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



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 20 Issue 1

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Pastor Patrick D. Clayborn, Ph.D.

Pastor's Message

Building Dreams in 2015

Nehemiah 4:6

As we begin a new year, it is time for many of us to build our dreams. If you have worked faithfully on the dreams of others - if you have given your life and work to God - if you are open to the will, word, and move of God in your life, it is time for you to bring your dream into reality.

What is a dream? In Penelope A. Lewis' *The Secret World of Sleep: The Surprising Science of the Mind at Rest*, she states, "Almost by definition, a dream is something you are aware of at some level. It may be fragmentary, disconnected, and illogical, but if you aren't aware of it during sleep then it isn't a dream."¹ She concludes by noting that "there's no universally accepted definition of dreaming. One fairly safe catch-all is 'all perceptions, thoughts, or emotions experienced during sleep.'"²

What is the purpose of a dream? Lewis points to several notions but places most of her emphasis here: "It is clear that dreams not only replay memory fragments but also create brand-new, highly creative mixtures of memories and knowledge. This process has led to the creation of many works of literature, art, and science...."³ She completes this thought in this manner: "Although we don't quite understand how dreams achieve this type of innovative recombination of material, it seems clear that the sleeping brain is somehow freed of constraints and can thus create whole sequences of free associations. This is not only useful for creativity, it is also thought to facilitate insight and problem solving."⁴

With Lewis' physiological description of a dream, let us describe a dream from a spiritual perspective. A dream is God's communication to us. It is that thing that will not let us go, that is always with us and is always nudging us. The dream will not give us rest until we heed it. The dream will not let us settle until we focus on it. As long as we ignore the dream, the dream will make us uncomfortable. We are aware of the dream!

In dreams, the constraints are removed. We are free to fully hear God and fully free to receive from God. This is the place where the fullest parts of us are explored and brought forth. The dream is that place where our destiny is defined and our life's work is highlighted.

2015 is the year of dream building! Unfortunately, many have done little work toward their dreams and have become discouraged. Do not let your dreams go, sit, or die! See Langston Hughes' poem "Dreams."

(Continued on page 2)

¹Lewis, Penelope A. (2013-08-27). *The Secret World of Sleep: The Surprising Science of the Mind at Rest* (MacSci) (p.81). St. Martin's Press. Kindle Edition.

²Ibid., p.82.

³Ibid., p.96

⁴Ibid.

Pastor's Message

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*Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.
Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.*

What a shame it would be for us to have broken wings in 2015. How frustrating it would be if our production in 2015 is similar to an empty, frozen field. Dreams tell us what we are made to do. Not doing those things is akin to eliminating the core of who we are.

I realize that we often succumb to the fear of failure! Yet, the bible is clear: dreams can be built if we put our minds to it. Nehemiah and the Israelites got the wall built to half its height because the people had a MIND to work! This is the year where we must set our intentions. Let us set our minds to work. Let us put our aim on God's word for our lives and do that WORK! If we keep our mind on the task and let our actions follow, our dreams will be built.

Some of us are afraid because the dream is too big! If it is small, then it is not a dream. If you can do it on your own, it is not a dream. We will need God for the dream. We will have to rely on God's wisdom and strength. Therefore, build your dream – even if it is big.

In building dreams, there are certain steps we must follow.

Be cognizant of opposition. When we dare to build our dreams opposing spirits will arise! Sanballat and Tobiah came against Nehemiah. Now, there is nothing wrong with being challenged or critiqued constructively. However, this kind of opposition is out to destroy! Be careful. They are all talk until the dream begins to form. When the gaps in the wall started closing, Sanballat and Tobiah started plotting. As we build our dreams this year and the gaps in our lives begin to close, our opposition will rise up. They will see the holes in our lives getting plugged up. When they do, they will start plotting. While they plot, we may experience fatigue and chaos. The Israelites got weary and found much rubbish around the wall (to the point where it stopped their work). When this happens, we must move to the next step.

Reposition ourselves. Nehemiah realigned the men with their families, told them to keep their weapons at hand, encouraged them not to fear, commanded them to remember God, and mandated that they be ready to fight. They repositioned their relationships, their posture, their emotions, their faith, and their fight. This is going to be a year of repositioning for many of us. We will have to sever some relationship and establish new ones. They will be our family in this season. We will have to rearrange our posture. We will have to keep our hands on our spiritual weapons of prayer, fasting, worship, bible study, praise, service, forgiveness and love. We must reposition our emotions and cast out fear. We do that by repositioning our faith. Remember who God is! God is great and awesome! If God be for us, who can be against us? Therefore, we can reposition our fight. Knowing that God is on our side readies us to fight with confidence. With that repositioned expectation, we can follow the last step.

Return to wall. Nehemiah went back to the wall to build because the enemies' plot was uncovered. We can continue to build our dreams this year because God will take away the element of surprise. We can return to the wall with maturity and new knowledge. Though some of us did not build (or fully build) our dreams last year, we can return to the dream with what we learned along the way. Some of us learned that we – like Nehemiah and the Israelites – have to keep our weapons close to our building utensils. We must be ready to fight and to build at a moment's no-

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St. John's Christmas Program The Story of Love

By Tawanda Buford

On December 14, 2014, at the 9:00 AM hour, St. John observed its Christmas Program titled "The Story of Love," coordinated by Sister Mary Rankin and Sister Sherrill Humphrey. Daniel Haygood opened up the program with a heartfelt welcome and inspirational prayer as he reminded the congregation of the abundant love God has for His children.



Ms. Humphrey tells inspiring story.



Daniel offers the opening prayer.

The "Story of Love" was attributed to John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life."

Sister Sherrill Humphrey provided an opening message telling an inspiring story regarding a young boy named Daniel who belonged to an orphanage and did not have as much as his fellow school mates. However, one of the gifts that he possessed was more precious than gold, and a gift greater than frankincense. His gift was Joy to the World and a brand new family tree. Her inspirational story made all realize that God loves us no matter the situation and despite our imperfections, He continues to love us without a pause.

The children of St. John graciously marched down the aisle as the congregation sang, "Angels We Have Heard On High." They presented "A Christmas Alphabet Poem" as each child came forth in order from A - Z to recite their speech and bible verse. It was amazing to see future leaders of tomorrow perform such a splendid program and they brought the congregation to their feet.

The St. John Worship Ensemble harmoniously performed "The Love Medley" as they rendered songs of God's Love, while members of the dance team performed. The songs performed were definitely soul stirring as they praised God for His everlasting love. As the program continued, Sister Sharon Hicks eloquently sang an anointed operatic version of "O Holy Night." Lastly, the Children and Gospel Choirs joined together in singing "I'll Give Him My Heart," led by Little Miss Jasmyne Rochelle.

The program ended with Sister Sherrill Humphrey providing her closing inspiration which was a continuance of her story, "The Story of Love." Accolades were extended to the musicians, soloist, coordinators, youth, parents, and loving helping hands (those who provided assistance) for making the program a huge success.

St. John's Christmas Program The Story of Love

By Tawanda Buford



2014 Advent Service *Be Still and Know that I am God.*

By Barbara Johnson

There were many distractions during the month of December; protests in Ferguson, grand jury hearings in New York, heightened terrorists' threats, falling gas prices and the constant advertisements calling shoppers to "shop until they dropped" from the wee hours of the morning until very late at night. How could you, how would you turn it off? During the Advent season we were challenged to open ourselves to God's loving Spirit. We were challenged to be still and welcome the true meaning of Christmas. While our world maintained a hectic pace at Christmas time, we had an opportunity to quiet our bodies, minds, and spirits, helping us to prepare for Jesus' birth.

It was a challenge to be still. We had many demands on our time. This was particularly true during Advent. We may have felt distracted, depleted, and even disconnected from God. Yet, Advent was the perfect opportunity to be still and listen for God's still, small voice calling us to prepare for the coming of our Savior's glorious gift of love on Christmas day. One reason we found it difficult to be still was that we feared the silence. In the quiet we heard our pain and sin, and that of the world. It was important to take time in Advent to recognize this pain. We came to understand how sin had devastated our world and how much we needed a savior. As we sat in stillness with our sin and suffering, something marvelous happened: we began to recognize that we were not alone. We heard God's words of love and assurance and realized God had been present with us all along, even in the darkness. Our hope was renewed. The more time we spent being still the more we experienced God's deep love for us. Where previously we were too busy to notice, now we saw signs of God's presence everywhere. We understood that God was preparing us to receive the most profound expression of love — in Jesus Christ. Hallelujah! Jesus is born! We recognized him as God's perfect expression of love for us. He is Emmanuel — God with us. We CAN be still and know that He is God.



Dance Ministry members Mariah Gullatt and Jennifer Patterson participate in candle lighting ceremony.



The Bradford and Washington families participate in the advent candle lighting during Black Lives Matter Service.

Preparation for Christ's coming was enriched by the symbolism of the Advent Wreath. The circular wreath of green symbolized the everlasting life found in Christ. The wreath reminded us of the eternal, unchanging love of God, made evident to us through His Son. The candles on the wreath signified God's Son as the light of the world. The three purple candles represented hope, love and peace. The pink candle represented joy, the joy we all should have felt knowing that the savior had come in the form of a baby to save the world. The white candle was the Christ Candle and was lit on Christmas Eve.

Summary of the 2014 Advent readings by Kristen E. Vincent.

"Jesus the Light of the World" Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

By Paula Bliard



St John AME family and friends congregated at 8 pm on Christmas Eve for the Annual Candlelight Christmas Eve Service.

The worship leader was the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn. Music was led by the Praise Team and members of the Naomi Council participated in the order of worship. Sister Charlie Brooks and Sister Eva Smith presented the Advent reading, prayer and lighting of the Christ Candle. Sister Sharon Hicks delivered a stunning performance of "O Holy Night."

Pastor Clayborn delivered the message entitled "Promises." The text was from Luke Chapter 2, in its entirety. He spoke on the birth of Jesus and the fulfillment of the Divine Promise. He also expressed how believers are included in that promise.

Communion was served and the service concluded with everyone lighting their candles and the singing of Christmas carols.



Pastor's Message

(Continued from page 2)

tice. Some of us learned that we have to keep a different schedule. We cannot become predictable because that keeps the opposition off balance in trying to forecast our direction. Finally, we can go back to building our dream in the midst of opposition with the promise: God will fight for us (Nehemiah 4:20)!

Let us build our dreams in 2015. In so doing, we will set aside time for prayer and fasting this month. Each Wednesday (January 14, 21, 28 at noon and 8PM) we will have prayer meeting. We will also be fasting those days. We are fasting from the thing, person, or habit that keeps us from being close to God. For church leaders and for those who want more, we will have two additional fast days (January 29, 30). We are setting the tone for this year. We are putting our hands on our weapons – prayer and fasting. We are seeking to get closer to God so that our dreams can be clarified and that our hearts may be purified. We are using the time in this first month to ready ourselves to build our dreams. Please join us. Set your intention on God's will for your life and join us in building your dreams.

As we build our dreams, we are required to remember the dreams of our ancestors. This month we celebrate the 86th birthday of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Let us remember his dream of freedom and justice for all persons. Remember his dream of tearing down barriers to genuine love and respect between people. Remember his dream of economic empowerment for African Americans. Remember his dream of peace instead of violence. Remember his dream of ending racial discrimination. As we build our dreams, let us never forget Dr. King's dream of hope and healing for this world. To keep that dream in our minds, some of our church members went to see the movie *Selma*. We had a wonderful time. Before this month ends, the youth will be going as well. Special thanks to Dr. Darrell Ezell who proposed this outing and donated a host of tickets. We also thank Brother Sam Walton for donating several tickets for our youth to attend.

By revisiting Dr. King's dream, I pray that our dreams will be reinvigorated. I pray that our strength will be heightened. I pray that our expectations will be lifted. I pray that our spirits will be firm. I pray that our minds will be focused on building the dream God gives us. Let this be our year to build dreams!

Eighteenth Annual Taste Tea Emphasizes "Christmas Joy"

By Bridget Floyd



The A.M.E. Newsletter Staff sponsored the Eighteenth Annual Taste Tea on Sunday, December 14, 2014. It was held in the Fellowship Hall after the 10 a.m. worship service. This year featured a theme, "Christmas Joy" and the decoration theme was that of a "winter wonderland" with snowflakes, blue

and white decorations, snowmen, and accents of red and green. Mrs. Mary Rankin decorated a bulletin board that featured the taste tea and theme. Mr. Bill Williams, vice chair of the Trustee Board, worked with Mr. Darwin Washington and other staff members to set up the Fellowship Hall to have fabric, snowflakes, and other effects, hang from the ceiling.

The St. John Family again participated fully by bringing a wide range of delicious food and sampling that which was provided. The Young People's Department (YPD) members did an outstanding job of serving so graciously. Beautiful Christmas music enhanced the ambiance of the transformed Fellowship Hall.

There were lots of desserts, as well as appetizers, salads, side dishes and vegetables, and numerous entrées and casseroles. There were two choices of punch. There was positive feedback about the tasty food and the decorations.

There were new AMEN Staff members who stepped right in as if they had been doing this for years. There also were new St. John members who brought dishes and embraced the taste tea fully. Young Master Patrick Clayborn II repeated his assistance in drawing for prizes for those who brought dishes. An "alumnus" of the Taste Tea, Kyle Speight, assisted in many areas as he was home from college and interestingly began helping with the Taste Tea when he was the age of young Patrick.

There were several people who volunteered to help who were not affiliated with the staff and they are greatly appreciated. Whether it was helping with decorating, bringing serving dishes and decorations, or volunteering for the "clean-up crew", the assistance is appreciated more than might be realized. A special note of appreciation is extended to the youth member of the AMEN Staff, Ms. Mariah Gullatte, who suggested having a theme; and to Editor, Ms. Nedra McDaniel, who selected the inspiration scene of "Christmas Joy", and brought it to life in the Fellowship Hall. Many may have viewed the display of the inspiration scene in the Fellowship Hall (courtesy of Mr. Washington) and the bulletin board reflected that winter wonderland as well.

Taste Tea coordinators, Ms. Claire Philadelphia and this writer wish to express deep appreciation for the efforts of the AMEN Newsletter Staff, the YPD, and everyone who played a role in making the Taste Tea a success. Thank you to Pastor Clayborn and Executive Minister Smith Clayborn for their support as well.

Recipes that were not submitted at the Taste Tea may be e-mailed to bifloyd229@aol.com or nedra.modaniel@gmail.com. Recipes will be published in the 2015 edition of the newsletter.

Cookbooks are available for \$10 each. They make a great gift for any occasion! Contact any staff member to make a purchase.



Taste Tea

By Bridget Floyd



The Promise Land Necessitates Sacrifice

By Chauncey Spears

As we think and reflect on the days leading up to Lent next month, I am reminded of the concept of sacrifice. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in his famous "Mountaintop" Speech, his very last public address, expressed a sentiment characterized by a deep understanding of Sacrifice:

"Like anybody, I would like to live - a long life; longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. *I just want to do God's will.*"

I often wonder what did he understand about the will of God and the need to be willing to give your all, even unto death, to live and do God's will? Does God's will require our all? Consider Jesus' words:

"Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me." (John 12:25-26 NIV)

As a husband and a father, I marvel at my family, my beautiful wife, and two adorable and remarkable children. To me, they are life, they represent what I live for. Yet as a believer, I am humbled by the reality that, as much as I love them, I will not be in God's will if I am not willing to sacrifice even knowing, loving, and being with them for the will of God. Consider Jesus' words

"Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." (John 10:37 NIV)

How do we live out being godly in the sense of the gospel call for discipleship and mission, while also being called to love one another? Obviously our devotion to the call of the faith entails being husbands, wives, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters. It also calls for us to put others before ourselves, and relate to the humanity; the God breathed purpose, in everyone. To be all that God has called us to be, we must truly lose ourselves, trusting that a radical love; a love that seeks the good and fight for it, will be most fulfilling, and will align us in God's will. King often recognized that the safety of his children and sanctity of his home would be violated because of the cause of justice, peace, and love.

Yet, consider King's assertion in that Mountaintop Speech:

"And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. *I may not get there with you.* But I want you to know tonight, *that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land.*"

This statement showed where King's devotion was. Not that he was not a devoted husband and father, but that God's will for his life, for your life, my life, is inexplicably bound up in where we are heading, together, "The Promised Land". What is this "Promised land"? The Promised Land is a running destination for generations in the Jewish Scriptures and is appropriated as the Kingdom of Heaven in the Christian Scriptures. In King's instance, it is a land of Justice and relief from Jim Crow Segregation. In every instance, the destination is arrived at as a collective, people loving each other and God's will enough to give of themselves to "arrive there" together. So, in a sense, God's will is a Promised Land of unity, peace and love achieved as people are willing to lose themselves; their lives, to see God's will for and in each other. The destination may not be as much physical as it is a spiritual connection between themselves and God's will.

As King summed up his address, he established that, even as he acknowledged getting to the "promised land" as a people maybe without him physically, they can rest assured that he is *Happy* in God's will:

"So I'm happy, tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. *Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.*"

Are we willing to give ourselves to see God's Promised Land, where God's will reigns?

Sons of Allen Participate in CASA Ramp Blitz

By Justin York



On Saturday, December 20, 2014, the Sons of Allen assisted in building a ramp with Care Assurance System for the Aging and Homebound (CASA) of Madison County. CASA of Madison County's mission is to provide needed services to aging/homebound individuals that allow them to remain in their homes and age in place. These services include home modifications (like building wheelchair ramps, installing grab bars, using bathroom safety equipment) and services (fall prevention education, transportation to doctor's appointments) that allow seniors to stay in their own

homes instead of moving to an assisted living facility or a nursing home. Every year, CASA coordinates the Ramp Blitz to build twenty (20) ramps throughout the month of December. This year, twenty-one (21) ramps were built. The clients of CASA are always so appreciative of the work that the volunteers perform. The weekend the Sons of Allen helped was no different.



This was the first ramp building project for a few of the brothers. There are several members of the Sons of Allen who have been volunteering for many years to help build ramps throughout Madison County. Relationships were built that morning as well as the ramp as the brothers fellowshiped and worked together to create better living conditions for the Dupree family. The Sons of Allen look forward to assisting CASA in the construction of more ramps in the future.

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

- 1 Peter 4:10 NIV

Soup Kitchen Corner



A New Year's Prayer for those we serve-for nothing is too hard for God!

"O Sovereign Lord! You made the heavens and earth by your strong hand and powerful arm. Nothing is too hard for you. You show unfailing love to thousands, but you also bring the consequences of one generation's sin upon the next. You are a powerful God, the Lord of Heaven's Armies. You have all wisdom and do great and mighty miracles. You see the conduct of all people, and you give them what they deserve. You performed miraculous signs and wonders in the land of Egypt-things still remembered to this day! And you have continued to do miracles in Israel and all around the world. You have made your name famous to this day."

-Jeremiah 32:17-20

The Soup Kitchen Ministry returns to serve those who come on the third and fourth Tuesdays of each month. Happy New Year to all!

Support Continues for Daniel Payne Project

Thank you for supporting the "I Believe" campaign for the Daniel Payne Legacy Village. Commitments made in January of last year allowed St. John to contribute monthly to this fund. In fact, more than \$5,000 was submitted from St. John members in 2014.

Since the "I Believe" campaign began, the Ninth Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church has purchased Daniel Payne Middle School and that property is now Daniel Payne Community Plaza. To support the transition of this property from a school to a plaza and to support the maintenance of the plaza, members of the Ninth District are encouraged to continue their "I Believe" donations of \$10 per month in 2015. This year St. John members are to make checks payable to St. John AME Church instead of the Daniel Payne College Legacy Village. From these donations, a monthly deposit will be made on behalf of the members of St. John.

Please continue to support this project with your finances and prayers.

Watch Night Service Ushers in the New Year



Over one hundred worshippers gathered at St. John at 10:00 p.m. on December 31 to praise God for 2014 and to praise Him, in advance, for the blessings to come in 2015. The contemporary worship experience included praise through song and dance, prayer, testimonies, preaching and the burning of "yokes" that persons did not want to carry into 2015.

The St. John Praise Team ministered in song, under the direction of Brother Reginald Pearson, and the Dance Ministry offered praise through liturgical movement, under the direction of Dr. Jennifer Patterson. The dancers were accompanied by the Praise Team and musicians. Prayer was offered by the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn and scripture was read from Exodus 32:15-29 by the Reverend Charles Glover. Testimonies were given by Sister Glenda Sconiers and Sister Maeola Peoples on how the recently completed Prayer Journey impacted their lives. Both ladies spoke on how the lesson that required students to complete the sentence "I do not pray when..." was a turning point during the prayer journey. One testimony was that during the journey, prayers were answered for peace of mind and a new job. Another testimony was that "issues" have not changed, but now they know they can be honest with God.



A video of the 2014 year in review was presented by Sister Janette Smith. Highlights of events throughout the year were shown, as well as, a video clip from Pastor Clayborn's Annual Conference Report. This presentation was a visual reminder of the great things God did through the people of St. John in 2014 and an inspiration for what will be done in 2015.

The message for the evening was entitled "Decisions" and the scripture text was from the passage read earlier by the Reverend Glover. In the message, Pastor Clayborn explained that there is no escape from making choices, either good, or bad, and even no decision is a decision. The message to worshippers was to choose God in 2015. In the text, Moses had a direct link to God and the sons of Levi went to Moses when he made the call for those who were on the Lord's side. Moses warned them that standing for God would call for tough actions, even cutting off brothers and neighbors. The choice to make in 2015 is to choose Jesus, even when tough actions are required, and this means to serve, love, be at peace, have joy, dream again and love again.

At midnight, worshippers in the sanctuary viewed the burning of the yokes via a live video stream. Prayer was offered and the Benediction given. There was a special anointing on the service. Even after the Benediction, some continued in prayer for at least an additional hour.

Happy New Year! Choose to be on God's side in 2015!



Understanding the Process for Election of Lay Delegates to the General Conference

By Claudinette Fears—Purifoy



This is an exciting time for members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. St. John will soon elect delegates to the Electoral College of the Annual Conference, then these delegates will run and, if successful, will represent the Ninth Episcopal District at the General Conference. The General Conference is the supreme body of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. It is composed of the Bishops, as ex-officio presidents, according to the rank of election, and an equal number of ministerial and lay delegates, elected by each of the Annual Conferences and the Lay Electoral Colleges of the Annual Conferences. Other ex-officio members are: the General Officers, College Presidents, Deans/Presidents of Theological Seminaries; Chaplains in the Regular Armed Forces of the U.S.A. The General Conference meets every four years.

The next General Conference will be held in the birthplace of African Methodism, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from July 5-13, 2016. This will be the 50th Session held since the AME Church was incorporated in 1816 and a celebration of 200 years of African Methodism.

General Conference attendees will experience and gain an understanding of how the AME Church works. They will see how bishops and general officers are elected. They will hear about all of the policy changes and programmatic issues of the entire AME Church. They will also sit side by side with members from all 20 Districts of the AME Church! That is all of the districts in the 39 countries of the AME denomination.

Every Lay member of the church has an extraordinary opportunity to be considered to participate in this process by being elected a delegate. Every Lay member elected by an Electoral College must be 18 years of age and older, in good standing, know the Doctrine, be a member of the AME church 4 consecutive years preceding the General Conference (2012) and a member of local church 6 months preceding the meeting of the Electoral College of the Annual Conference (Mar 2015).

So what is the process? Pastor Clayborn will notify the congregation a minimum of 2 weeks prior to elections for Lay delegates. Election must be held at least 3 months prior to the meeting of the Electoral College of the Annual Conference. All Lay, 18 years and older, can vote and voting by proxy is not allowed. St. John will elect one adult and one young person, between the ages of 18-30, and an alternate. The two elections are to be held simultaneously and at different locations.

The persons who are elected from St. John will "run" against other delegates from other (local) churches at the Annual Conference Lay Electoral College; so, expect stomp campaigning.

All ballots cast during the Electoral College are delivered to Annual Conference for certification. Each Lay delegate and alternate will be provided with a Certificate of Election signed by the Chair and Secretary of the Electoral College and a Certificate of Election from the Annual Conference signed by the Bishop and Secretary. These certificates will serve as the Lay delegate's golden ticket at General Conference.

The planning starts and you are off to the 2016 General Conference!

Reference: *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church- 2012*

Announcements

ITHRIVE Ministry Meet-ups

St. John youth and young adults (ages 13-20) are invited to attend monthly iTHRIVE Ministry. Please sign up on the form outside the main office if you plan to attend. For more information, contact the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn or Sister Janette Smith.

Black History Month Moments

Persons who are interested in working on the 2015 St. John AMEC Black History Month Moments are asked to contact Dr. Monica Dilihunt for details.

Exciting Enhancements Coming!

How worship is experienced at St. John will be elevated this year through video screens and media additions. WE NEED YOU!

If you are tech savvy or good with computers and desire to assist with simple but vital tasks, please sign the "technology interest sheet" posted outside the main office.

Address and e-mail Updates

Please inform the church office of any address, telephone number or e-mail changes. This allows the church to have continuous communication with you.

AMEN Available in Electronic Form

Members may choose to receive the St. John AMENewsletter electronically. When you choose this option, you will receive the newsletter in PDF form via e-mail. This option will reduce both paper and postage costs and you will normally receive your newsletter a few days before those who receive the printed copy.

To sign up, please send an e-mail to stjohnameh@aol.com.



Technology Tip

By Ricardo Williams

Email Spam

Spam has become a huge issue in the world of the internet. It can exist in several different locations but contain the same message. Most of these messages contain offers from mortgage refinancing to medical insurance. To prevent the mass occurrence of spam, let us take a look at some of the ways that it can be prevented.

One of the best ways to prevent spam is to protect email addresses. Many of the spam mail lists are created from email addresses that persons may enter into websites such as newsgroups and bulletin boards. An easy way to give an email address away in newsgroups is by posting the email address in discussions. Sometimes email addresses are entered into contests that contain prizes or shopping points/rewards in which the email address will be exposed to spammers.

A second way of preventing spam is to create an alias email account. There is no limit on the number of email accounts that you can have. Use the second email to participate in online newsgroups, bulletin boards, etc. to prevent the spam from occurring in the primary email account. This will also help to minimize the amount of space that is used in the inbox for the primary account.

A third way to prevent spam is to create rules for junk mail that is received. This will require monitoring the email account to track the senders that are sending the spam. Once the email addresses are obtained, create an alert to automatically delete the message and not post to the inbox. There are also several types of third party software that can be used to prevent the mass amount of spam.

Spam impacts people on a daily basis. Even if the content is helpful, it requires a lot of time to constantly delete unwanted messages from the inbox. To prevent this impact, it is best to implement a solution to filter the messages or delete the message prior to the message being posted to the inbox.



De-mask Perfected Phoniness™ in 2015

By Janette R. Smith

Certified Strategic Intervention & Mindset Coach

Many people go through life masking who they are, the current situation, and even how they really feel. Why? The short answer would be fear. Fear is the root of most behaviors or beliefs that are destructive. You fear that people will not accept you, or they will assess you to be a fraud. You fear that things from the past are too shameful for anyone to learn about and still accept or love you, or YOU do not forgive, accept or love yourself -so you are sure no one else will either. For these reasons and more, we wear masks. Some have perfected the art of being phony to the extent that they TOO believe the lies they live. We no longer wear masks, we ARE the mask.

"Perfected phoniness™" manifests when we become adept at constructing a false self-image to mirror the ideal "church" persona, "spouse" persona, "mother or father" persona, or maybe the perfect "son or daughter" persona, "employee or boss" persona – or worse, it becomes our "base" persona. When "perfected phoniness" controls our "base" persona, we not only pretend to be a certain way in front of a specific individual or group; we have now bought into that fake personality and have accepted that persona as our true selves. Being real and living authentically is the only cure. It allows us to be truthful with ourselves (and when appropriate – with others) about where we really are in life, accepting the highs and lows – understanding that we all make bad decisions or go through tough times, and that not all challenges are an indication of being cursed, or that we are bad people. When we accept that truth, we can stop pretending with ourselves and others.

A poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar eloquently shares "...our masks conceal bleeding hearts, tears and sighs – but still a cry from tortured souls arise." For this reason "perfected phoniness" amongst those in faith-based communities is deadly. Pretending to have perfected lives causes those around us to believe something must be WRONG with them. "Why am I the only person with marital problems?", "I must not have a strong faith – because no one else is dealing with the darkness of depression." Those misconceptions cause even more people to put on the mask of 'perfected phoniness', so they can hide their spiritual cracks and personal flaws. Like cancer, "perfected phoniness" can spread. From my personal viewpoint as a Christian, this is where many churches FAIL (I'm referring to "the church" in any form, denomination, or supporting any ethnic group.) Churches should operate more like hospitals, so that those who are spiritually ill – may feel safe to come in and be attended to in loving ways that promote healing. When we are critical and judgmental – we force people back behind their masks. God has NOT called us to be perfect.² The GOOD news (John 16:33) is that though we will have trouble, Jesus has overcome the world. The VICTORY is not in pretending we don't have issues and challenges, or that we are so UBER saved we live in the clouds – the victory is that GOD LOVES us – and that through the saving grace of Jesus Christ's sacrifice—we can live FREE, even though we will NEVER be perfect. So commit to living without the masks in 2015!

Make your mantra: Authentically...ME! Until next time — #BeEmpowered

Footnotes and Scriptural References

¹"Perfected Phoniness™" is a term this writer first used while doing conferences and workshops for women's groups as a speaker / life coach in Atlanta, Georgia.

² Matthew 5:48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. The Hebrew word rendered "blameless" (NKJV) or "perfect" (KJV) in Genesis 17:1 means "entire, complete, full, without blemish." The Greek word found in Matthew 5:48 translated "perfect" means "finished, complete, having reached its end," and implies being fully grown or mature. The definition of the English word perfect is "lacking nothing essential to the whole, without defect, complete." All three definitions contain the word "complete."

Church of the Great God, Commentaries: Forerunner Commentary.

<http://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm?useaction=Bible.showVerse&VerseID/23283&VerseID/23283>

"When Matthew 5:48 refers to "...be ye perfect because God is perfect," the verse is referring to being complete and whole. We are to strive for completion. The Greek translation for Telos is the word we translate in English to mean "perfect", is more accurately translated to mean "endpoint". (Strong's Concordance: HELPS Word-studies, <http://biblehub.com/greek/5058.htm>) Therefore, God has not called us to perfect (in the sense of missing or lacking nothing, completely free from faults or defects.) He has called us to reach an appointed end." (Rev. Patrick D. Clayborn, PH.D., personal communication, June, 23, 2014).

Church School Lesson Overview – February 2015

February lesson reviews were written by Brother Kenneth Parham.

February 1, 2015

Lesson Title: Feasting and Fasting

Lesson Scripture: Daniel 1:5; 8-17; Matthew 6:16-18; 9:9-17

Print Daniel 1:5; 8-17; Matthew 6:16-18

Devotional Songs: #530 [], #272 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "When you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you." (Matthew 16:17-18).

In this lesson, students are reminded of Daniel's life in a strange land that was hostile to God. Daniel was unwilling to compromise his faith in God, regardless of the consequences. Daniel was committed because he had a clear purpose. Daniel (a captured Jew) stayed true to his Jewish customs and resisted eating of the king's meat and wine because Babylonians worshipped idols and indulged in the practice of eating unclean meats and drinks. It is noted that Daniel did not outright refuse, but used the tactic of negotiations in order to allow God to intervene. Daniel asked if he and his friends could be permitted to eat a diet of fruit, vegetables and water for ten days. After the ten days were up, they would be compared to the Babylonians who ate of the king's meat and drink.

In life, everyone will be required to undergo trials and tribulations. It is how they endure that determines if they perceive themselves as victor or victim. The first thing to note is whether the world can see the discomfort. As Jesus pointed out, one should put on a cheerful disposition so that God is the only one who sees the situation and will provide comfort.

February 8, 2015

Lesson Title: Serving Neighbors, Serving God

Lesson Scripture: Luke 10:25-34

Print Luke 10:25-34

Devotional Songs: #283 []; #258 []; and #243 []

Key Verse: "Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." (Luke 10:36-37)

Upon reflecting on this lesson, the reviewer had the opportunity to reflect on a speech giv-

en by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The sermon was entitled, "On being a Good Neighbor." Based on current issues facing American human rights issues of today (attack on the Voting Rights Bill, recent stand your ground rulings, instances where excessive force was demonstrated by those entrusted to protect and serve, instances of racial profiling, etc.), this parable, as are many other parables taught by Jesus, is very pertinent and relevant in lives today. This familiar parable was told by Jesus of a man being robbed on the road to Jericho. He indicated that both a priest and a Levite passed by without rendering assistance. And it was noted that it was a Samaritan who took pity on the man and helped with his treatment and care. Jesus ended the parable by asking, "Which of these is the good neighbor?"

In his speech, Dr. King expounded on the backgrounds and reasons that the priest, Levite and the Samaritan would or would not be in a position to render aid to the befallen man. In the speech, Dr. King proposed a simple explanation of the reason both the priest and Levite did not or could not stop to render assistance. Dr. King also provided a profound reason that the Samaritan stopped. In summary, Dr. King addressed the reasons based on the concept of altruism – regard for, and devotion to, the interest of others. Dr. King's explanation follows: "... I imagine that the first question which the priest and Levite asked was – If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me? But by the very nature of his concern, the good Samaritan reversed the question – if I do not stop and help this man, what will happen to him?. Today, people are in a position to answer Dr. King's questions and demonstrate whether they are indeed good neighbors.

February 15, 2015

Lesson Title: Serving the Least

Lesson Scripture: Matthew 25:31-48

Print Matthew 25:31-48

Tentative Devotional Songs: #97 []; #251 []; and #243 []

Key Verse: "Truly, I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:40)

The bible contains countless examples where Jesus took on the role of servant to demonstrate how to serve the least among us.

This service Jesus speaks of is about relation-

(Continued on page 16)





Church School Lesson

(Continued from page 15)

ship more than anything else. Jesus is saying that a real relationship has evidence. Love toward others reflects love towards Him. The service is not given to get into heaven- it is given out of a love for Jesus. That love compels one to love those who are in need/have a need. That love manifests in service.

Jesus will examine the hearts of each person. Earthly achievements will not count no matter how prestigious or noble. However, Jesus will examine the results of one's relationship with Him. As noted in the lesson, six questions will be asked to determine who will receive the full blessings of God. The questions are noted as: (1) Did you feed those who were hungry? (2) Did you provide drink to the thirsty? (3) Did you provide clothing to the naked? (4) Did you befriend a stranger? (5) Did you visit the sick? (6) Lastly, did you visit those in prison? The questions asked are simply about acts that are freely given and freely received.

The reviewer ponders the other side of this scenario as well. As humanity has evolved from a communal society to an isolated humanity (Me-ism), it seems that they have neglected their fellow brothers and sisters even more. With the increase in numbers noted in social issues (increase in homelessness, lack of education, lack of adequate medical services, increased incarceration of minorities, increase of drug abuse, etc.), people must remember there will be an examination based on how they live out their relationship with Jesus. It is up to each person to recommit to a relationship with Jesus in such a way that serving the least becomes a part of who they are.

