritual renovation.

**DO YOU WANT TO BE MADE WELL? STAND UP! TAKE YOUR MAT! WALK!
RENOVATE OR DIE! NOW IS THE TIME!!!!**

Delegate Reports on the 4th Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference

By Monica Dillhunt

The Fourth Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference was held at the Fairfield Civic Center in Fairfield, Alabama, August 27-31, 2013. The conference was hosted by Bryant Chapel,



Bishop James L. Davis, Presiding Prelate of the Ninth Episcopal District, with Bishop John Hurst Adams.

the Reverend Damien Littlejohn, pastor; Bethel, the Reverend Darryl Ervin, pastor; and New Magnolia, the Reverend Zachary Watkins, pastor. Presiding Elder Willis Huggins, Sr. was the host Presiding Elder and Presiding Elders Dwight Dillard and Oliver Allen, Jr. were the associate Presiding Elders. The Annual Conference was preceded by the Northwest Alabama Conference Women's Missionary Society Convention. Please see the article on page 8 for a report on the WMS Convention. The Annual Conference Roll Call was the first official business and was held prior to the WMS Night in White on Tuesday, August 27.

Wednesday, August 28th began with bible study taught by the Reverend James Platt, pastor of Gaines Chapel, Anniston, Alabama. The lesson was entitled "There is Power in Your Shout" from Mark 10:46-52. Following bible study, Bishop Davis led the Conference Institute with a discussion of the book Renovate or Die by Bob Farr. He used this book for each day's Conference Institute. The author discusses the serious matter of the life of the church and addresses the destitute situations of the church. Using examples from the book and from his experience as a pastor, Bishop Davis, explained the difference in renovation and redecoration. Key points were to renovate, churches must be pastor-led and not pastor-centered, the people must buy into the vision, and one should do the easy things first. Bishop Davis used this book to highlight his emphasis on growth for churches in the Ninth Episcopal District.

During the Wednesday morning business session, Bishop Teresa Snorton brought greetings from the 5th District of the CME Church and Miles College. She introduced a representative from the Black People Run, Bike and Swim program. She shared the CME church's healthy living initiative and introduced AmeriCorp Vista volunteers who were present. Churches present were invited to partner with them and to start a health initiative. She also introduced a group of volunteers who were members of the Mapping Pathways to College Initiative.

The noon day service preacher was the Reverend Doctor William Campbell, Jr. of Killeen, Texas. His text was from 2 Corinthians 4:7-18 and the message was entitled "Letter from an Asian Jail: Birmingham, You've Got Mail," a spin off from Dr. King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." He stated that the church must be able to (1) handle the jail, recognize there is treasure in the jar, but the jar is still in the world; (2) handle the jam, be hard pressed but not crushed, be perplexed, but not without hope; (3) rest in the counts, be down but not out; (4) learn how to handle the jabs, God is working on a blessing; and (5) handle the joy.

After lunch, pastoral and ministry reports continued. During the Social Action Report, Bishop Davis challenged the pastors to love the people, but not to sacrifice the church's beliefs on homosexual marriages. During the pastoral reports, Bishop Davis emphasized that pastors and laity have to expect more than they currently have.

The Opening Worship Service was held on Wednesday evening and began with the processional of the clergy. The Annual Sermon was delivered by the Reverend T. Eric Nathan, pastor of Grant Chapel AME Church, Birmingham. His text was from Genesis 28:10-17 and was the sermon entitled "God's Presence is God's Promise." He stated that many know that they have God's presence; however, they do not know the power that they have. He continued by saying that there

(Continued on page 4)

Delegate Reports on the 4th Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference

By Monica Dillihunt

(Continued from page 3)

must be a change on the inside. There should not be simply decorations on the outside, but there must be some major renovations from the inside. He challenged the Conference to not limit God. In spite of the circumstances, "God won't take you, where His grace won't keep you."

Thursday, August 29th, began with bible study led by the Reverend Jermaine Richardson. His lesson was from Psalm 100. Bishop Davis continued the Conference Institute with more discussions on the book Renovate or Die and continued to emphasize the need for growth.

St. John was well represented in the reports given on Thursday morning by the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn, who gave the Christian Education Report for the Northwest Conference, and Dr. Monica Dillihunt, 9th District Koinonia Co-Director. Both reports were well received. During the pastoral reports, Bishop Davis emphasized how important it is for the shepherd (pastor) to love the people. He explained that being a preacher was not enough, but that people want a "Pastor".

Noonday Hour of Power Worship was led by the Reverend Charles Marie Davis and the Reverend Dr. Debora Grant was the preacher. Her message was entitled "Tag, You Are IT" and the text was Esther 4:14. She used the childhood game "Tag" and many others games that children of her generation loved to play, to challenge worshippers to know their purpose, know their place, and know their power.



Pastor Clayborn makes his second pastoral report.

The afternoon session brought more pastoral reports, including the dynamic report presented by Pastor Clayborn. Standing with the Pastor were First Lady, the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn, delegate Dr. Monica Dillihunt, alternate delegate Ms. Janette Smith, Ms. Nedra McDaniel, Mrs. Eva Smith, Mr. Guy Ginn, Mr. Jason Gilmore, Dr. Jeanette Jones, Rev. Dennis DeLoach, Mr. Eddie Sherrod, Mrs. Pamela Whitehead, and Deaconess Earnestine Barnes Ivery. The delegate shared highlights of the conference year, including information on the iThrive Ministry (Emerge, Arise and Friday Night Live). She also shared how this ministry mentors to the youth in the community and the church. She was most excited about the young people whose souls have been saved and the witnesses they have become to their family and friends. The delegate asked the Bishop to return Pastor Clayborn and his family as well as Elder and Mrs. Allen. Bishop Davis acknowledged that Pastor Clayborn had reported the most monies raised and the most accessions in this conference.

The Ordination Service was held Thursday night. The Reverend Dennis DeLoach was among the ordinands that evening. Bishop William P. DeVeaux, presiding prelate of the 2nd Episcopal District of the AME Church, was the preacher for the ordination service. Bishop DeVeaux's message was "Daring Disciples" from Luke 5:1-11. Bishop DeVeaux asked the question, "Why don't we have daring Christians?" He then answered the question with the primary reasons being fear, afraid to move out of one's comfort zone, and threatened by the unknown. He also shared that the reasons people should dare are because of the testimony of those who have already done what they are about to do, faith in God, trust, confidence in who one is in God, and a good memory that reminds one to not make a promise on God's behalf that cannot be kept.

The Reverend Jermaine Richardson again led the bible study on Friday morning. His text was from Mark 8. The remainder of the conference reports were read on Friday, August 30th, including the Trustee report that was read by Dr. Jeanette Jones. Bishop Davis continued to remind the

(Continued on page 5)

Delegate Reports on the 4th Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference

By Monica Dillihunt

(Continued from page 4)

Conference that the church is in their hands and if they do not make winning souls for the kingdom and bringing in new people to their churches a priority, the church will die. He emphasized that churches should be honest in their reporting and be responsible for what is happening. They must be willing to open their hands and their hearts to receive a new restoration.

The Conference was honored to have retired Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry visit and to bring greetings. Reports continued until the noonday service where the Reverend Sammie Nelms brought the message entitled, "The Odds Are Against Us Because the Decks Are Already Stacked." He expounded from Matthew 10:16-33; 27:20-23. He encouraged the Conference by explaining that although there will be ups and downs in life, "when the odds are against you, God is for you." After lunch a memorial service was held. The late Reverend Kenneth D. Johnson was among the persons memorialized. A retirement service was held to recognize those preachers who were retiring. Among those honored was the Reverend Horace Fitchard, who is a son of St. John.

The Church School lesson was presented by the Conference Church School on Friday afternoon.

A panel discussed presented the lesson by sharing their life experiences.



St. John YPD dance participants.

Led by the Lay Organization, the New Lives in Christ Fellowship and Recognition Service was held on Friday evening. The Alabama A&M Choir was featured in concert. St. John had several members of the Lay Organization to attend and five (5) new members attended, Ms. Gloria Humphrey-Harris, Mrs. Templena Stanley, Mr. Larry Stanley, Mrs. Joyce Cooper and Mr. Jason Gilmore. Dr. & Mrs. Hugine, president and First Lady of Alabama A&M University were also present.

The YPDers led the service on Saturday Morning. St. John had 15 YPDers in attendance, along with the Director Mrs. Yvonne Sanderson, Assistant Director Ms. Kathlyn Dulaney, and parents of some of the YPDers. Members of the Missionary Society were also present to show their support. Several youth participated in the choir and Agape dance. In a business session that preceded the service, Wallace Parham was elected the 2nd Vice President of the Northwest Alabama Conference YPD.

The Closing Worship Service began with an upbeat processional of the ministers of the Conference and the singing of the hymn of praise. 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 retired Bishop John Hurst Adams. His message was entitled "It's a Privilege to Ask and Always Get an Answer" with text from Matthew 7:7. He focused on the opportunity for pastors to ask God for what they need to minister and the assurance of knowing that God will always answer. The answer is always correct, meets the real need, and is spiritual, moral, redemptive and permanent.

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 Dr. Monica Dillihunt and Ms. Janette Smith (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*

St. John Celebrates and Recognizes the Bettye E. Derrick Women's Missionary Society

On Sunday, August 11, 2013, the WMS of St. John, under the leadership of President Felicia Carter and Past President Eleanor Burnett along with members, gathered for the 10:50 a.m. worship service to proclaim to all that the mission of the society still continues. The matrix for this year's theme, "Touching People...Changing Lives" surely resounded from the Doxology to the Missionary Benediction.

Sister Claudinette Purifoy-Fears delivered an eloquent welcome and occasion. She thanked the church leadership and members for supporting the WMS ministry as they strive to reach beyond the church doors into the local and global community. She stated the mission of the WMS includes training and equipping members for an active work in service. The work of the mission in the AME

Church was established in 1824 and has over 8,000 members. Missionary Fears reiterated that St. John's Society stands ready with open hands to serve and they invite all women of the church to join hands with them.

Sister Sarah Als, beautiful in spirit and charm, was presented the "Silver Member" award for her outstanding service to the WMS. She also received love tokens from the YPDers, YWI members and the society. Her life of faith, love and devotion is deeply appreciated by her fellow church members.



Mrs. Als (left) with Pastor Clayborn and Mrs. Burnett.

The Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn, the First Lady and Executive Minister of St. John, delivered an edifying sermon, challenging, not only the WMS, but to all in their daily walk with God. Her text was from Galatians 6:7-10, and entitled "Don't Stop, It's Working." Many times, she said, people act out of obligation, avoiding the "touch." A touch without

real commitment, a 'burger-king' touch. She cautioned to give a touch of care, for many have been touched in a wrong way. The WMS must not stop or grow weary. Paul, the writer of the text, stated that one must not grow tired in doing good. Abate physical tiredness with endurance, "touching lives." She stressed that one should keep that excitement that they had at the beginning of the commitment.



The Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn delivers the message

The mission is charged to work, growing in service, even when one strives to give all, and no one thanks them and recognition is void. How does one keep on going, working? Accept and govern ones self accordingly. Rick Warren's analogy exemplified how strength is obtained by connecting with others. Cultivate strong relationships as we work with others. Continuing, she stated that Paul warned to feed others, love others and share the load. Rev. Sheri said we should continue. It's working! The enemy wants to discourage and make one second guess their commitment. She said to remember, WMS must continue to work to reap the harvest. It will not come overnight, but surely will come.

Worshippers were emphatically reminded to pray and grow in God's spirit. Honor God for He sees all. When we witness and relate the real story of how we've stood, sometimes alone, we will benefit. The harvest, she stated, only comes at a given time. Concluding, she said "For He will not forget all you've done. God loves us. WMS, don't stop, It's Working!"

Appreciation Service Celebrated the Work of the Pastor

By Pamela Whitehead



The Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn, Dr. Teresa Fry Brown, and Pastor Clayborn pose in the sanctuary after the Appreciation Service.

"And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves."

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

The St. John Church Family joyfully celebrated the spiritual work and tireless labor of the Reverend Patrick DeWitt Clayborn, Ph.D. and family on Sunday, August 18th at the 10:00 a.m. Worship Service. The spirit of appreciation filled the air as members prepared for praise and worship with the theme "Celebrating Visionary Leadership".

The service yielded to the Holy Spirit with an upbeat and contemporary Order of Worship beginning with spiritual exaltation through the exuberant singing of worship songs by the St. John Praise Team, under the musical direction of Brother Dennis DeLoach (now the Reverend Dennis DeLoach). The congregation joyfully engaged in the worship service by lifting their voices in praise as the deeply meaningful song selections ministered to spiritual needs. The worship experience continued with the Doxology and Call to Worship by the Reverend Charles Glover. The opening hymn was sung by the choir and congregation with heartfelt emotion followed by a special rendering of the song "Behold the Lamb" leading into the morning prayer by Brother Clifton Pearson. A choral response was offered with the singing of "Thank You, Lord".

Enhancing the program with youthful praise was the Children's Choir under the musical guidance of Sister Mary Rankin. The angelic voices of junior soloists: Patrick Clayborn II (P2), Anthony Harbin, Kimberly Whitehead, and Janise Williams along with the entire children's choir was a spiritual delight! Additionally, Sister Thalia Love Brown ministered through a light-hearted mathematical/biblical lesson that reminded the children that "one always equals two" (in the Spirit) because God is ALWAYS with you! The worship service continued with the reverent reading of scripture, Habakkuk 2:1-4, by Sister Nedra McDaniel followed by a gracious welcome and occasion by Sister Pamela Whitehead. The visitors and special guests were recognized by Brother Clifton Miller and all received the traditional "Warm St. John Welcome" during the fellowship moment. The church family was especially blessed by several visitors and the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Gerald and Cassandra Smith, parents of the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn.

The spirit of gratitude continued as the church worshiped through the giving of tithes, offerings, and love tokens. The prayer of thanksgiving was offered by Brother Eddie Sherrod and a special litany paying homage to Pastor Clayborn's spiritual calling, preparation, education and training was authored by Sister Jeanette Jones and read responsively by the congregation.

St. John's Liturgical Dance Ministry ministered with great anointing and creativity through the pageantry of flags and interpretive movement to the song, "Greater is Coming" under the direction of

(Continued on page 11)

St. John Represented at Annual Northwest Alabama Conference WMS Convention

By Eleanor Bumett

The members of the Betty E. Derrick Women's Missionary Society of St. John were very excited to be attending the Annual Convention of the Northwest Alabama Conference Women's Missionary Society. They were all buzzing about St. John's Executive Minister, the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn, bringing the Hour of Power sermon.

The delegation left St. John very early on Tuesday, August 27, 2013, under the leadership of President Felicia Carter, and under the protective care of van driver, Brother Lars Avery, who treated the ladies like queens.

The business session of the conference was called to order by the Northwest Alabama Conference President, Patricia R. Smith. Sister Dorothy Davis gave the meditation and invited Christ into the meeting. The missionaries understood that with Christ's help, things would go well and as planned. Elections were held, reports from area coordinators were given, and committee reports were made. The Business Session was closed by Mother Arellis Beavers Davis, Ninth Episcopal District Episcopal Supervisor, and Ms. Carolyn Cummings, Ninth Episcopal District WMS President. They thanked everyone for their hard work in serving God by serving others.

The Tanner Turner Memorial Service honored those members who have gone home to take their rest after years of hard work in His garden. The Memorial closed with the Missionary promise to go and do greater and better works.

During the Noon Day Service, the house was brought down and built back up by the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn. She told the house that "all have issues, but God has fringe benefits." The Reverend Clayborn took her text from Luke 8. She referenced the story of the woman with the issue of blood. She noted that although the woman had spent all that she had, she was not defeated because she pressed her way to the One who holds all issues in His hands. She further stated that this One is Jesus and is the "Fringe Benefit" for believers. St. John was proud of this spirit-filled messenger who allowed her body to be the vessel through which He blessed the missionaries and ministers of the Northwest Conference. Throughout the Annual Conference, references to "Fringe Benefits" were made by Bishop Davis and other ministers.

The evening service was truly a "night in white" at the Fairfield Civic Center. Everyone, from the Bishop to Pastor Clayborn, looked good in white. After all of the mourning and "I do not want to wear a white suit" from the men, they stood out in their white suits. All this writer can say is "WOW" "Wow" "Amen, Amen, Amen."

The preacher for the "Night in White" service was the Reverend Doctor Glenda F. Hodges. Dr. Hodges holds many titles and positions; among those is member of the Judicial Council of the AME Church. The sermon was entitled "Will the Real Church Please Stand Up" and the text was Matthew 16:13-19. She began the message with a description of the television show "To Tell the Truth" and followed with points on how to identify what is and is not the "real" church. She stated that the church that is not "real" has a misguided purpose, mismanaged members and misaligned ministry. According to Dr. Hodges, Peter understood what the real church was; the "real" church is a holy temple for the Lord that stands on a solid rock.

Following this outstanding message, Bishop Davis led the candlelight ceremony. What an amazing way to prepare for the Fourth Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference. The Missionaries set the tone for the remainder of the week.



St. John Welcomes AAMU Athletic Department

By Bridget J. Floyd

The Athletic Department of Alabama A&M University worshipped with St. John on Sunday, August 25th, during the 10:50 a.m. service. The Male Chorus, Praise Team and the Liturgical Dance Ministry provided inspirational musical interpretation that elicited enthusiastic responses from the congregants. Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn greeted St. John's special guests and delivered the call to worship. Reverend Charles Glover offered prayer. The Old and New Testament readings were

provided by Ashley Forman (AAMU Volleyball Team) and Theron Rice (AAMU Football Team), respectively. Mr. Anthony Daniels welcomed visitors. Mr. Bryan Hicks, Director of Athletics, recognized the athletic staff and students. The church was filled to the brim and the spirit was enhanced by the sermonic selection of "How Great is Our God?" after the prayer of Thanksgiving by Reverend Meriam Garrett.