February 22, 2015

Lesson Title: Always Be Prepared

Lesson Scripture: Ephesians 6:10-20

Print: Ephesians 6:10-20

Tentative Devotional Songs: #412 ☐; 25 ☐; and #243 ☐

Key Verses: "Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." (Ephesians 6:11).

In this lesson, Paul reminded readers that, as Christians, they are under constant attack from principalities of the world. The principalities are described as being authorities, cosmic powers of darkness, and spiritual forces of evil that reside in heavenly places. Paul reminded

Church School Book Club

January 2015

Discussion Date: 17 January 2015

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Perfect Marriage, Kimbrela Lawson Roby, 2013

February 2015

Discussion Date: 21 February 2015

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Other Side of Goodness, Vanessa Davis-Griggs, 2012

How far will faith and love go when an ambitious man finds himself in the fight of his life—with a woman who knows the other side of goodness all too well. . . .

Fifty-year-old Alabama congressman Lawrence Rudolph Simmons will do whatever it takes to get re-elected—even switch parties from Democrat to Republican. With the political tide turning, Lawrence feels it is his best shot—along with his charisma, solid twenty-nine year marriage, and three great kids. But a buried secret from his past is about to be resurrected. . .

It's been eight years since Gabrielle Mercedes gave up her baby for adoption. But when she learns the child desperately needs a bone marrow transplant, she doesn't hesitate to contact the congressman. Like Lawrence, Gabrielle will fight for what she wants, even if it means the truth could ruin someone else's life and career.

- Amazon

Church School Lesson

them that they are in a spiritual war and that they should prepare for war by donning the armor (symbolic) of what a warrior in his time would wear in order to sustain the fiercest assaults during battle. Paul indicated that the helmet should be that of salvation, the breast plate should be that of righteousness, a belt of truth should be worn around the waist and, the shield of faith should be used to withstand the spiritual arrows of the evil one.

Lastly, Paul reminded readers that they must use the word of God and be constantly prayerful in fighting the spiritual enemy.

February 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 COMMUNION 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship DEADLINE FOR AMEN	2 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	3 6:00 p.m. Stewardless Bd. Mtg. VIP Choir Rehearsal	4 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	5 6:00 p.m. Steward Board Mtg. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	6	7 9:00 a.m. Usher Board 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal 12:00 p.m. Children's Dance
8 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship FOUNDER'S DAY	9	10 6:00 p.m. VIP Choir Rehearsal Sons of Allen Mtg.	11 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	12	13 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	14 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 10:30 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting
15 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship Kolossia Mtg	16 President's Day	17 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. BOUP KITCHEN 6:00 p.m. Trustee Board Mtg. VIP Choir Rehearsal	18 6:00 p.m. Ask Wednesday Service	19 6:00 p.m. Media Ministry Mass Choir	20 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	21 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 10:00 a.m. Church School Book Club 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal 12:00 p.m. YPB Meeting YWI Children's Dance
22 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	23	24 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. BOUP KITCHEN	25 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	26 6:00 p.m. Mass Choir	27	28 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry Women's Ministry 10:00 a.m. Secretarial Workshop 10:30 a.m. VMS



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Mrs. Arelis B. Davis, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Doctor Patrick Clayborn, Pastor



Important Dates to Remember

January 29, 2015	Quarterly Conference, 6:00 p.m.
February 8, 2015	Founder's Day, 10:00 a.m.
February 18, 2015	Ash Wednesday Service, 6:00 p.m.
March 22, 2015	130th Church Anniversary, 10:00 a.m. Bishop James L. Davis, 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 20 Issue 2

February 2015



Pastor Patrick D. Clayborn, Ph.D.

Pastor's Message

Ashes to Ashes: Even Ashes Matter

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. – Genesis 3:19

And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes.... – Genesis 18:27

As we enter the season of Lent, many of us on Ash Wednesday will hear these familiar words as ashes are imposed on our foreheads: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." The phrase reminds us of the fragility and the temporary nature of our lives on earth. This is why many churches added a phrase to the Ash Wednesday rite of imposition: "Repent, and believe in the Gospel." Since our lives are frail and finite (i.e. from ashes and dust back to ashes and dust), we must turn away from anything and anyone that obstructs our walk with God (i.e. repent). Then we must turn our whole selves toward the will of God for our lives (i.e. believe in the Gospel).

For many mature Christians this is not a new concept. However, I lift it up here because far too often many believers (even the mature ones) tend to think that because our lives are biblically typified by ashes and dust that our lives are ultimately meaningless. Here are just some of the phrases that get tossed around: I am just ashes so I do not deserve happiness; I am just dust so I should not expect God to bless me; I am only ash so I do not have the power to change my lot in life; I am only dust so I will have to settle for this limiting relationship or this confining circumstance. Perhaps, we do not use the terms ashes or dust in referring to ourselves but just fill in the blanks: I am so _____ that I do not deserve love; I have _____ in my past so I do not qualify to be blessed; I have _____ in my family so I cannot move ahead. However, this could not be further from the truth!

Our lives being symbolized by ashes and dust in the bible is not focused on our lack of worthiness or any inability we may possess. Our lives being symbolized by ashes and dust serves as a reminder that our lives are fragile, temporary, and CREATED by the hand of God (Gen. 3:19)! When Abraham calls himself ashes and dust as he prepares to talk to God, he does so to remind himself of his position in the conversation – creation talking to Creator (Gen. 18:27).

Since our lives matter, we have to be good stewards over our lives. When ashes are imposed on our foreheads, we are not just being reminded that we are God's creation; but, we are also being invited to reflect on how we have lived our lives. Have we given our lives to God fully? Have we built or begun building the dreams God has given us? Are we loving our neighbors as we should? Inevitably, we have disregarded some area of our lives that needs attention, nurture, or growth. That lack should cause us some level of grief. Ashes are also a symbol of grieving. When we see that we have not done our very best for God and our desire is to please God, our hearts will grieve.

Yet, the grief is not meant to be eternal – only temporary. When the ashes remind us that we are God's creation and that we have to be good caretakers over what God created in us, the ashes are also motivating us to improve any area of our lives that falls outside of God's will. Yes, we may grieve our mistakes, but we are only to do that for a moment. The ashes were primarily meant to serve as motivation because they remind us of how fleeting life is. We may not have as much time as we want to do all that God requires.

Pastor's Message

Thus, with the time we have, we must make the most of it! Let the ashes motivate us to turn away from all that holds us back: negative thinking, destructive relationships, oppressive employment, unhealthy addictions, damaging lifestyles, living in fear, avoiding issues, and ignoring our calling and God given gifts. Allow the ashes to propel us to go back to school, apply for the job, fill out the mortgage application, start the business, write the book, record the song, travel the world, repair the relationship, work on the marriage, improve our finances, care for our whole selves (physically, emotionally, and spiritually); and increase our service to God and God's church. Though we may come across challenges as we strive forward, let us be confident in the fact that our lives – our ashes – matter! I am suggesting that there is power in our dust; there is anointing in our ashes! This is why the biblical writer proclaims that the power of life and death is within us (Prov. 18:21).

Finally, we know that our ashes matter when we look at the source of our ashes. According to Genesis, our dust was selected by God. What makes us in our conception was chosen for us by the wisdom and power of God. Our dust – our ashes – are divinely chosen and consequently divinely empowered. When we follow God's will, that empowerment flows through us. Hence, the writer of Deuteronomy can exclaim that we are the head and not the tail, above and not beneath, blessed in the city, and blessed in the field (Deut. 28:3, 13).

This empowerment is symbolized in the rite of preparing ashes. The ashes are made by burning the palms from the previous Palm Sunday. Scholars have found that the earliest record of the ecclesial instructions for this act date back to the 13th century. Some believe that it was a practice of the church as early as the 9th century.¹ This connects the season of Lent to the life of Jesus. The ashes (and the 40 days of fasting) represent His suffering. The ashes – being made from the palms that celebrated His entrance into Jerusalem as a victorious king – now take on the expectation of eventual triumph. For these ashes are made from greatness!!!

Sure, the ashes will humble us when we think of God's love for us – for God so loved the world that God gave the only begotten Son (John 3:16). Of course, the ashes will cause us to grieve when we remember Christ's sacrifice for us – that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). Yet, these same ashes will prompt us to rejoice when we see their source – the celebration of Jesus' triumphal entry – the foreshadowing of His resurrection and installation as King of kings! YES! EVEN ASHES MATTER!!!

Our lives matter because within them is the hope of Christ's triumph over death and suffering. Our lives matter because within them are the gifts and graces that God has bestowed. Our lives matter because within them is our power to choose God over all else! Let us allow our lives to matter this Lenten season. Let us live the lives God called us to live. Let us honor the sacrifice of Jesus by making the sacrifices that will build our God given dreams. Let us reflect God's goodness toward us by cultivating goodwill among our neighbors.

Our dust was chosen by God. Our ashes have access to the throne of God through prayer. Our ashes and dust hold within them the kernels of Christ's victory. Therefore...

OUR LIVES MATTER!
BLACK LIVES MATTER!
GOD'S WORD MATTERS!
LOVE MATTERS!
SACRIFICE MATTERS!
BUILDING DREAMS MATTER!

EVEN ASHES MATTER!

¹Sylvia A. Sweetley, *An Ecofeminist Perspective on Ash Wednesday and Lent* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2010), 96.

Honoring Richard Allen and Celebrating the Founding of the African Methodist Episcopal Church

By Bishop C. Garrett Henning



Like Moses at the Burning Bush or Isaiah in the Temple, Richard Allen had an authenticating encounter with Jesus. We do not know the full details of Allen's conversion experience as it relates to what he describes as a "heavy burden." What we do know is that he cried out to Jesus and Jesus heard his cry and by Richard Allen's own testimony he tells us "All of a sudden my dungeon shook, my chains flew off, and glory to God, I cried, enough for me the Savior cried."

What followed was not a mere rehearsal of his conversion, but the beginning of Richard Allen's passionate participation in the purchase of his freedom and that of his biological brothers and sisters. His was also a life-long commitment to the continuing work of human liberation. He not only set free his biological brothers and sisters, but he emancipated others as well.

Isaiah had a spiritual encounter, but his was in the temple. It was there he cried out, "Woe is me for I am undone (doomed), I am a person of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." It was also the place where God absolved him of his sins, saying, "Your sins are forgiven and you are no longer guilty." After his personal deliverance he had a passion to be used by God whom he heard appealing for his commitment in the words "Whom shall I send . . ." He answered God,

"Here I am, send me." God sent Isaiah to proclaim divine Judgment (Isaiah 6:8).

As with Moses and Isaiah, where there was divine deliverance and divine directions there was also divine destiny. The effect of Moses' "Burning Bush" and Isaiah's "Temple" conversion was the receiving of personal forgiveness. With his personal deliverance, Moses was sent to confront Pharaoh, the leader of the forces of tyranny and oppression in Egypt, with the clear message to tell Pharaoh to "Let my people go!"

After Allen's conversion he was likewise sent to give spiritual, economic, educational and political liberation leadership to Black America and to stretch the borders of Christianity to include all of God's children. Richard Allen never saw his mission as limited to Blacks. He was committed to the liberation of all people.

Allen's wilderness included the treacherous activities of his white brothers, who did not want Allen to be an empowered part of "their" church. They did not want him to establish a church where his and like-minded people could worship God freely.

Allen's "wilderness" included going from a dependent mentality to an independent mentality that required discipline. His wilderness included the challenge of the "Yellow Fever" epidemic in Philadelphia where the African Methodist Episcopal Church reached out to the affected communities to eradicate this dreadful disease. His wilderness included the pitfalls that Whites put in the way of his actions to bring holistic deliverance to his people - soul, mind and body.

His wilderness did not only reflect his rejection by Whites, but by other Blacks as well. This included everything from his deep ebony hue, to the utilization of the church premises for the purposes of education, economic organizing and political planning. Like the children of Israel, there were Blacks who preferred the Egypt of St. George over the wilderness of a Blacksmith Shop.

(Continued on page 4)

Honoring Richard Allen and Celebrating the Founding of the African Methodist Episcopal Church

By Bishop C. Garnett Henning

(Continued from page 3)

Faithful to his divine call, he persevered in the cause of liberation. Yes! His was a stony road and of a bitter chastening rod. On Founder's Day, the AME Church recognizes the contributions of his sacrificial stewardship. Lest the church be ingrates, she must rededicate herself to the struggles of today. She must serve the present age as he served his age. African Methodism can and should do no less. It has a great legacy and a large indebtedness.

The testimony of Allen's relevance is clearly seen in "the host of witnesses" who heard him gladly and followed his leadership. In Allen's day, the African Methodist Episcopal Church was the fastest growing and most respected denomination among Blacks on the North American continent. Why? Because they were obedient to God's command to be about the work and ministry of liberation.

Although, today, the flag of liberation legacy and leadership flies at half mast, there are those who look up to her with hope that once again she will be hoisted to full mast. They hope that with renewed vigor she will usher a clarion cry to do battle with the forces of oppression and tyranny that continue to afflict our people in this nation and throughout the global community.

Though challenged, hear the word of hope that Paul spoke.

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels; that the excellence of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; 2 Corinthians 4:7-9

Yes! We are like expensive jewelry in a velvet-lined box. The true source of our value is not us. We are containers. We are instruments, persons into whom God poured God's self. We are only powerful when God is our center. We travel in the right direction only when God is at the controls. That is why, despite our present plight, we do not give up hope. We often suffer, but we are never beyond redemption. Why? Because in times of trouble, God is with us, so even when we are knocked down, we get up again. Surrounded by difficulties, and God knows we have them, we refuse to give up. We don't understand all the things that are happening to us.

Moral failures have brought disgrace and huge financial debts have been incurred in the process. Ministers and congregations who have benefitted from the influence of the name and the sacrificial suffering of ministers and of laity now choose to go their own way without any sense of loyalty or obligation.

We have been knocked down. We face trouble on every side. We are perplexed but let us not despair. We are persecuted, but we must remember that Jesus is our Captain. He is our guide. Most of all we need to remember, we are not destroyed. Weeping may endure into the night, but joy comes with the morning. The new day is dawning! Yonder comes day!



About the Author: Bishop C. Garnett Henning is the 112th elected and consecrated bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. He was elected bishop in 1992 in Orlando, Florida and retired at the 49th Session of the General Conference in 2012. During his twenty (20) years of service as a bishop, he served the 14th, 19th, 8th and 3rd Episcopal Districts. He and his wife, Ernestine Lee Henning, reside in Los Angeles, California.

Pastor Clayborn Captures Audience at the Harrison Center Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast Celebration

By Charlie Brooks



On Thursday, January 15, at 8:00 a.m., citizens of Madison County gathered for the prestigious Martin Luther King Birthday Celebration held at the Bob Harrison Community Wellness Center. This year's theme was "A Mission to Fulfill." This event was the start of many celebrations for the noted Civil Rights Leader throughout Huntsville.

The program began with the singing of "Lift Every Voice and Sing." The overflowing audience was warmly welcomed by Commissioner Bob Harrison, host. He thanked all for attending, thanked the program participants, and the speaker of the hour, the Reverend Dr. Patrick Clayborn. Dr. Clayborn was introduced by Dr. Arthur Walker, St. John AMEC member. After heart-rendering musical selections featuring Mrs. Carla McAlphine-Franklin, Dr. Clayborn spoke.

The text was from Matthew 1:19-20 and 2:13 and the message was entitled "The Power of a Dream." Pastor Clayborn began his sermon with a defined discussion of the issues of the Selma March, during 1965. There was the great debate during this time of whether the "Black Power" theme promoted by Carmichael would be commissioned or if King's non-violence movement would be adopted. There was disappointing support especially by white supporters with the "Black Power" theme, also Dr. King felt this slogan was an affirmation, but should not be accepted as the center of the Black movement; hence, it was rejected by the Black status quo. Dr. King felt they were, as now, in the fight with spiritual power and, unethical power structures. A spirit of evil prevailed and the churches were keeping silent. His plan was to drive out the spirit of non-caring, and the societal structures in existence during this time by including help from others as well.

Dr. Clayborn continued, "Even today" that slogan is still an issue with some. During this time disapproving attitudes existed: (I have mine) while black lives were disregarded. As with the current theme, "Black Lives Matter", we must remember, we are still in the midst of a fight with spiritual powers, unethical banking and power structures; the devaluing of our Arts and Music and churches still remain quiet.

He continued, Joseph has spiritual warfare in the biblical text today. Joseph overcame! How, (1) He had a dream. Though startled, Joseph showed us how to hold onto the dream in order to show support and true love. (2) A program came from Joseph's dream. Joseph's program for action came from his dream for he escaped and took his family to safety.

We can conclude that dreams come at an opportune time. We need God's help to fulfill the purpose of the dream, for only God can change an economic, judicial system. Just like Dr. King, we need to pray when problems come, world-wide problems, we need a dream. Enemies, bad persons, cannot stop one from dreaming. No obstacle can stop your dream. King's dream transformed relations, actions and opportunities for his peo-

(Continued on page 16)

Founder's Day Celebrated at St. John

By Bridget Floyd
Photography by Darwin Washington



Committee members pose for picture after the service. (left to right) Stewards Hodges Washington and Eddie Sherrod, Dr. Cooper, Steward Pamela Whitehead, Pastor Clayborn.

The African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church is grounded in tradition, method, activism, social justice, and most importantly spreading the gospel. With a rich heritage (the first African American church in the United States) and international branches and influence, the Church annually celebrates Founder's Day on the second Sunday in February to coincide with the birth date of the church founder, Richard Allen. The man who became the first bishop of the AME Church, along with other African Americans who were interrupted as they attempted to pray at St.

Georges Methodist Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, walked out of the church in response. This is the initial (and one of many) act of activism, initiative, commitment to God and, (this writer would add), furthering the "freedom of religion" that this country's founding fathers espoused. This rich heritage is a source of tremendous pride for many AMEs.

St. John AME, Huntsville celebrated Founder's Day at a combined 10 a.m. worship service on Sunday, February 8, 2015. The Reverend Jeffery B. Cooper, D. Min., General Secretary/Chief Information Officer of the AME Church, was the preacher for the special observance. The Stewards of St. John planned the program with the leadership of Steward Pamela Whitehead. Church members participated in the order of worship.

The Gospel Choir rendered music that augmented a spiritually uplifting service and an encouraging/stimulating sermon from Dr. Cooper. "Heritage Moments" highlighted the history of the AME Church blended with African American History in general. The Founder's Day Litany was "Acts of Hope" by Bishop Richard Allen. Dr. Monica Dillhunt presented historical highlights, as did Dr. Andrew Hugine in the Welcome and Occasion. There was worship via a moving solo by Ms. LaCondria Bryant ("Precious Lord") and worship through liturgical dance to the Academy Award nominated song, "Glory" from the film "Selma." The "heritage moments" embodied the thrust of the worship service/sermon that stimulated contemplation of the history and progress of the AME Church as well as the general African American struggle and progress, while noting that there is still struggle in the midst of progress. The key is to know and recall critical events as well as to inform future generations. It was inspirational to see the very young liturgical dancers perform, and experience the palpable intertwining of the civil rights movement and the current injustices, via the musical medium that intertwined traditional with modern musical expression.

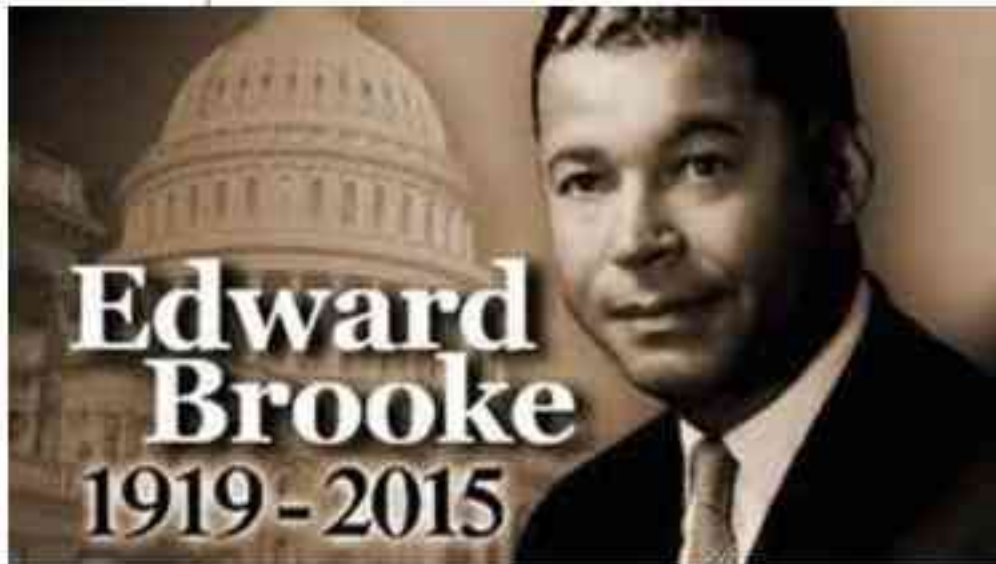
Dr. Cooper brought the message home in his aptly titled sermon, "Stoney the Road We Trod" from the text Joshua 4: 1-3, 19-24. The well-known text focused on the guidance to memorialize crossing the Jordan River, God's provision for the children of Israel, and the importance of re-

(Continued on page 11)

African American History

Edward W. Brooke, III
Trailblazer Leaves a Distinguished Legacy of Service and Activism

By Bridget J. Floyd



Edward William Brooke III, Republican from Massachusetts, served as a United States Senator from 1967 to 1979. He was the first African American to be popularly elected to the United States Senate. That is, the first U. S. Senator since reconstruction. He was also the first to be elected to a second term.

Senator Brooke was born in Washington D.C. in 1919. He earned his bachelor's degree from Howard University, Washington, D.C. and his law degree from Boston University Law School. Prior to becoming a senator he was a captain in the United States

Army, where he fought in World War II and received a Bronze Star. He also served as chairman of the Finance Commission for the city of Boston and was elected attorney general of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1962 and reelected in 1964. He died January 3, 2015 at the age of 95.

Senator Brooke was heralded by colleagues on both sides of the aisle as one who was not locked into partisan politics but embraced issues, submitted legislature and voted according to what he felt was best in a particular circumstance. He was labeled a liberal Republican, which seems unheard of in today's political environment. In a statement after Senator Brooke's death, President Barack Obama noted that "Ed Brooke stood at the forefront of the battle for civil rights and economic fairness. During his time in elected office, he sought to build consensus and understanding across partisan lines, always working towards practical solutions to our nation's challenges".

Brooke was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2004. In 2008 he was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in recognition of his service to the nation. He resided in Coral Gables, Florida until his death in January of this year.

Brooke, often referred to as "a trailblazer", paved the way for other African Americans to be elected to the U.S. Senate but this continues to be a rarity. Illinois senator Carol Mosely Braun was elected in 1993, becoming the first African American female senator. In 2005 Senator Barack Obama was elected, also from Illinois. He of course was elected as the first African American president of the United States in 2008, resigning as Senator. Roland Burris was appointed to fill this vacant Senate seat by the Illinois governor.

In 2013, Tim Scott of South Carolina became the first African American since Reconstruction to represent a southern state. William "Mo" Cowan joined the ranks of the Senate when appointed in February of 2013 to represent the state of Massachusetts, which marked the first time that two African Americans served simultaneously in the U.S. Senate. Although Mr. Cowan left the office in the same year, only a few weeks later a New Jersey special election resulted in Mr. Cory Booker entering the U. S. Senate.

(Continued on page 8)

African American History

Edward W. Brooke, III
Trailblazer Leaves a Distinguished Legacy of Service and Activism

By Bridget J. Floyd

(Continued from page 7)

As indicated, the very first African American senator came to the Senate during Reconstruction. This was Republican Hiram Revels of Mississippi, who in 1870 was elected by the Mississippi state legislature to fill a vacancy in the U. S. Senate. While there was mixed response, the opposition to Revels' being sworn to the U.S. Senate was countered/overcome by a speech from a Massachusetts senator. Revels was born in 1827 in North Carolina to free black parents, went to Knox College in Illinois, became an educator and started freedman schools. *Interestingly he served as a minister in the AME Church in Baltimore, Maryland.* He fought in the Civil War (Battle of Vicksburg) and led African American soldiers. His term lasted a year but he was noted to have spoken out against racial segregation and broke new ground for African Americans in Congress. Revels later became president of Alcorn College.

Five years later Blanche K. Bruce (Republican) of Mississippi became the first African American senator, and only person born into slavery, to preside over the Senate and to serve a full term. This was nearly a century before Senator Brooke was elected by the people of Massachusetts in 1967. Bruce was also elected by the Mississippi state legislature. A portrait of Senator Blanche Kelso Bruce, a former slave, is displayed in the U. S. Capitol.

There have been eight (8) African American Senators, two of whom were during Reconstruction. Since the historic two terms of the popularly elected Republican, Edward Brooke, four have also been elected, one of whom was the historic female senator. Others were appointed to complete terms. Still, this is a small "club". Currently there are two African American senators, one Democrat and one Republican. The distinguished tenure of Senator Brooke occurred almost one hundred (100) years after the Reconstruction Senators and then almost thirty (30) years later the first female African American Senator was elected. It takes the bravery (some would say audacity) of trailblazers to open the door, set the example. To think of the "trailblazer" who expressed appreciation to God for living to see another first, President Barack H. Obama

In the spirit of the extraordinary sense of history during this February 2015 in converging Civil Rights Era History (50th Anniversary of Selma) and the Commemoration of the founding of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, it is important to recall the trailblazers and cultivate those who would extend the trail.

"God Has Brought Us From a Mighty Long Way"



www.gotile.congress.gov/scripts/bloodisplay.p1?index=5000671

www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/commoableflag/majority_senators.htm

www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/Former_Slave_President_Over_Senate.htm#27

www.senate.gov/pressroom/111/111vote-00094

www.senate.gov/page/layout/history/amlst_senators_and_teachers/photo_exhibit_african_american_senators.htm

St. John Members React to Viewing of Historic Movie

By Guy Ginn
Photography by Janette Smith



Thirteen St. John members met at the Monaco Movie Theater at Bridge Street on January 10, 2015 to view "Selma," an American historical drama film directed by Ava DuVernay and written by Paul Webb and DuVernay. The film elicited profound emotional responses from the St. John audience. The movie was replete with scenes that stirred deep emotions. The climatic Edmund Pettus Bridge scenes brought tears of joy for the marchers' courage and tears of anger at how they were brutalized by Alabama law enforcement officers.

One viewer cited the irony of how Dallas County Alabama, where the city of Selma is the county seat and where the event depicted in the movie led directly to enactment of ma-

for voting rights legislation, remains an area of profound poverty. Another was pleased by the movie's recognition of the lesser known members of civil rights leadership.

"Powerful, engaging, prophetic, relevant" was the reaction of Pastor Clayborn. The Pastor went on to point out that in light of recent events such as weakening of the 1965 Voting Rights act by removing the requirement for certain southern states to get pre-approval from the federal government before enacting changes in voting legislation and the recent police killings of young black males, including a 12 year old child, this movie was not only a reminder of the past but a "warning of what could be." Just as the "Selma" audience knew what was coming during the scene of the four little girls waking down the staircase at the 18th Street Baptist Church and was nonetheless shocked when the bomb exploded, real-life scenes of voter suppression and police brutality are playing out and many are still shocked when injustice occurs. This movie serves as "a clarion call to reclaim our rights as human beings."

The movie made Reverend Sheri ponder what she and her generation should be doing and not doing to ensure that struggle depicted in the movie was not in vein. The movie reminded her and others how crucial it is to vote.

The day concluded with a fellowship meal at one of the Bridge Street's restaurants. Tickets to the movie were donated by Steward Darrell Ezell. A few weeks later, Pastor Clayborn and youth leaders took a group of youth to view the movie, followed by discussions with the youth about the movie and the sacrifices made to ensure they enjoy the rights that they sometimes take for granted.

Stewardess Board Straight Talk

By Barbara Johnson

Stewardess Board Straight Talk will be a column each month that will address some of the traditions and customs of the AME Church. The reference used for this column is, *A Guideline for Stewardesses, Ordinary Women Engaged in Extraordinary Work* by Richard J. Parker.

ALTAR AND CHANCEL APPOINTMENTS

The Cross: AMEs use the Latin form of the Cross which is the oldest and most basic in design. There are over 50 distinct variations of the Cross. Protestants do not use the Crucifix, which bears the body of Jesus, for the belief, is that Jesus left the Cross and ascended on high in victory and triumph.

Candles on the Altar

If used on the altar, there should be two in number. The candles should be lit for every liturgical (purely worship) service. The candles may be burned within three inches of the holders before they are changed.

Candles symbolize Jesus Christ, the Light of the world. When one candle appears on each side of the Altar, they represent the two natures of Christ—human and divine.

Flowers on the Altar

Since flowers symbolize the resurrection, it goes without saying that *no type of artificial flower or plant* should ever be permitted in the Nave, Chancel, Sanctuary or other place in the church where people gather strictly for worship service.

Next month...*The Seasons of the Church Year*.

AMEN Available in Electronic Form

Members may choose to receive the St. John AMENewsletter electronically. When you choose this option, you will receive the newsletter in PDF form via e-mail.

To sign up, please send an e-mail to stjohnameh@aol.com.

Soup Kitchen Corner

Mercy



Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born

again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. -Peter 1:3

Jesus said:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Matthew 5:3-6

The "St. John" Soup Kitchen serves nutritious meals each third and fourth Tuesday of the month. The desire is to not only offer sustenance of physical manna, but spiritual reflections of Jesus as they serve those who are poor in spirit, those who mourn, those who are hungry and those who thirst.

We pray for mercy, strength and humble hearts as we render deeds of mercy to those who come! Amen

March 22, 2015

10:00 AM

St. John AME Church

100th Anniversary
1895-2015

Celebrating God's Faithfulness
GOD CENTERED, VISION DRIVEN, PEOPLE LOVING

Bishop James L. Davis,
Guest Preacher

Announcements

Exciting Enhancements Coming!

How worship is experienced at St John will be elevated this year through video screens and media additions. **WE NEED YOU!**

If you are tech savvy or good with computers and desire to assist with simple but vital tasks, please sign the "technology interest sheet" posted outside the main office.

Address and e-mail Updates

Please inform the church office of any address, telephone number or e-mail changes. This allows the church to have continuous communication with you.

Secretaries' Workshop

A special workshop for all secretaries of St. John AMEC ministries and those interested in becoming a ministry secretary will be held on Saturday, February 28th at 10 AM at the church. All current secretaries are asked to attend. All are welcome. Please call or email the church to confirm your attendance.

Get Ready for Habitat Build 2015

Get ready St John family! The 2015 Habitat Build will begin the last week in February. This year's Habitat Build will be a five (5) bedroom house on Cornerstone Circle. The schedule and details regarding the work dates for St. John are March 21, 28, April 4, and 11. We will provide lunch on April 4. Please see Sister Tami McGhee for more details.

HAP Food Drive

St John is a member of the Huntsville Assistance Program (HAP), an association of approximately 70 churches that serves the entire city and some of Madison County. The organization is in need of food items to serve needy families of the community.

St John is asking members to participate in a two week food drive. Members are asked to contribute nonperishable food items from February 13 through March 1, 2015. Items may be placed in the labeled box in the front vestibule or one in the back hallway.

For additional information, contact Brother James Heyward or Sister Nedra McDaniel.

Founder's Day

(Continued from page 6)

member as well as informing future generations, who should in turn "recall" God's faithfulness, intervention, and appropriate fear of God.

Dr. Cooper cited three reasons to "remember the stones." First, *Remember the Power of God*. In the text God stopped the flow of the Jordan River, allowing them to cross on dry ground. He indicated the stones signified "God Did This". He cited a poignant anecdote of a loving grandmother who defied instruction for decorum during graduation ceremonies, to give praise to God for enabling the child that she raised to matriculate and graduate college (in the face of numerous obstacles). Secondly, one should *Remember to Tell the Story*. Dr. Cooper indicated that "no matter how tough, God is a faithful God. You might have to go through something before you get where God wants you to be". Thirdly, *Remember that the Future is at Stake*. Dr. Cooper highlighted the stones were placed "half way between the Jordan and Jericho...they could only go forward. God had closed the back door so they would go into their future".

Returning to the purpose of the day, Dr. Cooper noted that God helped Richard Allen obtain his freedom, walk out of St. George's Methodist Church, and that "it was about the future...hopes and dreams not yet realized". Dr. Cooper gave a litany of examples of African American authors, poets, educators, liberators, professional athletes, and performing artists and celebrities, as well as historical politicians and leaders to indicate that "future". He extolled the goodness of God, "When I think about the Goodness of God...how He has brought me [over the stony road]... **THANK YOU!!!!!!**

As the congregants stood in acclamation of the message and the goodness of God, Pastor Clayborn offered the invitation to discipleship and sang "I Don't Feel No Ways Tired". A beautiful and tasty repast was provided in the Fellowship Hall. There was also a display in the church nursery of "potential" for the future by two youth, St. John member Mariah Gullatte, a budding fashion designer, and her classmate Rayven Lane, a budding photographer.

Pictures from Founder's Day may be viewed on the St. John website.



Getting to the Core

By Janette R. Smith

Certified Strategic Intervention & Mindset Coach

I will always be intrigued by the headline-esque lifestyle stories of repositioning that go something like this: "Sheila and Dave Johnson have lived the life most people hope for. These high school sweethearts have traveled to every continent together, raised four very successful children and now enjoy nine extremely loving grandchildren. Both retired now, Sheila and Dave enjoy the spoils of a home-based pastry business that Sheila started on a whim. Perfect right? Everyone who knows them thought so too, until they announced at their 42nd wedding anniversary that though they love and respect each other – they are getting a divorce." Doesn't sound familiar? What about this one: "After running a successful dental practice for 15 years, Dr. Robert Vaughn closed up shop and moved to Salt Lake City, Utah to teach science at a local high school." As a certified life strategist, these types of stories leave me searching through the details like an investigator at a crime scene. "How did they get from point A to point B?" Many times, we find that beneath the surface of those types of drastic life shifts is evidence of someone who was making a seasonal life stage shift, or more disconcertingly - had not been living in their full truth along life's path.