Pastor Patrick Clayborn brought an encouraging message. His text was Psalm 137: 1-4 and he fo-

cused on the query of a captive people, as to how they could sing the Lord's song in a strange land. Pastor Clayborn recommended, and spoke on the topic, "Sing Your Song". He explained that this means to fulfill God's specific call, or sing one's own song, not that of someone else. He gave the example of David slaying Goliath in his own way, not emulating Saul or other warriors. He also cautioned against wanting something that belongs to someone else, in that there is no way of knowing the cost to the other person in obtaining that "song" or gift. Dr. Clayborn also encouraged "following the conductor", drawing the comparison of the negative result of not doing so, in an actual musical performance. He emphasized the importance of singing "the way God directs us and in God's time signature".



Dr. Clayborn noted the significance of singing as a part of one's faith and that this is cited in the Bible. However, it was difficult for the Israelites to sing as instructed by their captors, in that they were singing for entertainment. They were angered and saddened by their situation and were not inclined to sing and were angered to the point of praising those who would kill the babies of their enemies. Dr. Clayborn encouraged that when in the midst of anger and despair one should SING DESPITE THE CIRCUMSTANCES. Additionally he indicated that it is important to "remember

(Continued on page 10)



St. John Welcomes AAMU Athletic Department

By Bridget J. Floyd

(Continued from page 9)

what God did for us" although it may not change the circumstances, it can serve to change the person's perspective, enabling him/her to cope. This can be done by remembering that "if God has blessed us before, He will do it again". Pastor Clayborn highlighted the song "We've Come This Far by Faith". He interspersed songs throughout his sermon to highlight points as needed.

Pastor Clayborn noted that the Israelites remembered their mistakes and that despite their "national sin" they considered how God had blessed them and in like manner, believers today should "consider how God has blessed us despite our wrongdoings." Finally, the captive Israelites "had hope that there would be an end to their suffering". As such, Pastor Clayborn encouraged the congregants to "sing your song anyway". He stated further that although Jesus was killed, "HIS SONG WAS NOT KILLED", but lived on. He ended with the query, "WHAT'S YOUR SONG?"

The message extolling faith, redemption, and perseverance was well received. The invitation was extended.

St. John's special guests were invited to partake of dinner that had been prepared with the option of eating in the Fellowship Hall or taking their meal as a "carryout". A delicious meal was provided by the Food Ministry, and those who "dined in" as well as "carried out" seemed very pleased. The process was most efficient in serving a large number of persons while extending "warm hospitality". St. John thanks Brother Ron and Sister Patricia McIntosh, 2013 chairpersons, for their service.

St. John looks forward to this annual activity to encourage the students in their academic pursuits and safe athletic contests.



Students enjoy fellowship and food after the service.

Appreciation Service Celebrated the Work of the Pastor

By Pamela Whitehead

(Continued from page 7)

Sister Jennifer Patterson.

Brother Guy Ginn gave an endearing introduction of the guest preacher, the Reverend Teresa Fry Brown, Ph.D., Historiographer and Executive Director of Research and Scholarship, African Methodist Episcopal Church. The introduction was followed by the sermonic selection, "We Offer Praise".

The sermon title, "On the Job Courage" was taken from the biblical text, 2 Samuel 23:20. The Reverend Fry Brown, vividly described a utopic Peter Pan World of efficient church operations, clear communication, genuine fellowship, and effective leadership in contrast to the reality of churches whose climates are plagued with debilitating issues such as disharmony, financial distress, power struggles and hidden agendas. It takes on the job courage to address these types of problems.

The courage exhibited by Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, who went down into a pit on a snowy day and slew a lion was the primary focus of the message. God sometimes sends a person to places they never dreamed that they would go, but they must trust God and go anyway. In ministry, one must face many lions. Thusly, courage is a job requirement if one is going to do His will. Maya Angelou is quoted as saying "Courage is the most important of all the virtues because without courage, you can't practice any other virtue consistently". A person of courage has to have faith. Just like Benaiah, the odds may seem stacked against them, but courage and faith give them the edge when going into the pit. There are allegorical lions that seek to destroy, tear down and change a person's God-determined destiny, but take courage and face the lion. Christians must leverage their power and influence to address issues rather than engage in counterproductive and spiritually draining infighting. When they have courage like Benaiah and wear their own armor while engaging in the tools of their trade (like David who slew Goliath) they can be victorious. God prepares persons to do the

work that He has for them to do. Be encouraged! Do not give up when difficult challenges are encountered for God says, "I am with you always even until the end" (Matthew 28:20). "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." (2 Timothy 1:7) God has equipped believers with everything they need to go down into the pit where the snow is falling and slay a lion. When God has called, anointed, and appointed someone to go down into the pit, they should take courage, and go.

Following the sermon, special presentations were made by Brother Hodges Washington, with assistance from Sister Nedra McDaniel and Sister Pam Whitehead. There was even a special delivery brought by the Spiritual Express Security & Delivery-man, Brother Ray Sconiers!

Pastor Clayborn thanked the St John Church Family for all of the love, support, and other acts of kindness that have been shown to the first family this past conference year. With sincere gratitude, he concluded his acknowledgements with the beautiful melodic singing of "To God Be the Glory".



P2 receives gifts during special presentations

Praise God for the collective efforts of Brother Guy Ginn, Committee Chairperson, the Pastor's Appreciation Committee, the Stewards, program participants, and the entire St. John Family for a job well done!

Grandparents, It is Good to be Remembered!!!!!!!!!!

By John and Lois Clayborn

What's in a name? Grandparents are known by many names. Some are: Memaw, Nana, Granny, Granddaddy, Folley, Grandfather, Grandmother, G Ma, Paw Paw, Grandma and the list goes on. What matters is that these are considered names that are endeared by the grandchildren. What's in a name? Love!!!!!!!!!!

GRANDPARENTS
fill the world
with LOVE

Grandparents become the patriarchs or matriarchs of the family. Children are taught to respect the elderly; those with increased wisdom due to the time spent here on Earth. Regarding wisdom, the Message translation states: "Never walk away from Wisdom - she guards your life; love her - she keeps her eye on you. Above all and before all, do this: Get Wisdom! Write this at the top of your list: Get understanding! Throw your arms around her - believe me, you won't regret it; never let her go - she'll make your life glorious. She'll garland your life with grace, she'll festoon your days with beauty." (Proverbs 4: 8-9) It is hopeful that our grandchildren absorb this wisdom that time gives to the matriarchs and patriarchs.

Grandparents often become caretakers of the grandchildren. The children may be read to, homework checked, special dishes are prepared or cakes or cookies are baked for some special occasion. Breakfast, for some is a must. Perhaps Five Guys is a favorite, like our grandson, Pat 2. Most grandparents are major forces in providing a religious background for the grandchildren. The Reverend Doctor Clayborn's grandmother taught him how to pray. II Timothy 1: 5 states that, "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also." We pass it on to our children and grandchildren.

Some grandparents are no-nonsense types while others may be very humorous. All display a great love for their grandchildren. We do realize that our role is to help and not overshadow the life or lives of the grandchild or grandchildren nor should we interfere with parental instructions.

Parents may not understand why we overindulge the grandchildren's fantasies and/or desires. We are grateful that God has given us this time to be a part of their lives. We praise Him and continually magnify His holy name.

Happy Grandparents Day!!!!!!!!!!

The Soup Kitchen is SOUPER!

By Barbara Johnson

"He provides food for those who fear him; he remembers his covenant forever."
Psalm 111:5



St. John's Food Service Ministry is really cooking! A goal of serving 1000 meals was set at the beginning of the 2013 conference year by the Soup Kitchen Ministry. We're so proud to report that as of September 3, 2013, St. John's "Souper" Kitchen has served 1,011 meals and there are still four(4) months to go! Well done Food Service Ministry!

Congratulations "Souper" Kitchen Ministry Committee; Mrs. Myhand, Mrs. Peoples, Mrs. Brooks, Mrs. Allen, Mrs. Paulette Williams, and many others who volunteer on Tuesdays or donate food or monetary contributions.

St. John Participates in the 2013 Community Awareness for Youth

By Barbara Johnson

When August rolls around, Huntsville knows it is *CAFY Time!* Community Awareness for Youth (CAFY) is a city-wide event sponsored by the Huntsville Police Department. CAFY's focus is to demonstrate care and concern for the youth of the Huntsville-Madison County area. There are four main pillars of success that are emphasized during the event: Health, Physical Fitness, Education and Careers.

Established in 2011, this was the third year for CAFY. The attendance has grown from 1,000 the first year to almost 3,000 this year. Everything was free to the public. Five hundred backpacks filled with some school supplies were distributed to children of all ages. The participation of businesses and non-profit organizations supporting the event has also increased. Over 100 vendors set up booths and distributed informative literature to the community.

A new event was added-Madison County's Got Talent. There was stiff competition between several groups, as well as, individuals. The judges were challenged to crown a first, second and third place winner at the end of the performances.

This event is volunteer driven. It could not have happened without the support of churches, sororities, fraternities and other community volunteers. St. John AME has been a strong supporter of CAFY since its inception in 2011. Pastor Clayborn gave the invocation at the opening ceremony for the very first CAFY event. The Sons of Allen have been on board from the start, parking cars and providing security. Mr. Hodges Washington and other members of The 100 Black Men have participated annually. The Loves, Randy and Rickshel, joined the team and volunteered this year.

Planning for the next event will begin in the spring of 2014. As Dr. Harry Hobbs, HPD Community Relations Officer and chairperson of CAFY, always says, "There's always room at the table for those who are concerned about the youth in this city." Consider joining the team. This writer serves as the CAFY Volunteer Coordinator and I would love for more St. John members to get involved and support this worthwhile event.

The Talk

By Paulette Bargon

Do you have a neighbor, long-time friend or family member who does not have Christ in their life? You know the one whom you can count on when you need help at any time during the day or night. They are usually the life of the party, always have a big smile and hug for everyone. They are first to donate to a worthy cause and they will come to the aid of friend or stranger whenever they are in trouble.

You are concerned that they do not have a relationship with God. So you try to invite them to your church. They tell you that they do not like "organized religion" or the usual reply is, "I go to the church of St. Mattress." Or "I'm spiritual, I just don't like going to church". You might attempt to invite them to a church service or bible study a few more times but you decide to quit trying because you do not want to embarrass them and besides you do not want to lose their friendship.

We always invite people to church because we think this a good thing to do and you are right, it is. But we also need to sit them down and have The Talk. We must not let risk of losing a friendship or embarrassing someone deter us. We often fail to tell them why we love the Lord. You must let them know what He has done for you and how God's grace and mercy help you through sickness and troubled times. And all God wants in return is our love, praise, and obedience. I am not saying that this talk will instantly change them but our purpose is to keep talking and praying until we see a change or until God changes our prayer!

He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that He is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sin through his name. Acts 10:42-43.

Official Board Reading List

Pastor Clayborn has announced the latest book on the Official Board reading list. All Official Board members and interested church members are urged to read *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations* by Robert Schnase. The Official Board will begin discussing this book at the October meeting.

October is National Depression and Mental Health Screening Month

By Bridget J. Floyd

In October there is an effort to increase public awareness regarding mental illness. For 2013, Mental Illness Awareness Week is designated as October 7th through October 13th. "National Depression Screening Day" (NDS) will be October 10th. This day is also designated as "National Bipolar Awareness Day". Typically on this day there are opportunities to be screened for depression at local mental health agencies, at no charge.

There is a difference between "the blues" and major depression. While a person might be sad for a few days, clinical depression requires symptoms to be present for at least several months. Major depression is different from bereavement or coping with the loss of a loved one. Sadness is a normal part of life.

Symptoms of depression include sad or depressed mood, which may be characterized by crying spells. There may be an increase or decrease in appetite and associated weight gain or loss. A person may be unable to sleep or wake up frequently; alternatively, they may sleep excessively. Persons with depression often have problems with fatigue, memory and concentration problems, anger or irritability. There might be feelings of helplessness, worthlessness, hopelessness, and guilt. There might be thoughts of suicide or death. In children, behavior problems may be an indicator of depression. Symptoms may be brought on by several factors. There may be a reaction to environmental stressors and/or there may be an imbalance in certain neurotransmitters (brain chemicals). In some instances there may be a family history of depression.

Depression can be preventable and is treatable. There is treatment available whether a person is dealing with depressed feelings which are brought on by stress or whether they have had symptoms for several months or years. Research indicates that cognitive behavioral therapy is the most effective psychotherapeutic technique to treat depression. Psychotherapy can be augmented with medication. There are several medications which have been shown to be effective in treating depression.

(Continued on page 18)



Are You Making the Grade?

By Barbara Johnson

The St. John's **A**cademics **M**eeting **E**xcellence Tutorial Program will help you make the grade you want this year. Tutors will be available to assist students in grades K-12 with any academic need. Tutoring sessions will be scheduled on Wednesday evenings, from 4:30 pm to 6:20 pm. If you cannot meet on Wednesdays, special arrangements or appointments with tutors will also be available for students. We want to make sure every opportunity is made available for our students to be successful. Tutors will be present to assist you with long term tutoring, prep for a test, or support understanding a certain concept. Your success is our primary goal.

Mrs. Lauretta Teague is the coordinator for St. John's **A.M.E.** Tutoring Program. Tutoring applications are located outside the church office.

The first meeting for all persons interested in tutoring with the St. John's **A**cademic **M**eeting **E**xcellence Tutor Program should meet with Mrs. Teague and Ms. Johnson on Tuesday, September 17, 2013 at 5:30 pm.

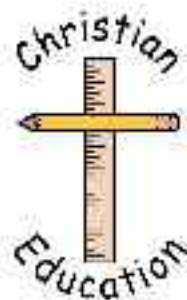
The **KNIGHTS** (Neighbors Investing in Great Horizons for Terrific Students) Tutoring Program at Davis Hills Middle School will begin the week of September 23rd. All persons interested in tutoring at Davis Hills will need to attend an orientation session on Tuesday, September 24, 2013 at 10:00 am.

Ms. Barbara Johnson is the coordinator for tutors at Davis Hills Middle School.



Online Giving Is Easy

Church School Lesson Overview – October 2013



This month's Church School Lesson reviews were written by Willie Sandifer.

October 6, 2013

Lesson Title: A Promise of Land

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 12:1-7; 13:1-18, 15:7-21; 17:8

Print: Genesis 15:7-21

Devotional Songs: #424 [], #272 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "The Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Genesis 15:18).

Application: To align ourselves as best we can with God's ways and to trust in His plan for our lives.

This lesson centers on God's confirmation and reiteration of His covenant with Abram to give him the Promised Land. This time He delineated the boundaries of the Promised Land. God, who owns the world, can give any part of it to whomever He pleases.

Today the nation of Israel is surrounded by hostile Islamic nations. Israel is outnumbered about twenty-to-one. The nations and powers of the world seem to feel they can dictate where Israel's boundaries should be. Some even question the right of Israel to be there or to own any land at all. Several of the neighboring nations have vowed to wipe Israel off the map. However, Israel's right to exist as a nation and their possession of the Land of Promise are not matters for man's speculation or treaty. God, who owns the earth, promised the land to Abram and his descendants.

October 13, 2013

Lesson Title: A Promise to Sarah

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 17:15-17; 18:9-15; 21:1-7

Print: Genesis 17:15-17; 18:9-15; 21:1-7

Devotional Songs: #375 [], #258 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son" (Genesis 18:14).

Application: To trust God's Word and His character in our daily walk and worship.

In this lesson, an extremely detailed example of prophecy and its fulfillment commands our attention.

We have seen God at work in the "big picture" parts of Creation, the Flood and the dispersing of the people by confounding their languages. We must never forget He is also the God of the individual, the smallest detail, and the fulfillment of the desires of a godly man or woman. God had promised a land to Abraham and his descendants forever while Abraham had no children. Even when Abraham tried to remedy this "oversight" by having a child by a maidservant of Sarah, God did the miraculous to complete His promise to Abraham.

The details of God's dealing with the godly couple, Abraham and Sarah may seem to be a very small part of human history, but they are of prime importance in the spiritual realm. God does the impossible and promises that which only He can perform. His promises and their fulfillment are not capricious. They are part of His great eternal plan for Man's redemption and His Son's glorification.

October 20, 2013

Lesson Title: A blessing for Ishmael and Isaac

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 15:1-6; 16:1-17:27; 21:9-21; 26:1-25

Print: Genesis 21:12-14, 17-21; 26:2-5, 12-13

Tentative Devotional Songs: #450 [], #251 [], and #243 []

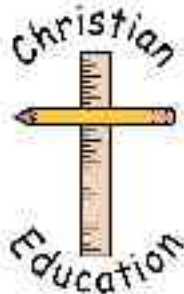
Key Verse: "In Isaac shall thy seed be called. And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed" (Genesis 21:12-13).

Application: To deepen our trust in and commitment to God and His Word.

This lesson lays out the blessings of Abraham's sons, even though one of them had not been part of God's promise.

It was one thing for God to promise Abram the land and rename him Abraham, "the father of multitudes." It was quite another for Him to make this happen in real life and real time. Abraham had no children, and Sarah was well beyond childbearing age. At Sarah's sugges-

(Continued on page 16)



Church School Lesson

(Continued from page 13)

tion, Abraham fathered a son Ishmael, by Hagar, his wife, Sarah's handmaid. God reaffirmed His promise to Abraham and included Sarah in his promise that the two of them would have a son.

Now both sons, Ishmael and Isaac, were present with Abraham. A major problem had arisen between Sarah and her son, Isaac, and Hagar and her son, Ishmael. How could God fulfill His promise and bring blessing to both sons in such a difficult situation?

October 27, 2013

Lesson Title: The Blessing Conveyed to Jacob

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 27:19-29; 28:1-4, 10-22; 32:24-30; 35:9-15

Print: Genesis 28:10-22

Tentative Devotional Songs: #412 ☐; 282; and #243 ☐

Key Verses: "Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" (Genesis 28:15).

Application: To deepen our trust in and commitment to God and His Word.

In this lesson we see how God's blessing on Abraham was continued and confirmed with his grandson Jacob. Very few life stories are as interesting and instructive as the story of Jacob. He began as a person who took advantage of his brother and father and ended as a changed person, a prince with God.