"Who are You...at the core?" This question scares many people because no one really wants to participate in self-inspection; it is too painful, too difficult, too ugly and often reveals just too much truth to digest. Unfortunately, being too scared, unwilling or just plain too lazy to find out the answer to that question will lead you far from where you hoped or believed you would end up in life. Some people are so far removed from the 'core' of who they are that, in essence, they have been playing a role of sorts on the stage of their lives. They have developed into the person they thought they should be, have been told they should be, or shamed themselves into becoming. Living life to meet someone else's expectations, or fulfill another's dream is nothing short of you turning on yourself. God's Word says in Jeremiah 29:11 that HE knows the plans He has for our lives— plans to prosper us and not hurt us,

plans to give us a hope and a future. He designed us each uniquely to fulfill a specific purpose in the earth. Selling yourself out for anything less than that makes you your own traitor; you have become someone willing to trade who you were created to be for the version of you that pleases those around you. This internal disharmony can create great stress, dis-ease, depression and even generate fear. Some people become tired of faking it. They 'wake up' and realize that they are not living authentically, and that perhaps some decisions they made in life did not line up with (or were completely out of alignment with) the path they know God was leading them toward. So, "Who are YOU...at the core?" What is it you are created for? Do yourself a favor and begin work in the spiritual and in the natural to answer this question, no matter where you are in life. If you determine you are on track- Praise God! If you find you need to investigate further, do so prayerfully and courageously. NEVER beat yourself up.

Believe you have done the best you can to this point, but it is time to do even better. Do not be afraid to seek out help through counselors, therapists and life coaches, especially if you have traumatic events that shape the way you see yourself. God receives no honor from us living under a facade. It's time to live authentically. Where do you start? Press yourself to identify at least one thing that glaringly stands out as something you do or participate in that does not give you peace, nor align with who you are down deep inside. THAT question will lead you to the next steps toward getting to your 'core.'



Caregivers' Prayer and Respite Ministry



(Questionnaire may be given to either Mrs. A. Hugine or Ms. Pat Grier)

The Steward Board is responsible for the care and concern of the congregation. The "Caregivers' Prayer and Respite Ministry," has been established to provide assistance and support to those members who may be caring for a loved one. In an effort to ensure that all the members' needs are being met, we're asking that each member respond to the following questionnaire.

1. Are you a caregiver? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. If so, for whom? ☐ mother ☐ father ☐ in-law ☐ sibling ☐ neighbor ☐ friend
3. Your name and contact information.
Name: _____
Phone # _____
Email Address _____
4. Would you be receptive to support and assistance from the CPR (Caregivers' Prayer & Respite) Ministry? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure
5. If so, check the type of support which would be most helpful to you.
☐ having a prayer partner
☐ having someone come in and sit, while you attend church, run an errand, etc.
☐ someone to grocery shop for you
☐ receive a delivered meal
☐ provide resources of services available in the Huntsville-Madison County Area
☐ Transportation to a doctor's appointment, to church, to an event

Other suggestions:

The Caregivers' Prayer and Respite Ministry is also recruiting partners to provide some of the needed services. If you're not a caregiver, and would like to assist in this ministry please complete this section.

Yes, I would like to be a partner in the CPR Ministry.

Name _____

Contact Number (home) _____ Cell _____

Email Address _____

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Ephesians 4:32

Church School Lesson Overview – March 2015

February lesson reviews were written by Brother Willie Sandifer.

March 1, 2015

Lesson Title: The Lamb of God

Lesson Scripture: Joel 2:23-27; John 1:29-34

Print John 1:29-34

Devotional Songs: #97 [], #272 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God." (John 1:34).

The ministry of John the Baptist opened a significant chapter in the history of God's communication with humanity. For almost 400 years, no prophet had risen in Israel to speak God's word to the people. The last of the great Hebrew prophets, Malachi, ended his book by predicting that the prophet Elijah would one day reappear to call people to remember the Law of Moses.

This led some of John's contemporaries to speculate that Elijah had indeed returned, a speculation that John denied in the literal sense of being Elijah reincarnated. Instead, John the Baptist openly identified himself as "the voice of one calling in the wilderness" that was predicted in Isaiah 40:3. This identification stressed his role as the forerunner to the Lord's appearance. John's designation as "the Baptist" is helpful to us for not confusing him with the apostle John, who wrote the Gospel from which today's lesson is taken.

Faithful Jews, desiring to avoid anything that might make them "unclean" in God's sight, would wash themselves regularly in running streams or pools of water. John, however, gained notoriety for washing other people, a practice unheard of at the time.

Since washing with water was viewed as a sign of self-purification, then almost by definition it would not occur to Jews that one person could wash another—no person could secure another person's purity that way. For John the Baptist, however, water baptism represented the cleansing of the soul that came through genuine repentance.

This repentance was critical in view of the fact that God was soon to establish his kingdom on earth. John associated this event with the coming of a figure much greater than himself. This figure to come would baptize people not with water but rather "with the Holy Spirit and fire", symbols of a much deeper and more

thorough cleansing from sin.

Within the larger context of his baptizing ministry, John also baptized Jesus himself. The first three Gospels mark Jesus' baptism as the beginning of his public ministry. Jesus' baptism, not recorded in the Gospel of John, had already occurred at the point in time of this lesson.

March 8, 2015

Lesson Title: Another Advocate

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 23; John 14:15-26

Print John 14:15-26

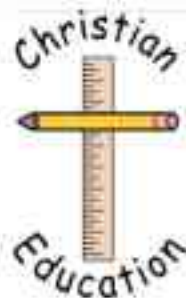
Devotional Songs: #25 [], #272 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." (John 14:26).

Jesus came to reveal God to humanity. Jesus was the Word who "was God"; he was the Word who "became flesh". He was the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world. We see an increasing emphasis on the divine identity of Jesus as the Gospel of John progresses. He was accused of "making himself equal with God". He exhibited the power to raise the dead and the authority to pronounce judgment. He said, "I and the Father are one". His miracles confirmed that His claims were true.

The climax of Jesus' claims came in the upper room in the final week before His death. There Jesus told His disciples that no one could come to the Father except through Him. Even more strikingly he said, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father". Truly God was present with His people! But Jesus also had an unpleasant shock to give His disciples that night. He was leaving. Just when they were realizing that they had God's presence in their very midst, it seemed that they were about to lose it! It was in this setting that Jesus promised to send another advocate—the Holy Spirit. From the very beginning of Jesus' ministry, the Spirit had had an active role. The Spirit had descended as a dove to Jesus at His baptism. Nicodemus had been told of the need to be born of water and the Spirit in order to enter God's kingdom. The woman at the well in Samaria learned that those who would worship God acceptably must worship "in the Spirit and in truth." Although the Holy Spirit had not yet been given, Jesus promised that one day the

(Continued on page 15.)



Church School Lesson Overview – March 2015

(Continued from page 14)

Spirit would be granted to all believers. And on a Thursday night in an upper room, Jesus made final preparations for that to be possible.

March 15, 2015

Lesson Title: The Spirit of Truth

Lesson Scripture: 1 Samuel 3:1-10, John 16:4b-15

Print: John 16:4b-15

Devotional Songs: #412[]; #258[]; and #243[]

Key Verse: "But I tell you the truth: it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go I will send him to you." (John 16:7).

Jesus gathered with His twelve disciples in the upper room on a Thursday night for a meal to celebrate the Passover. The heart of Judas Iscariot was exposed during the meal, and Jesus dismissed him into the night to carry through with his evil designs. To the eleven who remained, Jesus promised that the Father would send the Holy Spirit. They were not to be left to fend for themselves.

This promise to send an Advocate was the prelude to Jesus' final promises in this regard in the 16th chapter of John. The disciples were to face difficult times. They would be rejected and persecuted by their own people—some of whom would even kill the apostles, thinking that they were "offering a service to God". To face such challenges in Jesus' absence, the disciples needed to know that they still had the reality of God's presence backing them up.

March 22, 2015

Lesson Title: The Spirit of Peace

Lesson Scripture: John 20:19-23; Acts 1:4-8; 2:4-12

Print: John 20:19-23

Tentative Devotional Songs: #450[]; #251[]; and #243[]

Key Verse: "And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" (John 20:22).

The lesson text notes two "commemorative items" that served as proof of Jesus' own victory over adversity. The first were the physical wounds He had received during the crucifixion; these bore witness both to God's power and Jesus' authority. The second was and is the disciples themselves—from the first generation of disciples to believers today. The fact that believers in every generation continue to pro-

claim Him serves as a powerful confirmation of His victory over the grave. Jesus' defeat of death lives on in the witness of those who accept the facts of history.

The lesson text brings the Gospel of John full circle in many respects. The writer prefaces his account of Jesus' ministry with an episode involving John the Baptist. When a delegation from the religious authorities in Jerusalem questioned him about his identity, he explained that he was simply preparing the way for someone much more worthy than himself.

The next day, John the Baptist told two of his disciples that Jesus was the one they had been waiting for. He predicted that Jesus would baptize people not with water but with the Holy Spirit. Jesus affirmed this promise of Holy Spirit bestowal when He invited those present at the Festival of Tabernacles to "come to me and drink," promising that "rivers of living water" would "flow from within them"; the Gospel writer then immediately explained that Jesus was referring to the forthcoming gift of the Holy Spirit, who would be granted only after Jesus had been glorified.

March 29, 2015

Lesson Title: The Son of David

Lesson Scripture: Isaiah 45:20-25; Mark 11:1-11

Print: Mark 11:1-11

Tentative Devotional Songs: #221[]; 25[]; and #243[]

Key Verses: "Those who went ahead of those who followed shouted, 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'" (Mark 11:9).

The significance of Jesus' triumphal entry is stressed by the fact that this is one of the few events from His life to be recorded in all four Gospels. Each evangelist reports Jesus' coming to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover a week before his death, and each says that his arrival was marked by popular acclaim.

The triumphal entry was indeed a high point in Jesus' public ministry. Up to that point in Mark's account, Jesus had spent His time moving from village to village in areas north of Judea, ministering primarily in Galilee with occasional forays into Gentile territories. He focused His ministry primarily on rural peasants who lived in and around the villages across Galilee.





Scale Back St. John

Dream Builders

Join us as we
Get Healthy & Stay Healthy

Mondays 5-6 pm Line Dancing

Wednesdays 1:15 pm Walking

Fridays 6-7 pm Line Dancing

**Take some time to take care of you.
OUR LIVES MATTER!**

**In cases of inclement weather, please
call the church to verify scheduling.*

MLK Breakfast

(Continued from page 1)

ple. We must change our relationships and how we treat each other. Can we surpass limits? Yes, with God. We must change our perspective to see ourselves as heirs, erase the shame and accept our history with pride. Our lives matter, other lives matter. We have to join with others that look like us, work and not look to who takes credit. We must share with the youth. We must work on dreams that will keep hope alive. Dr. King gave declaration through his dream to the kind of God that we should seek today. God stayed with Dr. King, he didn't lose his mind. Dr. King turned things around. Thank God for Dr. King's dream. Dr. Clayborn loudly proclaimed: "God is our strength and salvation. Hallelujah!"

Membership Canvass

Calling all members!

It is that time of the year when members are asked to update their membership information. The stewards will be stationed in the Vestibule before and after services on February 8, 15, and 22, 2015. An adult member from each family must verify information, even if there have been no changes over the past year.

- The Stewards of St. John A.M.E Church

Church School Book Club

February 2015

Discussion Date: 21 February 2015

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Other Side of Goodness, Vanessa Davis-Griggs, 2012

March 2015

Discussion Date: 21 March 2015

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Keeper of My Soul, Keshia Dawn, 2010

Keith, a forty-year-old lawyer out of Houston, constantly feels neglected by a wife who has stepped out on him more than once during their fifteen-year marriage. Playing with the possibility of seeking new love, Keith never expected his wife to be in the midst of his secret, one he doesn't even know about. Michelle is ready to fight for what is hers when her own cheating instincts make her suspicious of Keith's intentions. Finding her way into her husband's affairs, Michelle is left to realize that her own betrayals are much deeper than she would care to believe. *Keeper of My Soul* is a powerful story about righting wrongs and finding peace in the soul. . . . - Amazon



AME Proud

**FEBRUARY IS AN IMPORTANT MONTH IN
THE LIFE OF THE AME CHURCH***

Bishop Jeffrey N. Leath, President of the Council of Bishops and Presiding Prelate of the 13th Episcopal District has shared information about the importance of February in the life of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Bishop Richard Allen, Bishop Morris Brown, Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, Bishop Daniel Alexander Payne and Mrs. Jarena Lee were all born in the month of February.

- Henry McNeal Turner - 1 February 1834
- Jarena Lee - 11 February 1783
- Morris Brown - 13 February 1770
- Richard Allen - 14 February 1760
- Daniel Alexander Payne - 24 February 1811

**From The Christian Recorder Online, January 30, 2015*

March 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 COMMUNION 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship DEADLINE FOR AMEN	2 5:00 p.m. Line Dancing 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	3 6:00 p.m. Stewardless Bd. Mtg. VIP Chdr Rehearsal	4 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study 1:15 p.m. Walking	5 6:00 p.m. Steward Board Mtg. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	6 6:00 p.m. Line Dancing	7 10:00 a.m. Official Board 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal 12:00 p.m. Children's Dance
8 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS	9 5:00 p.m. Line Dancing	10 6:00 p.m. VIP Chdr Rehearsal Sons of Men Mtg.	11 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study 1:15 p.m. Walking	12 6:00 p.m. Mass Choir Rehearsal	13 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal 1:15 p.m. Walking	14 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 10:30 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting
15 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	16 5:00 p.m. Line Dancing	17 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. BOUP KITCHEN 6:00 p.m. Trustee Board Mtg. Mass Choir Rehearsal	18 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study 1:15 p.m. Walking	19 6:00 p.m. Media Ministry Mass Choir	20 6:00 p.m. Church Anniversary Concert	21 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 10:00 a.m. Church School Book Club 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal 12:00 p.m. YPD Meeting
22 130th Church Anniversary Bishop J. L. Davis, Preacher 10:00 a.m.	23 5:00 p.m. Line Dancing	24 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. BOUP KITCHEN	25 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study 1:15 p.m. Walking	26 6:00 p.m. Mass Choir	27 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal 1:15 p.m. Walking	28 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry Women's Ministry 10:30 a.m. WMS
29 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship Palm Sunday	30	31	Holy Week			



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The Right Reverend James L. Davis, Servant Bishop

Mrs. Arelis B. Davis, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Doctor Patrick Clayborn, Pastor



Important Dates to Remember

<i>February 28, 2015</i>	<i>Secretaries' Workshop, 10:00 a.m.</i>
<i>March 8, 2015</i>	<i>Daylight Savings Time Begins</i>
<i>March 20, 2015</i>	<i>Church Anniversary Concert</i>
<i>March 22, 2015</i>	<i>130th Church Anniversary, 10:00 a.m.</i> <i>Bishop James L. Davis, Guest Preacher</i>
<i>March 30– April 1, 2015</i>	<i>Spring Revival, The Reverend Bankole Akinbinu</i>
<i>April 2, 2015</i>	<i>Maundy Thursday Service, 6:00 p.m.</i>
<i>April 5, 2015</i>	<i>Resurrection Sunday</i>

*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 20 Issue 3

March 2015



Pastor Patrick D. Clayborn, Ph.D.

Pastor's Message

130 Years of St. John AME Church

Genesis 47:7-12

When William Hooper Council and others organized St. John AME Church 130 years ago, they could not have imagined all that this congregation would accomplish. St. John has been a consistent voice of salvation, justice, liberation, education, empowerment, healing, and help in this Huntsville community. Great preachers – such as the Reverends Fox, Hereford, and McCall – have mounted this pulpit and declared “what thus sayeth the Lord”: how God is able to bless in spite of our circumstances; how God’s word has the wisdom and guidance we seek; how we are all God’s children regardless of our race or ethnicity or gender; how we have been called to be disciples of Jesus Christ; how we must love our fellow brothers and sisters; how we must work to make this world a place of peace, justice, and mercy; how God’s love and forgiveness can penetrate the coldest heart; and how we must give the best of our service to honor God.

Wonderful church members have served faithfully as stewards, trustees, stewardesses, ushers, church school teachers, and so much more. Ministries have gone out in the city to: repair the homes of senior citizens; build houses for Habitat for Humanity; provide resources for neonatal care units; feed the hungry in the area surrounding the church; tutor students in school; mentor juveniles to prevent incarceration; join other churches to form a coalition of assistance for those with financial need; register voters; provide scholarships and care for college students; visit the sick; and witness door to door to the saving power of Jesus Christ.

We were excited to celebrate this momentous occasion. The anniversary was the start of a host of events here at St. John. There was the anniversary concert on Friday, followed by Sunday worship service. Next, will be the celebration of Palm Sunday, Holy Week Revival, and Maundy Thursday with worship each day. Pastor Bankole Akinbinu will once again be our revivalist for Monday through Wednesday. We are anticipating nothing less than the miraculous! On Resurrection Sunday, we will have our sunrise service, Easter program, and mid-morning worship service.

We were thrilled to have our Servant Bishop – The Right Reverend James L. Davis – honor this 130th Church Anniversary with his presence and his ministry of preaching. We are elated that the membership of St. John is, after 130 years, still working, serving, dreaming, and doing all it can to build those dreams. We thank the anniversary committee (co-chairs and members), the office staff, the music and media departments, the stewards and trustees, the worship council and its ministries, and the kitchen committee for their hard work and faithfulness. We praise God for the honorees who were highlighted at the anniversary concert. We thank God for your diligence and loyalty to God and church.

Most importantly, we are grateful that God continues to bless!! God still blesses when we reach 130 years old. When Jacob reached 130 years old, God rescued him and his family from famine. Therefore, God has blessings for St. John that eyes have not seen nor ears heard! Let us give God praise for what God has done for 130 years, and let us thank God in advance for what God is about to do!



St John AME Church

MARCH
30 & 31

APRIL
1

6:30PM
NIGHTLY

Holy Week

REVIVAL

CATCHING FIRE
BIRTHING & REVIVING YOUR DREAM



PRAISE & WORSHIP

Musical Guests



GUEST PREACHER

Rev. Bankola Akinbinu
RALEIGH, NC

REV. PATRICK D. CLAYBORN, PH.D., PASTOR
229 CHURCH ST. NW
HUNTSVILLE, AL 35801
256.534.3265

Holy Week Revival Begins March 30th



St. John will again hold revival during Holy Week 2015. The Reverend Bankole Akinbinu will return as revivalist. The Reverend Akinbinu accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior at the age of ten and was later called into the Gospel Ministry at sixteen years of age. He is committed to education. He began his undergraduate studies at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, transferring his sophomore year to Washington Bible College in Lanham, Maryland, where he earned a bachelor's degree in Bible Theology. In May 2010, Rev. Akinbinu was conferred the Master's of Divinity Degree from Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey. Since January 2012, the Reverend Akinbinu has served as pastor of Baptist Grove Church in Raleigh, North Carolina.

The Reverend Akinbinu's resume' states that he is committed to spreading the Gospel because he believes that God's Word is able to transform and empower all that believe. He stands on the promise of Philippians 1:6: "He that hath begun a good work in you is faithful to perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." St. John is blessed to have the Reverend Akinbinu return for another spirit-filled series of sermons from this anointed man of God.



Revival will be held nightly, March 30-April 1, 2015. Services will begin at 8:30 pm. Plan now to attend and invite friends and family to share in this empowering Holy Week Revival.

Women's Prayer Breakfast Set for April 11



Do not miss this year's Women's Prayer Breakfast. Women will unite in Praise, Prayer and Practical Points of Power on Saturday, April 11, 2015 at 8:00 am. The focus will be "Dream Builders—The Power to Change."

Please see Sisters Lauretta Teague, Temple Stanley, Shannon Lott, or LaCondria Bryant to purchase a ticket.



St. John to Participate in Annual Habitat Service Project

The 2015 Habitat Build has begun. This year's Habitat Build will be a five (5) bedroom house on Cornerstone Circle.

The schedule will be posted and updated on the bulletin board at the church. Members are urged to volunteer on and dates during the project; however, there are several dates that have been selected for "all church" participation. These dates are March 21, 28, April 4, and 11. St. John will provide lunch on April 4.

Please see Sister Tami McGhee for more details.

Women's History Month's Inspiring Woman Misty Copeland

By Mariah Gullatte



I am a dancer...far from a Classical Ballet Dancer, but of all genres of dance, ballet is my favorite. I have studied ballet and other dance styles since I was 2 years old (I am now 17). A couple of years ago I watched a Black Girls Rock special on BET and in that flash of a moment I caught a glimpse of a beautiful young lady who looked like me, floating effortlessly across the stage. You could see the power and strength in her limbs as well as the determination in her heart. It was at that moment that I realized some things in history can change... The pictures that hang in my dance studio and on the bedroom walls of future dancers, can now be pictures that look like me. It is not my desire to become a classical ballerina, but I am honored to know that Misty Copeland, who looks like me, has beaten the odds and achieved a dream that seemed so far away.

Throughout Misty Copeland's journey these words often resonated in her heart... *You're too old, you haven't had enough training and yes, even things such as...Ballet is typically reserved for a privileged class and for those who have the lightest of skin. The perfect ballerina has a small head, sloping shoulders, long neck and legs, big feet and a narrow rib cage...none of which fit the description of*

Misty Copeland who has a 5'2" muscular and curvaceous frame, and a brown face which has served as a distraction in the world of classical ballet.

Misty Copeland was born to Sylvia DeLaCerna and Doug Copeland. Her home was a hotel room in an undesired neighborhood in San Pedro, California for most of her adolescent years. Trying to find herself and overcome her self-doubt, she had not even thought about the world of dance until she attended a free dance class at the Boys and Girls Club at age 13. Cindy Bradley, dance instructor/guardian/mentor who would later enter a bitter custody battle with Misty's mother, saw a Ballerina destined for greatness.



From her humble beginnings to a prodigy, she became the first African-American woman in the history of the American Ballet Theatre (ABT) to gain soloist status in two decades and only the third African-American in the company's 76-year history. Her endorsements range from Bloch dancewear to the ultimate athlete's gear, Under Armour. Misty was also the first Black woman in history to play "Firebird" for a major ballet company.

I most admire Misty for her courage, commitment and perseverance to her craft, stretching her limits and trying new techniques to a world already embraced by plies and port de bras. She recognizes the importance of sharing her life lessons in order to empower others. The White House honored Copeland with a Cultural Ambassador Role as she, ABT and the Boys and Girls Club launched "Project Plie", a program that brings top-notch dance training to the underserved communities. Dance is where our tendus touch and the passion to serve others is where our hearts chase. Misty says, "I transform through my performances for the little brown girls."

Ash Wednesday Ushers in the Season of Lent and Kicks Off the Dream Building Bible Study Series

By Nedra McDaniel

Photography by Darwin Washington

The LENTEN SEASON covers the forty-six day period between Ash Wednesday and the eve of Easter. Lent itself excludes the six Sundays and is, therefore, only forty days. Worship services on Sundays are weekly commemorations of the first Easter and the proclamation that Christ is risen. The date of the beginning of Lent, Ash Wednesday, is determined by the date of Easter. Lent is a time when many Christians prepare for Easter by observing a period of fasting, repentance, moderation and spiritual discipline. This year the St. John Ash Wednesday service was the kickoff for the Dream Building Bible Study series.



The Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn led the service and offered the opening prayer. The Praise Ensemble led praise songs including "You are Alpha and Omega" and "Total Praise." The Old Testament scripture, Joel 2:12-17, was read by Ashley Humphrey and the New Testament scripture, Matthew 6:16-21, was read by Justin York. Dance ministry members, Jennifer Patterson and Jason Gilmore, ministered to the song "Will Your Heart and Soul Say Yes?"



Pastor Clayborn brought the meditation from the topic "The Great Sacrifice." He gave biblical examples of dreamers (and the sacrifices they made), including Joseph, Gideon, Mary, mother of Jesus, and Peter. To illustrate that dreams have a central theme of fame and that fame costs (sacrifices), he incorporated a clip from the television series FAME. He also expounded on the cost that Jesus paid. Jesus had to start in the wilderness where He fasted for 40 days and nights. To see dreams come to pass, one must pay the cost by making great sacrifices. He noted that sacrifices that lead to fulfillment of dreams will not have instant gratification and instant power; they must yield to eternal provision and eternal power. Pastor Clayborn explained that when the sacrifice is made, God gives the reward. He noted that the greatest example of this is when the angels came to minister to Jesus as a result of His sacrifice in the wilderness. He concluded with the statement "God will give the reward for the sacrifice."

In preparation for the service of the ashes, Pastor Clayborn explained that the ashes are a symbol of grief and they symbolize that people are God's creation and should imitate the sacrifice of Christ. Even in the ashes there is strength, joy, and power. In the ashes of death, on Sunday morning He found power.

The ministers administered the imposition of the ashes on the foreheads of worshippers. Traditionally, the ashes are the burned palm branches from the previous year's Palm Sunday and the ash cross on the forehead is an outward sign of sorrow and repentance for sins. The closing prayer was offered by Pastor Clayborn.

Join Us for Resurrection Sunday Services

April 5, 2015

6:00 a.m. Sunrise Service

9:00 a.m. Easter Program

10:50 a.m. Morning Worship

Communion will be served at both worship services.

*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection
and the life. He who believes in me will
live, even though he dies; and whoever
lives and believes in me will never die."*

John 11:25-26

**AME Churches in the State of Alabama
9th Episcopal District**

February 15 - May 16, 2015

**I Dare You
to**
*Trust
God*

With Your Time • With Your Treasure • With Your Commitment

Principles of Stewardship

**James L. Davis, Servant Bishop
Arelis B. Davis, WMS Supervisor**

For more about "I Dare You," please contact any member of the Steward Board.



Support Requested for 2015 Crown of Glory Competition

The Crown of Glory event is a friendly competition among members of the Women's Missionary Society (WMS) in the Ninth Episcopal District that serves as the organization's primary Quadrennial fundraiser. St. John member, Mrs. Mary Powers, will represent the Agnes Cooper Area. Mrs. Powers is a member and past president of the Betty E. Derrick WMS, past president of the Agnes L. Cooper Area WMS, and a Life Member of the WMS. Mrs. Powers will compete in the "Crown of Life" category as referenced in James 1:12. The event will be held June 8, 2015 at the Daniel Payne Community Plaza in Birmingham, Alabama.

The St. John WMS members ask for the support of St. John members toward this endeavor by purchasing an ad. The costs of ads are as follows:

Full Page	\$100.00	Half Page	\$75.00
Quarter Page	\$50.00	Patron	\$25.00

Camera ready ads should be coordinated with Ms. Donnie Thompson or Mrs. Mary Powers. The deadline for purchasing/submitting ads is Sunday, April 28, 2015. Thank you in advance for your support!



AME Proud

Brown Chapel AME Church
Then and Now

Both the building and the members of Brown Chapel AME Church played pivotal roles in the Selma, Alabama, marches that helped lead to the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. In the 50th Anniversary celebration of the Selma march that is known as "Bloody Sunday," Brown Chapel continued to be the center of the movement. Most articles covering the celebration of the 50th Anniversary will mention the church, its members and/or its pastor. Members of Brown Chapel led in the organization of the celebration. President Obama named the Pastor, the Reverend Leotis Strong, in his opening acknowledgements during his historic speech at the foot of the bridge and the Reverend Strong offered the closing prayer for the service where the President spoke.



Maundy Thursday Service

Scheduled for April 1

Maundy is derived from the Latin word mandatum, meaning commandment. Maundy refers to the commands Jesus gave his disciples at the Last Supper: to love with humility by serving one another and to remember his sacrifice.

Maundy Thursday is observed during Holy Week on the Thursday before Easter, and commemorates the Last Supper when Jesus shared the Passover meal with his disciples on the night before he was crucified. In contrast to joyful Easter celebrations when Christians worship their resurrected Savior, Maundy Thursday services are typically more solemn occasions, marked by the shadow of Jesus' betrayal.

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.

Maundy Thursday Service will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Media Upgrades Enhance Worship

By Darwin Washington



Worshippers have surely noticed the not so subtle changes to the St John Sanctuary - big video screens. These are the most visible changes by which technology will support the Pastor's Vision of Passionate Worship.

A team including members of the Media Ministry, Music Ministry, Board of Trustees with the advice and assistance of GCPRO and Commercial Sound and Video Companies (both of Atlanta) are completing the final stages of a major upgrade to the church's audio and video systems. The integrated system design is characterized by image magnification (IMAG) technology and a near state of the art computerized audio console.

The IMAG technology includes two Panasonic video projectors illuminating dual custom installed DA-Lite screens (54"X108"). The new Pro Presenter software sends high resolution graphics, photos and video to the projectors.

There are several audio system upgrades. The heart of the system is the Soundcraft Si Expression 3 live audio console which controls audio inputs. The keyboard, a new drum cage with microphones and other instruments will connect through the console to control the quantity and volume of sound. Choirs will benefit from new suspended Audix microphones which provide an even coverage of voices.

When completed, these A/V upgrades will offer many benefits including the following:

- Images, text, graphics and video may be displayed during worship services
- Quality technical and creative support to the worship experience
- The audio mix and volume controllable to provide even coverage at appropriate levels

Placing the media team technician in the balcony to allow close coordination with the presenters and choirs; allows the media team to experience the worship environment and to respond to spontaneous changes during services.

Pastor Clayborn Receives the Reverdy Ransom Award

On Friday, February 20, 2015, The Reverend Patrick Clayborn, along with his family, traveled to Atlanta, Georgia, to attend the Black Church Studies Conference of Candler School of Theology at Emory University - *In the Footsteps of Our Ancestors: Revisiting, Renovating, and Revolutionizing the Path*. Rev. Patrick was scheduled to be a participant on the panel discussion: *Proclaiming Our Faith: More Than a Shout and a Song* (Black Churches, Liturgies, and Worship). He arrived to the banquet (the night before his presentation) just in time to hear the keynote speaker closing his speech and hear the introduction for the Bishop Reverdy Ransom award recipient. To his complete surprise, he was the recipient of the Bishop Reverdy Ransom award, receiving the award for his commitment to academic excellence and his faithfulness to the calling God has on his life within the church. The Reverend Teresa Fry Brown, Ph.D., Director of Black Church Studies, commented during the presentation of the award that Rev. Patrick is unlike most in that he started his career in the academy and was willing to pursue his pastoral calling in the church even after receiving the Doctorate of Philosophy. Rev. Clayborn was completely speechless. He graciously accepted the award by singing, *My Tribute*.

The Bishop Reverdy Ransom, the 48th elected and consecrated Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, is one who combined love of knowledge, becoming Dean of Payne Seminary, and love of the church and social activism. The Inaugural Black Church Studies Reverdy Ransom Alumni Award is given to the alum evidencing these qualities in their personal, academic and church life.

50 Years Later, What Next?

By Mattie B. Ezell



Aw! The sixties and the seventies! The good ole days! Really! So they claim. Do not ask who "they" are? However, they met! They prayed! They marched! They protested! Gradually Blacks were granted some of their Constitutional rights. However, there is one thing that the Constitution cannot grant: a loving heart. With all of the efforts made to equalize society, only God can take away the stony heart out of the flesh! Since most human kind

have not partnered with God on this endeavor, where do we go 50 years later?

An awesome starting point is to put into action John 3:16: For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. To love as God did solves issues, but until we really learn to love, other principles must be put into action.

One principle is parenting (child rearing), not buddy-buddy. Parents have the God-given responsibility to make sure they guide, nurture, and protect their children from infancy to adulthood so that they will become productive citizens in society. If children see parents reaching for the sun, they will probably imitate that behavior. If parents just tell a child something, they will probably forget it, but if they model it, normally it sticks. After all, most people learn from seeing and doing. So parents must be the persons they want their children to be.

Education is a must! "The mind is a terrible thing to waste." No one can take knowledge from a person. Everyone has gone through some trials, so do not let them be a deterrent. Keep pushing. Be a part of the solution rather than a part of the problem. Education opens doors and raises economical standards. Children are parents' hopes and dreams and society's next leaders, so make sure the children rise to the occasion.

Whether a person has a degree or not, children need to know that people must work in order to earn money for a livelihood. Man has been working ever since Adam disobeyed and got kicked out of the Garden of Eden. Since humankind still lives under that curse, every "able body" likely has to work until retirement age at least. No matter how unimportant the job may seem at the time, they must do the best they can. After all, no one learns more about a problem than the person at the bottom. God does not even judge by the multitude of works performed, but how well the work that is to be done is completed. Whatever one is to do, do it well.

Finally, on March 21, 1965, thousands of civil rights demonstrators, led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., began their third march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge from Selma to the state Capitol at Montgomery to support African-Americans' voting rights. Therefore, teach children/young adults to vote! Demonstrators were beaten and killed to gain this constitutional right for Blacks. Registering is great, but parents must encourage their children vote. Educate them. Emulate it to them. Then ask churches, civic organizations, neighbors, etc. to also pick up some of the load. If everyone yells from the treetop with every opportunity they have, children/young adults, and others will eventually get the message. Please do not allow them to give any excuses. If they need a ride, provide it. If someone cannot get to the poll, make sure they get an absentee ballot. Whatever must be done, people must be taught to vote as soon as they are eighteen. It is their constitutional right. Therefore, they must exercise it.

The conversation must continue. Keep telling the story, but more importantly, be a part of providing solutions to the story.



Stewardess Board Straight Talk

By Barbara Johnson



Stewardess Board Straight Talk will be a column each month that will address some of the traditions and customs of the AME Church. The reference used for this column is, *A Guideline for Stewardesses, Ordinary Women Engaged in Extraordinary Work* by Richard J. Parker.

The calendar for the Christian year is a means of teaching the events in the life of Christ and keeping them before the people. There is a need for an orderly and balanced presentation of the Gospel story, and the teachings of Christ, especially to the children and youth.

The church calendar and the plan of the church year, with its seasonal hymns, Scripture readings, colors and symbols, provide a framework through which the teachings of the church can be given in an orderly and rhythmical manner, instead of being left to individual impulse. During the year every part of the Christian faith is given due emphasis.

Every event in the life of our Lord is relived in such a way that it becomes not only an event in history, but a present reality.

During the different seasons of the Christian year we feel the entire congregation should be aware of the messages and meaning which the colors and the seasonal symbols represent. When the paraments are changed from one color to another, it is not because of a "whim," or "yen," to redecorate. They are not used merely for their beauty and decorations, but to arouse in us a remembrance of sentiments and dispositions in keeping with the season being observed.

The Seasons of the Church Year

1. Advent—(Purple) Season of expectancy, looking toward the coming of Christ: includes the four Sundays preceding Christmas Day.
2. Christmastide—(White) Season of Nativity; celebration of the birth of Christ, which includes Christmas Day, and the two Sundays leading up to Epiphany, or Twelfth Night (the 6th of January).
3. Epiphany—(Green) Season of the Evangel, which celebrates our Lord's outreach to the Gentiles. Epiphany Day is the celebration of the presentation of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the Christ Child by the Three Wise Men. Four to nine Sundays are included in this season, depending on the date of Easter.
4. Lent—(Purple) Season of Penitence and Renewal, symbolized by our Lord's forty day wilderness vigil in preparation for His ministry.
5. Eastertide—(White) Season of Resurrection, beginning with Easter Sunday and continuing fifty days, the biblical time between the resurrection and the day of Pentecost.
6. Pentecost (or Trinity) (Red) Celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit to the apostles, fifty days after the resurrection. This season includes Trinity Sunday, the first Sunday after the day of Pentecost, and extends over eleven to sixteen Sundays, depending on the date of Easter.
7. Kingdomtide—(Green) Season of teaching, emphasis, which begins with the last Sunday in August and extending to fifteen or sixteen Sundays to the beginning of Advent.

Next month... Colors of the Church

Health Corner

Colon Cancer: Dietary Risk Factors and Prevention

By Jennifer Patterson, Ph.D.

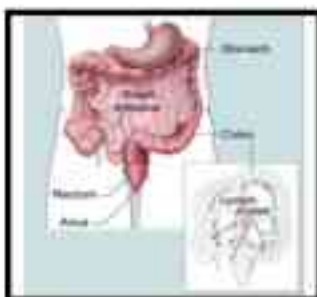


Figure 1: Diagram of the colorectal area



Figure 2: Colon Polyps

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) (Figure 1). Most colon cancers develop first as colorectal polyps, which are abnormal growths inside the colon or rectum that may later become cancerous (Figure 2).

What causes colon cancer? No one knows exactly the cause of colon cancer. You certainly cannot catch it from a 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. For colon cancer, 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 your chances of developing colon cancer increases after age 50. **Personal history:** If colon cancer has occurred and completely removed, you are still more likely to develop cancers in other areas of the colon. Individuals with numerous and large polyps are at an increase risk of developing colon cancer. Individuals with a history of IBS (Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis). **Family History:** Close relatives (parents, brothers, sisters, or children) of a person 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. Table 1 further explains the relationship between risks and these factors, but 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. The good news is that we can control this, hence the word "modifiable." *Research*

(Continued on page 13)

Table 1. Dietary, Lifestyle, and Other Factors that May Modulate Colorectal Cancer Risk

Increases Risk	Decreases Risk
Energy intake	Fiber
Total, saturated, and animal fat	Vegetables and fruit
Red meat	Calcium
Protein	Vitamin D
Simple sugars	Antioxidant vitamins (A, C, E, and beta-carotene)
Alcohol	Selenium
Smoking	Folate
Iron	Fish oil (omega-3 fatty acids)
Body mass index	Physical activity
	Hormonal replacement therapy
	Aspirin, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs

Health Corner

(Continued from page 12)

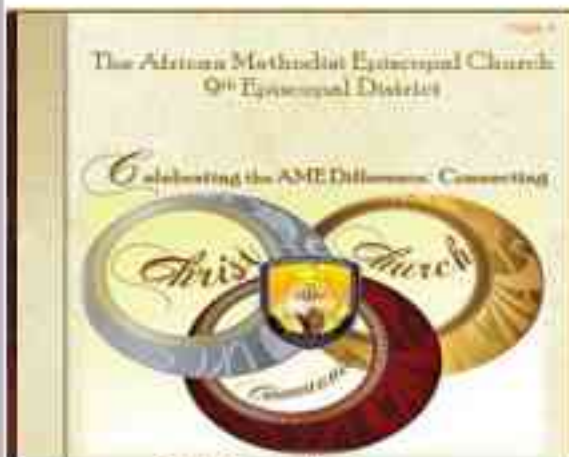
shows that 70-80% of colorectal cancers are diet-related. This means that the prevention can be done through diet and lifestyle modification. Consuming a diet high in fiber, vegetables and fruits, antioxidative vitamins (A, C, E), essential nutrients (folates calcium, Vitamin D) and low saturated fat and simple sugars will decrease your risks of developing colorectal cancer.

To summarize, below are 6 ways to reduce the risk of developing cancer:

1. Choose a diet rich in a variety of plant-based foods.
2. Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits.
3. Maintain a healthy weight and be physically active.
4. Drink alcohol only in moderation, if at all.
5. Select foods low in fat and salt.
6. Prepare and store food safely.

And always remember . . . Do not use tobacco in any form.

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



**Mid-Winter Conference
Founder's Day and Mid-Year Evaluations**

Devotion—Cornerstone Laying Celebration

Daniel Payne Community Plaza

April 15-18, 2015

**James L. Davis, Servant Bishop
Arelis B. Davis, Episcopal Supervisor**



Technology Tip

By Ricardo Williams

Installing a PC Hard Drive

When maintaining a PC for personal use, several things can be done on your own such as anti-virus, backing up data, and installing new hardware. One of the most common things that can be done at home is installing a hard drive. As the PC use increases, data will be added to the hard drive whether it be personal data or data from things such as software and security updates. This article discusses steps to install a hard drive on a personal PC.

You will need a screwdriver, four screws, an available data connection, an available drive bay and of course the hard drive that will be installed. Before installing the drive, make sure that no power is connected to the machine. Next, hold the drive in place with the label that is attached to the drive facing upward and screw in two of the screws to the side nearest you. While the drive has not been screwed on both sides, check the cables that attach to the drive to make sure you have enough length. Once you have confirmed that the cables are long enough, continue to screw in the remaining screws on the opposite side of the drive.

Next, connect the data cable. Take a look at the end of the cable to make sure you are inserting it properly. Some PCs are now built to not require movement of the cable allowing only the drive to be inserted. Now that the data cable has been connected, you can connect the power cable. However, before you can use the drive, partitions will have to be created and formatted. The best way to do this is by inserting your operating system installation disk and starting up your PC. After the disk is booted, you should be directed to a setup option to prepare the drive for use. Once the formatting has been completed, you can now use the drive.

Finally, keep in mind that if you are not using a new drive, it is possible that you could lose data after formatting the drive. You should always store backup copies of data from your hard drive to a separate device for situations such as installing a hard drive.



Woman to Woman

By Janette R. Smith

Certified Strategic Intervention & Mindset Coach

This is NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH. It is a time to reflect on the contributions, sacrifices and strengths of women. Since my coaching platform revolves around "pushing past stuck," I want to make this month's column a "call to action!" I want to encourage all women to be intentional about modeling the spirit of this month by stepping out in BOLD WAYS to SUPPORT and UPLIFT the women in our immediate worlds, and those we may come in contact with.

Sure 'she's' not always on her 'A' game, but neither are you. Yes, there are scandalous stories about 'her' that could be dug up and paraded around — but truth be told, if two of the right people sat down for a conversation about YOU, they could quickly excavate, connect dots and discover details and stories about an incident or time in your life when you were less than your best self. Let us DROP the harsh judgment of other women we encounter and practice LEADING WITH LOVE. We have no idea what it takes ANY WOMAN to be and 'do' her. Pray and ask God for the strength and wisdom to set aside any personal insecurities and inferiority complexes that push women to compare and compete, throw shade and be dismissive.

Build up a woman, and when she is walking restored -- CELEBRATE HER. BE EMPOWERED by the virtue of loving and edifying. WE ARE DYNAMIC AND IMPRESSIVE BEINGS... we are CREATORS, NURTURERS, BOTH INTUITIVE AND WISE. Seek to restore the best of what and who a woman is, rather than rub her face in her flaws and faults. LET US REMEMBER OUR PAST BUT WRITE NEW HERstory (history) FOR THE FUTURE.

We hope these characteristics, and accompanying verses, help spur you on to be the kind of woman that God created you to be!

1. SEEK GOD FIRST: Reject the lie that anything or anyone else can satisfy you.

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." — Matthew 6:33-34

2. SPEAK FAITHFULLY: Love others with godly wisdom, boldness, and kindness as a faithful completer of others.

She opens her mouth in wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. — Proverbs 31:26
Other Scripture: Psalm 19:14, Proverbs 12:18, Proverbs 13:3, Proverbs 16:13, Proverbs 20:15, Proverbs 24:28

3. SHOW TRUE BEAUTY: Bodies deteriorate, persons develop. Invest in that which lasts.

Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised. — Proverbs 31:30

4. STAY HUMBLE: Be constantly aware of 'pride and selfishness.' Do not think less of yourself but think of yourself less.

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus. — Philippians 2:3-5

5. SERVE THE LORD: Set your mind on eternal things, serve the eternal King, live to please only Him.

"The one who loves their life loses it, and the one who hates their life in this world will keep it to life eternal. If anyone serves Me, they must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor them." — John 12:25-26

Church School Lesson Overview – April 2015

April lesson reviews were written by Brother Willie Sandifer. (1st, 3rd and 4th Sundays) and Claudnette Purifoy-Fears (2nd Sunday).

April 5, 2015

Lesson Title: Fully Alive!

Lesson Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:1-22

Print: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11, 20-22

Devotional Songs: #77 [], #272 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "For as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:22).

This lesson looks forward to our Lord's return and the accompanying resurrection that is guaranteed for all those who believe in Him.

The Corinthian believers had initially accepted Paul's message concerning Christ, including His resurrection. But error had crept in, asserting that for Christians who died, there was no resurrection, no matter what the case might have been with Christ. So Paul found it necessary to return to gospel basics to reveal this inconsistency.

Paul laid out the facts of the gospel to prove it is a message that does save. The death of Christ was, in itself, not good news. It seemed a double tragedy because He was sinless and undeserving of death. But it was good news because it was for humanity's sins. He hung on the cross on behalf of all sinners and satisfied the justice of a righteous God. No message can claim to be the gospel unless it presents Christ's death as God's exclusive remedy for sin.

Paul took care to remind the Corinthians that this had happened exactly as the Scriptures had foretold. No one would question the fact of Jesus' death, but the meaning of it was not evident to all. This is where the testimony of the Old Testament prophetic Scriptures was essential. The same testimony was also given concerning Jesus' resurrection.

April 12, 2015

Lesson Title: All We Need Is Love

Lesson Scripture: 1 John 3:11-24

Print: 1 John 3:11-14

Devotional Songs: #461 [], #251 [], and #243

Key Verse: "For this is the message you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another" (1 John 3:11).

Love is more than a word. It is a selfless and

self-giving action that shows the heart. Love is what distinguishes the believer from the non-believer. In this lesson John stresses the importance of the demonstration of proper attitude and love as evidence of faith. We are commanded to love one another just as John challenged the believers in Ephesus to love one another. Our love of others does not guarantee that they will love us in return. John equates a "lack of or failing to" love as an evil action that pleases Satan and not God. Such as the hatred that led Cain to kill Abel and led to the death of Jesus. He warns the believer to not be surprised that in their quest to emulate God that they will be hated and find those who resist the teachings of Jesus. However, John challenges the believer to not sway from the mission.

John taught that love is sacrificial—Jesus gave His life for us. Love is helping others that are in need. Love is an act or deed. Loving others has many benefits. It allows the believer to see and experience the love of God. It can help your relationship grow stronger. It can also help you by providing assurance of your own relationship to God. Loving others is one evidence of our salvation so if you routinely love others it helps you grow more confident in your own relationship with Christ. That is what the phrase in verse 19 "it can assure our heart before Him" means. The opposite side of that is our hearts will also condemn us if we don't love others. Loving others can give you peace. Love in action gives us confidence.

Another benefit is that if we have a good relationship with God and are following Him, He will answer our prayers when we pray to Him. Being a Christian is not complicated, however it is not easy. We have to believe God when things are not going how we would like and we cannot understand or see His plan. We have to obey even when we would rather do it our own way. We have to love others even when they are unlovable and do not deserve it. Doing the right things won't happen naturally. Pray to God for strength and grace. Resolve yourself to do what is right even when it is difficult. And then, just do it because that is love.

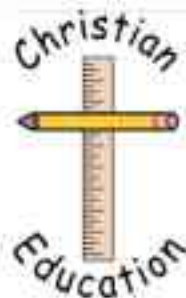
April 19, 2015

Lesson Title: Beloved Child

Lesson Scripture: 1 John 4-5

Print: 1 John 4:13-5:5

(Continued on page 16)



Church School Lesson Overview – April 2015

(Continued from page 15)

Devotional Songs: #549[]; #258[]; and #243[]

Key Verse: "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Child has been born of God and everyone who loves the parent loves the child" (1 John 5:1).

The emphasis in this lesson is that if we believe that Jesus came from God, we are to love those in that community of faith. It is a community of faith that is held together by the common bond of trust in Jesus. We are called to love the world around us as God loved us and reflect the love that Jesus has for us.

John gave three specific evidences of our confident assurance of God's love. First, He said we have the evidence of His Spirit. The Spirit gives assurance to our hearts by implanting within us a new appetite for spiritual things, a desire for prayer, a consciousness of new standards of life, new hope, new joy, and new obligations that please God.

Second, we have this assurance because of the evidence of eyewitnesses. John was the last living apostle of Christ and he was still testifying that Jesus is the world's Saviour.

The third evidence of our assurance is our own confession of faith. To confess means to agree with God completely concerning the deity of His Son, Jesus Christ, whom we accept as Saviour. As a result of our salvation, we are assured that God dwells in us and that we dwell in God.

The evidences of assurance lead to our certainty. We know by experience and believe by faith God's love for us. Our faith and experience are grounded in the reality that God is love in His nature.

April 26, 2015

Lesson Title: Fraud Alert

Lesson Scripture: 1 John 5:8-12, 18 – 20; 2 John

Print: 2 John

Tentative Devotional Songs: #450[]; #251[]; and #243[]

Key Verse: "Be on your guard, so that you do not lose what we have worked for, but may receive a full reward" (2 John 8).

In this lesson we study the important necessity of watching out for deceivers.

According to 1 John 1:2, the love that believers share is "for the truth's sake," that is, because of it. The reason for Christian love is that the truth lives in us. Becoming a Christian entails more than acknowledging the facts about God's salvation. It means making them part of our life and experience. When the truth dwells in us, it makes our character godlike.

Once implanted in us, God's truth will remain with us forever. This should strongly encourage believers, for although false teachers may depart from the truth, the truth will remain secure in the lives of true believers.

The balance between truth and love is always delicate. Some become so zealous to defend truth that they stifle the love that naturally flows from it. Others become so obsessed with love that they compromise God's true message and make peace with error.

Christians who encourage others also encourage themselves. Holding to God's commands is challenging, but an obedient life will not go unnoticed or unrewarded by our Father.

Church School Book Club

March 2015

Discussion Date: 21 March 2015
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Keeper of My Soul, Keshia Dawn, 2010

April 2015

Discussion Date: 18 April 2015
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Redeeming Waters, Vanessa Davis-Griggs, 2011

Brianna was ten when she first met twenty-five-year-old David R. Shepherd, a devout gospel recording artist who would ultimately become megastar King d. Avid, and he left a lasting impression. The next time they meet, Brianna's a lonely young wife seeking solace in religious studies. King's companionship offers Brianna the deep emotional connection she longs for. But she soon finds herself wrestling with questions of faith, fidelity, and forgiveness.

- Amazon



April 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
			6:30 pm Revival	6:30 pm Maundy Thursday Service	GOOD FRIDAY	9:30 am. Dance Ministry 11:00 am. Children's Choir Rehearsal 12:00 pm. Children's Dance Easter Egg Hunt Habitat Service Day
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
6:00 am. Sabbath Service 9:30 am. Easter Program 10:50 am. Worship Reconstruction Sunday	5:00 pm. Lire Dancing 6:00 pm. CPR Ministry	6:00 pm. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	6:00 pm. Gospel Choir Rehearsal Steward Board Mtg.	6:30 pm. AMEN Staff Meeting	9:30 am. Dance Ministry
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
8:00 am. Worship 9:45 am. Citrel School 10:50 am. Worship Kolossia Mtg	5:00 pm. Lire Dancing	6:00 pm. Sons of Allen Mtg. VIP Chdr Rehearsal	12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	6:00 pm. Media Ministry	6:00 pm. Male Chorus Rehearsal	9:30 am. Dance Ministry 10:00 am. Church School Book Club 11:00 am. Children's Choir Rehearsal 12:00 pm. VPB Meeting WMI Children's Dance
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
8:00 am. Worship 9:45 am. Citrel School 10:50 am. Worship	5:00 pm. Lire Dancing	11:30 am - 1:00 pm. SOUP KITCHEN 6:00 pm. Trustee Board Mtg.	12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	6:00 pm. Mass Choir	6:00 pm. Male Chorus Rehearsal	SBHB District Conference 9:30 am. Dance Ministry Women's Ministry 10:30 am. WMB
26	27	28	29	30		
8:00 am. Worship 9:45 am. Citrel School 10:50 am. Worship	5:00 pm. Lire Dancing	11:30 am - 1:00 pm. SOUP KITCHEN	12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	6:00 pm. Mass Choir		



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The Right Reverend James L. Davis, Servant Bishop

Mrs. Arelis B. Davis, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Doctor Patrick Clayborn, Pastor



Important Dates to Remember

<i>March 20, 2015</i>	<i>Church Anniversary Concert, 6:30 p.m.</i>
<i>March 22, 2015</i>	<i>130th Church Anniversary, 10:00 a.m. Bishop James L. Davis, Guest Preacher</i>
<i>March 30– April 1, 2015</i>	<i>Spring Revival, The Reverend Bankole Akinbinu, Revivalist, 6:30 pm</i>
<i>April 2, 2015</i>	<i>Maundy Thursday Service, 6:30 p.m.</i>
<i>April 5, 2015</i>	<i>Resurrection Sunday 6:00 a.m. Sunrise Service 9:00 a.m. Easter Program 10:50 a.m. Worship Service</i>
<i>April 11, 2015</i>	<i>Women's Prayer Breakfast, 8:00 a.m.</i>
<i>April 13, 2015</i>	<i>AME Connectional Day of Prayer</i>
<i>April 15-18, 2015</i>	<i>Ninth District Mid-Winter Meeting, Daniel Payne Community Plaza, Birmingham, Alabama</i>
<i>April 25, 2015</i>	<i>South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer District Conference, Gaines Chapel, Anniston, Alabama</i>

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



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 20 Issue 4

April 2015



Pastor Patrick D. Clayborn, Ph.D.

Pastor's Message

Dreams Resurrected

John 20:1-18

On Good Friday, Mary Magdalene's dream died. Her dream of serving God by following Jesus died. Her dream of living her life in the light of Jesus died. Her dream of having an ongoing earthly relationship with Jesus died. Her dream of seeing Jesus' reaction to her Godly pursuits died. Her dream of learning more from the feet of Jesus died. When Good Friday ended, Mary had no idea of how she could continue fulfilling her dream.

Let's give Mary credit; she never gave up on her dream. She stayed by the cross until the very end. The male disciples – the men – waked away (except for John). She watched her dream get beat unmercifully – taken from courthouse to courthouse – mocked – ridiculed – convicted unjustly – sentenced to death – forced to carry its own instrument of torture – nailed to the cross – pierced in the side – crowned with thorns – stripped of its garments (which became the objects of gambling) – and seemingly forsaken by God. Yet, her dream kept gasping for air. With each gasp, it uttered forgiveness. With each gasp, it uttered the promise of paradise. With each gasp, it covered and connected loved ones. With each gasp, it stayed honest about disappointment. With each gasp, it never lost its thirst for life. With each gasp, it proclaimed victory. With each gasp, it remained unbroken in spirit due to its submission to the hands of God. Mary watched each gasp hoping that somehow life would reinvigorate her dream. Yet, her dream still died. Strangely, when some came to put the final death blow to her dream, they found that the dream had given up its life. It seemed that her dream made a sacrifice of itself! Nonetheless, her dream died.

To feel we have never had a dream can be disappointing and frustrating. To work on a dream that seems to never come to pass can be infuriating and confusing. To have a dream that dies can be devastating. If the dream dies because of a mistake we have made, we may be able to understand. However, if the dream dies in the process of doing God's will, that death can persuade us to turn our backs on God. The disciples ran away. They locked themselves in their home for fear of the Jews (John 20:19). The death of a dream can convince us that the dream was never a dream at all (or at least not God's dream for our lives).

When we saw the video of that young Black man shot in the back by that police officer in South Carolina, many of us felt a dream die. When we pay taxes this month and see that a host of multimillion dollar corporations pay less (if anything) than we do, many will feel a dream die. When women with just as much experience and hard work as men in their workplace get less pay for the same job men perform, many see a dream die. When we see President Obama attempt to have mercy on immigrant families through executive orders to temporarily stop current immigration laws from being enforced on them and that 26 states refuse to follow this executive order, many of us believe a dream dies. When some of us stand in divorce court, have to file bankruptcy, watch our business go under, lose our job, experience near fatal hurt from the hand of a friend, or face our own mistakes that turn our lives upside down, many feel a dream dies.

(Continued on page 5)

St. John Proudly Celebrates 130th Church Anniversary

By Bridget J. Floyd

Photography by Darwin Washington



Bishop James L. Davis

St. John approached the celebration of 130 years of existence with great anticipation. The anniversary weekend began with a wonderful concert by all choirs and honoring members who have served in various capacities over their decades of membership at St. John. The 10 a.m. worship service on Sunday, March 22, 2015 was outstanding on so many levels.

The Right Reverend James L. Davis, Bishop for the Ninth Episcopal District of the AME Church, preached the anniversary sermon and baptized the daughter of Pastor Patrick and the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn and sister of Patrick II ("P2"). The theme for the anniversary was "Transformed Through Time...Envisioning the Future." The Co-Chairs of the anniversary committee were Mrs. Claudinette Purfoy-Fears and Mr. Rufus Gilmore III. The Mass Choir, directed

by Mr. Reginald Pearson, provided worship through song and an exceptional medley for the sermon selection. An offertory selection featuring a glorious duet by Ms. Sharon Hicks and Mr. Walter Williams was truly inspirational. A reverent liturgical dance by the St. John dance ministry set the tone for an uplifting, reflective, and praise-filled worship service. The anniversary litany was written by Dr. Lee Williams II (who was one of the honorees during the concert on Fri-



Jesse and Barbara Johnson
represent the Powers family



The Jones family
makes a presentation.



Zelda Goggans represents the Cobb
family.



Kaitlyn McClung presents
the Herston moment.

(Continued on page 3)

St. John Proudly Celebrates 130th Church Anniversary

By Bridget J. Floyd

Photography by Darwin Washington

(Continued from page 2)
day).

St. John members participated in the AME order of worship with the addition of the welcome and occasion, litany and "HERstory Moment" for women's month. The featured woman for this service was Mrs. Arelis Beevers Davis, the wife of Bishop Davis and Supervisor of the Women's Missionary Society and Young People's Department of the Ninth Episcopal District. A special gift was given to Mother Davis by way of Bishop Davis.



Dance Ministry



Mrs. Hicks and Mr. Williams lead in song.

Prior to the sermon, the baptism of Joya Diane Smith Clayborn added another level of joy and celebration to the day. The sweet spirit of Joya and the family and extended family that embraced the commitment to facilitate Joya's spiritual growth, exuded throughout the sanctuary.

Dr. Clayborn introduced the preacher of the day. They each reflected on their relationship as mentor-mentee as they spoke to the congregation. Bishop Davis preached from the text of Luke 5: 17 with encouragement to read the entire chapter. The sermon was entitled "A God of Strange Things." Bishop Davis noted that in the text Jesus was teaching as the Pharisees "were just sitting", noting that in today's church sometimes attendees "just come and sit". Bishop Davis indicated that in the text, Jesus saw the faith of the men who brought a paralyzed man to be healed by Him. Not only was the man healed, but by their faith those who brought the man to Jesus also received a blessing. The preacher of the day indicated that it is the responsibility of those in the church of today to have faith and others will/would be blessed, as in the text. He emphasized the power of those in the church, whether it is over a history of 130 years or with no consideration of the time frame. He cautioned, "Don't blame the world", while emphasizing that "Power is with those in the church."

Bishop Davis further stated, "Jesus can take anything you have and make more of it...will take and use your faith." He returned to "the sitters" in the text who began to criticize Jesus for healing, in that "they lost sight of the healing". Jesus told "the sitters" that he could in fact heal and Bishop Davis reminded the congregants that "Jesus can heal ... give you what you need". In the text, they ended by saying "Today we have seen strange things". Bishop Davis indicated that

(Continued on page 4)

St. John Proudly Celebrates 130th Church Anniversary

By Bridget J. Floyd

Photography by Darwin Washington



Bishop James L. Davis

come when you want Him but He's always right on time!" how strange God is. God works in mysterious ways!"

(Continued from page 3)

today believers should be "glad we serve a God who does strange things". He gave several biblical examples of "strange things": The aged woman who gave birth, the parting of the Red Sea, manna from heaven, a giant slain by a pebble, surviving a fiery furnace and a lion's den, among many other examples. He further noted, "If you have not found in 130 years that God is a God of strange things, you missed your lesson". He harkened to the statement of older individuals that God "may not He encouraged, "Start looking for



Mr. Pearson leads the Mass Choir



Bishop James L. Davis greets the congregation



Bishop Davis with the Claybom family



P. E. Allen, Bishop Davis and the Clayboms

Pastor's Message

(Continued from page 1)

This Easter season, allow me to encourage those of you who feel that your dream has died. The true essence of God's dream for our lives can never be destroyed! For that dream is rooted in God's word and God's word stands forever (Isaiah 40:8). God's dream for us can stand the test of time. Even our enemies can't destroy our God-given dream. No weapon formed against it can prosper (Isaiah 54:17). When they come to devour it, they will stumble and fall (Psalm 27:2).

I understand the counter argument. The dream died. It was buried in a borrowed tomb. How can anyone say that a true dream from God can't die?

The dream - the purpose - for our lives can never die because it reflects the invincibility of God. However, something does die - the form of the dream! When Jesus rises from the dead, He has a new form. The old form was gone - hence the empty tomb. A new form was born. This explains why Mary didn't recognize Jesus initially. She thought Jesus was the gardener (John 20:15).

When the form of the dream dies, our feelings will be hurt. We get attached to the form, and that's understandable. Death teaches us that form has finality. A form may work well in a certain period of our lives, but that form's effectiveness may be limited to only that period. If we would be open to the sacrifice of the form of our dream for the will of God, we will be surprised by the results. There will be NEW LIFE! New life shows up in a new form. When Jesus admonishes Mary and commands her not to hold onto Him (John 20:17), He is telling her to let go of His old form and be open to His new form. His new form is not bound by humanity because He is ascending to God (John 20:17). His new form carries a new relationship with His followers because He is now their spiritual brother ("my Father and Your Father" - John 20:17). His new form is that of a gardener. He is reclaiming the job that Adam and Eve once held! This simply means that Jesus' new form symbolizes the reconnection of humanity back to God and the restoration of God's purpose - God's dream - for humanity.

Even though the dream comes back in a new form, it's still the same dream. When Jesus calls Mary's name, she recognizes Him (John 20:16). We will know that it's our dream despite its change in form because the voice of the dream - the spirit of the dream - the heart of the dream - the integrity of the dream - the love in that dream - remains recognizable, reliable, and powerful.

Mary's dream never died - only the form died. A new form emerged. Jesus told her to go and tell the disciples what He said (John 20:17). He commissioned her to be the first preacher of the gospel. She went out and proclaimed that she had seen a resurrected Jesus (John 20:18). This was the new form of Mary's dream - to be a gospel preacher. Waking with Jesus was good for her. Watching Jesus was informative to her. Receiving a touch from Jesus healed her. Serving alongside Jesus empowered her. That form was good, but it was limited. Now her dream took a new form; her dream was resurrected. She was called to spread the message that Jesus lives.

Be encouraged sisters and brothers! It may seem that your dream died as you've strived to do your best. Rest assured that only the form died; the dream still lives! In resurrection, God is birthing a new form that will call you to a greater level of service, a greater level of exposure, and a greater level of relationship with God. So, go back to the place where you left that "dead" dream. Look for the signs that the old form is gone. Be open to the new form - the new opportunities - the new people - the new ideas - that will arise. Follow the new commands that the new form will demand. In so doing, you'll do things, go places, and have experiences that others can't imagine! Like Mary, you will say "I have seen the Lord!" For your dreams will be resurrected!

The Easter Program Portrays "The True Meaning of Easter"

By Lydia Ashe Owens

Prior to the Easter Program, "Excellence" was the one word used by the Program Director Mary Rankin on what to expect of this year's Easter Program. In an interview with Mrs. Rankin after the program, she stated that her intentions this year were two-fold: to provide a thorough understanding to the children of the real meaning of Easter and have it displayed throughout the recitations and to remind the children to listen and be respectful of others as they recited their parts. MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

The Easter Program began with two sisters, *"Mary and Martha"* (portrayed by Marissa and Morgan Owens), in a debate on the meaning of Easter. One sister argued that because she was dressed to a "tee" and her hair was on "fleek," the program could begin, while the other sister attempted to explain that Easter was not about the clothes, the hair, and the makeup; it was ALL ABOUT JESUS.

The opening prayer, scripture and introduction to the recitations were given by Martinee Hill. The program was derived from excerpts from Matthew 27-28:

- The Soldiers Mock Jesus
- The Crucifixion of Jesus
- The Death of Jesus
- The Burial of Jesus
- The Resurrection of Jesus

In addition, the skit *An Easter Story* may have muddled the waters for some; however Anthony Harbin, Kennedy Crutcher and Patrick Clayborn II (P2) were not fooled when the Easter Bunny (portrayed by Karl Gullatte) arrived on the scene.

The finale included a lesson for the young and the young at heart as Ms. Sherrill Humphrey held class. Her lesson was short, sweet, and to the point, and ended with a ministry in dance and the entrance of Jesus bearing His cross on the road to Calvary.



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The Easter Program Portrays "The True Meaning of Easter"

By Lydia Ashe Owens

(Continued from page 6)



The St. John A.M.E. Easter Ensemble then sang *No Greater Love*.

*Jesus went to Calvary to save a wretch, like you and me;
that's love, that's love.*

*They hung Him high, they stretched Him wide. He hung His head, for me He died;
that's love, that's love.*

*That's not how the story ends, three days later He rose again;
that's love, that's love.*

Pastor Clayborn then extended the invitation for those who had not accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior to do so, recognized all parents, program participants and coordinators. The program concluded with the Children's choir, Easter Ensemble, and the congregation singing, *Lord You Are Good*.

Sunrise Worship Service Held on Easter

By Charlsie Brooks



"He is not here. He is Risen." These thoughts were in the hearts of the 6:00 am Sunrise Service Worshippers as men, women, boys and girls gathered to offer praise and thanks to their Lord and Savior for the greatest gift ever given to humankind.

After lifting voices in the opening song, "Praise Him," the service continued with the Easter Call to Worship that ended with these lines:

Leader: Who have you come to Worship?

Congregation: The Lord who died on an old rugged cross for our sins.

Leader: Who have you come to magnify?

Congregation: JESUS-whose name is above every name-where every knee must bow and tongue must confess that He is Lord.

Leader: The Lord is risen!

Congregation: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The service continued with the invocation, welcome of guests, liturgical dance, and ministry through music by the Mass Choir.

Pastor Clayborn read the morning scripture, John 20:1-18. The sermon topic was "Seeing the Dream." The electrifying sermon began. He proclaimed that even though it is Resurrection Sunday, it is still a prime opportunity to fulfill dreams. Continuing the series on "Dream Building," he started by stating "we all have dreams." He stated that people may not know what that dream is, but there is a dream just for them. People fall into one of three categories concerning dream building, either: (1) I do not know what the dream is, (2) I have a dream and am working on it, or (3) I have a dream but have put it away. This can be because life happened and the dream was deferred, maybe a person does not know who will help them, or they cannot see the dream or they just wait and do nothing. Dreamers "walk by faith" (2 Corinthians 5:7) and must "Write the vision, make it plain," (Habakkuk 2:2) The preacher further stated that many run before they see the vision and many stand still, awaiting the spirit of expectation. He reminded worshippers that on Palm Sunday they learned that a dream was a vision that God puts on their heart.

Returning to the text, he noted that Mary saw her need. Her need had four qualities 1) help-self, 2) shared, 3) sacrificial, and 4) moved by God (sacred). Mary said she needed to see Jesus even though He was stuck in death--she needed to see Him. The preacher posed the question, "What need is haunting you?" He answered that the need should touch the passion and gave as an example that Mary was not satisfied. Her passion moved her to find a way into the tomb. Pastor Clayborn queried again "what drives your needs to put you in places others won't go?" The congregation responded when Pastor said, "the driving passion of your need will have you UP when others are asleep!" He challenged the church when he asked "Do you go places or serve when you do not get recognition, when your name is not called or you may not get credit?"

He continued from the text "John stated they had finished burial preparations and Mary didn't have to go to the tomb, but Passion--it will carry you above and beyond duty." Mary's need as well as persons today should drive them above duties as it did for her. That kind of passion is not measurable. Mary said to other women with her, "I don't know where they have laid Him!" She wanted to share her passion. Likewise, persons should not keep their passion to themselves, he said. Mary did not stay home in her despair. He continued, "Our hurt shouldn't have the last words: Cancer, diabetes other illnesses do not have the last word. Passion will strengthen you."

Turning to the portion of the text that talked about Peter and John, he highlighted the fact that although John and Peter raced to the tomb, Peter went in, John looked in, neither stayed. They looked and left." Pastor Clayborn explained that they did not understand, but could only see what was on the surface. Mary did not leave, but stood weeping. Her need was not met. He further stated that need can cause one to be desperate. She was able to endure. He then stated tears can give unimagined strength that can be anointing. He briefly reminded worshippers of the

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Concert Begins 130th Church Anniversary Celebration

By Bridget J. Floyd
Photography by Darwin Washington

St. John proudly celebrated 130 years of existence in March of 2015. On Friday, March 20th, at 6:30 p.m., the celebration began with a concert featuring the choirs of St. John. It was a special program consisting of worship in song as well as giving special tribute to several St. John members who have given of their time and talent over the years — "Honoring Visionaries."



The Reverend Dennis DeLoach serves as worship leader.

The theme was "Transformed Through Time, Envisioning the Future." The worship leader, the Reverend Dennis DeLoach, was a highlight as he moved the program along with sentimentality and humor. The program began with a meditation by Mrs. Charlesie Brooks, followed a medley of songs from the Praise and Worship Ensemble. The Gospel Choir, directed by Mr. Cleveland Wilson, followed with two favorites, "God Never Fails" and "You've Been So Faithful." The latter featured a special duet by Mr. Wilson and his daughter, Danita Wilson Jones, which was a sentimental favorite and touching on so many levels.

The first "special presentations" were made to the Reverend and Mrs. Homer L. McCall; Mrs. Mildred Hereford; Mrs. Sarah Bell; Mr. Homer McCraw; Mrs. Idell Merrell; Mr. James Jamar. This was followed by the Voices in Praise (VIP) Choir and the Children's Choir. They were directed by Mr. Reginald Pearson and Mrs. Mary Rankin, respectively. The VIP Choir sang "Peace and Favor" and "Watch God Move" and the Children's Choir enthusiastically sang a well-received rendition of "Old Time Religion."



Pictures of awards being presented to Mr. Jamar (seated on left), Mr. McCraw (accepted by his wife), and Mrs. Mildred Hereford (accepted by Mrs. Janice Hereford).



Pastor surprises Mr. Gilmore with an award for service as director of music.

After an offering was received the Male Chorus performed. They were directed by their former director, Mr. Rufus Gilmore. A special honor was given to Mr. Gilmore just after the selections by the choir, which Pastor Clayborn indicated was very difficult to keep as a surprise, given that Mr. Gilmore co-chaired the Anniversary Committee. Those present exhibited much enthusiasm for the honor and the return of the director for this concert.