We continue to follow the life and experiences of Jacob and the blessing God conferred upon Abraham and his descendants. In Abraham we see a man of great faith and belief in the word of the Lord. Isaac could perhaps be viewed as having less stature as a man of faith when compared with Abraham, but the promise still rested on him. In Jacob we see a man with whom we can more easily identify, a man of many failings and flaws. God continues the blessing of Abraham on Jacob. The land would still belong to him and His descendants, and the promised Messiah would certainly come through his line. God revealed Himself to Jacob and then established a working relationship with him.

Church School Book Club

September 2013

Discussion Date: 28 September
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Daddy Was a Number Runner, Louise Merril-wether, 2002

October 2013

Discussion Date: 28 October
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Preaching to the Choir, Wayne L. Wold, 2003

Wold gives church musicians a welcome reminder of what we are really about and why we are about it. In what is partly a "how-to-do-it", but essentially a "why-to-do-it" book, Wold discusses planning for worship, choosing music, leading rehearsals, teaching, and caring for the spiritual life of both choir members and directors in an easily assessable, often humorous, and ultimately profound way.

Soup Kitchen

SERVICE

"Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received." — 1 Peter 4:10

The dictionary defines service as "an act of helpful activity." Service is an action. It is one of the most fulfilling actions one can take.

Being of service requires thought and effort, but the rewards are immeasurable. The Soup Kitchen Ministry is blessed as they seek to be a meaningful ministry to those who are served in the "Soup Kitchen" on the third and fourth Tuesdays of each month. Through service, they set the law of giving and receiving in motion. Their prayer is to genuinely strive to provide "acts of helpful activity" to those in need. May God bless this ministry and those whose lives have been touched.

When persons give in service to others, they are blessed in return!

October 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 6:00 p.m. Church School Board Meeting	2 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study Love Feast	3 6:00 p.m. Steward Board Meeting 6:00 p.m. Mass. Chdr. Rehearsal	4	5 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
6 COMMUNION 8am Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship AMEN Deadline	7	8 6:00 p.m. Stewardess Board Voices in Praise Rehearsal 6:00 p.m.	9 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	10 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	11	12 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 10:00 a.m. Official Board Mtg 12:30 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting
13 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	14	15 11:30 a.m.—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 a.m. Dance Ministry 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
20 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	21	22 11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	23 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study	24 6:00 p.m. Mass Chorus Rehearsal	25 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal Dance Ministry	26 9:30 a.m. Women's Ministry 10:30 a.m. VMS Meeting
27 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	28	29	30 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study Love Feast	31 6:00 p.m. Mass Chorus Rehearsal	Friday Nite Live November 1, 2013	

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

Non-profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Huntsville, AL
Permit No. 240

Return Service Requested

E-mail: stjohnameh@aol.com

Website: stjohnamehsv.org

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

- September 29, 2013 Men's Day, 10:00 a.m., Presiding Elder Andrew Holtz, Guest Preacher
- November 7-9, 2013 Ninth District Planning Meeting, Fairfield Civic Center
- November 16, 2013 South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer Planning Meeting,
St. John Huntsville

Welcome back Pastor Clayborn, Rev. Sheri and P2!

*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 18 Issue 10

October 2013

Pastor's Message

There Is a Healing

Exodus 15:26; James 5:14-16



Pastor Patrick D. Clayborn, Ph.D.

Two months ago, God laid on my heart to preach a series of sermons on healing. I initially thought I was to begin immediately; however, my pathway took a detour until this October. As God would have it, these messages are happening in the midst of three national observances: breast cancer awareness, awareness around depression and mental health, and bullying prevention. The overarching thesis each week is simple: God has a healing for each and every one of us!

When we celebrated Pink Sunday (October 13), we invited Mr. Dwight Pope to give his testimony about breast cancer. He testified about taking care of his mother in the last three years of her life as she dealt with breast cancer. He urged us to see silence as the real killer, and he told us the best way to healing is through being open – even about something wrong in our bodies. That is true for bullying and depression. Silence around those issues allows bullying and depression to fester and worsen. Gregory C. Ellison, II, in his book *Cut Dead But Still Alive: Caring for African American Young Men*, says that one of the ways to healing is fearless dialogue.¹ In fearless dialogue, the one who suffers must tell her or his story from her or his point of view. Even if the story is tragic, there is healing in being able to share that pain as an authority. Please note that a dialogue usually involves more than one speaker and the activity of listening. This is why James could ask if there were any sick among those who gathered in Jesus' name. He instructed them to call upon the elders of the church (testify to the pain). In so doing, the elders were to listen and then respond with prayer and anointing (James 5:14-16). In fearless dialogue, those who suffer are to share their pain with a "community of reliable others"² – the elders. When the elders hear and listen, they should respond with faith-filled prayer; anointing; directions to a therapist, counselor, or physician; and a call to the church for care. When this is done, miracles happen!³ Recall the story of Legion in Mark 5:1-20. He and Jesus carry out a fearless dialogue, where he admits that he is possessed by a legion of demons. Jesus allows him to see his situation from a "pig's point of view!" Jesus casts the demons in the pigs (at the demons' request), and the pigs run off a cliff. When the man sees that demons – perhaps inspired by the abuse and bullying of the Roman soldiers in his area – have nothing good to offer, he is delivered.

The real essence of all healing – healing of body, mind, spirit, finances, family, relationships, and vocation – is hope. Ellison calls it an "interrupting hope."⁴

Interrupting hope is a disrupting desire for... change that is generated and sustained in a community...that names difficulties, envisions new possibilities, and inspires work toward transformation.... An interrupting hope is a stopgap that reroutes the toxic flow of rage.... Interrupting hope encourages those [unseen and unheard] to...speak....⁵

(Continued on page 8)

¹ Gregory C. Ellison, II, *Cut Dead But Still Alive: Caring for African American Young Men* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013), 49-72.

² *Ibid.*, 137-160.

³ *Ibid.*, 107-136.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 73-106.

⁵ *Ibid.*

Saint John African Methodist Episcopal Church 2013 Men's Day Worship Celebration

By The Reverend Charles E. Glover, Itinerant Elder

Worshippers gathered to celebrate with the men of Saint John African Methodist Episcopal Church in their 2013 annual Men's Day Service. The sanctuary was filled with great joy and excitement. Even before the official opening of the service, one could sense the presence of the Holy Spirit and the expectation that God was going to do something extraordinary today. With there being only one service for the day, the church was filled to capacity, on the floor and the balcony. The Sons of Allen, under the dynamic leadership of Mr. Theodore Tyson (Local Sons of Allen President) and Pastor Clayborn, planned and supported this great occasion. The 2013 theme was the same as the 8th Episcopal District "Rekindle Eternal Vision Inspiring Victory Every-

where (REVIVE)." Brother Tommy Anderson (former Sons of Allen president) greeted congregants with a hearty morning greeting and presented the church announcements. Subsequently, Pastor Clayborn came and jubilantly proclaimed that "we are assembled for one purpose and that is to Praise the Lord from whom ALL blessings flow." Brother Tyson led the Call to Worship. The congregation was led in song by the mighty voices of the Saint John Men's Chorus, who opened the service with one of the great hymns of the church, hymn number 97, "We Praise Thee Oh God." The voices of those assembled resounded with grateful hearts and thankfulness for the many blessings the Lord had bestowed upon them thus far in 2013.



Musical selections were rendered by the St. John Male Chorus, under the direction of Mr. Lawrence Souffrant.

everyone that they are nothing without God, but, with Him, they have everything. With God, "we are more than conquerors through Christ who loves us." (Romans 8:37) Brother Karl Gullatte read the morning scripture, which was taken from Jeremiah, Chapter 18, verses 1-6. Dr. Lee Williams II led the congregation in the reading of the Men's Day Litany. The Litany was very inspiring and offered spiritual nuggets in compassion and brotherly love. The Litany's ending captured the essence of God's sovereignty in stating that "The greatest force on earth is not the compulsion of law, but the compassion of love, because when we know that God's hand is in everything, we can leave everything in God's hand".



Darrius Scott gives the occasion.

The Reverend Dr. James Johnson offered the Morning Prayer that reminded Brother Karl Gullatte read the morning scripture, which was taken from Jeremiah, Chapter 18, verses 1-6. Dr. Lee Williams II led the congregation in the reading of the Men's Day Litany. The Litany was very inspiring and offered spiritual nuggets in compassion and brotherly love. The Litany's ending captured the essence of God's sovereignty in stating that "The greatest force on earth is not the compulsion of law, but the compassion of love, because when we know that God's hand is in everything, we can leave everything in God's hand". After the Male Chorus rendered another selection, Brother Darius Scott, one of the newest and youngest members of the Sons of Allen at Saint John, gave the occasion for this celebration. He enthusiastically gave an acronym of "MD" (Men's Day) and further graced the congregants with a youthful and heartfelt greeting. Brother Ray Sconiers welcomed those visiting Saint John for service. Numerous visitors were present from

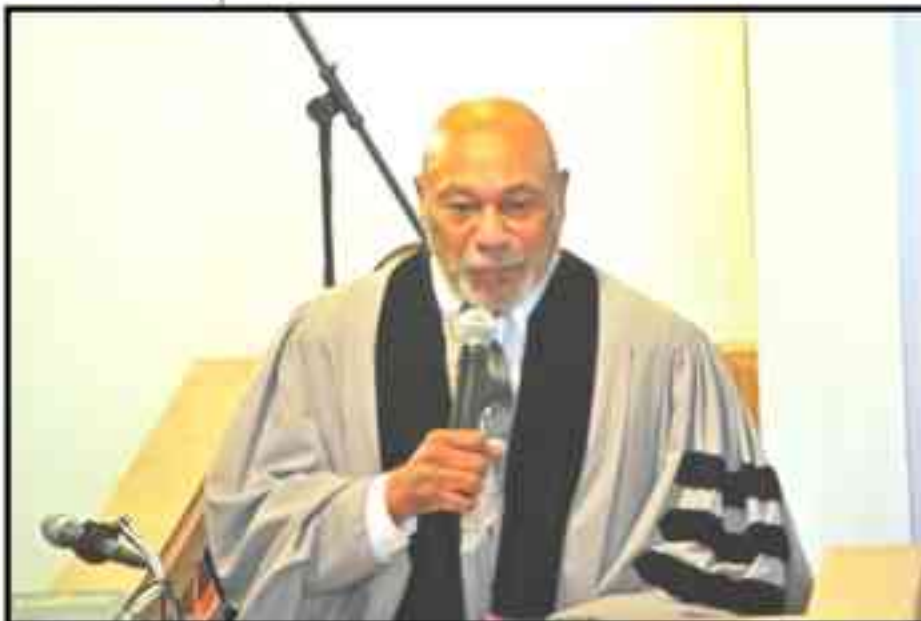
(Continued on page 3)

2013 Men's Day Worship Celebration

(Continued from page 2)

across denominational lines to include Pastors from Baptist and AME Churches. Representative Laura Hall, elected official in the Alabama Legislature representing District 19, also blessed congregants with her presence.

The worship of giving through tithes and offerings was received and Brother Justin York offered the Prayer of Thanksgiving. Pastor Clayborn introduced the Guest Preacher, the Reverend Dr. Andrew T. Holtz, Jr., Presiding Elder, Ozark-Troy District. After the singing of the sermonic hymn, "Jesus Christ Is the Way" by the Male Chorus, Presiding Elder Holtz came forth continuing the move of the Holy Spirit with a soul stirring rendition of the song, "Lord Prepare Me to be a Sanctuary". As the Holy Spirit ministered to the hearts of those in worship, Presiding Elder Holtz took his text from Nehemiah, Chapter 2, verses 1-6.



Presiding Elder Holtz delivers the morning message.

Presiding Elder Holtz's subject was "REVIVE-Rekindling Eternal Vision Inspiring Victory Everywhere-The Actual Thought To Fix Something". He began his sermon with the premise that all, at times, have followed the old adage of "If it ain't broke, don't fix it". If something is working "somewhat fine", leave it alone. As we moved along in life's triumphs we often forget that success does bring a level of comfort, although temporary and short lived. What happens when something is broken? Not necessarily externally, but internally, emotionally, and spiritually. That broken piece is often you and I, the church, or someone else. The text highlighted that Nehemiah, a contemporary of Ezra and Cupbearer to the King in the Persian Palace, led the third and last return to Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile. His concern

for the welfare of Jerusalem and its inhabitants prompted him to take bold action. Granted permission to return to his homeland, Nehemiah challenged his countrymen to arise and rebuild the shattered wall of Jerusalem. In spite of opposition from without and abuse from within, the task was completed in only fifty-two days, a feat even the enemies of Israel attributed to God's enabling. By contrast, the task of reviving and reforming the people of God within the rebuilt wall demanded years of Nehemiah's godly life and leadership. Presiding Elder Holtz stated that Nehemiah traveled over 500 miles to fix something and offered the question to congregants, "How far will we travel to fix something?" From the day that Nehemiah understood his part in God's plan for the people of Judah, his trust in God's provision and protection was unshakable. His confidence was contagious, and the people responded by working together to rebuild the city wall.

Just like in Nehemiah's time, folks today have an inner desire to work in unity and serve God, but often lack the spiritual insight necessary to complete the task. Nehemiah's immediate goal was to see the wall rebuilt, but his ultimate goal was to see the people honoring God in their lives.

Presiding Elder Holtz explained that people today have many choices in worshipping the Lord. They visit different churches seeking "to see and experience" the moving of the Holy Spirit. They want to see the presence of the Lord in the church. God knows what it will take to bring us to a place of searching. He knows how to stir us from our tranquil and comfortable perching position of supremacy. Everyone at some point seeks deliverance from the world and its vices to move

(Continued on page 4)

2013 Men's Day Worship Celebration

(Continued from page 3)

toward a closer relationship with the Lord. In spite of our rigid posture and swelling speeches, behind the scenes we tremble in our hearts at the presence of God. Many things available to us will not be found without an all-out search for this presence. To advance this searching, the role of the church is to be "inviting" and "open" enough to receive varying segments of our society and communities, the least, the lost, and the under privileged. People want to see an edifice representative of the Lord (nice pews, nice carpet on the floor, and good music) that invite the singing of praises unto our God. Additionally, people want to worship where church members are not self-righteous and condescending towards others. Immorality and false living strategies now being approved and condoned by the courts do not align with the commandments and principles of God, cannot and must not be evident in God's House. The church must be where God is present and people can come to receive healing and wholeness. Presiding Elder Holtz emphatically stated, "What goes on in God's House affects what goes on in your personal house"! God knows all about our "backsliding tendencies", yet He still loves us beyond measure. God "so loved the world" that "He gave" His only begotten Son (John 3:16) and He keeps on giving to us what we don't deserve.

Presiding Elder Holtz further elaborated that there are too many "things" that need fixing that often go unacknowledged by the church. Although these "things" that may be categorized as tempestuous winds may blow against the church and against its members' lives, they must exhibit comfort in knowing from God's perspective, it is not about "showing how good we are, but more about "being good", exhibiting the "fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)".

Presiding Elder Holtz conveyed the following focus points:

Focus Point #1: Promote the church. Christians must never lose their conviction that God does change lives. God enables persons to make the changes necessary for fulfilling their purpose in life for Him and His glory. Persons should acknowledge that God is the source of all that they do. Nehemiah prayed at any time, even while talking with others. He knew that God is always in control, is always present, and hears and answers every prayer. One must live a Christian life, witness for Christ, and stand against the immoralities present in this modern day.

Focus Point #2: Protect the church. Nehemiah trusted in God's ability to provide not only for his needs, but for those of the people. His confidence in God inspired people to trust God and have faith in His provision and protection.

Focus Point #3: Provide for the church. God gives Christians spiritual and natural gifts in order to build up, serve, and strengthen fellow Christians, and to expand His kingdom here on earth.

Focus Point #4: Be a Priest or Prophet for the church. Congregants were encouraged to acknowledge the authority and power of God's "Spoken Word". Job was so committed to the Lord that he proclaimed, "Though he slay me, YET will I trust in Him" (Job 13:15). Worshippers were encouraged to speak a prophetic word over God's church and its members, circumstances, and future, believing that God can do anything but fail.

Presiding Elder Holtz concluded his message by joining hands with Pastor Clayborn and speaking a prophetic word over his life, his family, his ministry, and the future growth of Saint John AME Church. First Corinthians, Chapter 2, verse 9, was his foundational reference, "But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the hearts of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him". The prophetic word was confirmed by several attendees coming to join Saint John AME Church (one family and several young adults- a total of seven).



Presiding Elder Holtz speaks prophetic word to Pastor Clayborn.

NOVEMBER 1, 2013 | 7PM

Thrive Ministry of St. John AMEC Presents

FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE

THE WORD & WORSHIP EXPERIENCE

PASTOR "PC"
& REV. SHERI SMITH
CLAYBORN

ON AIR

FNL TV

FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE TV

CANDY WEST

God's Property, Fred Hammond, Yolanda Adams

FEATURING SPECIAL GUESTS:

- L.P. (LIKE PAUL)
- CANDY WEST
- DJ SAM SMITE
- J4GIVEN
- AND
- UNANIMOUS

St. John
AME Church

229 CHURCH ST. HUNTSVILLE, AL 35801

www.FNLHSV.COM

GUEST HOST
JANETTE SMITH



October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month!!!

By Rosemary Wells

Facts

- Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in women.
- Breast cancer is the second leading cause of death among women.
- Each year it is estimated that over 220,000 women in the United States will be diagnosed with breast cancer and more than 40,000 will die.
- Although breast cancer in men is rare, an estimated 2,150 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer and approximately 410 will die each year.
- Cancer grows when a cell's DNA is damaged. It can be genetic (risk factors that cannot be changed) or environmental and lifestyle (avoidable risk factors), or a combination of the two.

Genetic risk factors:

- Gender (occurs 100 times more often in women)
- Age (two out of three women with invasive cancer are diagnosed after age 55)
- Race (occurs more often in Caucasian women)
- Family history
- Personal health history
- Menstrual and Reproductive History, early menstruation (before 12) or late menopause (after 55), having first child at older age, or never given birth
- Dense breast tissue

Environmental and lifestyle risk factors:

- Lack of physical activity (sedentary lifestyle)
- Poor diet
- Being overweight or obese
- Over consumption of alcohol
- Radiation to the chest
- Combination Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)

Signs & symptoms of breast cancer:

- Nipple tenderness or a lump or thickening in or near the breast or underarm area.
- A change in the skin texture or an enlargement of pores in the skin of the breast. A dimpling anywhere on the breast.
- A lump in the breast swelling or shrinkage.
- Recent asymmetry or unexplained change in size or shape of the breast.
- Nipple that is turned slightly inward or inverted.
- Skin of the breast, areola, or nipple that becomes scaly, red, or swollen or may have ridges or pitting resembling the skin of an orange.
- Discharge (particularly clear or bloody) from the breast.