The second set of "special presentations" were made to Dr. and Mrs. Willie Clark; Dr. Lee Williams II; Mrs. Martha Smith; Mrs. Vanona Walton; Mr. Otha Owens. The Mass Choir then performed three songs, the first featured Evangelist Elaine Tibbs-Rice in singing "You've Been So Good"

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Concert Begins 130th Church Anniversary Celebration

By Bridget J. Floyd
Photography by Darwin Washington



From left to right, Vanona Walton, Otha Owens and Martha Smith are honored for their service on the Steward Board.



Dr. Williams honored for service on Steward and Trustee Boards.

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to Me." The other selections were "All in His Hands" and "I am Redeemed." Mr. Pearson directed the choir that is an expansion of the former Sanctuary Choir. The service culminated with the invitation to Christian Discipleship by Pastor Clayborn, followed by remarks and benediction. A reception followed in the Fellowship Hall.

The concert/worship in song was a wonderful combination of the past and present with great expectations for the future. The musicians augmented the service with the quality of talent and reverence that continues to bless St. John. Ms. Claudette Purifoy-Fears and Mr. Rufus Gilmore as well as the anniversary committee, did an outstanding job in bringing a wonderful concert to those in attendance.

Congratulations to the honorees! Many thanks for the decades of service as part of the St. John Family! This was a great start of celebration for the anniversary weekend.

Scenes from the Choir Concert!



The Reverend Akinbinu Returns for Holy Week Revival 2015

By Nedra McDaniel
Photography by Dan in Washington

The Annual Holy Week Revival was held at St. John on Monday-Wednesday, March 30-April 1, 2015. The Reverend Bankole Akinbinu, pastor of Baptist Grove Baptist Church in Raleigh, North Carolina was the revivalist. The Reverend Akinbinu is no stranger to St. John, as he has been the revivalist in the past.

The theme for this year was "Catching Fire: Birthing and Reviving Your Dream." Music was rendered by the Praise and Worship Ensemble, Voices in Praise Choir and Mass Choir. Ministry in dance was by the St. John Dance Ministry and special guest, the NEEMA Dance Ministry.



The Monday night message was centered on "going higher in godly confidence" and entitled "Made, not Manufactured." The text was from Psalm 139:13-18. This text was a confirmation for those who had been attending the Dream Building bible study series and had studied this Psalm for the past two weeks. He began the message by emphasizing that God created each person with a unique plan. He does not make mistakes; He makes miracles. He stated that some people cannot approach life with the zeal that God would have because of lack of confidence to do what God wants them to do. They should have confidence because God's grace is sufficient. People must recognize that God made them; believers have a label "made by God." God put His signature on His people and hand crafted them for the purpose He has for their lives. In concluding he reminded everyone that if they are still living, God has more chapters in their book and that they must remember they are "fearfully and wonderfully made."

The powerful preaching continued on Tuesday night with a message entitled "Let It Flow." The text for this message was Ezekiel 47:1-12. The Reverend Akinbinu shared that Ezekiel was emphasizing there is nothing like the presence of God. The Israelites became too familiar and lost all awe. This resulted in their being in captivity; yet, the same God came back to restore His peo-

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The Reverend Akinbinu Returns for Holy Week Revival 2015

By Nedra McDaniel
Photography by Darin Washington



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ple. This shows that no matter how much one fails, their sins do not put them beyond the reach of God. He spoke of the plight of the Israelites from chapters 37-47 (from the valley of the dry bones to restoration of the land and temple, to the vision of the holy waters) as background for the sermon.

The Reverend Akinbinu noted that the stream flows beyond the walls to the community. It is not the people's responsibility to produce the stream of water because God is the source of this life-giving water. People have to spend time with God to get the life-giving water flowing and they are responsible for letting the stream flow in the direction that is according to God's purpose. The preacher continued by stating that God controls the depth of the stream, which sometimes takes one out of their comfort zone, takes them deeper in Jesus and to places they have not been before. The angel of God was leading Ezekiel and God's mercy would not let him down. The hearers of the preached word were told that for them there is also life-giving water. As the water brought life when it flowed into the Dead Sea, it brings life to the believer if they "let it flow."

The sermon on the final night of revival was entitled "Mysteries in the Middle" with text from Mark 4:26-29. This message used the parables Jesus taught about seeds and the analogy of a waiting farmer between the time of planting and harvesting to show how to get through the "middle period." To emphasize the point of the "middle period" he began by pointing out that the parable in the text is in the middle and lesser known of other parables in the chapter that are related to seeds.



The revivalist and Pastor Clayborn

The Reverend Akinbinu noted that during the middle period there are questions on whether what was planted will produce and it is the period where the planter has the least amount of control. The preacher indicated that "the struggle is to keep your hands off of what has been planted." He stated that the same is true spiritually. The final point was that one should not "pull up" too early for there will be a season of full grain if the harvester waits on God.

St. John was blessed to sit under the preaching of this anointed man of God for these three (3) nights of Holy Week. Please contact the media ministry for recordings of the services.

Support Requested for 2015 Crown of Glory Competition



The Crown of Glory event is a friendly competition among members of the Women's Missionary Society (WMS) in the Ninth Episcopal District that serves as the organization's primary Quadrennial fundraiser.

St. John member, Mrs. Mary Powers, will represent the Agnes Cooper Area. Mrs. Powers is a member and past president of the Betty E. Derrick WMS, past president of the Agnes L. Cooper Area WMS, and a Life Member of the WMS. Mrs. Powers will compete in the "Crown of Life" category as referenced in James 1:12. The event will be held June 6, 2015 at the Daniel Payne Community Plaza in Birmingham, Alabama.

The St. John WMS members ask for the support of St. John members toward this endeavor by purchasing an ad. The costs of ads are as follows:

Full Page	\$100.00	Half Page	\$75.00
Quarter Page	\$50.00	Patron	\$25.00

Camera ready ads should be coordinated with Ms. Donnie Thompson or Mrs. Mary Powers. The deadline for purchasing/submitting ads is Sunday, April 26, 2015.

Thank you in advance for your support!



AME Proud

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The Office of the General Secretary of the AME Church makes AME APP available to AMEs and others who would like to download the APP on Apple and Android devices. There is a one-time cost of \$1.99. In the App Store, simply type in the following in the search area: "AME Church." Follow the prompts to complete the download of the APP.



Maundy Thursday Service Held

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. John 13:14

The Holy Week celebration continued at St. John on Thursday, April 2, with the Maundy Thursday Service. The service was called to order by the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn. Prayer was offered by Sister Ashley Humphrey. The Praise and Worship Team led in the celebration of praise through song. The Reverend Smith Clayborn read scripture from John 13:1-14.

Pastor Clayborn shared how he came to the decision during prayer and meditation to include foot washing in the Maundy Thursday Service. He stated that God reminded him of what Jesus said in John 13:14. To wash feet requires humility and love between the saints. The practices Jesus instituted are those that bind believers together. Washing feet is just a symbol that represents one's willingness to be second.



The order of service continued with altar call for individual prayer and instructions for the foot washing portion of the service. Ministers were first to have their feet washed, followed by stewards, trustees, ministry leaders, members, and stewardesses. After the foot was washed, prayer was offered for each person. Many members were blessed to participate in this humbling service.

Stewardess Board Straight Talk

By Barbara Johnson

Stewardess Board Straight Talk is a column each month that will address some of the traditions and customs of the AME Church. The reference used for this column is, *A Guideline for Stewardesses, Ordinary Women Engaged in Extraordinary Work* by Richard J. Parker.

Colors in the Church

Color has always been used to denote meaning to life. So the use of varying colors in the paraments, (Altar cloths, Pulpit and Lectern scarves, and Clergystoles) is an added means of symbolizing truths of God to the people. If only one color is used, red or maroon is to be preferred, with the addition of white for Holy Communion and perhaps, weddings and festival days. The ideal preference would be to use the full five colors as follows:

Purple—which signifies royalty in the coming of the King in the Advent Season; in penitence, watching, self-denial, and self-discipline of Lent.

Green—which speaks to us of nature, growth, and life; used for Epiphany and Kingdomtide (Seasons). (*Epiphany*, always celebrated on the 6th of January; it is symbolic of the Wise Men's appearance before the Christ Child, bringing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh; the season may include as many as nine Sundays, depending on the date of Easter.)

Red—symbolizes blood, fire, and Christian zeal, used appropriately, for the Pentecost (or sometimes called Trinity) Season. (*Pentecost*, is the day of celebration of the birthday of the Christian church, the coming of the Holy Spirit, as the promised Comforter.)

White—the color that signifies "without spot or blemish," adorns the Chancel on Easter Sunday and during Eastertide; on Trinity Sunday; on All Saints Day; on Festival of Christ the King Day; on Christmas Day and the first and second Sundays after Christmas; on the first Sunday after Epiphany Day; and in the A.M.E. Church, on all Holy Communion celebrations.

Black—the color of mourning; used on Good Friday and for funerals.

Next month... *The Christian Flag*

Soup Kitchen



The Stone Was Rolled Away

"The stone was rolled away from the door not to permit Christ to come out, but to enable the Disciples to go in." - Peter Marshall

Thank you to the dedicated volunteers who "go in" each third and fourth Tuesday of the month to serve as vessels of service to those who come to the doors.

St. John's Soup Kitchen Ministry workers "go in" to participate in the service of Christian discipleship, rolling the stones away to feed the hungry. They "go in" to share their faith, and to offer service and love. They "go in" to give of themselves and offer service as faithful followers of the Savior. They "go in" because He calls His Disciples to serve and to share the gift of the Resurrection. Please join them. Disciples are needed!

"The Lord God has given me the tongue of disciples, that I may know how to sustain the weary one with a Word. He awakens me morning by morning. He awakens my ear to listen as a Disciple."—Isaiah 50:4

Let your dreams be bigger
than your fears, your
actions louder than your
words, and your faith
stronger than your
feelings.

Beauty Within Us

By Paulette Bargon

There is a commercial about a man who plants a row of hedges. It shows him laboring over these bushes, vigorously trimming and watering them. Finally he sits in his front yard proudly admiring his very high hedges. Then the camera zooms past the hedges to show a very colorful home. Viewers realized that the "ugly house" was the reason that he grew the hedges. What he failed to realize was the beautiful view of the landscape beyond that home.

Sometimes people do the same thing. They are so focused on blocking or getting rid of obstacles that they think are so ugly, or someone who they do not like for some insignificant reason, that they fail to see the beauty within or that surrounds it. We need to stop letting that bad first impression keep us from finding the good in someone. The real person inside may be a person of incredible beauty.

Matthew 7:2 says, "In this way you judge others, you will be judged." To God, real beauty comes from who a person is, not what they look like. People are not to be judgmental, but loving. They are not to be suspicious, but inviting. Jesus did not reject the sinful Samaritan woman; instead He offered her "living water."

And besides, this writer thought that "ugly house" in the commercial was cute.

"Don't be concerned about the outward beauty that depends on fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should be known for the beauty that comes from within. The unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit which is precious to God."

1 Peter 3:3-4

Prayer Time

Weekly Prayer Time each Tuesday at 6:00 am.

Conference Call Credentials
US Toll Number (530) 881-1212
Meeting ID: 878-883-940

Listen to the playback anytime.
Playback Number (530) 881-1212
Meeting ID 878-883-940.
Press # to ignore any requests for reference number when calling for playback.



Technology Tip

By Ricardo Williams

Internet Browser Cleaning

Spring is the season when people start spring cleaning in many areas of the home, whether it be outside or inside. One thing that most people forget to keep clean is their personal computer's internet browser. Keeping the computer's browser clean can be one of the most important tasks of safely keeping and maintaining personal data.

Each time a website is visited or information is downloaded from the internet, there is data cached onto the machine. Here are some instructions that will help to keep a clean cache of data on the machine on two of the most popular browsers, Internet Explorer and Google Chrome.

For Internet Explorer users, there is a Tool section in the menu bar of the browser. Once clicked, there is an option titled Internet Options. Once the Internet Options screen has appeared, there are options available that relate to cache being stored on the computer. The options available will be Delete Cookies, Delete Files and Clear History. By clicking each of these buttons, stored cache and history of pages visited from the computer will be removed.

When using Google Chrome, there will be an icon to the far right near the current URL that is open. After clicking the icon, there will be a settings options available for selection. From the settings option, the advance settings option will appear. Click the advanced settings option and there will be a clear browser button to clear browsing history, download history, cached images/files, form data and passwords.

It is always a good idea to keep the browser history and cache clean. Keeping cache on the computer allows another person access to things such as user name and passwords to accounts recently accessed via the internet. There are several tools that will help with keeping the browser clean, but the suggestions in this article are manual ways of doing so.



**AME Churches in the State of Alabama
9th Episcopal District**

February 15 - May 16, 2015

**I Dare You
to**
*Trust
God*

With Your Time • With Your Treasure • With Your Commitment

Principles of Stewardship

**James L. Davis, Servant Bishop
Arelis B. Davis, WMS Supervisor**

For more about "I Dare You," please contact any member of the Steward Board.



The Benefits of Pushing Pause

By Janette R. Smith

Certified Strategic Intervention & Mindset Coach

My client, whom I will call 'Tom' can be a 'hot head.' He reacts more than he responds. He is sure that every feeling he has is divinely attuned and unfortunately, it is always an indication of how people, situations and things are 'working against him,' or not working to his favor. He is always waiting for 'the other shoe to drop,' so to speak. There are several reasons that Tom has become a bit guarded and fearful - but the lesson I want to focus on for this month's article is an issue we all must learn: How to Push Pause. While preparing for my weekly radio segment I came up with a top ten list for WHY we should work to push pause in our day-to-day living, but before I share that, I want to share an excerpt of an interesting brochure, (*geared toward teens*) shared by the Scholastic Corporation. It explains why pushing pause is biologically beneficial.

Most people have said something that they wish they could take back. And if they had paused to think about it first, they probably would have acted differently. Pushing pause doesn't only pay off when you speak. Scientific studies have shown that making a habit of pausing before you do something can actually have a big impact on how your life turns out.

In making decisions we rely on two areas of the brain:

- 1) the limbic system which creates and processes emotions, and*
- 2) the prefrontal cortex which governs logical thought.*

The type of decision, how we feel about it, and how prepared we are to handle it helps determine which brain area has the most influence.

But our age also plays an important role. Thinking through the consequences of one's actions is actually harder for teens because the prefrontal cortex is not fully developed until around age 25.

So, train your brain.

The key to making impulsivity work for you—instead of against you—is to train your brain by practicing pausing. This doesn't mean you stop taking risks or being open to new experiences. But you won't know if the risk is worth it until you think it through.

Interesting isn't it? This article explains quite a bit if you are raising teens! The other truth is 'pushing pause' is the outward sign of a believer operating one of the fruits of the spirit—temperance. The word "temperance" literally means "self-control" (*Strong's Hebrew/Greek Lexicon*). We can all enjoy more of the life rewards that come with high levels of self-control, I pray this list offers inspiration.

Why Press Pause?

1. Being thoughtful and proactive is more powerful than being reactionary and out of control.
2. Our base-level selves usually show up first through our 'fight or flight' response tendencies.
3. There is always a 50-50 chance your perception about what is happening is off or distorted through your own filters.
4. *Reacting before thinking* leads to having to clean up more messes than most of us want to have to endure.
5. Pushing pause gives you time to slow your brain down and engage more senses on your behalf including discernment.

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The Benefits of Pushing Pause

(Continued from page 17)

6. We better model love and character through our initial responses, though taking ownership over mistakes and mishaps is also a valuable witness.

7. Our *need to be right* can lead to being right, but handling it wrong.

8. Living in a *war-ready state* is tiring and stressful. Let your guard defenses down, stop expecting people to wrong you, stop expecting to have to do battle — take your hand off of the 'kill' button.

9. Pushing pause is NOT a sign of weakness.

10. Love conquers all. Even tough love must be administered with wisdom which often does not happen when we act first and think secondly.

Contact Janette at www.UBeEmpowered.com

Serving The Servers

By Bridget Floyd

The St. John AMENewsletter (AMEN) Staff members are privileged to sponsor a Taste Tea each December, and to receive assistance from the St. John family in so many ways. Each year members of the Young People's Department (YPD) are the servers for the Taste Tea. They are greatly appreciated. In order to express this in a tangible way, the AMEN staff members were able to "serve the servers" on Sunday, March 15th, 2015.

The menu consisted of lasagna, garlic bread, veggies and dip, garlic bread, apple dumplings, cookies, brownies, ice cream and punch. It was a pleasure to show appreciation for their willingness to help.

Thank you YPD!



Pastor Preaching at CEC

Pastor Clayborn will be the preacher for the closing service of the Connectional Annual Ministries in Christian Education Training/ Planning Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee. Check with the church office for more details and to sign up to ride the church bus.

Be prayerful for this service and for the preacher.

Online Giving is Easy!

Online contributions may be made to St. John by using your PayPal account. Within PayPal, send donations directly to St. John at e-mail address stjohnameh@aol.com. Select the option to transfer from your bank-ing account or PayPal balance and specify donate/friends and family. Online giving is easy!



Sunrise Service

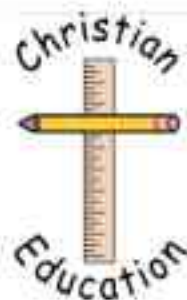
(Continued from page 8)

mother who used that kind of strength when she moved a car to save her child.

Pastor Clayborn stated that Jesus allowed John and Peter to go home so that Mary's strength would grow. God allowed her to look again. "Courage," he said, "will allow you to look again." Courage, Dr. Clayborn explained, does not mean absence of fear. Passion, need and strength will stir up gifts. When Mary looked again, she saw two angels. When dreams are fulfilled people are able to see things others do/cannot see. Mary would not leave until she could see Jesus' body, yet she received much more. Pastor Clayborn stated that Mary was now commissioned to be the first preacher of the Gospel, as she shared with the disciples, "I have seen Jesus."

It may be different, but God will promote and give each person what they need; more strength; more visions. Just like Mary, He will give them what they need and they must give Him honor and praise.

Church School Lesson Overview – May 2015



May lesson reviews were written by Brother Kenneth Parham.

May 3, 2015

Lesson Title: Let's Work Together

Lesson Scripture: 3 John

Print: 3 John

Devotional Songs: #525, #272, and #243

Key Verse: "Therefore we ought to support such people, so that we may become co-workers with the truth" (3 John 8).

Based on one's Christian walk, they understand that the greatest amongst them is the least and this is demonstrated through faithful service. This lesson highlights the theme of faithfulness and service. Apostle John wrote to Gaius to let Gaius know of how proud he was of him. John had received reports from fellow followers of Christ who had visited the town in which Gaius resided. The reports were positive in that they indicated that Gaius walked in truth and performed unending acts of generosity and hospitality. The reports indicated endless expenditure of time, energy and money to those traveling through his community. It was known that the followers of Christ, who were on a mission to spread the Word were to take neither food nor money on their journey. They were to rely on the generosity of the people with whom they came in contact.

John encouraged Gaius by comparing Gaius' love for others with the acts displayed by Diotrephes. It was noted that Diotrephes was a self-appointed leader of the church in the region where Gaius resided. John indicated that although Diotrephes declared to be a follower of the truth indeed he was the exact opposite and that Diotrephes went to the extreme of throwing members out of the church if they practiced following the truth and showing hospitality to those passing through their community.

John left Gaius with encouragement by holding up another follower of the truth. He indicated that there was one named Demetrius who walked in truth also.

May 10, 2015

Lesson Title: Unity in Diversity

Lesson Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12: 1-11

Print: 1 Corinthians 12: 1-11

Devotional Songs: #77, #251, and #243

Key Verse: "To each is given the manifesta-

tion of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:7).

In this lesson, Paul discussed the spiritual gifts and their importance. He indicated in his letter that God had appointed the Holy Spirit to distribute spiritual gifts as the Holy Spirit deemed appropriate. The spiritual gifts noted were manifestation of the spirit, the utterance of wisdom, the utterance of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, ability to speak in various tongues, and the ability to interpret various tongues.

Paul indicated that the various gifts (given individually) were distributed to benefit the whole church – given to be put into service as "one in the Spirit" to build God's Kingdom.

May 17, 2015

Lesson Title: The Sum is Greater Than Its Parts

Lesson Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Print: 1 Corinthians 12:14-31

Devotional Songs: #364; #412; and #243

Key Verse: "In the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and we were all made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:13).

Paul continued to discuss the theme of unity from the previous lesson. He explained why persons may have different talents, yet they are all one in God. He used the human body as an analogy to discuss the theme of being one body of many parts and the importance of each member.

Paul indicated that all parts of the human body were special and had a purpose. He also indicated that no body part is more important than the other. He indicated that some body parts are more vulnerable than others and need greater protection in terms of respect and honor.

Paul also touched on the structure of the church indicating that God first appointed apostles, next prophets, next teachers, next deeds of power, next healers, next givers of service, next those with leadership abilities and finally those with the ability of various kinds of tongues. It is the reviewer's opinion that Paul was indicating that even within a structured

(Continued on page 20)

Church School Lesson Overview – May 2015

(Continued from page 19)

environment; each gift is special and strives for inclusion into the greater gift – the glorification of God.

May 24, 2015

Lesson Title: From Nonsense to Sense

Lesson Scripture: Acts 2:1-21; 1 Corinthians 14:1-25

Print: Acts 2:1-7, 12; 1 Corinthians 14:13-19

Tentative Devotional Songs: #97; #258; and #243

Key Verse: "What should I do then? I will pray with the spirit, but I will pray with the mind also; I will sing praise with the spirit, but I will sing praise with the mind also" (1 Corinthians 14:15).

Acts 2 documents the events that occurred on the day of Pentecost where Jesus promised to send the disciples a comforter upon His departure from their midst. On the day as noted, the upper room was filled with the power of the Holy Spirit as evidenced through the disciple's ability to speak in different languages. And when the crowd heard the various languages and noted that the disciples could be understood, the crowd was astonished.

This provides the backdrop for how tongues and different languages were used in worship. God sent the Holy Spirit there so that Jewish leaders would see His power to communicate using what they would consider to be low status people (Galileans). The Corinthians text shares how the gift of tongues may be properly used during worship. Paul reaffirms the importance of this gift but cautions its overuse. Apostle Paul makes clear that without the benefit of a spiritual translator, speaking in tongues could hinder spiritual growth. Though some may speak in tongues in their private worship and praise, the use of this gift in public worship without an interpreter only benefits the speaker and not the masses. When the gift of tongues is used prophetically, proper protocol, according to Paul, would be for an interpreter to translate the message. (In some cases, the speaker is also gifted to interpret the message.) If an interpreter is absent the prophecy can't be understood because of the language barrier. The interpreter allows us to avoid possible confusion. Proverbs reminds us that in all things we should get an understanding. Confusion is not of God.

Excerpts were taken from the Improved Adult Teacher Sunday School Quarterly.

May 31, 2015

Lesson Title: Love Never Ends

Lesson Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13

Print: 1 Corinthians 13

Tentative Devotional Songs: #481; #141; and #243

Key Verse: "Now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13).

In reflecting on Paul's summation of the trait that makes one Christ-like, the reviewer is reminded of various scriptural passages that characterize love as being the greatest power that one can possess to withstand all trials that may come their way.

The following are some examples that support verses discussed by Paul. The list noted below is only a sampling of the verses expounded on by Paul in defining the concept of love.

Jesus' parable of the rich man who has lived a righteous life and asks what else must he do to gain salvation. It appears evident that the rich man loved status and possessions more than he loved his fellow man. (Mark 10:17-21)

God's steadfast patience (out of love) was evident in dealing with the Israelites (Book of Judges). Time after time God's love was so evident in accepting the Israelite's repentance during periods of captivity for turning away from God in worshipping idol gods and accepting the lifestyle of their captors.

One of Jesus' greatest acts was the love (or compassion) shown to both Mary and Martha in dealing with the death of Lazarus. Jesus was so moved that He wept. And to demonstrate that love believes all things, Jesus called Lazarus from the grave to life.

And to sum up Paul's conclusion that out of the three greatest virtues (faith, hope and love, with love being the greatest), the reviewer is reminded of the Hebrew men in the fiery furnace. They demonstrated their faith by staying committed to their God while serving a foreign king, they demonstrated hope by knowing that their God would save them from their present situation (bound and thrown into the fire) and their love for their God was evident in their statement that if they perished, they did not fear any idol gods or images. God's love endures forever.



May 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal 12:00 p.m. Children's Dance
3 AAMU Founder's Day 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	4 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing 6:00 p.m. CPR Ministry	5 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	6 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	7 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal Steward Board Mtg.	8 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing	9 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 10:30 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting
10 MOTHER'S DAY 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	11 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing	12 6:00 p.m. Dance of Allen Mtg. VIP Chdr Rehearsal	13 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	14 6:00 p.m. Official Board Meeting	15 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal Women's Walch Party 6:00pm	16 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 10:00 a.m. Church School Book Club 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal 12:00 p.m. VPD Meeting WMI Children's Dance
17 WOMEN'S DAY 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	18 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing	19 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN 6:00 p.m. Trustee Board Mtg.	20 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	21 6:00 p.m. Mass Choir Media Ministry	22 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	23 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry Women's Ministry
24 PENTECOST 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	25 MEMORIAL DAY 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing	26 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	27 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	28 6:00 p.m. Mass Choir	29 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing	30 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry
31 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship						



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The Right Reverend James L. Davis, Servant Bishop
 Mrs. Arelis B. Davis, Episcopal Supervisor
 The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder
 The Reverend Doctor Patrick Clayborn, Pastor

Important Dates to Remember

<i>April 15-18, 2015</i>	<i>Ninth District Mid-Winter Meeting, Daniel Payne Community Plaza, Birmingham, Alabama</i>
<i>April 24, 2015</i>	<i>Women Of Worth: Women's Fellowship – Dream Builders, Power to Change (6pm)</i>
<i>April 25, 2015</i>	<i>South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer District Conference, Gaines Chapel, Anniston, Alabama</i>
<i>May 3, 2015</i>	<i>AAMU Founder's Day Worship, 8:00 a.m.</i>
<i>May 10, 2015</i>	<i>Mother's Day</i>
<i>May 15, 2015</i>	<i>Women of Worth Watch Party, 6:00 p.m. Dream Builders, Power to Change</i>
<i>May 16, 2015</i>	<i>Closing Session of Connectional Christian Education Congress, Pastor Patrick Clayborn, Guest Preacher, Nashville, Tennessee</i>
<i>May 17, 2015</i>	<i>Women's Day, 10 a.m. worship service</i>
<i>May 24, 2015</i>	<i>Pentecost</i>
<i>May 31, 2015</i>	<i>10:00 a.m. worship service</i>

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



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 20 Issue 5

May 2015



Pastor Patrick D. Clayborn, Ph.D.

Pastor's Message

Women of Worth - WOW

Genesis 1:27-31

WOMEN HAVE WORTH!

WOMEN HAVE GREAT WORTH!!

WOMEN HAVE EXTRAORDINARY WORTH!!!

Far too often, women are deemed unworthy based on standards that have nothing to do with God's concept of womanhood! The standards of the world do NOT apply!!! Far too often, women will discount themselves because of these erroneous standards in:

Fashion (petite/flawless/striking features are only to be considered attractive)

Work (having to resemble men in order to get close to same pay)

Family (have to be docile/maid-like/doormat to gain status)

Religion (silent submission and unquestioning faithfulness to be worthy of the kingdom).

We see this especially in religion – with the idea that our righteousness is like filthy rags in God's sight (Isaiah 64:6). Women are taught to see themselves as unworthy. Our worthiness/ righteousness has nothing to do with the value/worth that God sees in us. The idea that our righteousness is like filthy rags in God's sight is a two-fold idea:

1. When we compare ourselves to God, there is a large gap between our righteousness and God's righteousness. Hence, the idea of filthy rags reminds us of our place in the universe.
2. When we say that our righteousness is like filthy rags in God's sight, it is meant to humble us into a mindset that says, "I won't boast about my righteousness because I still have TONS of room for growth!"

Unfortunately, in many churches, we have perverted that message at the expense of women. Some churches do not want women as preachers or pastors. Some will not accept women in any leadership role. Some will take all of their money but give no avenue for true spiritual renewal. And, they abuse the scriptures in order to do so: "Women keep silent in church" (1 Cor. 14:34); "The woman is weaker vessel" (1 Peter 3:7); "Eve committed first sin and caused Adam to sin" (Genesis 3:12); "The man is the head of the woman" (1 Cor. 11:3); and so many others.

However, God declares that women have worth! That worth comes from almighty God!! In Genesis 1:27-31, God created woman. Just as the value of a painting is determined by the greatness of the painter, the worth of woman is determined by the greatness of God. Since God is great and greatly to be praised, woman has GREAT worth! In addition to creating woman, God blessed the woman with ability and purpose – to be fruitful, multiply, and supervise the earth. In so doing, the woman is like God. After creating and blessing the woman, God declares that the woman (along with all creation) is GOOD! This word "good" – used in Genesis 1:31 – is the same word in Hebrew that we find in Psalm 100:5: "For the Lord is GOOD...." Again, the wom-

(continued on page 3)

A Mother's Day Reflection

By The Reverend Sheri D. Smith Clayborn

To be a mother is to be a steward over one of the greatest blessings one can receive... God's children. Mothering is a humbling privilege and I am grateful to have mothers and those with a mothering spirit in my life. I want to take this opportunity to first honor my mother, Cassandra Dianne Jones Smith who is the greatest mother on this side of heaven. The sacrifices she has made as a mother and the love she exudes as she does it is nothing short of miraculous. I am blessed that my mother also had a loving mother, so she did not have to start from scratch in raising me (and my siblings). She had been enveloped in a foundation of love, care, and responsibility. I am reaping the harvest of my mother and those mothers who prayed for me and continue to do so. For this, I am thankful.

I honor other mothers, biological and surrogate. I am glad to know some awesome mothers. I continue to keep my eyes and spirit open so that I may continue to learn from other mothers...my sisters. An openness to learning and sharing is absolutely necessary in mothering and raising children. None of us can do it on our own, nor was it ever in the plan for us to do it on our own.

I am a proud mother of two biological children. They are love personified. I truly believe younger children are not only less tainted by the world, but also display an unconditional love of God. For eight years I have had the privilege of mothering a son and a 16 month old daughter as well. The journey to mothering was seemingly long and interesting- filled with laughter and tears, a journey from which I have chosen to learn, and grow. Please allow me to share with you just a small portion of my journey...

February 20, 2007, I birthed Patrick Clayborn, II (P2) into this world. This experience truly left me speechless. I did not have words that could adequately convey the level of grace I had received from Almighty God. I still don't feel I have adequate words to describe God's goodness packaged and delivered through me. *This* was the blessing for which my husband and I had prayed. Yet, I was filled with anxious anticipation. You see, we thought we would have this privilege two years before, but that pregnancy ended in a miscarriage. While that was a very difficult time, one of the things it showed me... I had a strong desire to be a mother. Before that moment, I was not sure. So even through the hurt, I chose to embrace the knowledge I believe God had revealed to me. I tried to rest in knowing that the desire wasn't mine alone, but one that had been revealed by God. This was exciting, but the uncertainty of it all was overwhelming. God blessed and P2 was born... a dream realized. Watching him grow and mature is amazing. He is loving, intelligent, and gifted. In his own way, he is very open to the move of God in his life. Do not get me wrong, even with all of that, he is still an 8 year old boy. Even for this, I am proud! He is learning to balance life with God as the Center.

February 2012 was another rough time in the life of this mother...in the life of our family. We were just getting situated in Huntsville, Alabama. My husband was the newly appointed pastor of St John AMEC... an exciting time filled with uncertainty and newness. I found out I was pregnant shortly after we arrived. I was so excited... another prayer answered, only to experience brokenness again. On Valentine's Day 2012, another miscarriage. While extremely thankful for how God had already blessed, I still had a heavy heart. I did my best to live what I teach and preach, and that was difficult. I kept my hand in God's hand and I believed God would make a way for the desire, I believed, He had placed in my heart.

January 2014... what a way to bring in the new year... JOYA to the world. God did it again! God allowed me to experience the manifestation of what I believe God had promised. The birth of a little girl- a blessing. I am privileged to be a mothering steward over the blessings that belong to God. To see and be used in God's promise living, moving and blessing still leaves me with words of thanksgiving that seem inadequate.

I just wanted to share with you a small portion of my journey and what was on my heart this Mother's Day. To those who have a mothering spirit and are waiting on your turn... *Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge God and God will direct your paths.* I cannot promise you that on your journey things will always turn

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Pastor's Message

(Continued from page 1)

an is like God!

Therefore, when the serpent tries to convince Eve that eating the forbidden fruit will make her like God, the serpent is implying that she is NOT like God. Even though God clearly made the woman in God's image, the serpent attempts to persuade her that she is not like God. So much of what women have to face daily are serpents who attempt brainwash them into believing that they are not like God. They face insecure men, sexist workplaces, misogynistic family members, condemning church goers, and perhaps self-sabotaging thinking.

Women – hear this: You are fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14). You are so loved that God gave God's best for you (John 3:16). You are Spirit filled, anointed, called, chosen, equipped, beautiful, intelligent, creative, innovative, strong, fierce, courageous, loving, nurturing, helpful, and God's heir!

Women, you are Women of Worth – WOW!!!!

Women of Worth are Women of...

Word ---- Wisdom ---- Work ---- Wonder ---- Wellness ---- Wholeness ---- Witness ----
Will ---- Warmth ---- Wealth (spiritual).

They may have Wounds, but they are Winning (attitude), Womanish, Withy (flexible and tough), Witting (aware / conscious / intended), Warriors, Wakeful (vigilant), Wimble (active/nimble), Wanted, Welcoming, Weird (in a good way), Worshippers, and Whatever Praisers!

This is why we give God praise for women!!!! They are Women of Worth --- WOW!!!!

This month, St. John celebrates women as Women of Worth. We thank God for all mothers (biological moms, aunts, older sisters who acted as mothers, grandmothers, great grandmothers, big mommas, nanas, ma deas, God mothers, God grandmothers, foster moms, adoptive moms, surrogate moms, play moms, spiritual moms) as we honor them on Mother's Day. We also celebrate Women's Day this month as we lift up WOW Dream Builders with the Power to Change! We even changed our format for worship and how the word will be proclaimed! Be sure to keep all of our women lifted in prayer as they partake in all of the women's events this month. We are praying that they become empowered as Women of Worth and that they will form holy partnerships with other Women of Worth.

All I can say is WOW!!!!



Women's Prayer Breakfast Dream Builders: The Power to Change

Praise, Prayer and Practical Points of Power

By Barbara Johnson

The atmosphere was set for change on Saturday, April 11, 2015 at the Doubletree Suites conference room. The tables were elaborately layered with a bounty of beautifully appointed centerpieces; each one filled to capacity with heavenly blue and white hydrangeas and blush, pink roses. The centerpieces set atop a wispy, organza, table covering of shimmering blue. Each centerpiece held a distinctive glittering affirmation regarding dream possibilities.



Pictured left to right are LaNetta Teagle, Sheri Lott, Rev. Sheri, Dr. Kelley-Ellis, Pastor Clayborn and LaCondria Bryant.

After all were seated, the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn, like the village Griot, called the gathering to order. Sister Shannon Lott welcomed not only the St. John sisters, but those visiting sisters from other churches. Sister Janette Smith blessed the gathering with an inspirational prayer of praise followed by Sister Templena Stanley's heartfelt and moving rendering of the poem, *In the Valley I Grow*.

Attendees were inspired musically by the St. John Praise Ensemble, led by Director of Music, Mr. Reginald Pearson with accompaniment by Mr. Roberto Burton. Songs of Praise were, *Yes, Lord*, *Yes Lord*, and *Destiny*. There was a real treat when the guest ensemble, (Friends of St. John AMEC) sang, *Is My Living in Vain*. All selections caused persons present to reflect upon the theme, Dream Builders, *Yes Lord*, saying yes to the Lord and being obedient *Destiny*, Thank you Lord for showing me and

directing me to my destiny---I know what I'm here for. By then, the group was ready to have church.

Sister LaCondria Bryant introduced the guest speaker, Dr. Kreslyn Kelley-Ellis, as an Empowerment Coach, educator, speaker, consultant, author, servant leader and president/CEO of Premier Leadership Academy, Inc.

Dr. Kelley-Ellis took the floor and captivated the audience for approximately 45 minutes. It appeared everyone was with her from her initial introduction until her final remarks. Dream Builders—The Power to Change. "Is there a dream in you? If so, it's going to cost you something. I am here to glorify God. God can get the glory out of my life. The power of Dreams—What God puts in you will come to be. God created you to do something that no one else can do. God has a plan for you." She then related the story of Joseph, the dreamer. "The dream cost Joseph his friends, his family, and his finances. Your dreams will do likewise. They will cost you your friends, your family and your finances. Let your dreams be built on something solid."

Dr. Kelley-Ellis elaborated on these points regarding dreams. Everyone's dream is different. Everyone receives their dream differently. Some dreams may be received visually, or through thoughts. Some dreams may never be seen. Some come from the heart while others might be inherited. Dreams may stem from childhood. Some dreams may change. Sometimes God gives dreams and sometimes people choose dreams. No matter how one comes to their dreams, they are always an inspiration from God. She encouraged, "whatever you do, do it for the Glory of God."

Dr. Kelley-Ellis shared that the number one dream blocker, the one thing that keeps people from seeing their dreams to fruition is, "FEAR." She stated, "Don't let your fear paralyze you. The main thing we fear is what others think about us. Stop it!" Other blockers were, talking to the wrong people, and being too trusting. She cautioned listeners to not trust their dreams with everyone. They must not be impatient, but remember that God's time is not their time. Apathy and doubt were two more dream blockers. And the final was comfort. "Don't languish in your comfort zone. We are called to be useful. We're ushering in the second coming of the Lord, Jesus Christ—

(Continued on page 5)

Women's Prayer Breakfast Dream Builders: The Power to Change

Praise, Prayer and Practical Points of Power

By Barbara Johnson

(Continued from page 4)

we're all here to be about the purpose put in us."

She indicated that the deepest fear is that one is inadequate. However, they have within themselves the "Power to Change." Dr. Kelley-Ellis shared eight strategies for change as listed below.

- ◇ Know yourself—know the God in you
- ◇ Be true to yourself
- ◇ Ask the right people for help—Who are the right people? Look at their fruit.
- ◇ Create a plan—write the plan, make it plain.
- ◇ Be accountable
- ◇ Be responsible
- ◇ Make a commitment
- ◇ Act with integrity

Dr. Kelley-Ellis concluded her presentation with the "power-up" strategies listed below.

- ◇ Pray...pray...pray...pray without ceasing
- ◇ Affirming yourself.....walk in it
- ◇ Power-up by trusting God—for He knows the plans He has for you.
- ◇ Being thankful
- ◇ Journaling...to remember what God has done for you in the past
- ◇ Pouring into others—helping others to see their dreams come true
- ◇ Power down—don't overwork yourself and risk overlooking your miracle
- ◇ Recharging---READ YOUR BIBLE!
- ◇ Retreat—get away with friends and family.

Dr. Kelley-Ellis ended by saying, "Your life is not an accident. It unfolds one piece at a time." POWER-UP!" The entire room stood with resounding applause.



Seated at one of the beautifully decorated tables are Jessie Patterson, Alberta Jefferson, and Kamea Lathore.

Pastor Clayborn thanked the presenter, Dr. Kelley-Ellis, for a remarkable presentation. He acknowledged the Women's Prayer Breakfast Committee for an outstanding event, the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn; Sister Janette Smith; Sister Lauretta Teague, the Women's Ministry Chairperson; Sisters LaCondria Bryant and Shannon Lott, Koinonia Ministry; Sisters Donna Gullatte and Mary Rankin for decorations; and Sisters Templena Stanley and Barbara Johnson.

All Pastor Clayborn could say in his closing remarks was, "WOW!" He elaborated on his acronym, WOW as an affirmation for all women, by stating, all women are, "Women of Worth, Women in the Word, Women of Wholeness, Women of Will Power, Women of Warmth and Compassion, Women of Work, Women Willing to Witness and testify to His glory," and he looked to Mrs. Heyward and Mrs. Ezell and declared them

to be "Women of Wisdom."

So ended the Dream Builder: The Power to Change, St. John Women's Prayer Breakfast, WOW!

Update on Habitat Build 2015

By Tami McGhee



St. John is partnering with St. Matthew Episcopal Church, United Church of Huntsville, Aldersgate United Methodist Church, First Presbyterian Church, Church of the Nativity Episcopal Church, and First Christian Church in the 2015 Habitat Build Spring Build. This year's Habitat Build is a 5 bedroom house at 2505 Cornerstone Circle. St John provided lunch for the Habitat volunteers on Saturday, April 4, and will also provide lunch on Saturday, May 23.

Members are encouraged to volunteer on any of the dates listed in the schedule of remaining build dates. This ministry thanks everyone for their support throughout this Spring Build. For more information contact Sister Tami McGhee.

2015 SPRING BUILD SCHEDULE

DATES	DAYS	TASKS
May 26, 28, 30	Tue., Thur., Sat	Paint and install baseboard, interior doors and trim
June 2, 4, 6	Tue., Thur., Sat	Install cabinets, finish trim, touch-up walls
June 9, 11, 13	Tue., Thur., Sat	(Plumbing and electrical fixtures by others) Install door hardware, door stops, closet shelving, window blinds.
June 16, 18, 20	Tue., Thur., Sat	Landscape, touch up paint, clean and wax floors, work punch list
June 23, 25, 27	Tue., Thur., Sat	Catch-up, no lunch

Directions to the site: From Memorial Parkway, go west on Oakwood. Turn right onto Blue Spring, left on Thornhill, left on Garden Park, and left on Cornerstone Circle.

A Mother's Day Reflection

(Continued from page 2)

out the way you prayed or hoped, but I can promise you that God will be with you on the journey.

To those who are already biological mothers, I offer you the same scripture. No matter how long one has been mothering... it still works. *Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge God and God will direct your paths.* I pray that we all receive God's peace, knowing when we've done our best- we have to allow God to do the rest. After all, we are only stewards of God's great blessing. All children were God's first, and they still belong to God.

To those who wanted to have biological children but for various reasons are not able to do so, I offer you the same scripture, *Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge God and God will direct your paths.* I don't know how or why God chooses or allows what God chooses or allows, but I do know that God can still use your mothering spirit to bless mothers and children. Many of you serve as surrogate mothers, godmothers, aunts, mentors, and so much more. Please receive a heart-felt thank you from me for all that you do. If there is hurt because of this, I pray that you will not allow it to lend itself to bitterness. I pray that you will pick up the *mantle of the mothering spirit, for it too is powerful and necessary.* It takes a combination of biological mothers and those with mothering spirits to raise the village. Please do not underestimate the power of your mothering spirit. We need you.

To those who have chosen not to have biological children because that was not a part of your calling, I offer you a thank you. So many times women have been called and expected to operate outside of their calling, even in biological mothering, because of standards someone else set or interpreted for them. I offer you the same, *Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge God and God will direct your paths.* Continue to allow God to guide your calling.

I will continue to celebrate mothers this month and all year long, those who birth children biologically and those who allow their mothering spirit to shine as God gives them opportunity. My journey continues as does yours. Until the next time... Blessings and love to you on your journey.

May 2015

Women Of Worth

the
wait is
OVER
HABAKKUK 2:1

WOMEN'S CONFERENCE
Watch Party

Wednesday Nights - 6pm
MAY 6 - MAY 27

A POWERFUL WORD FOR WOMEN
BISHOP T.D. JAKES
THE POTTER'S HOUSE
DALLAS, TX

DR. "JAZZ" JASMIN SCHULARK
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LANDOVER, MD

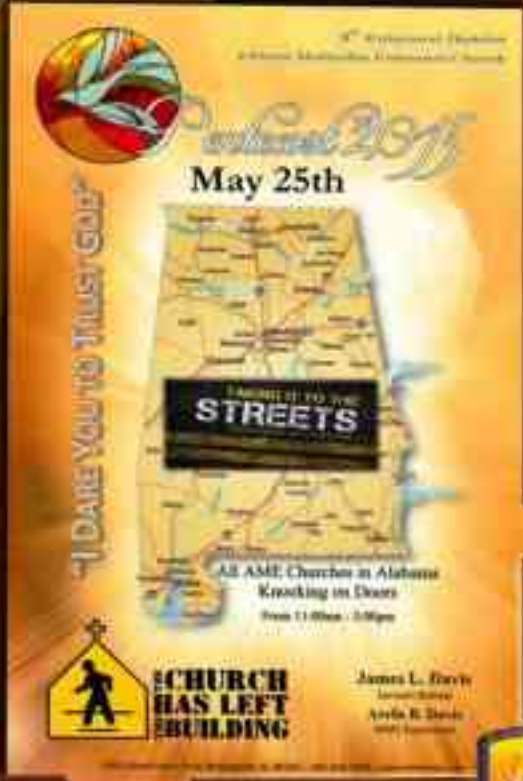
CHRISTINE CAINE
HILLSONG CHURCH
AUSTRALIA

PASTOR VAN MOODY
THE WORSHIP CENTER CHRISTIAN CHURCH
BIRMINGHAM, AL

WOMEN'S DAY

MAY 17, 2015
10:00 AM

Upcoming Ninth District Events



May 25th

TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

All AME Churches in Alabama
Knocking on Doors
From 11 AM - 5 PM

THE CHURCH HAS LEFT BUILDING

James L. Davis
Seymour Bishop

Angela B. Davis
Worship Supervisor



9th Episcopal District
African Methodist Episcopal Church

Seek God

with his righteousness and all
these things shall be added
unto you
Matthew 6:33

Kingdom Seekers
CONFERENCE

June 12-13, 2015

DANIEL PAYNE COMMUNITY PLAZA
1500 DANIEL PAYNE DRIVE
Birmingham, AL 35214
205-326-4400

James L. Davis
Seymour Bishop

Wanda B. Davis
Worship Supervisor



AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
9th EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CONGRESS

Getting ready for
REVIVAL

what to do, what to expect, and how to experience it

2015 SUMMER MEETING

June 22-25, 2015

The Shrine - Troy, AL

Rev. Mike Richey
Executive Director, Christian Education
24 Little Rock
Phon: 205-338-1111
Email: michey@ame9.org

Summer Revival Theme: "Trending #1 Want More"



Northwest Alabama Annual Conference
September 15 - 19, 2015

Southeast Alabama Annual Conference
September 23 - 26, 2015

Alabama River Region Annual Conference
October 7 - 10, 2015

Northeast Alabama Annual Conference
October 14 - 17, 2015

Southwest Alabama Annual Conference
October 21 - 24, 2015

Pre-Plenary Meeting
November 11, 2015

Plenary Meeting
November 12 - 13, 2015

2015
Last Series of
Annual Conference
Worship
Supervisor

St. John Participates in Daniel Payne Community Plaza Ceremonies

Pastor Clayborn and members of St. John attended the Daniel Payne Community Plaza ceremonies during the 2015 Mid-winter meeting. The St. John Dance Ministry, under the direction of Dr. Jennifer Patterson, participated in the Friday evening Soirée. What an honor! Below are pictures of the cornerstone laying service and the Dance Ministry's participation in the Soirée.



AME Presence Felt At AAMU Graduation

The first weekend in May was graduation and Founder's Day observance at Alabama A&M University (AAMU) in Huntsville. The connection between the university and St. John goes back to its founder, Dr. William Hooper Council. St. John has many members who are graduates of AAMU, members who are current students, staff and faculty (retired and active) who are members and President and Mrs. Hugine who are members of St. John.

This year was the 140th anniversary for AAMU. On May 1, St. John member and Steward, Mrs. Adrienne P-K Washington was the speaker for the Founder's Day service on the campus. On Friday evening, Servant Bishop James L. Davis, presiding prelate of the Ninth Episcopal District received an Honorary Doctor of Humanities Degree during the commencement ceremony. The commencement speaker was Congressman James Clyburn, U.S. Representative, 6th Congressional District South Carolina and an AME. He received an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

On Sunday, May 3, alumni of Alabama A&M University completed the Founder's Day Week by worshipping at St. John at the 8 a.m. service and prayer at the original site of AAMU.



Mrs. Adrienne P-K Washington at Founder's Day on the campus of AAMU



Bishop Davis (center) with Dr. Hugine, Dr. Jones and AAMU Faculty.

Join the St. John Line Dancing Fellowship

By Maeola Peoples

"Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow."

Jeremiah 31:13

Line Dancing is a choreographed dance with a repeated sequence of steps in which a group of people dance in one or more lines or rows. These steps are practiced over and over until learned and all are dancing as one and can be done by men, women, and children. With that said, Line Dancing can be fun and can be a form of exercise. Members of St. John Line Dance for fun, fellowship, networking, stress reduction, because black health matters and most of all as a way to "Glorify God."

On Monday and Friday, from 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm, everyone is invited (men, too) to come out and join this group in the fellowship hall at St. John AME Church and "get your dance on." Bring a towel, a bottle of water and a willing heart to learn. Do not be afraid to join because you think you cannot dance. The dances are broken down step by step and we will go over them until everyone learns the dances, but in order to learn them you must come out and join us!!!



AME Proud

The Ninth Episcopal District has an open position of Executive Director for the Daniel Payne Community Plaza.

Contact the church office for the job description and criteria for the position. All qualified and interested persons should submit their resume and letters of reference via email to jld123bishop@yahoo.com by Monday, May 25, 2015, and they will be forwarded to the DPCLV Foundation Trustee Board Committee.

2015 MS Walk Thank You!

By Pat Grier



PJ's Partners—Kenneth Parham, Lorraine Parham, Phyllis Barrett, Pat Grier and Agnes Gilmore.

The 'PJ's Partners' Team participated in the 'Walk MS' event for Multiple Sclerosis (MS) here in Huntsville on May 2nd. The Huntsville event was held at the Village of Providence. For the 26th year the team had the opportunity to participate in this worthwhile MS activity - walking to help find a cure for MS - to raise funds for research and for MS patient support services.

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 Walks go toward the research for new treatments and for hopefully one day soon finding a cure for MS and for support of services for MS patients.

The PJ's Partners' team would like to extend a huge thank you to all of you for your generous contributions and support of this annual team activity and fundraiser. The 'PJ's Partners' team members participating this year were: Agnes Gilmore (Team Captain), Pat Grier, Kenneth Parham, Lorraine Parham, and Phyllis Barrett. The Team members will be collecting donations through the end of May. If you would like to support this worthy cause and the team members have missed contacting you, please contact Agnes Gilmore, the team Captain, at 256-536-9131.

Thanks again for your generous support.

Stewardess Board Straight Talk 4th in a Series

By Barbara Johnson

Stewardess Board Straight Talk is a column each month that will address some of the traditions and customs of the AME Church. The reference used for this column is, *A Guideline for Stewardesses, Ordinary Women Engaged in Extraordinary Work* by Richard J. Parker.

You see it every Sunday and anytime you are in the sanctuary. It is up front and to the right of the American Flag. We understand the significance of the American Flag, but what is that other flag and what is its significance to Christian worship? It is so common to see it that you probably do not even think about it. It is just always there, the Christian Flag. What is its significance to Christian worship?

The Christian Flag signifies Christianity in its entirety—faith, worship, traditions, responsibilities, and all of its blessings. The Cross on the flag symbolizes the Christian faith—God's love for His people and the promise of eternal life. The blue background speaks of the faithfulness and sincerity of the Savior, who was obedient unto death. The white portion of the flag is symbolic of the sinlessness of Christ.

All of us learned the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag when we were in school. But did you know that there is also a Pledge to the Christian Flag? Only those of us who attended vacation Bible school would know this. It is recited every year at the opening ceremony. We looked forward to vying for the opportunity to say either the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag, the Pledge to the Christian Flag or holding the Bible and reciting its pledge.

Pledge to the Christian Flag

"I pledge allegiance to the Christian Flag and to the Savior for whose Kingdom it stands. One Savior, crucified, risen, and coming again with life and liberty to all who believe. Amen."

Pledge to the Bible

"I pledge allegiance to the Bible, God's Holy Word, I will make it a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path and will hide its words in my heart that I might not sin against God. Amen."

Soup Kitchen

Willing Service



"At last the wall was completed to half its height around the entire city, for the people had worked with enthusiasm"

(Nehemiah 4:6).

A musician is not recommended for playing long, but for playing well. It is obeying God willingly, that is accepted and pleasing. The Lord hates that which is forced. It is rather a tax than an offering. Cain served God grudgingly; he brought his sacrifice, not his heart. "To obey God's commandment unwillingly is like those who come out of the man who was possessed, at Christ's command, the spirits came but with reluctance and against their will." Good duties must not be pressed and beaten out of a person, just as the waters came out of the rock when Moses struck it with his rod; but must freely drop from them as myrrh from the tree, or honey from the comb.

This ministry's service, just as those who worked with Nehemiah must be offered continuously and lovingly on each third and fourth Tuesday of each month. Pray that the "Willing Service" will serve as a fragrant flower and will be accepted by God.

Lord, we want to make it our goal to work for you. Let us always see it as an honor and a privilege to work with you. Amen

Straight Talk

(continued)

Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag

"I pledge allegiance, to the flag, of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. Amen."

So, the next time you are in the sanctuary, take a good look at that "other flag." It's the Christian Flag, standing in its place of honor.

Next month... The Stewardess Board of the AME Church

Church School Book Club

Discussion Date: May 18, 2015
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Deal the Dance and the Devil, Murray, 2011

Discussion Date: June 20, 2015
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Husband's Secret, Liane Moriarty, 2015

At the heart of *The Husband's Secret* is a letter that is not meant to be read...

*My darling Cecilia,
If you're reading this, then I've died...*

Imagine your husband wrote you a letter, to be opened after his death. Imagine, too, that the letter contains his deepest, darkest secret—something with the potential to destroy not only the life you have built together, but the lives of others as well. And then imagine that you stumble across that letter while your husband is still very much alive.

Cecilia Fitzpatrick has achieved it all—she's an incredibly successful businesswoman, a pillar of her small community, a devoted wife and mother. Her life is as orderly and spotless as her home. But that letter is about to change everything—and not just for her. There are other women who barely know Cecilia—or each other—but they, too, are about to feel the earth-shattering repercussions of her husband's secret.

Prayer Time

Weekly Prayer Time each Tuesday at 8:00 am.

Conference Call Credentials
US Toll Number (530) 881-1212
Meeting ID: 876-863-940

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.



Technology Tip

By Ricardo Williams

PayPal®—we keep hearing this term surface in conversations throughout church and even outside of church. What is PayPal? That is the main question that many people may have. Well let us discuss the answers to that question.

PayPal was started in 1998 under a different product named Confinity. PayPal is an online payment tool that will allow people, whether or not they are business owners, a way to transfer funds electronically, make donations and purchase/sell items online. The basic PayPal account can be used for free by those who have an email address and a credit/debit card or bank account. To sign up for PayPal, you do not have to enter your bank information until you are ready to start making purchases or transferring funds by using PayPal. Your personal account numbers are never seen by those receiving your funds for donations or purchases. If you have received funds through PayPal, you can keep the funds there or transfer them to your bank account.

There are three types of accounts in PayPal: Personal, Premier and Business. All three provide the same basic functions. You can visit www.paypal.com and there will be a sign up link. Signing up is quick and easy. You will only be asked limited personal information; such as first and last name, address, contact number and e-mail address. After you have agreed to the PayPal policy, you will receive a verification email at the email address that you registered. This is a safe way of verifying your identity. The verification process helps other buyers and users of PayPal ensure that you are not a scammer. Each time you make changes to your personal information in PayPal, you will receive an email. All personal information that you enter stays with PayPal and is not shared with others. As an added layer of identity security, PayPal will allow you to purchase a security key which creates a code every 30 seconds that gets linked to your PayPal account and will have to be entered when logging in.

(Continued on page 13)



Mothers WOW

By Paulette Bargon

Mother's Day is a time to appreciate mothers and mother figures, including grandmothers, great-grandmothers, stepmothers, aunts, foster mothers and women who play a great role in the upbringing of children and young adults. There are just a few women who had a great impact in our lives. Some may not have children, but they will still be considered mothers for the sacrifices they made to make our lives better.

Septima Pointsette Clark

Known as the "Grandmother of the American Civil Rights Movement." She was an educator and civil rights activist who played a major role in the voting rights of African-Americans. In 1920, Clark worked with the NAACP to gather petitions allowing African Americans to serve as principals in Charleston, SC schools. Those petitions resulted in the first black principal in Charleston. In 1979, Septima Clark was awarded the Living Legacy Award by President Jimmy Carter.

Shirley Chisholm

In 1968 she became the first African American Congresswoman, representing New York's 12th Congressional District. In 1972, she became the first black woman to contend for the presidential office. Shirley Chisholm was also an educator and author.

Barbara Jordan

She was the first African American elected to the Texas Senate after reconstruction (1967), the first southern black female elected to the United States House of Representatives (1973), and the first African American woman to deliver the keynote address at a Democratic National Convention. In 1994 Barbara Jordan received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, among her many honors.

Mae Jemison

She was the first female African American astronaut. On September 12, 1992, Mae Jemison was the first female black woman to travel into space on the Endeavor shuttle. Dr. Mae Jemison is a physician and an educator. Dr. Jemison was born in Decatur, Alabama.

Toni Morrison

She is an African American novelist, editor and professor. She won the Pulitzer Prize and



Technology Tip

By Ricardo Williams

(Continued from page 12)

As you can see, using PayPal can be very beneficial for making online purchases and transferring funds. It has the layers of security that some online tools do not use. We will be discussing more on using PayPal in other means of communication. Stay Tuned!

Online Giving is Easy!

Online contributions may be made to St. John by using your PayPal® account. Within PayPal, send donations directly to St. John at e-mail address stjohnameh@aol.com. Select the option to transfer from your banking account or PayPal balance and specify donate/friends and family.



Online giving is easy!

Mothers

(continued)

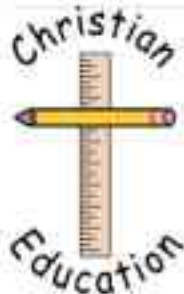
the American Book Award in 1988 for *Beloved* and the Nobel Prize in 1993. Some of Toni Morrison's best known novels are *The Bluest Eyes*, *Song of Solomon*, and *Beloved*. In 2012, she received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, presented by President Barack Obama. Her newest novel *God Help the Child*, was just released in April 2015.

St. John A.M.E. is so blessed because there are many women who have a positive influence on their children and young adults. They are also true inspirations and great role models for mothers and women of all ages.

Happy Mother's Day to all women of St. John A.M.E., Huntsville, Alabama.

Teach the new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always even to the end of the age. Matthew 28: 20

Church School Lesson Overview – June 2015



Church School reviews for June were written by Brother Willie Sandifer, Church School Superintendent

June 7, 2015

Lesson Title: God Passes Judgement

Lesson Scripture: Amos 2:4-16

Print Amos 2:4-8

Devotional Songs: #77 [], #272 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "This is what the Lord says: 'For three sins of Judah, even for four, I will not relent. Because they have rejected the law of the Lord and have not kept his decrees, because they have been led astray by false gods, the gods their ancestors followed.'" (Amos 2:4).

Amos described a variety of sins among the nations of Judah and Israel. But this variety could be traced back to a single root system: a disregard for God and His law. That disregard resulted in a focus on fulfilling fleshly desires without moral restriction.

Three additional situations violated what God has ordained for the care of the poor. The first one was quite startling: the oppressors treated the poor no differently than the dirt upon which everyone walked!

The second situation involved taking advantage of the person who may not have had the means to pursue a case with the elders holding court at the city gate. The result was justice denied—no one cared.

The third indictment has drawn different interpretations. One view is that Amos was condemning religious prostitution. The worship of Canaanite deities combined that degradation with an emphasis on fertility; what would otherwise be called *adultery* was deemed acceptable because it was an act of worship. It is unclear whether the profaning of the Lord's *holy name* was the intention of such acts or simply a result that occurred under this interpretation. God had forbidden His people to participate in such rituals. The other major view contends that the victim was a young woman who was not a prostitute. Amos knew the word for "prostitute", but he did not use it here. This suggests that two men in the same household took advantage of a servant or someone else who did not have the ability to resist.

June 14, 2015

Lesson Title: God is not Fooled

Lesson Scripture: Amos 5

Print Amos 5:14, 15, 18-27

Devotional Songs: #97 [], #251 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "Let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!" (Amos 5:24).

The year was about 760 BC when God sent Amos from Judah to the northern nation of Israel to proclaim a warning. The previous study showed how Amos pronounced God's judgment on nation after nation, and then he came to the eighth nation: Israel. Amos reminded the people there that God had chosen them from among all the nations of the earth, but their actions did not demonstrate gratitude for this divine favor.

In the seven centuries since the time of Moses, Israel had violated often its commitment to God. The pattern that emerged was for God to discipline His people because He loved them, and for the nation to repent when the situation became critical (see the book of Judges for examples). Although God punished, He would always forgive.

Amos's mission included challenging the distorted views of the people in that regard. They regularly performed the religious rituals that were prescribed in their covenant with God, but they also worshipped other gods. This violated the first of the Ten Commandments. In addition, the high standards of morality that the Lord had established gave way to gross immorality. The people's arrogance about their favored status caused virtue to vanish from private and public lives.

What the people saw as "the best of times" God saw as "the worst of times." He was making His final appeal to a favored nation. Historical hindsight tells us that captivity at the hands of the Assyrians was less than 40 years away by the time Amos preached.

June 21, 2015

Lesson Title: God Abhors Selfishness

Lesson Scripture: Amos 6

Print Amos 6:4-8, 11-14

Devotional Songs: #390 [], #258 [], and #243 []

(Continued on page 15)

Church School Lesson Overview – June 2015

(Continued from page 14)

Key Verse: "Do horses run on the rocky crags? Does one plow the sea with oxen? But you have turned justice into poison and the fruit of righteousness into bitterness..." (Amos 8:12).

This lesson depicts the people of Israel as idly singing and making music on instruments while drinking bowl after bowl of wine. That is going to change, and such songs will become loud lamentations. The cause for such grievous sounds is given: *many, many bodies—flung everywhere!*

Amos traveled from Judah to Israel to deliver his oracles from God during what has been called Israel's "Indian Summer." That expression describes a weather phenomenon in the fall of the year as a period of pleasant warmth and sunshine after the first frost. When Amos preached, Israel was enjoying a period of peace that it had not experienced for many years. There was no oppressing nation at that time, and the nations of Israel and Judah were not at war with each other.

This situation allowed Israel to expand its boundaries to such an extent that they approached what they had been in the days of Kings David and Solomon. Jonah had prophesied that this would happen; it is assumed his prophecy was made in the early days of King Jeroboam II, who reigned about 783-753 BC. The 790-739 BC reign of King Azariah (also called Uzziah) of Judah overlapped much of Jeroboam's reign in the north. The descriptions for Judah's parallel prosperity are given in 2 Chronicles 26:1-15. Outwardly, the reigns of these two kings were characterized by success in military expansion, economic recovery, and sustained peace.

But spiritual apostasy had been the norm in the northern nation of Israel for decades, beginning with King Jeroboam I, who created rival centers of worship shortly after Solomon's death in 930 BC. Jeroboam II is assessed as one who "did evil in the eyes of the Lord and did not turn away from any of the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit". To the south, King Uzziah became proud in his accomplishments, and he acted corruptly by attempting to function as a priest. His penalty was to be stricken with leprosy for the rest of his life.

Peace, prosperity, and progress—those factors are the background when Amos came from Judah to preach in Israel. He was ready to ridicule the attempts of the wealthy to find happiness and fulfillment by excesses of sinful indulgences and mistreatment of the poor.

June 28, 2015

Lesson Title: God Will Never Forget

Lesson Scripture: Amos 8

Print: Amos 8:1-6, 9, 10

Tentative Devotional Songs: #384[]; #251 []; and #243 []

Key Verse: "Then the Lord said to me, "The time is ripe for my people Israel; I will spare them no longer" (Amos 8:2).

A suggested outline of the book of Amos is that of three major sections: chapters 1-2; chapters 3-6; and chapters 7-9. The first section features eight messages to eight nations and cities. The second section has five sermons that announce God's pending judgments on Israel; these are marked by the phrases "Hear this word" and "Woe". The third section contains five scenes of divine revelation to Amos; these might be called *visions*, although that specific word is not used.

Each of the first three visions features a promise of destruction for Israel. The first vision is that of an invasion of locusts; Amos besought God that this would not happen, and God relented. The second vision was that of a ravaging fire; again Amos prayed that it might not come to pass, and the judgment was averted. The third vision was that of testing Israel against God's plumb line, and Amos was convinced: God's judgment was just. The destruction of Israel would reach to the palaces and the sanctuaries of Israel. It was at that point in Amos's prophesying that "Amaziah the priest of Bethel" told him to shut up and go home, back to Judah.

In response, Amos protested that he was not a prophet in any professional way. He then listed the ways he made a living. Amos also responded with prophecies about Amaziah: he would die in a foreign land, his children would die by the sword, and his wife would become a prostitute in order to survive.





Asking for Help

By Janette R. Smith

Certified Strategic Intervention & Mindset Coach

The topic for this issue's article flowed naturally from several conversations with friends and colleagues: Why Do People Not Ask for Help? I have heard this topic come up in various ways, and there are always varying factors for each case, but clearly it seems that people are convinced that asking for help is a sign of some deficiency.

I took time to reflect on how this plays out in my own life. I realize that in the past I would ask for help, in subtle ways – and unfortunately, sometimes people would miss or not recognize the request. I've only gotten better about asking for help over the last five years.

Again, there seems to be a stigma attached to "the asking." When this bleeds over into our faith we bump heads with the Word. Clearly God knew we would need help.

- ♦ Psalm 54:5 (NIV) *Surely God is my help; the Lord is the one who sustains me.*
- ♦ 2 Corinthians 12:9 (NIV) *But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.*
- ♦ Psalm 46:1 (NIRV) *God is our place of safety. He gives us strength. He is always there to help us in times of trouble.*
- ♦ Psalm 18:7 (NIV) *In my distress I called upon the LORD, And cried to my God for help; He heard my voice out of His temple, And my cry for help before Him came into His ears.*

Still, people build up fears and anxieties about asking for help for several reasons. 1) Fear of rejection. 2) Fear of seeming weak or incapable. 3) Fear of being a burden. 4) Belief that they should not have to ask for help. 5) Fear of losing control.

Some of these reasons even seem noble, but the truth is – EVERYONE is going to need help sometime. Often, it is pride that keeps us from asking or allowing others to assist us. It actually takes strength to admit when you need assistance. To offer direction, I am listing tips for how to be empowered when asking for help.

HOW TO BE EMPOWERED TO ASK FOR HELP:

1. Be clear with what you need help. Make it easy for others by being clear on what you need help with. What is not working? Often you will get a much more positive response if you ask for something concrete.
2. Choose carefully who you ask for help. The best way to start is by choosing the right person to trust. Avoid asking anyone who might take advantage of your vulnerability, as it will put you off trying again. You don't want them to share with others what you told them in confidence.
3. When you have a problem, ask for help early on. When you are in a tight spot, the sooner you open up about it and get help, the easier it will be. When you talk to others about your problem earlier on, you have the chance to get help from others to turn the situation around before it gets bad.
4. Find your tribe. Find a supportive environment where you can find others who have been in the same situation and can relate to what you are doing or going through. If you need a lot of help, going to several people for help instead of one will help you get more perspectives and will not make you a burden to someone.
5. Give a heart-felt thank you. Share with others what it meant to you that they gave you their support. Just a simple note saying "Thank you so much for helping me with X." If they went out of their way to help you, maybe you want to send them a present.

(Continued on page 18)

June 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing 6:00 p.m. CPR Ministry	2 6:30 p.m. Church School Mtg.	3 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	4 6:00 p.m. Steward Board Mtg.	5 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing	6 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 11:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal 12:00 p.m. Children's Dance
7 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship	8 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	9 6:00 p.m. Sons of Allen Mtg. VIP Choir Rehearsal	10 SBHB Church School Convention	11 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	12 13 Kingdom Seekers Conference	
		2015 Vacation Bible School 5:30 p.m., nightly				9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry Church School Book Club 11:00 a.m.
14 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship	15 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing	16 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN 6:00 p.m. Trustee Board Mtg. VIP Choir Rehearsal	17 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	18	19 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	20 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 10:00 a.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal 12:00 p.m. VPB Meeting YMW Children's Dance
21 FATHERS DAY 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship	22 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing	23 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	24	25 6:00 p.m. Mass Choir Media Ministry	26 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	27 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry Women's Ministry
28 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship	29 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing	30	June 29-July 1, 2015 Council of Bishops and General Board Meeting New Orleans, Louisiana Bishop Davis preaches on June 30 at 7:30 p.m.			



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

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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

<i>May 24, 2015</i>	<i>Pentecost, 8:00 a.m. Worship Service, 11:00 a.m. Witnessing, Wear Ninth District shirt or any red top, with I Dare You wristband</i>
<i>May 31, 2015</i>	<i>Graduate and Retiree Recognition, 10:00 a.m. North west Conference Lay Meeting, 4:00 p.m.</i>
<i>June 8-11, 2015</i>	<i>Vacation Bible School, 5:30pm nightly</i>
<i>June 10, 2015</i>	<i>SBHB Church School and Christian Education Convention, Livingston Chapel, Guntersville, Alabama, 8:00 a.m.</i>
<i>June 12-13, 2015</i>	<i>Kingdom Seekers Conference Daniel Payne Community Plaza, Birmingham, Alabama</i>
<i>June 22-25, 2015</i>	<i>Ninth District Summer Meeting, CEC, Troy University, Troy, Alabama</i>
<i>June 29-July 1, 2015</i>	<i>Council of Bishops and General Board Meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana Bishop Davis preaches on June 30 at 7:30 p.m.</i>

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 20 Issue 6

June 2015



Pastor Patrick D. Clayborn, Ph.D.