The difference between a breast self-exam (BSE) and a clinical exam is a breast self-exam is something EVERY woman should do once a month (preferably at the same time each month) at home and a clinical breast exam is performed by a healthcare professional who is trained to recognize many different types of abnormalities and warning signs. Keep in mind that lumps that appear soft, smooth, round, and movable are likely to be either benign (non-cancerous) tumors or cysts. A lump that is hard, oddly-shaped and feels firmly attached within the breast is more likely to be cancer, but further tests are needed to diagnose the problem.

Although breast cancer in men is rare, an estimated 2,150 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer and approximately 410 will die each year.

The full Breast Cancer Awareness Report from Mrs. Wells is posted on the St. John website at <http://www.stjohname-hsv.org/resources/Breast-Cancer-Awareness>.



Celebrating 50 Years of Progress

By Janette R. Smith



Long before Mrs. Eva P. Smith became a Stewardess, Trustee or volunteer at St. John AME Church, she was a servant leader for her community. Sister Smith was recently honored by the Northwest Alabama Conference Lay Organization for her civil rights efforts and civic service.

Sister Smith's sense of civic duty was cultivated by her father and mother, the Reverend Y. P. and Hattie Slaughter of Jasper, Alabama. She knew from an early age that she had a responsibility to make a difference in her immediate world with impact that rippled into all the world. Her efforts took greater form in a much deeper sense as she began getting involved with community and civic organizations while attending Tuskegee Institute. It was there she met the love of her life and future husband John E. Smith. As he made a commitment to serve his country through military service, beginning his Air Force career in training within the elite Tuskegee Airmen program, Sister Smith began her service to the country through her active membership in the local branch of the NAACP. In fact she

has been a member of the NAACP ever since and has a Lifetime Membership in the organization. Her drive, then as it is now, was to help members of the black community have a voice.

Sister Smith also wanted that voice to hold weight and be accounted for when it came to government programs. For this reason, she became a census taker in the early 1980's when she moved to Huntsville, having fulfilled her desire to raise her children through their adolescent years and fulfilled her duties as an Officer's wife.

Throughout her 30 years of civil rights activism through the NAACP, Sister Smith has served as Vice President, Assistant Treasurer, Treasurer, Chairman of the Fair Housing Committee, Membership Chairman, and Office Volunteer for the Huntsville / Madison County Branch of the NAACP. She was also the NAACP Board appointed member of the Huntsville / Madison / Limestone County Community Action Agency.

It was through the NAACP Sister Smith served faithfully with voter registration campaigns - registering people to vote, helping provide voters with rides to the polls, investigating concerns of those who would register complaints with the organization, helping organize town hall meetings, attending city council and school board meetings, and taking part in NAACP local marches and protests for various civic concerns.

Sister Smith has also been a member of the Huntsville/Madison County Chapter of the Alabama Democratic Conference (ADC) for 25 years. During this time she has served as Secretary and Treasurer. Her duties include registering voters and providing rides to the polls during local and general elections, providing meals for poll workers, and serving on various committees formed to educate voters about pertinent issues on the ballots that affect them. She also meets with legislative leaders to voice concerns and/or garner support on issues.

Though Sister Smith's sole motivation through the years has been to serve and empower members of the black community to understand their power and use their political might, she has been graciously recognized for her contributions. Most notably, she received the Madison County Branch of the NAACP's Award of Excellence and received the coveted Chairman's Award from the ADC. To this day Sister Smith is an active officer in both the NAACP and ADC and she helps run the annual NAACP membership drive for St. John AMEC.

Rich history, experience and stories are tucked away in the membership jewels of St. John AMEC. The next time you are in fellowship with members, take a little time to ask the question, "How has God used you to leave a mark in the world for His glory?"

**MENTAL ILLNESS
AWARENESS WEEK**

October 6-12, 2013

www.nami.org/MAAW



Ways to Address Depression

By Bridget J. Floyd

Depression can be treated successfully. Psychotherapy can be beneficial. Cognitive behavioral therapy focuses on helping the person understand that their way of thinking or beliefs impact their mood and coping. Learning to change from a negative to a positive perspective is key. In addition to talking about feelings, it is helpful to write feelings in a journal. It is helpful to understand underlying factors that impact feelings/mood/coping; for example, past or early childhood experiences, traumatic events, loss/grief, relationships. It can be helpful to include family or significant others in therapy.

For some individuals it is necessary to also take medication to reduce or manage depressive symptoms. Both therapy and medication take a while to become effective. Psychotherapy may be provided by a psychologist (Ph.D.), psychiatrist (M.D.), licensed professional counselor (LPC) or social worker (LCSW). Medication is typically prescribed by a psychiatrist, a physician who specializes in treating individuals with mental disorders. For some individuals whose serious symptoms do not respond to therapy and medication, electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) is used. This is only after all other methods have not been helpful and the person's life is at risk due to serious suicide attempts.

There are strategies that can be helpful in preventing or managing depressive symptoms with or without psychotherapy and medication. The foundation is healthy choices such as getting at least eight hours of sleep, eating properly, and getting exercise/avoiding a sedentary lifestyle. Spending time with *supportive* family and friends and engaging in activities that provide enjoyment and relaxation prevent isolation and improve mood. Therapy helps the person learn to reduce and/or cope with stress.

Depression is treatable and like many conditions, best results occur when detected and treated early. If concerned about being judged by family, friends, co-workers (stigma); individuals should ask if they would hesitate to seek treatment for themselves or their child(ren) in the case of an irregular heartbeat or breathing problems. *Quality of life can be enhanced through treatment, regardless of age.*

(Continued from page 3)

Our gatherings in church are supposed to build interrupting hope. Our coming together should interrupt the illnesses we encounter in the streets, on our jobs, in the schools, in our families, in our minds, in our spirits, and in our bodies. Where two or three are gathered in Jesus' name, Jesus will be in the midst (Matthew 18:20). 'Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty' (2 Corinthians 3:17)!

When we get together as church, there should be a healing! For in the presence of God, there is healing. Our God is a God of healing (Exodus 15:26). Yes, I encourage those who are ill to go to God in prayer, the doctor, the therapist, the counselor, the pastor, the expert in your area of need, the friend, and the family member. I also encourage you to go to CHURCH – the assembling of the saints! So, come and meet us on Sundays for corporate worship and Church School. Visit us on Wednesdays for Bible study. Get involved in any of the ministries that meet throughout the week.

On November 1st, we will have our last Friday Nite Live service of the year. We have a host of guest artists who will minister in unique and anointed ways. This service is not only geared to youth, but it is also geared to the young at heart. If you need revival – if you need healing, I extend this invitation to you. You just may encounter the healing you desperately need.

There is a healing!!!!

St. John Prepares to Host SBHB Planning Meeting

St. John AMEC looks forward to hosting the South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer (SBHB) District Planning meeting on Saturday, November 16, 2013. The Worship Service is scheduled to begin at 11 am.

All members are encouraged to attend. If you are able to lend a hand and help us host, please contact the church office or Rev. Sheri Smith Clayborn. Thank you in advance for your willingness to serve.

School Pride Evident at Davis Hills

By Barbara Johnson



Davis Hills students model school uniforms.

School Pride is evident in the attitudes of the Davis Hills Middle School students. They arrive for school "Dressed to Impress," in their navy or white shirts and khaki or navy pants. Look at them, standing confidently with their pants pulled up and their belts in place. These students are ready to be successful. Wearing the school uniform is a requirement at Davis Hills.

The St. John AME family stepped up when a call was extended for support in providing some students with appropriate attire. This was a church-wide effort to supply the needed uniforms for the students. Fifty complete uniforms, including the shirt, pants, belts, socks, and several pairs of sneakers were donated to Davis Hills during the months of September and October. This will be an ongoing project, for students are growing constantly and new students are enrolling weekly.

Mrs. Jill Burwell, principal of Davis Hills Middle School and a member of St. John, has expressed heartfelt thanks to the church on behalf of the students and parents. She has stated that having the uniforms really met a need for several of the students and many of their parents. They are very appreciative to St. John for the donation.

Thank you, St. John, for supporting this project

Faith

By Paulette Bargon

Faith not works produces good works.
Read Galatians 5: 5-6: 22

Affects your relationship with God
Read Genesis 15:6

Is inspired by God's goodness
Read Psalm 36:5-9

Trust
Read The Book of Job

How we pass faith on from generation to generation because faith is not yours alone.
Read Deuteronomy 32:4-9, 7-9

Faith is believing in God's word. Read the word.
Listen to the word. Receive the word.

"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:17

New Director of Music Joins Staff

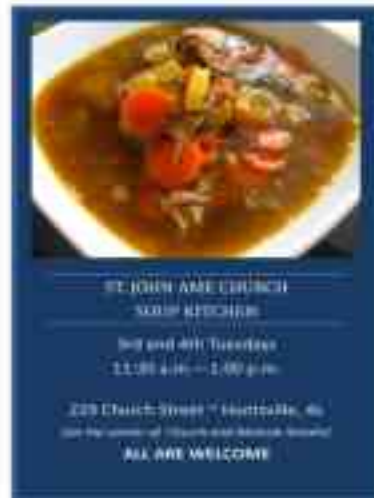


Mr. Reginald Pearson is the new Director of Music at St. John. His first Sunday in this position was October 6.

Mr. Pearson is a graduate of Alabama A&M University with a degree in Music Education. He is the band director at Westlawn Middle School and has served on the music staff at First Missionary Baptist Church.

Welcome Mr. Pearson!

Update from the Soup Kitchen Ministry



Guest List

"When you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed." Luke 14:13-14

A notable religious writer shared that a first-century Jewish community isolated itself from outside influences in order to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. All took great care in their devotional life, honored ceremonial washings and held strict adherence to rules of conduct. His research also showed that they would not allow the lame, the blind or the crippled into their community. It was their conviction that anyone with a physical "blemish" was ceremonially unclean. During their table fellowship, disabled people were never on their guest lists.

He further stated that, ironically, at the same time the Messiah of Israel was at work in the city and villages of Judea and Galilee proclaiming His Father's Kingdom and bringing teaching and comfort to all He saw. Strikingly, He proclaimed: "When you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind and you will be blessed." (Luke 14:13-14)

St. John's Soup Kitchen strives to share as Jesus, the Messiah, did. The doors are open to everyone who comes on the third and fourth Tuesdays of each month. For the month of September the kitchen served over 200 persons. One of the coordinators shared, "That is Good". Please Come!



Time Change

Please note that the time for the Wednesday evening Bible Study has been changed to 6 p.m.

Women's Ministry Tidbits!

God's Minute

"I've only just a minute. Only sixty seconds in it. Forced upon me, can't refuse it. Didn't seek it didn't choose it. But it's up to me to use it. I must suffer if I lose it. Give an account if I abuse it. Just a tiny little minute. But eternity is in it." - Dr. Benjamin E. Mays



AME Proud

The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2012

Be informed about the doctrine and discipline of your church.

You may purchase a copy of The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2012 from the church office. The cost is \$30. This book is updated every four years to reflect the adopted legislature and actions of the General Conference.

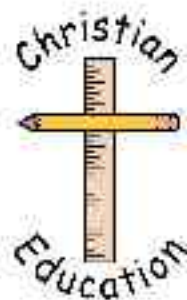


Lay Fellowship Dinner

November 6, 2013
5:30-8:30 p.m.

The St. John Lay Organization invites you to attend the Lay Fellowship Dinner that will be held from 5:30—8:30 pm on Wednesday, November 6, 2013. This is an excellent opportunity to enjoy food and fellowship with the Lay of the church and to learn more about the Lay Organization.

Church School Lesson Overview – November 2013



This month's Church School Lesson reviews were written by Kenneth Parham.

November 3, 2013

Lesson Title: God Prepares for Deliverance

Lesson Scripture: Exodus 1-4

Print: Exodus 3:7-17

Devotional Songs: #414 [], #272 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "The Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of ... Jacob, has appeared to me, saying: 'I have given heed to you and to what has been done to you in Egypt. I declare that I will bring you up out of the misery of Egypt'" (Exodus 3:16-17).

Application: God prepared Moses well in advance of his call. God prepares us in the same way. Past experiences whether negative or positive, prepare us for potential use by God in the future.

Hearing the cries and observing the tribulation that the Israelites suffered under the hands of their captives (the Egyptians), God set out to deliver the Israelites. He looked to Moses as His frontman. However, it appeared that Moses was not convinced that he was the "one". Moses indicated that he had doubts that the Pharaoh would listen and free the Israelites because he (Moses) said so and that he (Moses) did not believe the children of Israel would listen to his instructions.

God imparted not only courage to Moses but He gave Moses the proper greetings that all Israelites who followed the Law would know and accept.

November 10, 2013

Lesson Title: Remember to Celebrate

Lesson Scripture: Exodus 8:2-30; 12

Print: Exodus 12:1-14

Devotional Songs: #412; #258; and #243

Key Verse: "This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance" (Exodus 12:14).

Application: Our shared experiences help make us into God's Holy Nation. That's why we need to find ways to pass the experiences on to others. We can hold festivals like Juneteenth and Passover or we can share in Holy Communion.

In this lesson, God gave the Israelites step by step instructions on what to do in preparation

for His passing through Egypt and unleashing the deadliest of the ten plagues that would indeed lead to the Pharaoh setting the Israelite free. The plague would kill the first born males (man and animal) living in Egypt. God's instructions centered on the selection of a year-old unblemished lamb. The lamb was to be slaughtered, the blood smeared on the two door posts and on the lintel of the houses, the whole lamb is to be grilled over a fire and eaten with leavened bread and bitter herbs. God instructed that the Israelites eat the meal clothed, with sandals on their feet, a staff in their hands and to eat the meal hurriedly. God instructed that any uneaten meat was to be burnt before sunrise. God indicated that by observing these instructions, He would pass by the homes of the Israelites and not kill the first born.

Moses commanded the Israelites to remember and celebrate God's workings as a perpetual ordinance. The Jewish historians have called this celebration, the Passover. Indeed God passed over the Israelites in His dealings with the Egyptians when delivering the Israelites from captivity.

November 17, 2013

Lesson Title: From Despair to Deliverance

Lesson Scripture: Exodus 13:17-22; 14

Print Exodus 14:21-30

Devotional Songs: #365; #251; and #243

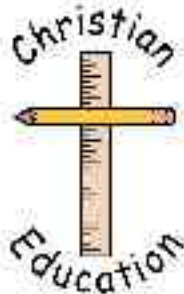
Key Verse: "Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians" (Exodus 14:30).

Application: Identify those you know who are being oppressed in school, community, and/or around the world. What help can you offer?

Most know the story of how God, through Moses, saved the Israelites from the Egyptians as they fled from Egypt. This lesson recounts Moses stretching the staff out over the Red Sea and the waters dividing and the Israelites' safe passage on dry land through the divided waters while the Egyptians were in pursuit. Once the Israelites were safely through, God makes the ground, just traveled by the Israelites, somewhat muddy and placed panic in the minds of the Egyptian soldiers. God instructed Moses to stretch out his staff a second time and God allowed the waters to reunite, thereby drowning the Egyptians.

God continued to communicate through Moses

(Continued on page 12)



Church School Lesson

(Continued from page 11)

and his workings reinforced that God is the God of Deliverance.

November 24, 2013

Lesson Title: Traveling Light

Lesson Scripture: Exodus

Print: Exodus 40:16-30, 34, 38

Devotional Songs: #378 []; 282; and #243 []

Key Verses: "The cloud of the Lord was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, before the eyes of all the house of Israel at each stage of their journey" (Exodus 40:38). Application: To learn the significance and purpose of the tabernacle; sense God's presence in our lives and thank God for His abiding presence.

In reading chapters 35-40, God commanded Moses to build a tabernacle to house the ark (which would contain the covenant that God made with the Israelites). Within the group, special offerings were collected, along with the needed talent to produce the tent, the ark, the tabernacle and furnishings to be placed within the tabernacle. Items collected and processed were gold, silver, bronze, precious stones, acacia wood, animal skins (ram, goat and badger), threads of special colors, fine linen and special spices and oils.

In this lesson, it was recounted that the tabernacle and its contents were assembled in accordance with the instructions from God through Moses. The work was completed. Once the instructions were completed, God was pleased by the work and His presence dwelt in the tabernacle.

Prayer Time

Join us for Weekly Prayer Time each Tuesday at 6:00 am.

Conference Call Credentials
US Toll Number (530) 881-1212,
Meeting ID: 876-863-940
For smart Phone Speed Dialing:
5308811212, 876863940

If you are not able to join the call at 6:00 am, you may listen to the playback any time.
Playback Number (530) 881-1219,
Meeting Id 876-863-940,
Press # to ignore any requests for reference number when calling for playback.

Church School Book Club

October 2013

Discussion Date: 26 October
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Preaching to the Choir, Wayne L. Wold, 2003

November 2013

Discussion Date: 23 November
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Tempted by Trouble, Eric Jerome Dickey, 2011

For Dmytryk and Cora, there's only one way to fight the recession that's crippled their comfortable lifestyle: accept a crime boss's offer to rob a few banks. It's quick. It's a nice big payoff. No one gets hurt.

Good luck believing that. -- Amazon

Dmytryk Knight earned his college degree. In addition to English, he's fluent in five languages. He finds a well-paying, white-collar job at a Detroit automobile company. Seven years later, a recession hits, and he's demoted to the assembly line. Seven years after that, the economy tanks, and he's laid off. What's a guy to do? In Dmytryk's case, he looks for honest work, and struggles on unemployment for two years. Dmytryk's wife, Cora, isn't happy with their stressful, uncertain existence, so she pushes her husband to work for Eddie Coyle. The problem is, Coyle is a crime lord, and the job requirements include killing whom he wants, when he wants. Dickey's cautionary tale features a criminal prone to panic attacks, shows that crime does pay, but only for a little while. This is another sizzling, entertaining book by the ever-popular Dickey.