Pastor's Message

Men of Honor

With a Special Tribute to the Honorable Rev. Clementa Pinckney

Honor is a heavy word. It means integrity – fairness – dignity – distinction – duty – service – respect – high rank – glory – esteem – hard work – fame. Even when we think about what honor means, we have to be clear about where it originates. I believe honor is built into our DNA. We come here with it encoded into our being. When God made man, God called him GOOD!

I know the question that springs up is this: How can we talk about having honor built in when these low life men are in the streets? Where is the honor in having several children by a multitude of women or in abandoning a family that needs you? Even though honor is built into every man, each man has to activate it! Honor is a dedication to a higher purpose, ideal, and calling. For us to be men of honor, we have to be dedicated to a GOD!

We dedicate ourselves to God by being aware and present in the world around us. We engage the world instead of running from it. We dedicate ourselves to God through faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Faith is not just lip service that says we believe in God. Faith is living a life which puts its trust in God. The just shall live by faith. We walk by faith and not by sight. We dedicate ourselves to God by having an encounter with God, and that encounter forever transforms us.

Unfortunately, we men are trained to dishonor ourselves (and thus dishonor our dedication to God) every day. Look at news, media, marketing, and American culture. Masculinity is usually limited to athletics, romantic appeal, outer appearance, income, the attainment of material possessions, and dominance.

There's not a big market for men becoming men through: spiritual formation (making God first), cultural pride (especially for African American communities), emotional healing (embracing tears, hurt, loss, remorse, uncertainty, counseling), health care (going to the doctor instead of being "superman"), relational integrity (being a true to one romantic partner), service/support (being the nurse instead of the doctor or the administrative assistant instead of the CEO), humility, care of family, pursuit of a non-glamorous purpose, and shared authority with women.

Men, so many of us have been ROBBED of our masculinity!!!! We believed the lies that others told us: In order to be a man, you've got to make more money than your woman; in order to be the man, you've got to be in charge of EVERYTHING; as a man, you are the HEAD and must make every decision; and nothing should happen without your approval. We wonder why so many of us men suffer from stress, anxiety, hypertension, depression, and paranoia. Then we cause those who love us to suffer. We've beat them down emotionally, financially, and (some) physically. We've neglected them to provide for them. We've ignored them to lead them. We've spread ourselves so thin doing everything to make ends meet, that we are no longer strong enough to support those who need us.

We do this because there is a hole in our hearts that says we are not good enough. If we don't make enough money - if we don't have children, a wife, and several girlfriends - if we don't have a job or degree - then somehow we are not good enough. Somehow, we are not real men!

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Pastor's Message

(Continued from page 1)

While we are chasing things that we think will add to our lives and our masculinity, we are being robbed of our true manhood. Our health, our families, our calling, and our communities are being taken from us. And, we are being taken from them! Just as we get all of the materials the world says we should have, we find that we've lost what means most. A job can't replace a family. Money cannot replace health. A title cannot replace emotional balance. A degree cannot replace self-respect. Popularity can't replace GOD!

We honor ourselves and reclaim our true masculinity by honoring the God in us. This involves honoring our feelings and emotions. God made us to be emotional beings. Real men cry! Real men express themselves. Real men experience doubt, fear, angst, joy, shock, and love. Real men are honest about their feelings. In their honesty, they also honor the boundary. Men do not allow their feelings to rule them in such a way that they destroy themselves and those around them. Men also honor the gifts God gives them: They honor their spouses, children, families, abilities, vision, calling, and health. Most of all, they honor their relationship with God.

As we celebrate Men of Honor month with bible studies, bowling, a Boys to Men conference, a celebration of Father's Day, and Men's Day, we want to pay tribute to a fallen Man of Honor and faithful father – The Honorable Rev. Clementa Pinckney. He served as a state senator in South Carolina and as the pastor of Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC. He and eight of his members were shot and killed by a gunman during their bible study and prayer meeting on June 17, 2015. Pastor Pinckney was a 41 year old husband and father of two children. He was a Man of Honor in every way. Pastor Pinckney served in government with integrity and respect. He served as a pastor in the AME Church with anointing and heart. His family, churches, and communities laud his work as loving and gracious. Rev. Pinckney is truly a Man of Honor and faithful father.

We lift up his family, the families of the other eight members who were slain, the Emanuel AME Church family, the churches and communities of South Carolina, and all who were deeply impacted by this tragedy. We held a prayer service on June 18, 2015, at our church. We had a brief service at 8PM for pastors and their families. We then had a service at 7PM for the Huntsville community at large. Mayor Tommy Battle, Sgt. Oscar Smith of the Huntsville Police Department, and Ms. Delois Smith of the University of Alabama in Huntsville came to share with us. They focused on how we move through grief and how we work together as a community of hopeful people. We were led in prayer by three pastors: Rev. Debra Ballard of Livingston Chapel AME Church (Guntersville, AL), Bishop Daniel Richardson of Eagle's Nest Christian Church (Huntsville), and Rev. Gregory Bentley of Fellowship Presbyterian Church (Huntsville). Our choir and praise team provided uplifting music as we worshiped God in spirit and truth!

That night we addressed the idea that people may be afraid to return to their houses of worship. Yes, we encouraged churches to be safe and to increase their security measures. We lifted the idea of churches working closely with law enforcement to be proactive instead of reactive. We honored the fact that we are humans and that fear is a natural response to these horrific events. Yet, we declared that – as the church of God and the followers of Christ – we are open for business! We will continue to feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, visit the sick and the imprisoned! We will preach the word of God in season and out of season. We will pray. We will study the bible. We will point out what is just and what is unjust. Even if the face of evil shoots us and attempt to kill us, we will keep following God's call on our lives. When we get weak and have no strength to fight, we will lean on God and the Lord will rebuke the hand of our enemies. The Lord will rebuke racism, sexism, classism, elitism, homophobia, heterosexism, ageism, materialism, and consumerism. The Lord will tear down every division that hurts us. We will come together as a human race: Black, White, Red, Brown, Yellow, rich, poor, young, old, male, and female. The gates of hell shall not prevail against us! For, the mouth of the Lord has spoken it!

*Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord,
He has trampled out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored,
He has loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword,
His truth is marching on!*

Council of Bishops Statement Concerning Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina

**African Methodist Episcopal Church
Council of Bishops**

June 18, 2015

The Council of Bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church joins with our components and worldwide membership in expressing our grief and sympathy on the senseless and tragic attack which took the lives of The Rev. Clementa Pinckney, pastor, and eight other congregants of Mother Emanuel AME Church, Charleston, South Carolina. Mother Emanuel is the oldest black church in the south and one of the most historic churches in the nation. The senseless and evil action which took the lives of those who gathered at Mother Emanuel to study and pray is indicative of a major crisis facing our nation and its people. While we are pleased that Dylann Storm Roof, the assailant and alleged murderer has been arrested, we do not believe this matter has been concluded.

First, we join in grief with Mother Emanuel Church in the loss of her pastor, the Rev. Clementa Pinckney, and the Rev. Daniel Simmons Sr., Cynthia Hurd, the Rev. Sharonda Singleton, Myra Thompson, Tywanza Sanders, the Rev. DePayne Middleton-Doctor, Susie Jackson, and Ethel Lance, members of that church family. We also grieve with the State of South Carolina, which also lost an outstanding state senator and leader in the person of the Rev. Pinckney. Second, we pray and ask for the God of love, mercy and grace to comfort; restore and give peace to family members and of all of us who have been shaken and saddened by this tragedy. May our faith be strengthened and our hope restored.

Finally, we call upon the nation's political leadership, faith institutions and other organizations in this country to face the reality that race remains a problem in this nation. "The arrest of Dylann Storm Roof, the assailant and alleged murderer does not end this matter. In fact this matter makes even clearer that race is a major problem in our nation that must be dealt with," said Bishop Julius McAllister, President of the Council of Bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. "The nation can no longer live in denial and act as if it does not exist. Every week there is some incident, which involves the negative consequences of race," he added. "The AME Church will join with other faith communities to stress the need for the United States to face, discuss and meet head-on the problem of race in this country," said Bishop John R. Bryant, Senior Bishop of the AME Church.

"African Methodists in South Carolina are strong and faithful, we will not shy away or lessen our commitment to equality and social justice," said Bishop Richard Franklin Norris, Presiding Bishop of South Carolina. "This will make us stronger and more determined to advance God's kingdom on earth. This tragedy will not weaken, but strengthen us. African Methodism will become stronger because of this tragedy," he said.

The problem of race has not decreased but increased over the last several years. Listen to what has been said, "We want our country back." The question is from whom? Mr. Roof stated that he had to kill blacks because of what blacks are doing to "his country."

The recent Charleston, South Carolina tragedy; the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri; Eric Garner in Staten Island; Akil Gurly in New York; Tamir Rice in Cleveland, Ohio; and Freddie Gray in Baltimore, our nation's president has been called "a monkey," disrespected and had his citizenship questioned, are all indicative of a systemic race problem.

In September the African Methodist Episcopal Church will be joining with our sister communions

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Council of Bishops Statement Concerning Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina

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and other partners to constrain this nation to address the issue of race in this nation. Details will be announced next month.

The Council of Bishops calls on all of our churches, and other communions and congregations to join together this week, and in particular this weekend wherever we worship to pray for those who lost their lives, their families, Mother Emanuel Church, and our nation.

Contribution to assist with the burial and expenses related to those who lost their lives can be sent to:

"Mother Emanuel Hope Fund"
Seventh Episcopal District
110 Pisgah Church Road
Columbia, SC 29203

For further information contact Bishop Reginald T. Jackson, Bishop of Urban and Ecumenical Affairs and Chair of the Social Action Commission of the AME Church at Reginald.jackson132@verizon.net.

Bishops of the AME Church:

Julius McAllister, President, Council of Bishops
John R. Bryant, Senior Bishop
John F. White, Secretary, Council of Bishops
Clement W. Fugh, Ass't Sec. Council of Bishops
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C. Garnett Henning Sr.
Carolyn Tyler Guidry





The month of May was Women's Month at St. John. Women were celebrated throughout the month and there were opportunities for spiritual growth, sharing, and fellowship. Watch parties were held to view sessions from last year's Woman Thou Art Loosed Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Several women from St. John attended the conference and wanted to share the powerful sessions with the women of St. John. Ice breaker sessions were held prior to the viewing, and discussions on what the messages meant to the women followed the viewing. Sessions viewed are listed below.



Five WOW Watch Parties were held during Women's Month and provided a range of inspirational video viewing that provided encouragement to women of faith. The first was the viewing of a presentation by Bishop T. D. Jakes entitled "Catching Up to Your Dream." In this video Bishop Jakes highlighted the points that to "catch up to your dreams" one must write it, read it and run it. Following the video the women of St. John shared points from the video that were "for them" and discussed doors to close or keep closed in 2015. The final viewing was a message by Pastor Van Moody entitled "Why Can't I Open the Door?" He highlighted the need for a revelation, to stand up and to get ready for a shift. He noted when one is in the right relationship with God they will be able to "step through doors you do not have to open for yourself."

The final watch party ended with the "release" as women walked through doors to symbolize the things they were waking away from and/or waking into as they realize the dreams that God has for their lives. This very touching experience culminated the video viewing sessions, but was just of the start of greater growth for the women of St. John.

St. John's Women of Worth Spa Night

By Paula Elliard

St. John's Women of Worth Spa Night was held on May 18, 2015 at the Rejuvenation Spa in



Bridge Street Town Centre. Ladies were greeted with a welcoming atmosphere and sisterly love from the moment they arrived. The spa did not disappoint! With extraordinary treatments, intoxicating aromas, beautiful ambience and incredible discounts, it certainly passed the test with flying colors! As each lady decided on which spa service she would partake, the women enjoyed delicious refreshments of pinwheels and an assortment of fruit. While

Women enjoy fellowship during Spa Night

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engaging in the services, the Women of Worth reflected on the Dream Building series and shared how it applied to them.

It appears everyone had a great time and many expressed how nice it was to do something unique. Thank you to all who came and made this event a success!

Women's Day: "I've Got the Power"



By Bridget J. Floyd

On Sunday, May 17, 2015, the St. John A.M.E. "Women of Worth" celebrated Women's Day. The theme was "Dream Builder - The Power to Change - I've Got the Power!". The Women's Day Choir provided inspirational worship through music. Ministry through liturgical dance was provided by W.O.W. (Women of Worth) Movers in Praise. There were four speakers/featured women for the day. They were diverse in their presentations. The A.M.E. Order of Worship was modified to have the special "messengers" woven through the service. Another highlight was the baptism of Mr. Walter Jenkins, a 2015 high school graduate.

Women of St. John were featured in all aspects of the service. Pastor Clayborn introduced the "messengers" for the day. Ms. Ashley Humphrey provided the "ministry of laughter". The congre-

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gation was entertained with her story of her youthful entry into church dinners and picnics and the hierarchy of elders and the power dynamic in the church, even in something that seems as simple as who serves and how one serves meatballs or banana pudding at a church event. There was constant laughter. The "power" of laughter was evident as spirits were lifted.

The second presenter was Ms. Janette Smith, who focused on mindset and the manner of becoming her alter ego, "Diana," who without super powers might experience fear, pain, etc. However, Ms. Smith urged those present to "spin" into their power to be all that they are called to be. Ms. Smith presented with props from the Wonder Woman character and with enthusiasm.

The Honorable Martha Lynn Sherrod began with poetry inciting power and transitioned to the biblical judge Deborah. Judge Sherrod indicated that Deborah was characterized by integrity and boldness that came from God, rather than her. Citing the biblical text where assistance from Barak, demonstrated that "we can have victory in the worst of times" with God's help and if it is God's will. Judge Sherrod noted that Deborah was her role model. She closed by highlighting that prayer enables communication with and empowerment from God; that the prayer does not have to be eloquent or to impress others, nor to manipulate God. Rather a simple childhood prayer – such as that which many may have learned as their first prayer ("Now I lay me down to sleep...") will suffice. The purpose is to "seek strength and direction from God." There is true power in prayer.

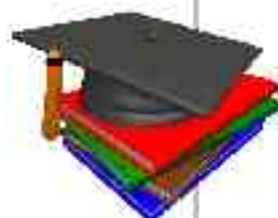
The Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn spoke from the text of John 11: 43 – 44, recommending that the entire chapter be read. The focus was on Mary and Martha's distress over their very ill brother and Jesus delaying his response to their request that he come to the aid of their brother. Executive minister Smith Clayborn indicated that Martha was upset and struggled with her faith as Jesus arrived four days after Lazarus died. However in her answer to Jesus' query, Martha communicated her belief that Jesus was the Messiah. The speaker indicated "We must have faith" and defined faith as "following God's command without knowing specific details or outcome". She noted that Martha's willingness to change combined with Jesus' power allowed Martha to change. There is a tendency to "want Jesus to operate as we would have Him change or move". She indicated that in the text the stone was taken away and "then Jesus prayed...when Jesus prays – things happen! Jesus did the raising but the people loosed Lazarus." With that, there was a demonstration (visual aide) of "the loosing". This culminated with the speaker exclaiming, "Loose That Woman and Let Her Go!!!"

The invitation "to receive the power" was extended and the baptism of Mr. Walter Jenkins followed. The unique service was one that emphasized the theme and was well-received by the members and guests.

May was an exciting month and spiritually empowering for the women of St. John, but what is next? The message was received and now they will visit the next steps to waking out the Word received during the May Watch Parties. The June topic was "Remaining Healthy Spiritually, Emotionally, and Physically." The July topic will be "Empowered to Have Hard Conversations" and the August topic will be "Free to Be Me, Resources for the Journey."

St. John Recognizes Achievement

Compiled by Paula Eliard



Jared Burns

- Promoted to the 8th Grade

Blake Johnson

- A Honor Roll
- Native American Achievement Award

Alicia Brownlow

- A-B Honor Roll
- Quill & Scroll Membership
- Outstanding achievement in Cooperative Education
- Outstanding Academic Excellence
- Scholastic Achievement for Outstanding Academic Performance

Josiah Gullatte

- A-B Honor Roll for the full Academic Year
- Presidential Academic Award
- Member of the CNN Staff—Cougar News Network
- Member of the 8th Grade Boys Basketball Team (2nd Place County Championship Winners)

Michael J. Clark

- Promoted to the 7th Grade at Madison Academy
- A-Bible
- A—Band
- A-Computer

Patrick Clayborn II

- A Honor Roll,
- 2nd Highest Language Arts Average,
- Penmanship Award, Spelling Achievement Award,
- Artistic Expression Award,
- Mathematics Achievement Award,
- Highest Phonics Average, 2nd Highest Average Outstanding Science Achievement Award
- Outstanding Conduct Exemplary Behavior Award



Mariah Gullatte

- Graduating Senior with Advanced Diploma—Sparkman High School
- Senior Class President
- Sparkman High School Dance Team Member—3 Years and Captain 2014-15
- Future Business Leader of America—Historian

Janise Williams

- A-B Honor Roll
- Presidential Award for Excellence in Math
- Student Ambassador Leadership Award
- 5th Grade Graduate
- Reading Achievement Award
- Certificate of Completion Foreign Language Chinese
- Outstanding Choir Student Achievement



Celebrating Students!!!

St. John AME Church Holds First Caregivers Prayer and Respite (CPR) Workshop

By Barbara Johnson



Anticipation was high on Saturday, June 6, 2015 for the first Caregivers Prayer and Respite Workshop. Promotion for this workshop had been fierce. Announcements had been made, flyers posted, personal letters of invitation and congregational appeals had been made. The goal was to spread the news that caregivers do not have to work in silence; help is available.

The morning began with a light repast and welcome from Mrs. Abbiegail Hugine, CPR, Chairperson and Congregational Care Steward. Prayer was offered by the Reverend Sheri Smith-Clayborn, Executive Minister. Mrs. Lorraine Parham then led as the moderator for the three sessions, introducing each of the invited presenters.

Ms. Michele Cain, Diversity Outreach Coordinator for the Alzheimer's Association was the first presenter, followed by Ms. Chandra Crutcher, Executive Director, American Senior Assistance Program (ASAP). The final presenter was Attorney Kevin Crenshaw, who spoke on Estate Planning.

The audience was captivated from beginning to end. The questions were very thought provoking. Comments afterwards varied from, "I'm glad I came," to "I learned so much," to "There was just not enough time to cover all the information and answer all the questions from the audience."

The CPR Committee members were elated to know that they had truly provided a service for the caregivers in the congregation as well as some from the community. Looking forward, the goal now is to bring each presenter back for a more in-depth conversation regarding each of the topics that were introduced at this workshop.

The CPR Committee is grateful to all those who came out to support the first workshop. Your attendance and encouragement made this first event a wonderful success.

St. John Observes Pentecost by Sharing the Gospel in the Community

Pentecost, which means fiftieth (50th) day, is commemorated as the day the Holy Spirit empowered the Church. It was taken from the Jews who observed it as a feast at the end of the harvest. Later, the Jews came to associate Pentecost with the giving of the Law to Moses at Mount Sinai, thus founding the "Jewish Church." Some present this account as the logical parallel to the empowering and founding of the Christian church on the day of Pentecost. The liturgical color for the Pentecost season is red.

Under the leadership of Bishop James Davis, Pentecost has been a coordinated celebration throughout the Ninth District. It has been a day of witnessing through Pentecost Gathered Services in Birmingham (2009 and 2011) and Pentecost Scattered (2010, 2012, 2013, and 2015).

On Pentecost Sunday this year, May 24, regular worship services were held at 8:00 am, followed by church school. Music was rendered by the Male Chorus and Pastor Clayborn brought the morning message. The text was Act 1:14 and the message was entitled "If It Wasn't for Certain Women." Pastor Clayborn used the text to highlight and continue the Women's Month sermon series on "Women of Worth" and to celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit. He expounded on the following points that relate to what the women did in the Upper Room as well as what Women of Worth must do to receive an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They must cultivate skills and gifts, become economically empowered, embrace the significance of the struggle, and hold on to spiritual leadership. The final challenge was to "do what God called you to do."



Pastor Clayborn gives witness illustration before departure.

At 11 am, the normal time for St. John's second worship service, members participated, along with AMEs across the state, in witnessing in the communities of Edmonton Heights and Searcy Homes. Over 100 persons received information on St. John and upcoming events; prayer was offered to all who accepted the invitation to prayer. Some members remained in prayer at the church during the time of witnessing. Upon return to the church, all participants shared their experiences, and as always, there were many expressions of the blessings received by those who received the witness teams as well as those who participated. To God be the glory!



Members prepare to depart for witnessing.

St. John Holds Graduates and Retirees Honors Celebration

By Tawanda Buford
Photography by Darwin Washington



Dance Ministry participants in worship

On May 31st, 2015, 10:00 AM hour, St. John observed an honors celebration by commemorating members who graduated and recent retirees. The opening hymn was symbolic to this life changing event as the choir and congregation melodiously sang, "Every Praise Is to Our God," while the Dance Ministry ministered in dance to "He's Preparing Me." Pastor Clayborn delivered the sermon titled, "The Transition Into Your Dream." Graduates/Retirees were recognized and presented gifts for their accomplishment and success.

Since the month of June is graduation month, it is a time to be honored and celebrated for all graduates. As graduates walk across the stage on graduation day to receive their diploma, feelings of satisfaction, excitement and nostalgia begin to set in. For high school graduates, challenges and new responsibilities will be created as they experience adult freedom for the first time entering college. New friends will be made and peer pressure may occur.

We pray that God will give them direction, purpose, and perseverance as they enter the next phase of their lives.

For college graduates, the real world has finally arrived. Graduates will begin to search for jobs and enter the job market as they finally experience the workplace environment, and meet people of all ages from various backgrounds. They may come in contact with unethical business practices, hear crude and vulgar language, or experience other behavior that is unacceptable in the workplace.

We pray that they will rise above ungodly behaviors and have the boldness to stand up for what is right wherever they work, study, or socialize.

As for retirees, this is a huge transition that takes one from working to finally having the freedom of doing absolutely nothing. Many retirees generally find themselves traveling, enjoying family and friends, or participating in a hobby which they have never had the opportunity to do, because of the long devoted hours worked. Now is the time to be free and enjoy life.

We pray for many continued blessings during this new phase in life as they choose new paths and explore new horizons.

Congratulations to the following Graduates and Retirees for a job well done!



Pastor Clayborn delivers message

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St. John Holds Graduates and Retirees Honors Celebration

By Tawanda Buford
Photography by Darwin Washington

High School Graduates	Associate Degrees	Baccalaureate Degrees	Advanced Degrees	Retirees
Alicia Brownlow	Nina Johnson	Michaela Brown	Yvonne Sanderson (EDS)	Sharon Butler
Mariah Gullatte	Brenda Mack	Kevin Speight	Abreeotta Williams (PhD)	Larry Davis
Walter Jenkins	Deidre Walton	Amber Davis	Aaron Dudley	Agnes Gilmore
Marissa Owens			Shamela McCoy	Dorothy O'Quinn
Sapphire Rochelle				Mildred Patton
Shendrecus Spencer				Glenn Phippen
David Wells				Carolyn Russ

Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your



Pastor Clayborn, high school graduates Walter Jenkins, Mariah Gullatte, and Alicia Brownlow, and Rev. Skerl.



Pastor Clayborn, graduates Shamela McCoy, Deidre Walton, and Brenda Mack, and Rev. Skerl.



Pastor Clayborn, retirees Carolyn Russ, Glenn Phippen, Agnes Gilmore, Larry Davis, Sharon Butler, Dorothy O'Quinn, and Mildred Patton, and Rev. Skerl.

Great Fathers of the Bible

By Paulette Bargon

ADAM

Adam was the first biblically recorded man and the first human father. He had no example to follow except God, and after that big fiasco with the serpent he had to raise his children in a world of sin. He also had to deal with the tragedy of his son Cain murdering his brother, Abel. The story of Adam has much to teach today's fathers about the consequences of their actions and the absolute necessity of obeying God.

ABRAHAM

The mission God gave Abraham was to be the founding Father of the Nation of Israel. He was a man of great faith and obedience, which pleased God tremendously. Abraham made mistakes when he relied on himself instead of God. Still, he exemplified qualities that any father would be wise to develop. As part of God's promise, and to reinforce His covenant, God blessed Abraham and his wife, Sarah, with a son, Isaac, when Abraham was 100 years old.

God continued to test Abraham, but the biggest test on his faith was when God asked him to sacrifice Isaac. This time Abraham obeyed, fully prepared to slay his son while trusting God. At the last minute, God intervened and provided a ram instead.

ISAAC

Isaac was the son Abraham tried to sacrifice. He could have resented his father offering him as a sacrifice, but he was an obedient son. He probably felt intimidated trying to follow in the footsteps of his father. Most sons do. But Isaac learned the invaluable lesson of trusting God from his father. That made Isaac the most favored father in the Bible.

Isaac married Rebekah and they found she was barren, just as Sarah had been. As a good husband, Isaac prayed for his wife, and God blessed them with the birth of twins; Jacob and Esau. Isaac favored Esau, while Rebekah favored Jacob. That was an unwise move for a father to take and it caused a split in their family. Isaac should have strived to love both.

JOSEPH

Joseph was the earthly father of Jesus. He is considered the most underrated father of the bible. He took care of his wife, Mary and their baby. He saw to Jesus' needs and His education. Joseph also taught Jesus the carpentry trade. The Bible calls Joseph a righteous man. Joseph's story tells us that you don't have to be a birth father to be a good father.

GOD THE FATHER

God is the Father and the Creator of all. He is the perfect example for all earthly fathers. He is holy, just, and fair and His most outstanding quality is love. *Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 1 John 4:8.* We see God as our heavenly Father, Provider, and Protector. The only thing He wants is our obedience. God loves us so much that He sacrificed His only Son for our sins, and through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, He provided a way to rescue us from sin's consequences. God offers us salvation.



Sometimes Dads are taken for granted because we know that they will always be there for us. So let us take the time to honor our fathers this month, especially on Father's Day. Give him a call or visit. Tell him how much you love him and how you appreciate all the things that he does for you. Some of us have lost our fathers, but we can still show our love for him by helping a new father. Some of us never knew our birth father, so tell that father figure or the man who touched your life in a positive way how much you appreciate him. If you think that you never had a male who ever cared for you then, THANK YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER, because He will always care and love you unconditionally.

... Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him... Luke 15: 17-24
Father's Day is a time to honor all fathers and father figures. Some do not celebrate father's day like they do mother's day. Take the time to make this one extra special.

Reference- about.com/religion

MEN'S DAY

Saint John AME
Church

6 . 28 . 2015
10:00am



Join Pastor Patrick Clayborn

WEEKLY WORSHIP SERVICES
Sundays at 8 & 10:50am

MEN OF HONOR- BIBLE STUDY
June 3 & 17 at 6:00pm

MEN OF HONOR- BOWLING
June 19- 7:30pm
Location TBD

BOYS TO MEN "MAN UP" MEET UP
June 27- 10am
SS. Hereford Fellowship Hall

Men of Honor

St. John Hosts Conference Lay Meeting



The Third Quarterly Meeting of the North-west Conference Lay Organization was held at St. John on Sunday, May 31, 2015. The meeting was led by Conference President, Dr. Wayman Shivers. Aside from the normal business items that are covered at the meeting, several breakout presentations were coordinated by the conference Director of Lay Activities, Dr. Simpson Berry, Jr. The sessions presented were:

1. The Constitution and Bylaws—Executive Board Duties
2. The Up-Coming 34th Biennial Session
3. The Annual Conference Election of Delegates and Alternates-Electoral College (Functions and Responsibilities)
4. The 9th Episcopal District Summer Meeting – CEC (June 22-25, Troy University – Youth Delegates) - How to Plan Your Day

A light meal was served by the St. John Lay Organization. Mr. Hodges Washington, president of the St. John Lay Organization, coordinated the hosting of the meeting.

Memorialization of a Man for All Seasons

By James O. Heyward

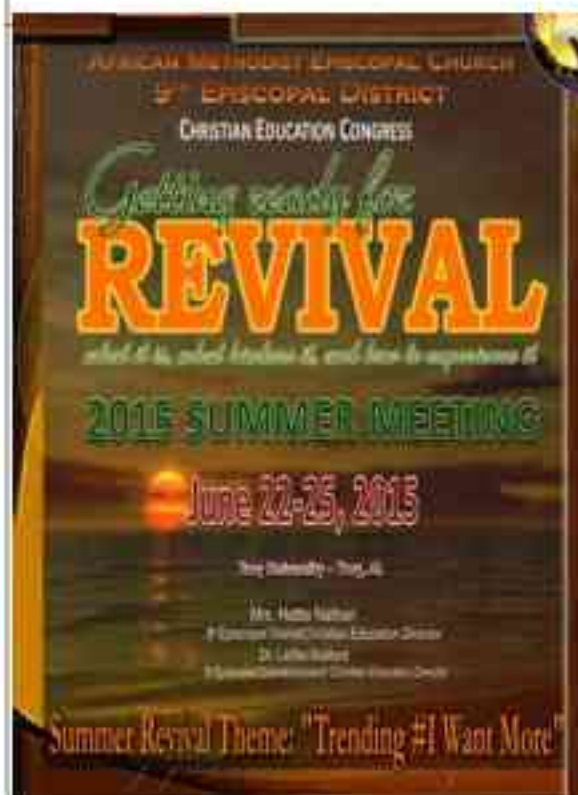


A man for all seasons at Saint John A.M.E. Church and the City of Huntsville, Alabama was memorialized April 24, 2015. A large facility (Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church) was required for the service in order to accommodate the large attendance. Dr. Clark served his church

over many years in various capacities. Dr. Clark taught in at least three major secondary schools in Huntsville and retired as Assistant Principal at J.O. Johnson High School. He touched many lives in this community, state and nation through his leadership role in Saint John A.M.E. Church, numerous civic groups, professional education organizations and his fraternity, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

Dr. Clark joined Saint John A.M.E. Church in 1957 and served his church as a member of the Trustee Board, the Steward Board, the Senior Choir, and the Male Chorus. He was always interested in the advancement of young people. Many successful former students of Dr. Clark publicly and proudly state that "I don't know where I would be today if Dr. Clark had not intervened in my life." Before his health failed, he was always a regular at many church conventions / meetings. In the early seventies, he worked with officials at Marshall Space Flight Center, (NASA) to establish a program for minority students to work at the Center; this opened unimaginable opportunities during those days for our youth. Some of the youth of Saint John benefited from this program and retired from high level positions with the federal government.

Dr. Clark had a beautiful tenor voice and was frequently called upon to sing as a soloist on many occasions. In addition to singing with the Senior Choir and Male Chorus, he was a founding member of the renowned Alpha Phi Alpha Ensemble that has been in great demand throughout the State of Alabama and the Southeast. Dr. Clark often told the story about the Vice President of the United States Hubert



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Memorialization of a Man for All Seasons

By James O. Heyward

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Humphrey's arrival at the Airport in Huntsville when he asked for Willie Mingo Clark. During Dr. Clark's tenure as a member of the Trustee Board, he always took the leading role in the maintenance of the church's physical plant because of his training and background.

Dr. Clark was very dutiful in church attendance even after his health began to fail; he would usually be in attendance on Sunday mornings. He was always traveling, sometimes abroad, representing one of the organizations of which he was a member. At conventions and meetings, it appeared that everyone knew "Mingo Clark" and was delighted to greet him. He was a member of the North Alabama Educators Credit Union Executive Board of Directors for more than 30 years. A few months before his passing, the Board of Directors authorized and directed that the organization name the Branch Office on Sparkman Drive in Northwest Huntsville, the "Willie Mingo Clark Branch".

His family members are his widow, Mrs. Lou Clark, and his daughter Mrs. Cassandra Clark Thompson and her family.

"Dr. Clark was truly a man for all seasons." There is not enough space to mention all of the actions, impact and involvement that he had in his church, the City of Huntsville or the State of Alabama. He will be missed at Saint John A.M.E. Church.

Prayer Time

Weekly Prayer Time each Tuesday at 6:00 am.

Conference Call Credentials
US Toll Number (530) 881-1212
Meeting ID: 876-863-940

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.

Soup Kitchen

Work for God



"Let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father."

Matthew 5:16

The greatest victory one can achieve with work is to glorify God. All other work is inferior to this. Work is only victorious if it is done to the glory of God alone!

Persons who live for Christ, are like a light that reflects Him. Work is in vain if those serving keep quiet when they should speak or witness. If they go with the flow; if they deny that they have received talents from God; if they allow sin to dim their light and zest for work; if they do not explain to others that their work and strength are from God. If workers are a bright beacon of truth, the work will always prevail, and be to the glory of God.

Good work accompanied by overestimating of the self can never be blessed, because it draws attention to the individual instead of glorifying the Father in heaven. If He gets the credit, the work done for Him will overcome everything.

We pray, Faithful Lord, let the work of the "Soup Kitchen" bring honor and glory to You, so that those who serve can be victorious in Your Name. Amen

Online Giving is Easy!

Online contributions may be made to St. John by using your PayPal® account.

Within PayPal, send donations directly to St. John at e-mail address stjohnameh@aol.com. Select the option to transfer from your banking account or PayPal balance and specify donate/friends and family.

Online giving is easy!



Church School Lesson Overview – July 2015

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

July 5, 2015

Lesson Title: No Rest for the Wicked

Lesson Scripture: Micah 21

Print Micah 2:4-11

Devotional Songs: #412 [], #272 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "Should this be said, O house of Jacob? Is the Lord's patience exhausted? Are these his doings? Do not my words do good to one who walks uprightly?" (Micah 2:7).

In this lesson we learn that there was nothing funny about the desperate plight of God's people. Micah prophesied that as a result of their wickedness, the nation of Judah would experience unrest and despair. We examine two areas of Judah's life that were revolting to God.

While Micah's audience was the nation of Judah and not Israel as with Amos', the message was the same. Because they had failed to obey God's covenant, God's people would experience extreme judgment in the form of deportation from the land that God had given them.

Like the people in Amos' audience, the people to whom Micah was preaching thought that because they were God's people in God's land, they would be exempt from divine judgment. They were going through all the right motions, but their hearts were not there.

The book of Micah consists of three messages, each beginning with the challenge to "hear" what God had to say. He began by mentioning the coming destruction of the northern nation of Israel, but his primary focus was on the fact that Judah was just as guilty as Israel and would also be disciplined. Each of the prophetic books preceding Micah, with the exception of Jonah, emphasized God's judgment coming upon the Jewish people. Micah also penned such a warning, and he included a major section of the coming kingdom.

Each one of Micah's three messages makes mention of the remnant of Israel. He was looking ahead to the restoration of the people and

the time when Israel would hold a prominent place in the world under the presence and leadership of the Messiah.