-- Shelley Mosley.



Pastor's Aid's Annual Bake Sale

The Pastor's Aid Board will hold its annual Bake Sale on November 24th after the 8 am and 10:50 am Services. This is an excellent opportunity to get your baked goods for Thanksgiving.

November 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Friday Nite Live 7:00 p.m.	2 9:30 a.m. Dance Minsky 1:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal
3 DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS COMMUNION 8am Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship AMEN Deadline	4	5 6:00 p.m. Stewardess Board Voces in Praise Rehearsal 6:00 p.m.	6 12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Bible Study Lay Fellowship Meal 5:30—6:30 p.m.	7 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	8 Ninth District Planning Meeting Fairfield, Alabama	9 9:30 a.m. Dance Minsky 10:30 a.m. AMEN Meeting
10 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship HARVEST SUNDAY	11	12 6:00 p.m. Voces in Praise Rehearsal Gospel of Allen	13 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	14	15 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	16 South Birmingham Huntville Becoming Planning Meeting St John, Huntville
17 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	18	19 11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m. SOUP KIT CHEN 6:00 p.m. Thurs. Board Mtg.	20 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Love Feast Prayer and Song	21 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	22 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal Dance Minsky	23 9:30 a.m. Women's Ministry 10:30 a.m. VOCES Meeting PACK HOLIDAY BOXES
24 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship BAKE SALE	25 DISTRIBUTE HOLIDAY BOXES	26 11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m. SOUP KIT CHEN	27	28  THANKSGIVING	29	30

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

Non-profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Huntsville, AL
Permit No. 240

Return Service Requested

E-mail: stjohnameh@aol.com

Website: stjohnamehsv.org

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

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| November 6, 2013 | Lay Fellowship Meal, 5:30—6:30 pm |
| November 7-9, 2013 | Ninth District Planning Meeting, Fairfield Civic Center |
| November 10, 2013 | Fifty-Plus Harvest Service, 10:50 am |
| November 16, 2013 | South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer Planning Meeting,
St. John Huntsville |

*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 18 Issue 11

November 2013

Pastor's Message

Thankful People

Submitted by Patrick Clayborn & Sheri Smith Clayborn



Pastor Patrick D. Clayborn, Ph.D.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

In everything give thanks: This is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

As we move into the holiday season, Thanksgiving is the first major holiday that we will observe. We are aware of the historical reasons for celebrating this day, yet we are not only historical people...we are people of faith. As a people of faith we have not been exempt from the suffering and challenges of the world. Therefore, one might ask...why are we thankful? Kurt Karr says it this way in "Grateful People, Grateful Praise":

We realize it's an honor to dwell in this place/to bask in the refuge of mercy and grace. [We] are offering a praise, [putting] a smile on [our] face...When [we] think of the goodness of Jesus and all He's done for [us, our] very soul cries out hallelujah. We've got to thank God and praise God for the great things He's done for [us]. We are grateful people...a grateful congregation of saints in praise. Because we're grateful, we give grateful praise!

Our thanksgiving comes out of our gratitude for God's blessings. Yet, we realize that it's hard to put thanksgiving into words. This is the time of year when we count our blessings, and when we count them, we realize that it would take an eternity to properly thank God for all He has done. What do we do, as thankful people, when we know that our meager thanksgiving doesn't compare to the blessings we receive from God? Andraé Crouch, in "My Tribute," phrased it this way:

How can I say thanks for the things you've done for me? Things so underserved, yet you gave to prove Your love for me. The voices of a million angels could not express my gratitude. All that I am and ever hope to be, I owe it all to Thee. To God be the glory. To God be the glory. To God be the glory for the things He has done. With His blood He has saved me. With His power He has raised me. To God be the glory for the things He has done.

As a church family, there are a number of things we will do this season to express our thanks and gratitude to God. We will worship together at our Thankful People worship service on Wednesday, November 20th at 8 pm. We will provide food baskets to those in need. We will also remember, through a memorial service, our loved ones and bless the community with a forum intended to foster better relations between our youth and law enforcement. As well, we have regularly scheduled opportunities for worship and service. These are some of the ways we will give God glory and say, "Thank You!"

As we move through this season, stop and take the time to express your thanks and gratitude to God for all that He's done for you. Attend worship, give a thank offering, share a meal with someone, serve at your church's soup kitchen or a community soup kitchen, spend time with family, call a loved one, call or visit someone on the sick and shut in list...do something that says, God, I thank YOU!

God bless you and Happy Thanksgiving!

On November 11, We Honor Our Veterans*

By Colonel James O. Heyward, Sr.



"This is my Country. Land of my birth. This is my Country, grandest on earth. I pledge thee my allegiance America the bold, for this is my Country to have and to hold."

Even if you were not born in the United States but served in the U.S. Armed Forces, you sacrificed and you have a stake in this land.

We honor all veterans for the many sacrifices that you made while serving our country. Many of your comrades did not return home while others returned with permanent injuries. You and generations of fighting and support personnel provided this country with the many freedoms that we currently enjoy today. For this, we say thank you for you have honorably served our country over the years. From the American Revolutionary War, through peace time, and in every war or conflict, up to the current actions in Afghanistan.

As a veteran who served in the Army for 30 years, one of the statements that really gets to me is "We want to take our country back." I say, back from whom? Are we not all Americans? Didn't we elect our officials, especially our national officials? Are we using code words to convey another message? I remember when the term "Law and Order" was the national code word to do whatever it took to squelch the social aspirations of a segment of our citizens. Today, redistricting is being used to squelch political aspirations of large segments of our citizens in certain states.

I encourage all Americans, especially veterans, to always emphasize that this country belongs to all of us. "It belongs just as much to the little boys and girls from the inner cities and rural areas of this country, as it does to the little boys and girls from the nation's middle class, upper class and wealthy groups". Many of our fathers, uncles, brothers and let us not forget mothers, aunts and sisters have paid a price for us to enjoy many of the things that we take for granted. I am a combat veteran and I know first hand the racial make-up of our Nation's Armed Forces, then and now. This nation's citizens of color paid and are still paying a tremendous price and we still have a great investment in our Armed Forces.

So, do not take a back seat and remain silent when the discussion comes around to the subject. We Must Take Our Country Back! I recently read in a journal statement by writer Sinclair McKay, and I quote "that a carefully cultivated ignorance pervades our politics and national discourse. Reason has taken a back seat to throwback impulses, simple confusion and paranoia."

Witness what we are going through today with Congress in Washington. A few members of Congress "high jacked" the passing of the national budget regardless of the pain it caused the nation, in order to defund, The Affordable Care Act, a federal law. That is simply evil.

Today, as veterans of our Armed Services, we wonder whether too many of our citizens take the freedoms that we currently enjoy for granted. Many of you sacrificed greatly for your country, whether you served the minimum amount of time in uniform or if you served a career.

So, now that we are separated or discharged, what do we do to make this a better place for our family, our community and our country? I would like to challenge all abled bodied persons, but especially veterans to seek to accomplish something that will have an impact on society, be it ever so small. I challenge all persons to become involved in doing more that will benefit society. I know many persons will say that I am already doing this or that. But, you know that there is

(Continued on page 3)

* Colonel Heyward was inducted into the Alabama District Hall of Fame of Alpha Phi Alpha, Incorporated Alabama District on October 11, 2013. At this event he gave a speech to challenge Veterans, as well as others in attendance, and honor the service of those who have served in the branches of the United States Military. The AMEN requested that Colonel Heyward share his speech, with appropriate modifications, as the feature for Veterans Day in the November issue.

On November 11, We Honor Our Veterans

By Colonel James O. Heyward, Sr.



(Continued from page 2)

more that you can do:

There are so many ways one can serve our country and communities. First, think of ways in which you can do something to improve the lives of others. There is no greater satisfaction than helping someone else to achieve something positive that may change their lives or the lives of their loved ones. Once you discover that one thing, then do it, don't procrastinate.

Many persons in our community have completed careers or are nearing the end of a current career. You have so much to offer your community. I give a shout out to veterans, but this can apply to anyone with ability and talent. You were trained and you developed skills that once you only dreamed of. Use those talents to help others in your communities. You can supervise; you developed leadership skills. Why not put those talents to work and help someone else along life's way? You know how to organize, communicate, monitor projects and train others.

Life may be a little tough during these times, when money is tight because of man-made sequestration at the national level of government and the lack of cooperation by some members of the U.S. Congress to pass our national budget beyond January 15, 2014.

We can do a lot for many of our neighbors who are worse off than we are. Think of the individuals and families we could assist in our respective communities. Can you think of anyone on your street, in your neighborhood or in your church who would appreciate a helping hand with a fence, a door or other things that are now beyond their capability to do for themselves? We could organize and use the skills and other abilities that we possess. Just imagine the good we could accomplish, and the lives we could touch.

Let us look at the violence in our neighborhoods. In Huntsville during the first week in October 2013, there was a shooting and someone being killed almost every day and most of it occurred in Black neighborhoods. It appeared as if we were competing with Chicago. There are so many of us who say I don't want to get involved. Well, someone has to get involved if we are going to reduce the level of violence and similar incidents in our respective communities.

Many persons reading this article may be wondering just what they can do to make this world a better place. If you are dreaming about it, that is fine, don't dream too long. Act now, do something that will help change the lives of others for the better. Help make this world a better place than it was before you inherited your place in it. I encourage you to use the leadership skills that you developed over the years. Always attempt to encourage opportunity.

You are extraordinarily talented people in whom the nation has made a huge investment...and you are people who can get things done. You are usually team players with ability to adjust quickly to changing circumstances. Why not put that talent to work for the up-building of your respective communities. We must begin to think outside the box and develop additional ways to assist our communities. But in all of your doing, try to do what you enjoy, because that which you enjoy becomes your passion and we tend to follow our passions.

We should always try to do better than what is already being done. We owe this to our communities and especially to our youth who will inherit our world. Let's develop a passion for improving the lot of our communities and country.

Let success inspire you, and then you inspire others. Pastor Patrick Clayborn and the entire St. John A.M.E. Church Family join me in thanking all veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces and those persons currently serving for the sacrifices they have made while serving our nation and protecting the freedoms that so many of us take for granted. May God continue to bless you, your families and the United States of America.

Be Thankful

BY Bridget J. Floyd

For Thanksgiving, most people embrace the tradition of feasting on turkey, dressing, sweet potato casseroles and pies, various side dishes and desserts. Most know that the meal in 1621, upon which this tradition was based, was not as bountiful. In fact it came out of hardship associated with a harsh winter in a strange land with a few survivors (about half of those who crossed the Atlantic on the Mayflower). Interestingly, it was Native Americans who sought out the settlers to teach them how to plant and harvest crops as well as cook the food (Native American style). One of these benevolent individuals had previously been captured, enslaved, later to escape and return from England.

Various forms of having a celebratory meal of Thanksgiving occurred over the years prior to President Abraham Lincoln establishing Thanksgiving as a national holiday in 1863, in the midst of national conflict; encouraging people to pray for unity of the nation and for the widows, orphans, casualties of the Civil War. Ultimately, Thanksgiving is celebrated on the last Thursday in November, after efforts were made to choose an earlier time for economic reasons (the Depression era). Even now, there is commercialism and controversy about the focus on shopping and sales with stores opening earlier and earlier so that now people can shop on Thanksgiving Day rather than early Friday morning. They will start their Christmas shopping (another holiday that has had religious focus blurred by commercialism).



What does it mean to be thankful? Why might one be thankful? Certainly Christians know to be thankful to God for the many blessings that are bestowed: Life, health, family, friends, food, employment, shelter, as well as some fills beyond the "basics". *The ultimate blessing is that of Salvation.* It is important to give thanks in all things and at all times. Do not take blessings for granted; and when blessed, it is important to share with others. Might it fit in the Thanksgiving schedule to volunteer at a homeless shelter? Consider serving those who are dependent upon others to provide the basics in their lives. Contribute food items/can goods that can be shared with families who are in need. Remember the Native Americans helped the settlers survive. *Reach out, even if others have been negative or harmful in the past.*

It can be a bit challenging to be thankful when things are not ideal (recall the hardship of the "original" Thanksgiving). Modern times present significant challenges. There is war, global and national political conflict, natural disasters, economic uncertainty, sequestration, furlough, marital and/or family problems, school problems, illness, loss of a loved one. It is important to be thankful in the midst of the daily stresses and strains of life and have faith that God will provide. A childhood pastor of this writer would often say, *"We are thankful to God that it is as well with us as it is"*.

This seems to be the key. It is easy to be thankful in the good times. Work on being thankful in the less than optimal times as well. There are many trials and tribulations in these days and times. Put it in perspective. In the midst of it all, find at least one blessing, and keep counting, "one by one". Realize that God has provided blessings, including the capacity to wait for the blessings that are "on the way".

BE THANKFUL! HAPPY THANKSGIVING! KEEP THE FAITH!

St. John AME Stewardess Board Establishes The Naomi Council

By Barbara Johnson



Picture of Pastor Clayborn and Naomi Council members, Mary Powers, Charlsie Brooks, Lou Clark and Eva Smith.

When one mentions the name Naomi, people think of Ruth having been the main character of the story, when the focus should be on Naomi, the mother-in-law. For it was Naomi, who, after the loss of her sons and husband, decided to return to her own country and her own people. Yet, while her daughter-in-law Ruth could have chosen to go her separate way, she chose to remain with her mother-in-law and hence, fulfill her destiny.

Ruth journeyed on with Naomi, not only because she loved her, but also because she was a strong, wise, obedient and faithful believer. She knew her mother-in-law would provide her with wise council. We have Naomis among us; among this congregation, who provide wise council every day to anyone who's receptive and open to listen.

St. John AME's establishment of The Naomi Council grew out of the need to continue to engage and keep the Naomis of the

Stewardess Board actively involved in Christian service. The Naomi Council is comprised of senior members of the Stewardess Board who have served faithfully and dutifully, for many, many years, and who wish to continue doing so; however, are unable to fulfill the physical requirements of being a Stewardess. But just like Naomi, these sisters have provided and will continue to provide wise council to all who would seek council.

Naomi Council members will still dress in white, and be recognized by the bronze colored flower they will wear. Just like bronze, they have been strong, have persevered, endured and withstood the test of time. They have seen the best and the worst of life. They have celebrated the highs and provided comfort during those times of loss. These great women have held the hands of the weary, wiped away the tears, stood in the gap, interceded on behalf of members and comforted them. Yet, here they stand, still willing, still desiring to continue to serve this congregation and community in Christian service.

The St. John Naomi Council members are:

Mrs. Charlsie Brooks

Mrs. Lou Clark

Mrs. Gwendolyn Baldwin

Mrs. Willie M. Heyward

Mrs. Eva Smith

Mrs. Mary Powers

Naomi Council members have been charged with a specific task in ministering to the congregation. Mrs. Brooks and Mrs. Clark will pray and send cards to sick and shut in members each month. Mrs. Baldwin and Mrs. Heyward will encourage the care-givers in the congregation through prayer and by sending them a card monthly. Mrs. Smith will meet the needs of bereaved families by staying in touch with them for at least three months after a loss. Mrs. Powers will bridge the distance between students who are away at college and St. John. She will be sending motivational cards to students, as well, as a care package during finals week.

St. John AME's Naomi Council, strong women, still serving.



FNL-A Modern Day, Blinged-Up Testimony Service

By Janette R. Smith

We live in a cynical world. Even as believers, we often become numb to the goodness God has placed around us and forget the challenges He has waded us through and all the ways He MADE a way. We, not just the youth and young adults, but WE focus so much on what is wrong in life that we lose appreciation for all that is right. Silently, we keep these torturing thoughts to ourselves and put on a good 'church face' so that we can remain esteemed in the eyes of those around us, while inside we are being eaten alive by fear, disappointment, anger, pride, insecurity, and shame.

As a people, we moved through dark times by leaning on community, allowing friends and family to 'shore us up' when we had no strength to stand alone. We poured into each other with the restoration power of God's Word. We shared our stories of 'how we got over' and moved through the darkness of the times with the promise that, "If He did it for me, He'll do it for you!" That practice birthed testimony services at churches that often turned into brag-imony or get-you-told-in-public services. As a result, many churches stopped offering a structured testimony service. Revelation 12:11 shares "we overcome by the blood of the lamb and the power of our testimony." On this platform, the format for the last Friday Nite Live was produced.

The talk-show themed worship service offered attendees the sights, sounds, and experience of being inside a network studio as part of a live audience for a mainstream media television broadcast. From set design to full-length, strategically crafted commercials to interview guests and entertainment—this was perhaps the biggest production St. John AME Church has hosted for the purpose of evangelism. To GOD be all the glory!

Pastor Patrick Clayborn and the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn, Executive Producers for FNL events, got things started by setting the tone for the unique service which offered the audience opportunities to ask questions of the guests and share in the experience that would unfold. Sister Janette Smith, one of the youth leaders for St. John AME Church and content creator for FNL, served as interviewer.

Things got started with an energetic performance by L.P. (Like Paul), a rapper and emcee from Birmingham, Alabama. His music appeals to all ages through easy to understand Christian based lyrics and in some songs, the sampling of positive old school music like the Staple Singers classic, "I'll Take You There."

David Battle, a former J.O. Johnson High School and Auburn University football standout, was the first guest. The crowd was moved by his transparency and tears as he told the story of a life filled with problems that landed him in the Limestone and Atmore Correctional Facilities and the Madison County Jail. After injuring his knee as a freshman at Auburn, he said, he lost his identity and drifted into the world of drugs and alcohol. Battle said at one point he wanted to die. However, he defeated the demons of drugs and alcohol that haunted him as a young man in college and he is back at Limestone Correctional Facility, but this time he is on the other side of the bars as a drug treatment counselor.

The first commercial was a spoof on "Cover Girl" ads that claim with its "product" any woman can look as good as a supermodel in magazines. The promotion went on to reveal that the product was 'Fotoshop' by Adobe (i.e. Photoshop image altering software).

(Continued on page 7)

The talk-show themed worship service offered attendees the sights, sounds, and experience of being inside a network studio...



(Continued from page 6)

...the hand of God and His purpose for that evening's service became quite clear ...

L.P. returned with a second performance then joined Sister Smith on the couch to share his story of growing up fatherless and losing his mother at a very young age. This anointed artist had at one time made a name for himself in the secular music industry with songs on the charts and videos in regular rotation on MTV. Later, L.P. (Jason McKay) says he did not feel what the industry was molding him into was what he stood for as a Christian. He challenged the youth and young adults to not let secular artists and music define them and pressure them into becoming someone they are not. L.P. also shared that the spirit of suicide plagued him growing up and how God's grace kept him and helped him defeat that spirit of depression and death. For producers and insiders who worked on the content for FNL, the hand of God and His purpose for that evening's service became quite clear: the church would be helping some attendees combat the spirit of suicide and death. None of the guests shared their struggle with suicide during pre-interviews, yet one of the feature stories shared via video that night was a testimony from 17 year old Emma – a member of another local church whose youth group supports FNL. She shared the heart-wrenching story of depression that led to a dark night when she almost leaped off a ledge to her death. Emma shared the conflicting conversation that took place in her head that night and how the love of God literally surrounded her and pulled her off of the ledge. This brave young lady was not supposed to be in attendance at FNL that night; however, through a scheduling change Emma did come. She was invited to the stage to share a word of encouragement for others who may be dealing with the same feelings.

Other commercials included one produced with the youth and young adults who shared why they felt it was important to be 'connected' to a local church. Afterwards, there was a call to action by Pastor Patrick Clayborn for persons to quit trying to navigate life's path alone.

The last interview of the evening was with dynamic praise and worship leader Candy West. The Dallas, Texas born worshipper has relocated to Birmingham, Alabama where she serves as the Director of Worship at The Worship Center Christian Church. The audience was moved by Candy's testimony of struggle as a 'Church Kid' who grew up singing from the age of three under the watchful eye of her Pastor Grandfather and mother. "Finding yourself and defining yourself as a real person, not just the title of 'a good girl' can be tough. I made mistakes but I'm stronger for it..." Candy shared. In a moment of transparency, West shared that she too had struggled with depression and suicide – her triumph coming in accepting God's love for her and growing to see herself as His beloved daughter despite her mistakes and frailties.

Pastor Clayborn returned to share a final thought on how all things worked together in that evening to offer the audience hope and encouragement that 'it ain't over, til God says it's over.' Led by Sister Jennifer Patterson, director and choreographer, the St. John AME Church Dance ministry offered one of its most powerful performances in recent years, ministering to the song "I Can Only Imagine." Dancers adorned in all white seemed to float through the air as the dance was done in darkness, with only the glow from black lights illuminating the sanctuary. Posters and signs with white imagery further helped tell the story of the joy of one day being fully in the presence of God.

The altar call was powerful as youth, teens, young adults and adults came for prayer for various matters. Some, however, came in hopes of combating the depression and persecution of suicidal thoughts that plagued them.

How do you measure the success of such innovative ministry? How can we calculate the benefits of

(Continued on page 9)





the effort and time spent in the pre-production phase, and the money raised and spent? If it is only measured by the number of people who joined the church – there were none. Several people did rededicate themselves to living more fully for Christ. More importantly, there were a few young people who, as a result of facing their fears and admitting where they were emotionally, are now getting help for their debilitating depression. Perhaps this text message that came as a follow-up to the November 1st event sums it up best:

"_____: Feeling better now that I am going to therapy twice a week. I called an anger management coach and she contacted a specialist for me through her program. Plus, those sessions are free, so that's a blessing financially. Thank you so much!"

Thank YOU SOOO much St. John AME Church! It is because of you and your support that iTHRIVE Youth Ministry continues to offer the burden-removing, yoke-destroying, spirit-filled ministry of Friday Nite Live: The Ultimate Word and Worship Event.

If you have never been to a Friday Nite Live event and have written it off as something only for teens, you are missing out on experiencing one of the most powerful and engaging Word and Worship events in North Alabama.



Pray the Scriptures for Thanksgiving

*Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name;
make known his deeds among the peoples!*
- 1 Chronicles 16:8

*Oh give thanks to the LORD; for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever!*
- 1 Chronicles 16:34

*I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart;
I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.*
- Psalm 9:1

*I will praise the name of God with a song;
I will magnify him with thanksgiving.*
- Psalm 89:30

*Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise!
Give thanks to him; bless his name!*
- Psalm 100:4

*I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving
and call on the name of the LORD.*
- Psalm 118:17

*Give thanks to the LORD of hosts,
for the LORD is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever!*
- Jeremiah 33:11

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ.
- 1 Corinthians 1:4

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus
- 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
- Philippians 4:6

"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."
- Revelation 7:12

Doris Beverly Outlaw

by Rufus and Agnes Gilmore



There is an Old Danish proverb which states 'What you are is God's gift to you; what you do with yourself is your gift to God'.

Doris Beverly Outlaw was born in Huntsville, Alabama on December 19, 1949 to the late Robert and Margaret Outlaw. She confessed hope in Christ at an early age at St John A.M.E. Church and was baptized by Pastor S. S. Hereford. Thus began her journey of faithful service to her church and community. She was a dedicated stewardess, Sunday School Teacher and Choir Member.

Doris mastered the art of teaching and molding young lives. During the summer she taught reading and language skills at Alabama A&M University. One of the students she touched was Anthony J. Powell, he states, "Ms. Outlaw was a firm teacher who inspired you to excel in all aspects of life. Her lessons not only included reading and language but lessons on life and how to handle yourself as men and women belonging to Christ. Ms. Outlaw will forever live in my heart because of her gentle spirit and her unwavering dedication to educating those who were entrusted to her care". Doris served as an Elementary School Teacher in the Huntsville City School for over 35 years.

Doris was born in December and started a December club. Each December Doris would coordinate a celebration of all church members born in or celebrating wedding anniversaries in December. She took great pride and enjoyment in this time of fellowship.

One of God's gifts to Doris was music and Doris's gift to us was that melodious, harmonious, pleasant and beautiful soprano voice. We should all be willing, as Doris was, to share our gifts to bless others, but most of all to honor God. Doris was a loyal member of the Music Department and served in the Sanctuary Choir for many years.

Doris leaves to cherish her memory her beloved son, Christopher S. Outlaw, her sister Madeline Outlaw, her nephew Richard Outlaw, her godchildren Sharon N. Daniels and Erica Halsey and a host of St. John family and friends.



By Rosemary Wells

World AIDS Day is held on December 1st each year and is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, show their support for people living with HIV and to commemorate people who have died.

The 2013 theme for World AIDS Day is **"Shared Responsibility: Strengthening Results for an AIDS-Free Generation."**

Show your support for people living with HIV on World AIDS Day by wearing a **red** ribbon!

For more information on HIV/AIDS awareness go to the website www.hivaware.org.uk

The WMS Sponsors Blankets Project

The St John Women's Missionary Society (WMS) will be donating blankets and quilts to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Huntsville Hospital. The blankets will be used to drape cribs and incubators occupied by high risk, critically ill infants and will be taken home by the parents as a keepsake. St John members are encouraged to assist by donating quilts and blankets made from pre-washed fabrics such as cotton or flannel in colors of your choice. The size should be between 30 to 45 inches square.

The WMS would love to have the blankets by the end of November, but will accept them through December 15th.

IN EVERY
THING GIVE
THANKS; FOR
THIS IS GOD'S
WILL FOR YOU
IN CHRIST
JESUS.

Youth Ushers Elect Officers

By Claudinette Purifoy Fears



It is official! On Sunday, 27 October 2013, the members of the St. John Youth Ushers elected their leadership for the new Conference Year.

Officers are as follows:

President.....	Alicia Brownlow
Vice President.....	Wallace Parham
Secretary.....	Mariah Gullatte
Assistant Secretary	Ashley Ann Lewis
Treasurer.....	Curtis Mayes
Chaplain.....	David Wells

Congratulations to this great group of young people. They are willing to serve the church and our community. Our ministry is continuing to grow. If you are 12 years of age or more and are interested in serving with this group of dynamic young people, contact Mrs. Agnes Gilmore or the Church office for more information.



Pastor's Aid's Annual Bake Sale

The Pastor's Aid Board will hold its annual Bake Sale on November 24th after the 8 am and 10:50 am Services. This is an excellent opportunity to get your baked goods for Thanksgiving.



Texting Teen News!

By Mariah L. Gullatte

November already?

Wow, this year has flown by so quickly! All the more reason to pull out the turkey! This is the time to share with family, friends, and a time to share with others. A season of thankfulness for everything God has done in our lives. Make sure you take time to share with others.

The YPD continues to make a difference in individuals' lives by volunteering at the Manna House and Christmas Charities.

YPD meetings are on third Saturdays of the month and new members are always welcomed!

ATTENTION ALL EXTRA KIDS: If you participate in ANY extracurricular activities, please provide a copy of your schedule to post on our YPD board so that your church family can come and support you! ☺

Until next time! TTYL (Tak To You Later).

December Dates to Remember Yoke Release Month

Communion every week in the Month of December

Sunday, December 1st 8 am & 10:50 am
Advent Begins, CandleWreath Lighting

Wednesday, December 4th 6 pm
Selah Memorial Service

Sunday, December 8th following 10:50 service
AMENewsletter Taste Tea

Wednesday, December 11th 6 pm
Community Forum

Sunday, December 15th 10 am
Christmas Program

Wednesday, December 18th 12 pm & 6 pm
Bible Study

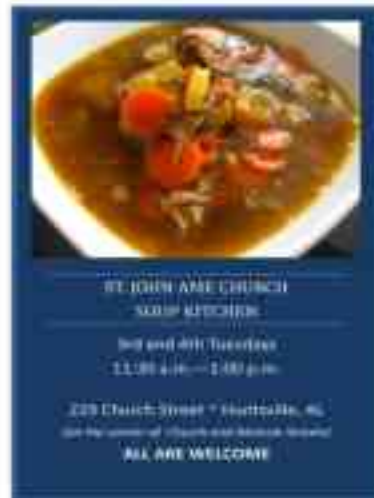
December 19th & 20th
Holiday Basket Packing

Saturday, December 21st
Holiday Basket Distribution

Tuesday, December 24th 6:30 pm
Christmas Eve – Walk in The Light

Tuesday, December 31st 10:00 pm
Watch Night Worship Service

Update from the Soup Kitchen Ministry



We All Need Help Sometime

"If there be among you a poor man or one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth." Deuteronomy 15:7-8.

St. John's October Soup Kitchen was opened with a loving new appeal. Because of the dire economic situation facing millions of Americans and our own AME brothers and sisters, Rev. Sheri beckoned all, especially our own to come by, call to place a pick-up dinner order, to feast on a nutritious hot meal for as many as needed.

For surely as the body of Christ, we share in the responsibility for one another. Generosity should be a response to our ever maturing relationship with Christ. The point here is not to fulfill obligation without understanding. The body of Christ is all about relationship with each other under the authority and grace of Jesus Christ who is the head. At times, it can be a challenge to climb out of our selfishness and give. Likewise, let the Holy Spirit lead you in receiving generosity just the same, WE ALL NEED HELP SOMETIME!

Our third and fourth Tuesday Soup Kitchen is open to ALL as well as our OWN.

Women's Ministry Tidbits!

LET GO AND LET GOD

When you're troubled and worried
and sick at heart
And your plans are upset
and your world falls apart,
Remember God's ready
and waiting to share
The burden you find much too
heavy to bear—
So with faith let go and let God
lead the way
Into a brighter and less troubled day.

Helen Steiner Rice

2013 TASTE TEA

The Seventeenth Annual Taste Tea, sponsored by the A.M.E. Newsletter Staff, will be held Sunday, December 8, 2013 after the 10:50 a.m. worship service. St. John members and friends are asked to bring their favorite dish and the recipe (to be published in the 2014 A.M.E.N.). Please bring your dish(es) to the fellowship hall prior to either worship service. Share a new dish that you may have discovered during 2013.

A sign up list is located outside of the pastor's office or forms may be picked up and completed in the vestibule. The forms may be submitted to the coordinators, Mrs. Claire Philadelphia or Dr. Bridget Floyd.

The second edition of A Taste of St. John and Friends cookbook will be available at the tea. It will make a great Christmas gift. The cost of the cookbook is \$10.00.

Christmas Drama Planned For December 15th

The St. John Drama Ministry is preparing for the 2013 Christmas production entitled "Ringing in the Great News - Jesus an International Savior." The children's play comes with a similar title, "The Good News." This presentation will be held at 10 am on Sunday, December 15th. Come and be blessed!

Directors are Donna Gullatte, Cheryl Anderson and Amber Humphrey.



Holiday Baskets Food Drive

St. John AME Church

Church-Wide Service Project #4: Holiday Baskets

Coordinators: Paulette Williams, Maeola Snell Peoples, the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn

St. John family and friends are asked to prayerfully donate the following for those who are in need of a Holiday Food Basket.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. dried beans | 10. corn (canned) |
| 2. rice | 11. potatoes (box or package) |
| 3. mac-n-cheese | 12. cake mix |
| 4. corn meal | 13. cereal (grits or oatmeal) |
| 5. flour | 14. stuffing |
| 6. oil | 15. cranberry sauce |
| 7. yams (canned) | 16. Kool-aid |
| 8. green beans (canned) | 17. sugar |
| 9. peas (canned) | |

A turkey will also be provided in the basket, but the church will not be accepting donations of turkeys at this time, unless it is a monetary donation.

You may also make a monetary donation toward this project. A donation \$50.00 will cover the cost of a holiday basket for a family in need. Any monetary donation will be accepted.

Process for Receiving a Basket

If you know of families who are in need, or if your family is in need of a holiday basket, please submit their/your name to one of the coordinators. Please do not share with the family that their name is being submitted. The church will contact them once we determine what resources will allow us to do.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to share.



November Is Diabetes Awareness Month

By Rosemary Wells



A reported 22.3 million people in the United States were diagnosed with Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes according to the study Economic Costs of Diabetes in the U.S. in 2012. The American Diabetes Association reported that 4.9 million African American adults are living with it. African American men have one of the highest rates of diabetes and have a disproportionate amount of diabetics undiagnosed, which means they are waking around with it and do not even know.

"Everybody needs to be aware of diabetes. With the use of certain medicines and marked increase of childhood obesity, we're seeing more and more Type 2 diabetes with severe diabetes in childhood and early adulthood," says James N. Sullivan, M.D., an associate professor of internal medicine at Meharry Medical College and a board-certified internist and endocrinologist in Nashville, Tennessee. "If they have it in their family, they need to arrange to get checked periodically, particularly if they have symptoms like getting up at night to go to the bathroom or yeast infections in women and trouble with sex lives in men."

Eating too many sweets does NOT cause diabetes! Some people call it "sugar" but having diabetes is far from sweet and the number of folks living with the complicated disease is staggering.

Type 1 Diabetes is an inherited autoimmune defect; the body's immune system attacks the pancreas and kills the cells that make insulin, a hormone needed that helps the body to use glucose (sugar) found in food for energy. When this happens the pancreas stops producing insulin, causing the sugar in your blood to rise. Type 1 diabetes usually presents itself in children and young adults; it is a lifelong illness and affects 5% of the population. Having Type 1 diabetes, you must take insulin to survive; there is no other treatment for the disease.

Type 2 Diabetes results when the body does not produce enough insulin and/or is unable to use insulin properly (this is also referred to as 'insulin resistance'). This form of diabetes usually occurs in people who are over 40 years of age, overweight, and have a family history of diabetes, although you don't necessarily have to have diabetes in your family to develop the disease. People with Type 2 diabetes may initially be able to manage their diabetes with a combination of healthy eating, physical activity, and oral diabetic medications. Eventually their plan of care may include insulin. By following a well thought out diet plan and exercising to lose weight some Type 2 diabetics can discontinue the use of insulin or diabetic medications altogether.

Gestational diabetes develops during pregnancy and mothers have a higher risk of developing Type 2 diabetes later in life.

Symptoms of diabetes may include being very thirsty, frequent urination, weight loss, increased hunger, blurry vision, irritability, tingling or numbness in hands or feet, wounds that do not heal, extreme unexplained fatigue, and frequent skin, bladder or gum infection. Complications resulting from poorly managed diabetes are heart attacks, strokes, blindness, kidney disease, blood vessel disease (that may require amputation), nerve damage, as well as, impotence in men.

People who drop their weight by 10 percent can sometime decrease the risk by 50 percent. Diabetes patients should be seen at least every 6 months by a diabetic specialist (an endocrinologist or a diabetologist) and have regular eye exams (once a year) by an ophthalmologist.

The need to learn how to monitor blood glucose is very important. Daily testing of blood sugars will determine how well the meal, activity and medication plans are working to keep blood glucose levels in a normal range. A1C is the primary test used for diabetes management and diabetes research, sometimes called the hemoglobin A1C, HbA1c or glycohemoglobin test. The A1C is a (blood) lab drawn at least twice a year by your physician; it is an overview of your average percentage of blood glucose (sugar) levels for the past 3 months. The higher the percentage the higher the person's blood glucose levels have been. A normal A1C level is 5.7 percent.

To obtain more information contact the American Diabetes Association of Alabama @ 205-870-5172, ext 3072. 3918 Montclair Road, Suite 218, Birmingham, Alabama 35213

Church School Lesson Overview – December 2013



This month's Church School Lesson reviews were written by Willie J. Sandifer.

December 1, 2013

Lesson Title: The Angel Foretells Jesus' Birth

Lesson Scripture: Luke 1:26-45

Print: Luke 1:26-45

Devotional Songs: #118[], #272 [], and #115 []

Key Verse: "You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus" (Luke 1:31).

In this lesson the appearance of Gabriel to Mary takes us to the cusp of the watershed moment of biblical history. We see it better if we keep in mind some key elements of the Bible's story line. The angelic appearance occurred when Israel was under the rule of the Roman Empire. The Romans conquered Judea in 63 BC; about 20 years later they consolidated their power further through King Herod the Great. He was a ruthless local ruler who cooperated with Rome.

The Romans were skilled administrators, but their rule over Israel was still oppressive. Most offensive of all, the Romans were pagans – Worshipers of false gods. Roman rule meant that the injustice and moral evils of that empire were sustained by allegiance to false gods who represented that evil.

An awareness of Jewish marriage customs in the biblical period will help in understanding the text. Marriages were usually arranged by families, with the input and approval of the prospective couple. Because the economy of the time was simpler, people were given responsibilities at what seems a young age to us. Thus, young women could be married as young as 13 years of age.

When a marriage was agreed to, the couple was considered legally bound, but they did not live together as husband and wife until the day of the marriage. On that day, the groom went to the bride's family's home, received his bride, and escorted her back to his family's home, where a feast of celebration was prepared. Prior to the wedding day, the groom and bride were forbidden to have sexual relations.

December 8, 2013

Lesson Title: Mary Sings Her Praise

Lesson Scripture: Luke 1:46-56

Print: Luke 1:46-56

Devotional Songs: #111[]; #108[]; and #113[]

Key Verse: "Mary said: 'My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior'" (Luke 1:46, 47).

This lesson is part of the account of Mary's visit to Elizabeth, who became the mother of John the Baptist. Both women became mothers of children conceived by God's miraculous intervention, and both children became instrumental in fulfilling God's promises. But Mary's child was inherently superior, and so Elizabeth hailed her as 'the mother of my Lord'. The focus of attention was not on the mothers, but on their children – especially Mary's child – and what God was to accomplish through them.

Mary responded to Elizabeth's greeting with the song that is today's text. Like the Psalms and other poetry of the Old Testament, it derived its poetic qualities not from meter or rhyme, but from the expression of ideas in parallels. Two, three, or more statements follow on another to express similar concepts, creating a lyrical effect that conveys both thought and feeling.

The themes of Mary's song are familiar to readers of the Old Testament. Mary adapted traditional expressions of hope in God's promises as she reacted to God's announcement that He was about to fulfill those promises. Mary's song most closely resembles Hannah's prayer of praise after the birth of Samuel.

December 15, 2013

Lesson Title: Zechariah Prophesies about His Son, John

Lesson Scripture: Luke 1:57-80

Print: Luke 1:57, 58, & 87-79

Tentative Devotional Songs: #106[]; #251 []; and #112 []

Key Verse: "You, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins" (Luke 1:76, 77).

This lesson is the zenith to the prophecy of John the Baptist's birth. Zechariah, an elderly, childless priest, had received from God's angel

(Continued on page 16)



Church School Lesson

(Continued from page 15)

a pledge that he would become the father of a son who would announce the fulfillment of God's promises. Zechariah responded with disbelief, as a cautionary sign of judgment, God rendered him unable to speak for a time.

Zechariah's ultimate reaction, like Mary's song, is a poetic expression for praise to God. Employing parallel expressions typical of biblical poetry, Zechariah's song echoes key themes of prophetic promise from Israel's Scriptures. As God had fulfilled His surprising promise that Zechariah would become a father, so God will fulfill His greatest promises for all.

December 22, 2013

Lesson Title: Jesus is Born

Lesson Scripture: Luke 2:1-20

Print: Luke 2:1-17

Tentative Devotional Songs: #120 ☐; 116; and #109 ☐

Key Verses: "She gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them" (Luke 2:7).

The faithful looked to the promises of Scripture for hope. God had promised a great Son of David to rule over His people. He had promised that beyond exile lay restoration, like the exodus of Moses' time. One day the pagan powers would be destroyed, and God would rule supreme over all nations. Through centuries had passed since God gave His promises, the faithful looked beyond the failures of their forefathers and kept their trust in God's promise to take back His world.

These ideas cross with Luke's story of Jesus' birth. The power of Rome is portrayed through its power to tax. We glimpse the oppression of Israel in the poverty of Jesus' family. The promise of God is clear as we hear again of David, whose promised Son is to rule over all

December 29, 2013

Lesson Title: Jesus is Presented in the Temple

Lesson Scripture: Luke 2:21-40

Print: Luke 2:21, 22, & 25-38

Tentative Devotional Songs: #112 ☐; 121; and #122 ☐

Key Verses: "My eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all

Church School Book Club

November 2013

Discussion Date: 23 November
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Tempted by Trouble, Eric Jerome Dickey, 2011

December 2013

Discussion Date: 21 December 13
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Last Noel, Michael Malone, 2003

The Last Noel is a beautiful gift to American fiction. In a deeply touching tale, *The Last Noel* captures the exuberance and poignancy of a lasting friendship between a man and a woman from very different backgrounds. Noni Tilden and Kaye King grow up and grow close as their lives come dramatically together through four decades of tumultuous change in a small southern town.

The story begins in 1963 when Kaye first meets Noni on the eve of their seventh birthdays. On that Christmas Eve, Kaye climbs through her bedroom window to invite her to come sledding with him in a rare southern snowfall. Over the next thirty years on twelve days of Christmas, they meet to share the passion, the sacrifice and the romance of a lifetime.

At once exquisitely written and tearfully joyful, *The Last Noel* is one of the great love stories of our time.

Church School Lesson

nations" (Luke 2:30, 31).

This lesson is set in the Jerusalem temple against the background of the requirements of the Law of Moses. The temple was the center of ancient Israel's worship. In the wilderness just after the exodus from Egypt, God instructed Israel on building a tabernacle for worship. The tabernacle and its successor, the temple, represented God's presence with His people. But as the Israelites descended further and further into sin, no king proved to be the one whose throne God would establish forever.

December 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 COMMUNION 8am Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship AMEN Deadline	2	3 6:00 p.m. Stewardess Board Voices in Praise Rehearsal 6:00 p.m.	4 6:00 p.m. Setai Memorial Service	5 6:00 p.m. Steward Board Gospel Choir Rehearsal	6	7 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry
8 COMMUNION 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship TASTE TEA	9 Fifty Plus Auxiliary 9:30 a.m. 6:00 p.m. Official Board	10 6:00 p.m. Voices in Praise Rehearsal Sons of Allen	11 6:00 p.m. Community Forum "Bad Boys-What You Gonna Do?"	12	13 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	14 8:00 a.m. MEN'S BIBLE STUDY
15 COMMUNION 8:00 a.m. Worship 10:00 a.m. Christmas Program	16	17 11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN 6:00 p.m. Thurs. Board Mtg.	18 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	19 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal PACK HOLIDAY BOXES	20 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal Dance Ministry PACK HOLIDAY BOXES	21 DISTRIBUTE HOLIDAY BOXES
22 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	23 6:00 p.m. Steward Board Gospel Choir Rehearsal	24 11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN 9:30 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service COMMUNION	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28 9:30 a.m. Women's Ministry 10:30 a.m. WMO Meeting
29 COMMUNION 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	30	31 Watch Night Service 10:30 a.m.				

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

Non-profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Huntsville, AL
Permit No. 240

Return Service Requested

E-mail: stjohnameh@aol.com

Website: stjohnamehsv.org

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

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| November 16, 2013 | South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer Planning Meeting,
St. John Huntsville |
| November 20, 2014 | Thankful People Worship Service |
| November 23, 2014 | Prepare Thanksgiving Boxes |
| November 24, 2013 | Bake Sale |
| November 25, 2013 | Distribute Thanksgiving Boxes |
| November 28, 2013 | Thanksgiving Day |

DECEMBER IS YOKE RELEASE MONTH

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| December 4, 2013 | Selah Memorial Service, 6:00 p.m. |
| December 8, 2013 | Taste Tea, after 10:50 am service |
| December 15, 2013 | Christmas Program, 10:00 a.m. |
| December 24, 2013 | Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 6:30 p.m. |
| December 25, 2013 | Christmas Day |

ST. JOHN A.M.E.N NEWSLETTER



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 18 Issue 12

December 2013

*For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder,
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

*Of the increase of His government and peace
There will be no end
Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,
To order it and establish it with judgment and justice
From that time forward, even forever.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.*

Isaiah 9:6-7

*St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church
extends Christmas Greetings to all of our readers.
May God bless you this Christmas Season and
throughout the new year.*

Pastor's Message

Living Free for Advent

Isaiah 9:6-7

In the Ninth District of the AME Church, December is Yoke Release Month. Each week in December, every AME church in Alabama will celebrate Holy Communion. During that celebration all persons are encouraged to write down all of the burdens (or yokes) that they are praying to leave behind in 2013. At the end of the year (at each church's Watch Night service), all of those written burdens will be burned to symbolize their destruction and their inability to go forth into 2014.

Therefore, St. John's mantra for December is "Live Free." This is the theme of Advent. Jesus came to free us from sin (Matthew 1:21). Jesus came that we may have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10).

In keeping with this theme, we have been busy with activities that will help us live in freedom. We had a Selah Memorial Service for departed loved ones connected to our church family. We decided to celebrate these lives so that certain persons in our church family would be able to endure their absence during this season. We also sponsored a Community Forum that focused on bringing better relations between law enforcement and African American youth. Our church concluded a bible study on surviving the tragedies of life (inspired by *Life of Pi*). I am beginning a new bible study with the men of the church this month. Furthermore, we are distributing holiday baskets for those in need this Christmas. In addition, various ministries are doing their part to live free. Some are reaching out by giving various kinds of aid to families in need this season. Other ministries are reaching within by holding Christmas fellowships. We realize that even those closest to us may feel isolated in this time of year. Our year will conclude with two special services: a Christmas Eve candlelight service and a Watch Night service on New Year's Eve.

We will no longer be bound by fear, finances, abusive relationships, addictions, shame, regret, past mistakes, limitations from others, dead end jobs, low living, negative thinking, gossip, lies, betrayal, low self-esteem, insecurities, denial, silence, hatred, and sorrow. With every communion service, we declare that we will live free by God's grace! We intend to lead new lives in love and charity with our neighbors. We will love ourselves. We will love God and trust God's word as true. That truth will set us free (John 8:32). We will celebrate the birth of God's Son on Christmas Eve with the assurance that whom the Son sets free is free indeed (John 8:36). We will burn our "yokes" on New Year's Eve as a symbol that God's anointing will destroy any burden that seeks to block us (Isaiah 10:27). By 2014, we will be FREE!

Live free with us! Live in the freedom of God's love and light. Live in the freedom of God's word. You are the head and not the tail (Deuteronomy 28:13). Jesus does all things well (Mark 7:37). God will make your enemies your footstools (Psalm 110:1). Jesus is with you throughout the ages (Matthew 28:20). Live free from worry, from haters, from despair, from underachieving, from procrastination, from facades, from ignorance, from jealousy, from pride, from drama, from hopelessness, from spiritual starvation, and from confusion.

We invite you to join us for any and all of our freedom activities this month. If you are in the area, we would love to have you with us. If you cannot reach us physically, join us in spirit. Practice freedom along with us. Give God the praise. Be good to yourself. Help those around you. Invite God's Spirit to lead you. For where God's Spirit is, there is freedom (2 Corinthians 3:17)!

To all of you our faithful readership
From the loving family of St. John AME Church

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Pastor Patrick S. Clayborn, Ph.D.

A Christmas Reflection Good News: Jesus is Still Emmanuel

By The Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn

"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." ~ Matthew 1:23 NRSV

It's the most wonderful time of the year... the time of year that people anticipate all year long. Gift giving/receiving, parties, socials, fellowships, food, trimming the tree, and vacationing comprise just a short list of what many people look forward to during the Christmas season. After all, what better way is there to end the year?

While I have always loved Christmas, I must say that the older I get (and prayerfully the wiser) the more I value the Emmanuel in Christmas. All of the other "stuff" is nice, but it is not primary. Most of it is not even secondary. It is amazing how living life has the ability to change a person's perspective. Life helps us see more clearly what is most important during this season.

I find great joy- joy unspeakable- in knowing that Jesus is still Emmanuel. He did not cease to be Emmanuel after His naming or once people started to laud praises upon Him. Jesus is still Emmanuel. He is still the One who walks with us, talks with us, and reminds us that we are His own. He is still the One who is able to be with us no matter where we are and no matter what circumstances in which we find ourselves.

While the most wonderful time of the year is often filled with the stressors of life: the stress of what others think you should be able to do, what you feel you should do, what you want to do, and the reality of what really is...Emmanuel. While family continues to go through the issues of being family...Emmanuel. While sickness looms...Emmanuel. While furloughs and government shut-downs are seemingly on the horizon...Emmanuel. While fear tries to keep you from releasing the yoke that has had you bound for many years or maybe just this year...Emmanuel. While you ponder, "What's next?"...Emmanuel. While you grieve what used to be and at the same time anticipate what shall be...Emmanuel. Jesus continues to send the reminder to each one of us that He is still Emmanuel...God With US! And that is GOOD NEWS!

Just in case this is not *the most wonderful time of the year* for you, hold on to what many of us are holding on to...Jesus...Emmanuel... God is with us! While the season may hold its difficulties and concerns, it still holds great wonder just because of Emmanuel.





Advent Puts the "Joy" back into, "Joy to The World"

By Barbara Johnson

The new retail store Christmas catalog arrived yesterday. It was slick, with all the trappings of the holiday shopping season. There were big glossy, photo shopped pictures of lovely families around the tree with tons of beautifully wrapped presents on Christmas morning. I was in the grocery store the other day and before I knew it, I was humming along to "Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow." It was not even Thanksgiving and the public was being bombarded with Christmas shopping ideas, Christmas music, Pre-Black Friday sales, before Christmas sales and stores opening after Thanksgiving dinner sales. One cannot help but feel like Charlie Brown in *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, when he laments to his friend Unus, "Is there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?"

Sometimes, the true meaning of Christmas can get lost in the fray of shopping, decorating and the busyness of life. That is why Advent is so special. It causes one to "pump the brakes," stop for a moment and really become cognizant of the true meaning of Christmas. For the four Sundays before Christmas, the church will be exploring Advent and deepening its understanding of Christmas.



In 1986, Mrs. Anita Burns (a.k.a. Momma Neet) wanted to implement a new tradition at St. John to bring about a more sincere appreciation for Christmas. Momma Neet was a Stewardess, and suggested that the Stewardess Board take the lead with this project. The Advent Wreath was secured, the readings were printed and presentations were arranged for the four Sundays leading up to Christmas and for Christmas morning service. The Advent service has been observed at St. John since it was first initiated by Momma Neet. It continues to inspire and implore the congregation to think past the pretty presents, the glitz and the glamor of Christmas, and really embrace the true meaning of Christmas...the birth of the Savior of the World. This is His birthday.

To gain a richer understanding of Advent, you must understand the meanings of the symbols of Advent. The preparation for Christ's coming is enriched by the symbolism of the Advent Wreath. The purpose of the wreath is to heighten the understanding of Christmas. The circular wreath of green symbolizes the everlasting life found in Christ. The wreath reminds believers of the eternal, unchanging love of God, made evident to them through His Son. The candles on the wreath signify God's Son as the light of the world. The three purple candles represent love, hope, and peace. The pink candle represents joy. The white candle is the Christ Candle and is lit on Christmas morning (or Christmas Eve), symbolizing His entrance into the world. The readings and songs are just reminders that Christmas is Love, Hope, Peace and the Joy of Jesus in the Christian life.

So, when we see the Advent Wreath, it is a reminder of the Love, Hope, Peace and Joy Christmas brings to us all in the form of a baby, born on Christmas morning.

Happy Birthday Jesus!



The Low Family lights candle on first Sunday in Advent.



The Hadley Family lights candle on second Sunday in Advent.

Fifty-Plus Auxiliary Led Annual Harvest Sunday

By Clifton Miller

On November 10, 2013, the Fifty-Plus Auxiliary led St. John in observing the Annual Harvest Celebration at the 10:50 a.m. worship service. It was a spirit-filled celebration with members of the Auxiliary performing worship tasks throughout the service. Music was led by the Gospel Choir and the Dance Ministry ministered in dance. As this was the Sunday before Veterans Day, a special tribute to veterans was given by Lt. Col. Felicia Carter. The Reverend Meriam Garrett is president of the Fifty-Plus Auxiliary.

The guest preacher for this occasion was the Reverend Doctor Keith Donaldson D. Lawrence of Global EmPOWERment Ministries of Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. Lawrence is a native of Trinidad, West Indies. He was called to ministry and ordained in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church at the young age of 18. His late mother, Mrs. Lena Simeon Lawrence who was also an ordained minister, is largely responsible for Dr. Lawrence's exposure to ministry and spiritual nourishing. Dr. Lawrence earned his Doctor of Ministry degree at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio.

With his infectious smile and calm disposition, Dr. Lawrence delivered a fiery message that was biblically based, spiritually inspiring, and well received.

Thanks to everyone who participated and attended this wonderful program. To God be the glory!



Fifty-Plus President, the Reverend Meriam Garrett



Mrs. Ezell gives the invocation.



Music was rendered by the Gospel Choir.



Dr. Lawrence delivers the message.

Women's Ministry Tidbits!

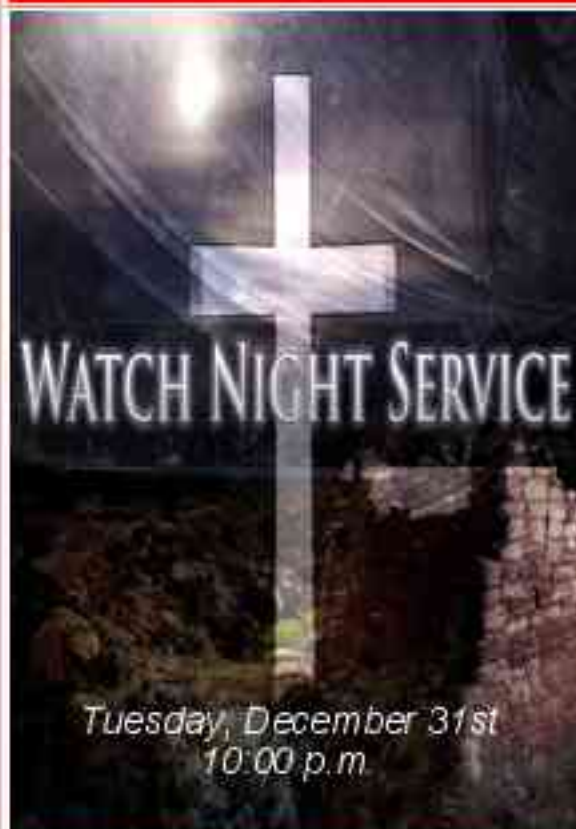
During this Holy Season, Lord help us to show the world the love You've enveloped us in. Allow us to be a reflection of Your light, so that it may shine on all who come into contact with us. In the Name of Christ, the Newborn Child, we pray.

- Amen



Join us for the
9th Annual
Candlelight
Christmas Eve Service

on Thursday, December 26, at 6:00 p.m.



WATCH NIGHT SERVICE

Tuesday, December 31st
10:00 p.m.

A Message from the Soup Kitchen

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

A SEASON FOR EVERYTHING

"To everything there is a season,"
- Ecclesiastes 3:1

Did you know that the last line of the song "Turn! Turn! Turn!" used the lyrics from the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes? "To everything there is a season," proclaims the writer of Ecclesiastes, "a time for every purpose under the heaven" (3:1). He then lists some of the seasons in human experience: birth and death, gain and loss, tears and laughter, mourning and dancing. Just as the seasons in nature change, so do the seasons in our lives. Our circumstances never stay the same for long. As Christians, we are thankful that God does not change. "I am the Lord," He said through the prophet Malachi. "I do not change." (Mal. 3:6)

When we think of the homeless and the hungry, things for them do not seem to change. Many seem lost in endless misery and despair. We are then reminded that the true story of Christmas is more than Angels and Shepherds. We must not remain beside the manger, but understand that each of us has the opportunity and obligation to dive into the world and rescue those exhausted by their need and despair.

Continue to seek a different "season" for those in need. Soup kitchen will be held the third Tuesday of December, and resume the regular schedule during the New Year. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the Food Services Ministry.

Eliminating Stress During the Holiday Session

By Rosemary Wells



Welcome to the holiday season-that whirlwind of gift-giving holidays, marketing blitzes, holiday parties and activities galore that begin right after Halloween, builds to Thanksgiving, and continues gaining momentum through the end of the year!

While this season is meant to bring feelings of love, peace and joy, it's also the harbinger of holiday stress and depression for many. Stress and depression can ruin your holidays and hurt your health.

Stress is what one feels when they have to handle more than normal. When stressed, the body responds as though one is in danger. It makes hormones that speed up the heart, makes one breathe faster, and gives a burst of energy. This is called the fight-or-flight response. Some stress is normal and even useful. Stress can help one work hard or react quickly. For example, it can help win a race or finish an important job on time. But if stress happens too often or lasts too long, it can have bad effects. It can be linked to headaches, an upset stomach, back pain, heart disease (including heart attacks) and even trouble sleeping. It can weaken the immune system, making it harder to fight off disease. If a person already has a health problem, stress may make it worse. It can make one moody, tense or depressed. Relationships may suffer and one may not do well at work or school.

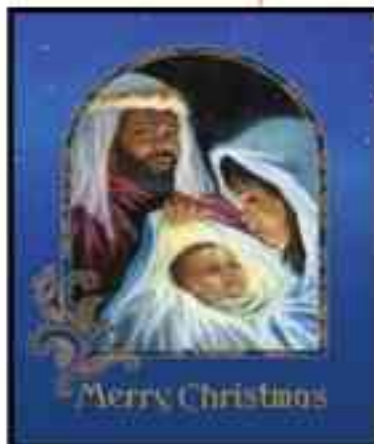
When the holiday to-do-list stretches longer than Santa Claus' beard, eliminate whatever is unnecessary. Planning ahead can prevent last minute scrambling to buy forgotten items or trying to find that perfect gift!

"Do all things in moderation," as the saying goes. Too many activities, even if they are fun activities, can cause too much holiday stress and leave one feeling frazzled, rather than fulfilled. When holiday shopping, one should decide how much they can afford to spend and then stick to the budget. Do not try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts!

Being alone during the holidays can lead to feelings of loneliness and depression. In order to prevent being alone, try seeking out community, religious or other events during the holidays. Volunteering time to help others is also a good way to lift spirits and broaden friendships!

Learn to say "NO". Saying yes when one should say no can leave them feeling resentful and overwhelmed.

Do not abandon healthy habits during the holidays! Overindulgence only adds to stress and guilt! Take a breather. Make some time for oneself! Take a long walk at night and stargaze! Listen to some soothing music! Find something that reduces stress by clearing the mind, slowing the breathing and restoring inner calm! Remembering "the reason for the season" and prayer always helps!



**Have a Blessed Holiday Season
and a Prosperous
and Healthy New Year!**

Seventeenth Annual Taste Tea Highlights the Season

By Bridget J. Floyd

The A.M.E. Newsletter Staff's sponsored the Seventeenth Annual Taste Tea on Sunday, December 8th, after the 10:50 a.m. worship service. The St. John Family came through, as usual, by bringing delicious food. The Young People's Department (YPD) members did an admirable job as servers for the event. The AMEN staff members began the day before in staging and decorating the Fellowship Hall in preparation for the Taste Tea. There were new members who contributed for the first time as well as those who can be counted on each year to bring one or more dishes and/or make delicious punch to augment the main dishes, appetizers, side dishes and desserts. Those who helped with set up and decorations and other strategic factors were invaluable. Editor, Ms. Nedra McDaniel, demonstrated great creativity in decorating.

This year the Staff expressed appreciation for contributors by having a drawing for prizes. A presentation was made at each worship service and several were drawn during the Taste Tea. Young Patrick Clayborn II gave an able assist as he drew the names of the recipients in each of the worship services.

Cookbooks were (and are still) available for \$10 each. They make a great gift for any occasion! Contact any staff member to make a purchase.

If you forgot to submit your recipe, you may e-mail it to bjfloyd229@aol.com or nedra.mcdaniel@gmail.com. Recipes will be published in the 2014 edition of the newsletter.

The coordinators, Mrs. Claire Philadelphia and this writer, would like to express appreciation to AMEN editor, Ms. Nedra McDaniel; other AMEN staff members; the YPD (coordinator, Mrs. Yvonne Sanderson); and the St. John Family for contributing from set up to clean up, and especially coming to "have a taste of St. John."



Seventeenth Annual Taste Tea Highlights the Season

By Bridget J. Floyd



Church School Lesson Overview – January 2014

This month's Church School Lesson reviews were written by Willie J. Sandifer.



January 5, 2014

Lesson Title: Living with Justice and Mercy

Lesson Scripture: Luke 6:1-47

Print: Luke 6:1-11

Devotional Songs: #437 [], #272 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "Jesus said to them, 'I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save life or to destroy it?' (Luke 6:9).

Application: To see God's rationale for giving the Sabbath Day to man.

This lesson puts Jesus in the spotlight in providing random acts of kindness that address human needs: hunger and health. The intent of the Sabbath was not to restrict and bind our actions of goodwill toward one another. Jesus' critics refused to acknowledge this self-evident theological truth and instead allowed a formalistic view to the Sabbath to cloud their thinking.

The message communicated by the Lord is clear: serve your fellow man with freedom and dignity or be bound with ritualistic rules that deprive us of a close understanding with our creator. If we choose to make helping people a New Year's resolution, we will be fulfilling our duty of being agents of justice and mercy.

January 12, 2014

Lesson Title: Living Justly with Others

Lesson Scripture: Luke 6:17-36

Print: Luke 6:17-31

Devotional Songs: #525 [], #251 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you" (Luke 6:27).

Application: To see specific examples for Christian conduct.

In this lesson we look at Luke's version of the "Sermon On The Mount." While differing in minor details with Matthew's version, the two sermons resonate the same theme of living justly with others. The sermons were both preached from a hillside overlooking the Sea of Galilee soon after the disciples were selected. The sermon laid the foundation for both Jesus' Disciples-in-Training Program and for a new covenant between God and God's people.

Jesus establishes the poor as legitimate members of God's Kingdom and it belongs to them! Poor people have so little in the world. But now they have access to God's secret Jesus said that God's Kingdom is theirs, not only in the future, but here and now. They can know God's rule in their lives. He will guide them. He will care for them.

January 19, 2014

Lesson Title: Jesus Teaches about Humility

Lesson Scripture: Luke 14:7-24

Print: Luke 14:7-18A, 22-24

Tentative Devotional Songs: #381 [], #258 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted" (Luke 14:11).

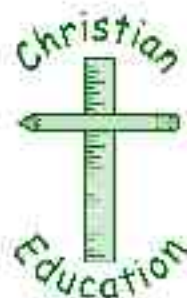
Application: To consider what changes we need to make in order to be like Jesus.

In this lesson we relook at social protocols concerning how we should carry ourselves in public settings. Jesus used an instructive forum to relate the importance of humility, social inclusion, and casting a wide net when one hosts dinners. Our attitude is the key point and determines how real one is when one welcomes others into our homes.

Jesus was very concerned that His followers understood the rules of spiritual etiquette. The parables provided in Luke 14 make this point resonate within us. Honor, Humility, and Hospitality summarize the rules of spiritual etiquette.

Jesus utilized a radical idea of honor. Conventionally noteworthy persons would be recognized by being seated in special places of honor, usually in the front. Jesus stressed that His followers should not immediately move to the front but instead should find a seat at the back and allow the host to invite them up to the front. This is important because if one were seated in the front, the host may shame the person by asking him/her to move to a less prestigious place in order to make room for someone of higher status. The seating order is designed to reinforce the principle of humility.

(Continued on page 11)



Church School Lesson

(Continued from page 10)

January 26, 2014

Lesson Title: Compassion for the Poor

Lesson Scripture: Luke 16

Print: Luke 16:19-31

Tentative Devotional Songs: #221 []; 77; and #243 []

Key Verses: "Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much" (Luke 16:10).

Application: To create an awareness of the stewardship that comes with the grace of God.

In this lesson we uncover basic teachings about personal responsibility and wealth. We also take a look at the causes and consequences of economic inequality. Jesus exhibits a brilliant command of economic theory by complimenting economic resourcefulness of the unjust steward, by describing the true value of money and by demystifying the problem of wealth redistribution in the parables of Lazarus and Dives.

The Pharisees were among the chief adversaries to Jesus' ministry and teachers. Using the traditional Jewish question and answer teaching method, they tried through their questions to shame, ridicule, and discount Jesus' authority to usher in a new spiritual dispensation. Jesus presents a series of discourses on financial matters; using one's wealth not to obtain or to boost one's ego, power, or to flaunt one's success; but wisely to help those in need.



**AME
Proud**

The Doctrine and Discipline
of the
African Methodist Episcopal Church 2012

Be informed about the doctrine and discipline of your church.

You may purchase a copy of The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2012 from the church office. The cost is \$30. This book is updated every four years to reflect the adopted legislature and actions of the General Conference.

Church School Book Club

December 2013

Discussion Date: 21 December 13
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Last Noel, Michael Malone, 2003

January 2014

Discussion Date: 18 January 14
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Time Keeper, Mitch Albom, 2012

Time - whether it's too much or too little - and how it's handled by fallible humans is the subject of best-selling author Mitch Albom's latest, "The Time Keeper." Just as with his other hits - "Tuesdays with Morrie," "Have a Little Faith," "One More Day" and "The Five People You Meet in Heaven," his novel is a thought provoker, urging readers to find the depth in his simple, yet imaginative writings. He has once again taken a simple theme and created an inspirational tale that lingers in the mind long after the last page is read.

Time is first noticed 600,000 years ago by Dor, an ordinary man with an extraordinary need to count, measure and bring order to his days. He is the first man on earth to count hours, literally becoming Father Time. Rather than embracing time as a gift from God, Dor challenges Him when his wife dies.

Dor is banished to a cave when voices rise up from a pool as they ask, plead and demand more time. Centuries have passed, and Dor doesn't have the spiritual strength to take much more. God agrees to free him if he can help two people, a teenage girl named Sarah and an elderly man, Victor, embrace the true meaning of time. Armed with a magical hourglass, Dor travels through time into today's society.

Mitch Albom provides enough detail at crucial points in the story to inform the reader of the driving themes of two other supporting characters, Sarah and Victor, who are plagued with being bound by time. Along with Dor, they are all prisoners of the same device. Only when the protagonist frees Dor, does Dor begin to understand the sentence and the meaning of the very thing he invented. He is a slave, perhaps in Plato's Cave, where he is only exposed to the shadows of thoughts and reality from outside the cave.

Kids Watching the Huntsville Christmas Parade

By Pam Whitehead



Here is a cute candid photo of some of the St. John kids watching the Christmas Parade from St. John's parking lot after Christmas Program Practice on Saturday, December 7. Kids in the photo are Kennedy Rankin Crutcher, Jordan Patterson, Jayla Mack, Janise Williams, Kimberly Whitehead, Anthony Mack, Eddie Whitehead, Jr., and Jared Burns.

DECEMBER

Yoke Release Month

From December 1-31 members will write on a sheet of paper those things they will not take into 2014. On Watch Night, the papers will be burned to literally burn the past negatives. Also, each week during the month of December, Holy Communion will be served. This will emphasize the true meaning of Holy Communion and serve as a reminder of the great sacrifice given for believers to have this blessing.

The observance of Yoke Release month will end on January 2, 2014, because it is the first Sunday in the new year. At that time, Holy Communion will again be served as a symbol of God's promise of relief from bondage, and to renew the covenant with Almighty God to start afresh.

Church Conference Set for December 31

Church Conference will be held at 8 pm on Tuesday, December 31. A light fellowship meal will be served at 9 pm, followed by Watch Night Service at 10 pm.

Invitation to the Party

By Paulette Bargon



I do not know how old I was when I learned the real meaning of Christmas. It was not about Santa bringing toys, but it was the day Jesus was born. My grandma (mamma) stated, "it is His birthday and we are having a party."

On Christmas Eve the family would read "The Night Before Christmas" story and the Bible story about the night that Christ was born. All kinds of visitors would come over, some would stay just long enough to give her a little gift and get a sip of eggnog (the kind that I was not allowed to drink) and some would stay all evening. Christmas Day was the real celebration. Family, friends, church members and neighbors would come over and the merriment began. We had so much fun. My sister and I had to go visit my other grandparents, who only lived a few streets over, but we could not wait to get back to mamma's house. It was so joyful.

What I did not know until I got older was that mamma was calling everyone well before Christmas day to invite them over. She felt no one should be alone during Christmas day. She wanted to make sure they had someplace to go on Jesus' Birthday.

So if you know a person or family who recently lost a loved one, invite them to the party. That person who has lost the spirit to live, you know who they are, invite them to the party. That family "dope head," invite them to the party. Go get Aunt Hattie from the nursing home, that wheel chair will fit right in your trunk. Even invite your cousin Bae Bae and her bad kids. We can all get along for a few hours.

Do not forget to invite the most important person to the celebration, the Lord, Jesus Christ Himself. He is always the life of the party!

Go and celebrate with food and a choice of sweet drinks and share gifts of food with people who have nothing prepared. This is a sacred day before our Lord, don't be dejected and sad, for the joy of the Lord is your strength!

Nehemiah 8:10

January 2014

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 New Year's Day	2 6:00 p.m. Steward Board	3	4 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal 10:00 a.m. Official Board
5 COMMUNION 8:00 a.m. Worship 10:00 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship AMEN Deadline	6 9:30 a.m. Fifty Plus Auxiliary	7 6:00 p.m. Voices In Praise Rehearsal Stewardess Board	8 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	9 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	10	11 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 10:30 a.m. AMES Meeting
12 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	13	14 6:00 p.m. Sons of Allen Voices In Praise Rehearsal	15 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	16 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	17 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	18 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 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 MLK DAY	21 11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN 6:00 p.m. Turkey Board Mtg	22 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	23 6:00 p.m. Mass Choir Rehearsal	24 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	25 9:30 a.m. Women's Ministry 10:30 a.m. VWBO Meeting
26 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	27 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	28 11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN 6:00 p.m. Church School Board Mtg	29 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study Love Feast	30 6:00 p.m. Mass Choir Rehearsal	31	

POTPOURRI

Pray for our Sick & Shut-ins

Susie Akin

Gwendolyn Baldwin

Jason Brown

Altonette Burks

Mildred Hereford

Evelyn Hildreth

Ada Houston

Robert Hyder

James Jamar

Ernest Jones

Lorene Jones

Idell Merrell

Carver Myhand

Pray for our sick and shut-in.

About St. John Members



Congratulations to Daishy Dupri T. Joseph on graduation from basic training on November 8th in Great Lakes, IL. Daishy is the daughter of Specialist Jewel S. James, niece of Lula Rochelle and Lillie Rivers, and granddaughter to the late Benita Jackson. Daishy is now stationed in Pensacola, Florida. Congratulations, Daishy!



Congratulations to Cassie Nicole Shropshire on her graduation from Alabama A&M University with a Master of Science degree in Counseling Psychology and Rehabilitation Counseling. Congratulations Cassie!

Go Green Tips for Christmas

Here are a few suggestions for saving on gift wrapping this year:

- save and reuse wrapping paper - most conventional giftwrap is not recyclable
- when giving oversized gifts, like bicycles or CD racks, just tie a bow around the box.
- buy rechargeable batteries for electronic gifts
- instead of wrapping gifts, hide presents, plant clues and have a treasure hunt!

Prayer Time

Join us for Weekly Prayer Time each Tuesday at 6:00 am

Conference Call Credentials
US Toll Number (530) 881-1212
Meeting ID: 876-863-940
For smart Phone Speed Dialing:
5308811212, 876863940

If you are not able to join the call at 6:00 am, you may listen to the playback any time

Playback Number (530) 881-1219
Meeting Id 876-863-940

Press # to ignore any requests for reference number when calling for playback.

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

Non-profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Huntsville, AL
Permit No. 240

Return Service Requested

E-mail: stjohnameh@aol.com

Website: stjohname-hsv.org

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

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| December 24, 2013 | Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 6:30 p.m. |
| December 25, 2013 | Christmas Day |
| December 31, 2013 | Church Conference, 8 p.m.
Fellowship Meal, 9 p.m.
Watch Night Service, 10 p.m. |
| January 20, 2014 | Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. 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