July 12, 2015

Lesson Title: No Tolerance for Corrupt Leaders and Prophets

Lesson Scripture: Micah 3

Print Micah 3:5-12

Devotional Songs: #390 [], #258 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "As for me, I am filled with power, with the spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin" (Micah 3:8).

In this lesson we learn about the utterly broken religious society of God's people. The systemic corruption of Judah and Israel moved God to respond with catastrophic judgment.

The children of Israel were listening to messages from their prophets, but the prophets were bringing them a strange message that was not from the Lord. While that might have been just the problem of the prophets, the fact is that it became a problem for any who listened to them and conducted their lives as though the message were true.

God's message to Israel at that time was that because of them, bad things would happen to Jerusalem. What they held dear would come to ruin, and it would be their fault because of their sin.

How better to confront the false message and see it corrected! How much better to leave the situation where it has gone wrong and cannot be corrected! There may still be a price to pay, but it will be less than the price of staying in complicity and agreement with false teaching.

July 19, 2015

Lesson Title: Justice, Love, and Humility

Lesson Scripture: Micah 6

Print Micah 6:3-8

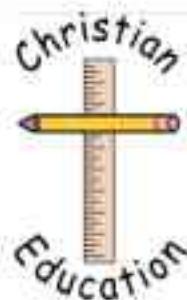
Devotional Songs: #77 [], #251 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "Do justice, and love kindness, and walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

This lesson explores what the Lord had done

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Church School Lesson

(Continued from page 17)

for Israel and what He expected from them. Christians will see parallels with their lives and how they can respond. In the midst of the Israelites' rebellion, God's people heard that He required justice, love, and humility rather than vain worship.

Micah's third message is given in the final two chapters of this book. Like the first two messages, it begins with the challenge to hear what God has to say. Micah presented the message as a courtroom scene, opening with God challenging His people to present their case against Him. In this legal controversy, He called on the mountains to be His witnesses while He sought an explanation for the disobedience of His people.

July 26, 2015

Lesson Title: God Shows Clemency

Lesson Scripture: Micah 7:11-20

Print: Micah 7:14-20

Tentative Devotional Songs: #413 ☐; #251 ☐; and #243 ☐

Key Verse: "Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity? And passing over the transgression of the remnant of your possession? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in showing clemency" (Micah 7:18).

This lesson portrays God's blessing on His people in compassion and unfailing love. Micah revealed some interesting reactions to God's character. From his longing for God's provision for His people to the pagan nations' fear of God's Person, Micah presented one of the most balanced descriptions of the Lord's nature.

Micah called the nation back to its covenant relationship with God. He pleaded with the people to return to the Lord, because there was no other god like God. When it comes to pardoning sin and restoring sinners, "Who is like the Lord?"

In the closing part of Micah's message, the focus was God's compassion and faithfulness. These verses gave a glimpse of God's restoration of the remnant after the exile. Here God extended compassion to the remnant of the covenant people. By saving a remnant of

Church School Book Club

Discussion Date: 20 June 15
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Husband's Secret, Liane Moriarty, 2015

Discussion Date: 18 July 15
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Fate of Mercy Alban, Wendy Webb, 2013

Grace Alban has spent more than twenty years avoiding her childhood home, the stately Alban House on the shores of Lake Superior, for reasons she would rather forget. But when her mother's unexpected death brings Grace and her teenage daughter back, she finds more is haunting the halls and passageways of Alban House than her own personal demons.

Long-buried family secrets, a packet of old love letters, and a lost manuscript plunge Grace into a decades-old mystery about a scandalous party at Alban House, when a world-famous author took his own life and Grace's aunt disappeared without a trace. The night has been shrouded in secrecy by the powerful Alban family for all of these years. Her mother intended to tell the truth about that night to a reporter on the very day she died—could it have been murder? Or was she a victim of the supposed Alban curse? Grace soon realizes her family secrets tangle and twist as darkly as the mansion's secret passages.

**Church School
is held each Sunday
following 8 am Service!**

Church School Lesson

Abraham's descendants God honored the covenant promise that the innumerable descendants of Abraham would bless all the nations.

At the close of the book, Micah highlighted another side of God's character. He featured the God who goes overboard to redeem the repentant sinner. This God of justice also delights in pardoning the penitent sinner.

Flexibility in Relationships

Philippians 2:1-8
Bent But Not Broken

This essay from St. John won first place at the South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer Church School Convention.

The concept of flexibility in our Christian relationships presents a conflict for many believers because of a perceived discordance between living a life that reflects the salvation we have achieved and our daily operation in a world pregnant with situations and pressures that we must navigate and adapt to in order to survive. Often the pressure mounts when we are faced with these situations and pressures as we attempt to survive in the world without compromising our values and condoning practices and beliefs that contradict our own. Philippians 2:1-8 assures us that in order to embody spiritual flexibility we must operate in humility, valuing others and their interests so that our relationships reflect the mind of Christ that guides our walk of faith. In our overall goal of strengthening relationships, flexibility is presented in the scriptural passage as the one category of our lives that should illuminate the value of a character of flexibility.

The passage of scripture from Philippians begins by saying in verses 1 and 2 that "...if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind." In this letter, Paul is reminding the Philippians of what Christ has taught them about tempering the storms that they face. The believers are encouraged to remain united. Comfort from Christ's love means that we are able to love those who are different, not by ostracizing them until they conform, but by our own transformation through love so that we reflect Christ's love in a way that encourages them to join with us in our faith walk. Spiritual relationships have their strength not in the ease of the relationship but in the loving spirit and one-mindedness of the believers as they engage in relationship with each other and non-believers.

The heart of this passage is in verses 3 through 5, which state, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus, valuing others' interests more than our own. Christ had no selfish ambition driving his actions. Thus, as we pursue spiritual relationships within and outside of the body, we must develop the capacity to humble ourselves—bend, adjust, adapt, become flexible—and CHANGE from our own ways. Flexibility is the tool that allows us to reflect Christ's image. Inflexible people are not willing to adjust to Christ's standards and, therefore, are not able to portray His image. The relationships that we build must be rooted in service to the person in the relationship and not in our own needs and interests. Inflexible people will not be able to serve Christ in His image because they are not willing to change into what that image is. Their arrogance and pride convince them that changing equals to selling out to the world and sacrificing their spiritual calling. However, the passage of scripture presented here indicates that this is not the case. The transformation of our minds that Paul calls us to have begins with a renewing of our minds to reflect Christ's image.

The final verses, verses 6 through 8, tell what Christ's image is so that we have a clear understanding of what our role should be in imitating and then modeling for those around us. The verses conclude that Christ, "Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage, rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!" God's purpose for us is to be conformed into His image. That conformation must take place in our hearts in order for us to reflect the outward manifestation of the change in the world. Transformation does not mean bending to every whim nor sacrificing our core values to live peacefully. The conflict that arises in us comes when we deal with the passage as a whole. In order to serve as Christ served, it is imperative that we do as he did and make ourselves nothing—valuing others more.

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Need a Spiritual or Emotional Chiropractor?

By Janette R. Smith

Certified Strategic Intervention & Mindset Coach

Just like a chiropractor is able to adjust discs or segments of the spine or skeletal system that become misaligned –it is always good to check our attitudes and make adjustments as needed to stay in peak emotional, spiritual and mental wellness. Here are a few things to remember.

Someone Else is Happy with less than you have.

(A Matter of Gratitude)

The effects of gratitude on our well-being, published by Harvard Health Publications, support an association between gratitude and an individual's well-being.

Other studies have looked at how gratitude can improve relationships. For example, a study of couples found that individuals who took time to express gratitude for their partner not only felt more positive toward the other person but also felt more comfortable expressing concerns about their relationship.

Managers who remember to say "thank you" to people who work for them may find that those employees feel motivated to work harder.

This finding suggests that gratitude is an attainment associated with emotional maturity. You have to train yourself.

What We See Depends Mainly on What We Look For.

(A Matter of Perspective — Law of Attraction)

Think about how you never saw the make, model and color of the car you have until you bought one. What we look for - we find.

Energy attracts like energy — if you are negative you attract negative people who are messy and entertaining and secretly sucking you lifeless of positivity, motivation, and drive. (Why are you going back to school at this age? It is too late for that, etc.)

You Will Feel More Motivated and Less Overwhelmed & Stressed if You Focus on Solutions Over Problems.

(A Matter of focus)

When you focus on solutions, you make RESOLVE bigger than the problem. You are able to see things in a more balanced perspective, not ignoring obstacles but you do not over-magnify them — nor the stress they cause.

A Year From Now - You'll Wish You Would've Started TODAY.

(A Matter of Drive and Motivation)

You may not finish everything you want in one day, but if you work on it a little at a time... save a little every week, work toward your goal a little every day — a year from now you'll be glad you started TODAY.

As always — it is little adjustments in our day to day living that bring long lasting results.

#BeEmpowered

You can reach Janette with your questions and comments at janette@janettesmith.com. For more articles visit www.UBeEmpowered.com.

July 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3 Church Office Closed	4 INDEPENDENCE DAY
5 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship	6 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	7	8 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	9 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	10 Free To Worship	11 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 11:00 a.m. AMEN Staff Luncheon Meeting
12 ITHRME Sunday 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship	13 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing	14 6:00 p.m. Bans of Allen Mfg. VIP Choir Rehearsal	15 Pastor Clayborn's Birthday 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	16	17 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	18 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 11:00 a.m. Church School Book Club Children's Choir Rehearsal 12:00 p.m. YPD Meeting WHL Children's Dance
19 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship	20 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing	21 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN 6:00 p.m. Trustee Board Mtg.	22 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	23 6:00 p.m. Mass Choir	24 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	25 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry Women's Ministry
26 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship	27 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing	28 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN 6:30 p.m. Church School Mtg.	29 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	30 6:00 p.m. Mass Choir Media Ministry	31 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing	



St. John AME Church
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(256) 534-6828 Fax

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The Right Reverend James L. Davis, Servant Bishop

Mrs. Arelis B. Davis, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Doctor Patrick Clayborn, Pastor



Important Dates to Remember



June 21, 2015

Father's Day

June 22-25, 2015

*Ninth District Summer Meeting, CEC,
Troy University, Troy, Alabama*

June 27, 2015

MEN OF HONOR—Boys 2 Men "Man Up", 10:00 a.m.

June 28, 2015

Men's Day, 10:00 a.m. service

June 29-July 1, 2015

*Council of Bishops and General Board Meeting,
New Orleans, Louisiana
Bishop Davis preaches on June 30 at 7:30 p.m.*

ST. JOHN A.M.E.N NEWSLETTER



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 20 Issue 7

July 2015

FREE GO WORSHIP



St. John Holds Prayer Vigil for the Emanuel 9

On Thursday evening, June 18, members of St. John and the community came together for a prayer vigil in memory of the nine members of Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina, who were murdered during bible study on Wednesday, June 17. Persons came from throughout Madison County to express their sorrow and to pray for the families of those who lost their lives, for Mother Emanuel, and for the Charleston community.

Pastor Clayborn led the service. Music was led by the musicians and the combined choirs. The Reverend Gregory Bentley of Fellowship Presbyterian Church, Bishop Daniel Richardson of Eagles' Nest Ministries, and the Reverend Debra Ballard of Livingston Chapel AME Church offered prayers. Scripture was read by Ms. Ashley Humphrey. Mrs. Delois Smith, a counselor, shared information with persons present on how to deal with grief. Expressions of sympathy and assurance of the protection by the city were expressed by Mayor Tommy Battle and an officer from the police department spoke to persons gathered to ensure them of their safety at church. Pastor Clayborn read the names of each of the victims and offered words of sympathy and of hope. After prayer, the service closed with the singing of a song of encouragement, "My Hope Is Built."



(Continued on page 3)

St. John Holds Prayer Vigil for the Emanuel 9

(Continued from page 2)

On the following Sunday, the worship service included a Litany "The Doors of the Church Are Still Open," written by Bishop Adam J. Richardson. A special offering for the Emanuel Fund was also received on that Sunday. Below is the letter that was sent to the Huntsville community by Pastor Clayborn.



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Rev. Patrick D. Clayborn, Ph.D., Pastor

June 18, 2015

Our hearts have been broken by the news of the shooting at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina. We grieve the loss of Rev. Clementa Pinckney and eight of his congregants and shed tears with their heartbroken families while we cover them with our prayers.

We are thankful to law enforcement for their due diligence in apprehending the suspect. We are in communication with our own local leaders, law enforcement agencies and the US Attorney's Office in Huntsville, working collaboratively on 'next steps.'

As a community church located in the heart of downtown we have had to be extremely attentive and sensitive to the safety and security of our congregation and over the last several years, taken many measures to better secure our own church. We suggest all churches make this a priority.

Our world has been rocked by this event - but not our faith. We have hope in God for a better day.

We invite the community to join us tonight for a time of healing. Pastors and spouses are invited to join us at 6pm, we will then open our doors to the community at 7pm as we pray for healing, understanding, and peace.

Rev. Patrick D. Clayborn, Ph.D - Pastor

Jesus: The True Superhero

by Monica L. Dillihunt, Ph.D., Director of Christian Education

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11, KJV)

This year's Vacation Bible School was another success. The average attendance was 100 persons each night. Teachers, youth, young adults and adult classes were all excited to see what types of *Superheroes* they would be transformed into by the end of the week. This year's study was only four days focusing on God's plan for all, praying for God's help, defending justice for others, and seeking salvation through Jesus Christ.

Each night attendees checked in with fun, fellowship and dinner provided by the kitchen ministry with help from the Sons of Allen, Stewardesses, Ushers, Koinonias, and choirs.

The opening night began with a video on how attendees would be transformed throughout the week, learning the theme song "Jesus Superhero", and a vibrant introduction to the Superhero teachers. Special guests taught the teen and adult classes. The teens were taught by "Wonder Woman" (Ms. Janette Smith) and the Adult class was surprised by the entrance of "Bible Woman" (Mrs. Lillie Rivers). Throughout the week all of the other teachers (Mr. Rufus Gilmore, Dr. Love-Brown, Dr. Dillihunt, Mrs. Fears, Ms. Little, Ms. Lott, Mrs. Whitehead, Ms. Holland, Ms. Humphrey and Ms. Eliard) were just as enthusiastically informed and provided amazing connections to the day's lessons.

Youth participated in nightly crafts (led by Ms. Cheryl Anderson) where they made superhero masks and capes. They also participated in outdoor games (led by Mr. Justin York) where they had to work together using the power of collaboration and team-work as teams competed against each other.

By the end of the week all understood how Joseph faced some difficult challenges, yet trusted God's plan and was appointed the leader of a nation; how King Hezekiah had been threatened by a foreign nation and decided to pray; about God's supernatural deliverance of Moses and how justice is one of God's primary concerns; and that salvation is the ultimate blessing of what it means to be a Christian.

During the closing ceremony each class gave summaries of what they learned in their classes. The pre-school class shared scriptures; the primary class, dressed in their tie-dyed tees and masks, shared their memory verses; the juniors, in their capes, shared a summary of each night; the teens created a video sharing affirmations of how they connected the lessons to their lives and the ultimate superhero Jesus Christ; the young adults created their own superhero names and emblems that represented who they are and how they can fight for a life in Christ; and the adults took ordinary items and shared how they could use them in their work for good.

(Continued on page 5)



Jesus: The True Superhero

by Monica L. Dillihunt, Ph.D, Director of Christian Education

(Continued from page 4)

This was another outstanding Vacation Bible School experience for persons of all ages. Thank you to each person who participated as a student, teacher, or in a support position.



Jesus: The True Superhero

by Monica L. Dillihunt, Ph.D, Director of Christian Education



Christian Education Congress

June 22-25, 2015 at Troy University Campus

The 411 on CEC!

By Mariah Gullatte



St. John CEC attendees pose in front of Troy University fountain.

The Christian Education Congress, better known as CEC, was spiritually empowering; empowering AMEs to "Want More of Jesus while daring to Trust God." Sadly, this was the last CEC-Summer Meeting under the leadership of current Servant Bishop James L. Davis. We are thankful to Bishop Davis and the CEC leadership for allowing us to experience a bit of college life before our time. This has given us a glimpse of our future. Thank you, Bishop Davis, for having vision and allowing us to walk in that vision.

There were powerful guests who presented during the week of CEC. The Reverend Doctor Lee P. Washington (Pastor of Reid Temple AME Church, Maryland), Sunday's Best winner, Crystal Akin, AMEs own gospel hip-hop rapper Davonta Anderson, and some

extreme H.E.A.T. were some of the power packed guests that God used to minister to the Ninth Episcopal District. Worship service is always the kickoff to all of the hype at CEC! As we worshipped as one church, we witnessed the choir filled with YPDers singing with voices of praise. Each day we enjoyed watching drama performances from each of the conferences from the subjects: "Rethink the Possible," "Rethink, Pentecost Gathered," "Rethink, Pentecost Scattered," "Rethink the Possible, Feeding of the 5,000," "Rethink the Possible, Daniel Payne College Legacy Village." We also enjoyed debate topics such as carnality vs. morality. The highlight of CEC was the presentation of \$55,000 in scholarship money to high school graduates. Wow! \$55,000 was awarded to high school graduates in the Ninth District! St. John AME Church member, Walter Jenkins was one of the recipients...to God be the Glory!



Scholarship Recipients

Pastor Clayborn had a hand in the fun too! He presented a workshop entitled, "Carnality vs. Morality." Dr. Clayborn taught that carnality goes beyond pre-marital sex, gossip, drugs, and gangs. Carnality also includes having to have things our way, avoiding the will of God for our lives personally, and not looking out for the least of them socially, which includes all of the isms (racism, sexism, ageism, etc.) The goals should be to strive for spirituality as modeled by Jesus. This may include breaking traditional patterns of thinking, even inside church. This helps people to be who God called them to be beyond the limitations that they put on themselves or others put on them.

Every night boys and men participated in some physical fun- playing basketball, which burned almost every calorie they had eaten! After dinner one night, there was an enriching lesson that taught what to do and what not to do "If the police stop you..." CEC members could not leave Troy University without shutting it down with a dance on the last night. Before leaving campus on Thursday, CEC was visited by Alabama's Secretary of State, Mr. John Merrill, who talked about the importance of registering to vote, and he brought along some voter registration forms.

We had a good time and we are still thanking God for a power-packed week. Until next year, we will continue to seek "More of God..."

Men's Day Celebrated "Men of Honor"

By AMEN Staff Writer

Sunday, June 28, 2015, was the culmination of an exciting and spiritually enriching Men's Month. The theme for the month was "Men of Honor." The men participated in weekly bible studies, went bowling, sang, danced, participated in Boys to Men Conference and led the worship service on June 28.

The theme for Men's Day was "Building the Dream: Mind, Body and Spirit." The men of St John participated throughout the service. The Call to Worship was led by Brother Larry Davis, prayer was offered by Brother Guy Ginn, Scripture (Matthew 7:24-27) was read by Brother Clifton Miller, the Welcome of Guests was extended by Brother Jesse Johnson and Brother Wilbert Brownlow led the offertory prayer. The Male Chorus, under the direction of Brother Reginald Pearson rendered music for the service. Selections included "Pass Me Not," "He'll Keep You in Perfect Peace, and "My Soul Has Been Anchored in the Lord." A special group of male dancers ministered in dance to the musical recording of "The Sound."

There were three speakers for this special service. Each focused on a portion of the theme: body, mind and spirit.

Brother Justin York spoke on "The Body." He shared his testimony regarding a life-threatening health issue for which he was reluctant to seek help. He encouraged men to listen to their bodies and take care of their health. Brother York's condition first flared up in 2011 and he shared how he was reluctant to go to the doctor, thinking the symptoms would go away. After treatment, the symptoms went away for several years, only to reoccur in 2014. Although he was reluctant to seek medical help at first, he later sought help and was determined to seek treatments until the root cause of the problem could be identified. This testimony was a memorable life-example of how important it is to take care of the body.

Dr. Arthur Walker spoke on "The Mind." As a retired educator and college president, Dr. Walker spoke on how men (and people in general) can develop their minds. He used a subtopic of "Being Men of Honor – Choose Attitude and Thought." He noted that people have the ultimate power to choose by bringing their minds into submission. Points that he highlighted were to feed the mind with the truth, free the mind from destructive thoughts and focus on the right things. This thoughtful message definitely equipped persons to develop their minds.

Pastor Clayborn spoke on "The Spirit." His message was entitled "If You Build It on the Rock" with text from Matthew 7:24-27. His message related dream building and the Spirit. He posed the question, "Why take the risk of building on sand?" and followed with points on how important it is to "dig deep to build on a rock." He noted that building on rock is not easy, but without the hard work, one will be cut off like building on sand. He further noted that the challenge of building on a rock "will pull the best out of us." Pastor Clayborn used the parable in the text to show how mind, body and spirit work together to build a strong foundation. He also used the movie "Field of Dreams" as an example of building on a rock, making a sacrifice, and making opportunity for the future. Paralleling this to the life of a believer, his point was that God never fails to bless when one builds on the Rock.

As the service came to an end, a call for men to gather at the altar for prayer was made. It was a blessing to see so many men of faith gather around the altar and overflow down the aisles of the church for prayer. This was a great testimony that St. John's men are "Building the Dream: Mind, Body and Spirit."

Men of Honor: Boys to Men Conference

By Justin York



The men and boys of St. John AME Church held the Boys to Men Conference on Saturday, June 27, 2015. The men have been working on forming a mentoring program for some time. The Boys to Men Conference was a much needed step in the right direction. Recent events throughout our country that have claimed the lives of several of our young black men made this conference more timely than ever. Through the leadership and vision of Pastor Clayborn, the efforts and participation of the men and boys of St. John AME; open, honest conversations about what it means to be a Man of Honor took place. Becoming a man of honor is not just a concept or theme. It is a walk our men and boys must chose to take every day. A walk that must be displayed to those young and old.



The conference began Saturday morning with all of the boys and men gathering in the church's sanctuary and participating in icebreakers. After much laughter and discussion, the music video Man Up Anthem by 116 (a Christian rap group featuring Lecrae, KB, Trip Lee, Tedashii, Sho Baraka, P.O., & Andy Mineo) was shown. The reception of this music video and song was mixed to say the least. Once the lyrics were read, it was revealed that these extraordinary young men of God were spreading the word of God in an entirely different way from how most were accustomed. Man Up Anthem is essentially what being a man of honor requires. The artists explain that faith, responsibility, growth, being present, and living the example of true manhood is paramount. Many left the first discussion of the

morning enlightened and with a different perspective on how the Gospel is taught.

Group discussions followed the discussion of the Man Up Anthem. The men separated into



groups to discuss various topics. These topics included: manhood and masculinity, true brotherhood, leadership, respect for women, differences between boys and men, family roles, and so

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Men of Honor: Boys to Men Conference

By Justin York

(Continued from page 9)

much more. After much discussion in each group, it was lunch time. Everyone enjoyed a hearty meal catered by Mama Annie's Southern Style Cuisine.

Discussions continued after lunch. Each group of men also included a young man; not only to teach but to gain perspective. These young men provided nuggets of wisdom beyond their years. CJ, a friend of Anthony Harbin, defined manhood as taking responsibility and making important decisions. Anthony Harbin spoke on leadership. Anthony quoted Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "If you can't fly, then run. If you can't run, then walk. If you can't walk, then crawl. But whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward." This quote was right on time as the discussion of responsibility, leadership, and priorities were taking place. Making mistakes is a part of growth and in order to grow, we must continue to move forward.

While discussion is important in identifying what needs to be corrected, practical application is equally important. Every group discussion concluded with a plan of action to make the ideas and suggestions real. The actions included forming solutions to the issues that face black men in today's society, young and old. Showing respect to women and men, being there for one another in times of need, displaying leadership qualities, treating others as one wants to be treated, daily prayer, studying the bible, loving others, passing on knowledge and experiences, making responsible decisions, and trusting God are just a few examples of how these ideas can be applied in everyday life.

The conference ended with the youth discussing what they wanted the men to know — issues they deal with and what was on their minds. Wallace explained how interacting with different ethnicities changed his perspective on life and how cyber bullying is real and turns into real world issues. Walter shed light on today's music and television. He explained how much of an impact it has on today's youth and how some view what they see on television as real life. Anthony also commented on television, "I often wonder why people do strange things on television." Michael answered by addressing why some people do the things they do, "Some people just want attention."

Josiah commented on cyber bullying informing the older men that it results from ignorance. "Musicians discuss disrespect to get attention and noticed by others," Jason said. As you can see, these young men are very aware of what is going on in the world today. Not only are they aware, they know right from wrong and live to be the right example for others to follow. They have not let the ignorance of the world around them change their values and beliefs. This is a reflection of their families and loved ones that have instilled love and respect.

We must continue to work with our youth and provide them with a place to discuss the issues they face. The purpose of this conference was not just to discuss the problems and issues we face as black men in today's society, but to discover applicable solutions that can be taught to other young men. The boys and men of St. John will continue to meet and have activities



like the Boys to Men Conference. Please encourage the boys and men you know to come out and participate in the future. The exchange of knowledge and experience is something that must continue to take place in order to secure a successful future for our youth.

St. John Participates in Church School Convention

By Willie J. Sandifer and AMEN Staff Writer



St John Church School members traveled to Civitan Park in Guntersville, Alabama to participate in the South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer (SBHB) District Church School and Christian Education Convention, hosted by Livingston Chapel A.M.E. Church, on June 10, 2015. The theme this year was "Aim for Change."

Activities:



St John submitted posters for the poster contest, an essay for the essay contest, and displayed a marquee. They won first place in the Essay Contest of which the prize was a registration for the Christian Education Congress in Troy, Alabama June 22-25 2015.

The debates were on the following topics: 1) Students who cyber bully on social media should be held legally responsible for any harm or incident that results from their actions / Students who cyber bully on social media should not be held legally responsible for any harm or incident that results from their actions. 2) Clothes are statements! You are what you wear! / Clothes are simply fashion! You are not what you wear! 3) A code of morality (right and wrong) is essential in society / A code of morality (right and wrong) is not essential in society. 4) Police officers are justified in their violence because their authority is not respected / police officers are not justified in their violence because their duty is to serve and protect ALL.

The Reverend Tommie Harvey Sr., from Gravitts Chapel A.M.E. Church in New Market, Alabama, gave the message during the midday service. His text was from Hebrews 13:5 and the message was entitled "God's Promise and Promises."

The St. John Church School was well represented and appreciative of the opportunity to work with other Church Schools throughout the SBHB District. Thank you Presiding Elder Allen for your leadership of this Presiding Elder District and to Brother Willie Sandifer for your service as SBHB Church School Superintendent.

9th District Schedule of Annual Conferences



Northwest Alabama Annual Conference
September 15 – 19, 2015

Southeast Alabama Annual Conference
September 23– 26, 2015

Alabama River Region Annual Conference
October 7 – 10, 2015

Northeast Alabama Annual Conference
October 14 - 17, 2015

Southwest Alabama Annual Conference
October 21 - 24, 2015

Pre-Plenary Meeting
November 11 , 2015

Plenary Meeting
November 12 - 13, 2015

2015
Last Series of
Annual Conference
this
Quadrennial



Technology Tip

By Ricardo Williams

Fixing the "USB device not recognized" Error

Many of us use devices that require a USB port to be used whether it may be on a tablet or a laptop. When connecting the USB device to a computer, we often get the famous "USB Device Not Recognized" error. You can spend a lot of time working to resolve this error without knowing the proper steps to take. This article reviews several things that can be done to fix this error.

The most commonly known method to fix the problem is to unplug the device or restart. The motherboard of the computer is where the hardware of the computer connects, which includes the USB ports. Unplugging or restarting will allow the processors on the motherboard to reload drives that may be used by the USB ports. The next tip that can fix the USB issue is to update the device drivers through the device manager of the computer. Access the device manager through the control panel or by clicking on start icon and typing devmgmt.msc. Once in the device manager, there will be a list of USB ports and there will be an unknown device in the list. Right clicking on the unknown device, click properties, click the driver's tab, and then select the option to update drivers.

Also within the device manager, one can change a setting on the USB root hub. Access this hub by expanding the USB serial bus controllers, right clicking on USB root hub and selecting properties. Within properties screen, there will be a tab labeled power management. Click on the power management tab and uncheck the setting that allows the computer to turn off the USB device to save power. This step will need to be performed for each USB root hub listed and then restart the computer.

Another option is to download the Windows USB troubleshooter. This is a free tool that works with Windows 7. With the troubleshooter, users can choose to select the fixes themselves or allow the troubleshoot program to fix

Church School Book Club

Discussion Date: July 18, 2015
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Fate of Mercy Alban, Wendy Webb, 2013

Discussion Date: August 15, 2015
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Go Set a Watchman, Harper Lee, 2015

An historic literary event: the publication of a newly discovered novel, the earliest known work from Harper Lee, the beloved, bestselling author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning classic, *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Originally written in the mid-1950s, *Go Set a Watchman* was the novel Harper Lee first submitted to her publishers before *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Assumed to have been lost, the manuscript was discovered in late 2014.

Go Set a Watchman features many of the characters from *To Kill a Mockingbird* some twenty years later. Returning home to Maycomb to visit her father, Jean Louise Finch—Scout—struggles with issues both personal and political, involving Atticus, society, and the small Alabama town that shaped her.

Exploring how the characters from *To Kill a Mockingbird* are adjusting to the turbulent events transforming mid-1950s America, *Go Set a Watchman* casts a fascinating new light on Harper Lee's enduring classic. Moving, funny and compelling, it stands as a magnificent novel in its own right. -- Amazon

Technology Tip

(continued)

the issue. It is recommended to allow the troubleshooter program to resolve the issue.

Another possible fix is to change the USB cord because it may have some sort of shortage.

These are some of the ways to get the USB device working properly.

Bowling: Men's Night Out

Following the Men of Honor Choir rehearsal on Friday, June 19th, the men of St. John AME Church enjoyed a night of bowling and fellowship at AMF Pin Palace Lanes.



Prayer Time

Weekly Prayer Time each Tuesday at 6:00 am.

Conference Call Credentials
US Toll Number (530) 881-1212
Meeting ID: 876-863-940

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.



Soup Kitchen



JOIN IN THE FEASTING

"The poor will eat and be satisfied" (Ps. 22:26).

There are many campaigns that focus on the enormous issue of poverty in the world today. Figures report that millions of people have to get by with practically no money. On the other hand, there are those who are well off and throw away their leftovers that could feed the poor.

The slogan of those who want to put an end to poverty is: "Make poverty history." The writer of Psalm 22 was not dreaming of a time that poverty would be eradicated. In his joy of being healed from his illness, he was preparing to go to the temple to give thanks to God. In some offerings the sacrificial animal was placed on the altar and killed, and after it had been sacrificed it was cut open and returned to the worshiper and his family to eat. This is probably what the psalmist had in mind, and he intended to invite the poor to join in the feasting.

It is always praiseworthy when those who have plenty decide to share their meal with the needy. It is much easier to be selfish and just ignore the less privileged. "If you are thankful to God for His Blessings, your generosity would be gladly appreciated in support of St. John's Monthly Soup Kitchen." Monetary and food items are needed and would be greatly appreciated.

The Soup Kitchen is open each 3rd and 4th Tuesday and Mrs. Pearlean Myhand, Ministry Leader, may be contacted for your support. Thank you in advance.

"Christ fed the crowds. It won't be possible for you to make poverty history, but you can turn someone's poverty into a feast." Unknown



AME Proud

THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH HAS AME APP AVAILABLE. The Office of the General Secretary of the AME Church makes AME App available to persons who would like to download the App on Apple and Android devices. Many connectional services are streamed online via the APP.

A Tribute to Mrs. Altonette Burks



Various members of St. John shared their memories of Mrs. Burks. Col. James Heyward and Mrs. Mattie Ezell shared information on her membership at St. John. Mrs. Burks was a dedicated member of Saint John AME Church where she served faithfully until her health failed her. She was a charter member of the 50+ Auxiliary and she served as vice-president and on any committees where she could be of assistance. Mrs. Burks was also a faithful member of the Stewardess Board and the Sanctuary

Choir. She and her husband of over seventy years, the late Arthur Burks, attended Sunday worship regularly, until their health declined. It was important to both of the Burks to include St. John worship, Vacation Bible School and other church events in the agenda for their grandchildren when they visited for the summer or whenever they were in Huntsville. Col. Heyward also noted that Mrs. Burks was a charter member of the Huntsville Society of Professional Women.

Dr. Jeanette Jones shared the following thoughts on Mrs. Burks based on their careers at Alabama A&M University. Mrs. Burks is fondly remembered for being "quietly effective" in all of her endeavors. She was always positive, neat in appearance and always kept a pleasant smile. Her former colleagues and students at Alabama A&M University (where she taught from 1968-1984) remembered her as being a very nice lady, who was competent and very thorough as professor of history. Although she was very patient with her students, they did not mistake her kindness for weakness. If she was ever approached to do something she did not feel comfortable doing, she knew how to politely turn it down without hurting your feelings. She was a good lady, and would do anything for anybody, if she could. She loved and supported her husband, loved her family and enjoyed fishing.



Online Giving is Easy!

Online contributions may be made to St. John by using your PayPal® account.

Within PayPal, send donations directly to St. John at stjohnameh@aol.com. Select the option to transfer from your banking account or PayPal balance and specify donate/friends and family.



Online giving is easy!

You may also donate by sending funds through PopMoney to stjohnameh@aol.com.

Mrs. Altonette Burks

Brother William Bell remembers her as "a BLESSING, very kind, and very encouraging." Col. Heyward said "Mrs. Burks was one of the nicest persons that I knew. She was a kind and generous person and always carried a smile." Mrs. Charlie Brooks remembers Mrs. Burks as a woman who "seldom spoke, but when she did it was with eloquent authority." She also remembers her last visit with Mrs. Burks as stated here, "As she lay there quietly she emitted such a beautiful aura, I stated, quietly and truthfully, 'Mrs. Burks, your skin and hair are beautiful.' Amazingly, she stated, 'Thank you.' That was Mrs. Burks."

Continue to pray for the Burks family as they mourn the loss of their beloved matriarch.

Church School Lesson Overview – August 2015

This month's reviews were written by Kenneth Parham.

August 2, 2015

Lesson Title: Our Redeemer Comes

Lesson Scripture: Isaiah 59; Psalm 89:11-18

Print: Isaiah 59:15-21

Devotional Songs: #450, #272, and #243

Key Verse: "[God] will come to Zion as Redeemer, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression" (Isaiah 59:20).

In verses 1-14, the Prophet Isaiah reminded the Israelites that due to their sinful nature, either through slavery or voluntary practices of pagan customs, God had turned His heart and eyes away from His chosen people. Isaiah, in these noted verses, indicated that, at a minimum, the Israelites were guilty of murderous acts, bearing false witness against their neighbor, committing adultery, speaking evil acts, and performing evil acts that had displeased God. Isaiah also indicated that sin was so prevalent that any act of truth or righteousness became tainted by sin and thus became sin.

In verses 15-21, Isaiah provided the children of Israel hope in their time of desperation. He indicated that God saw the few that attempted to live in truth and that He was aware that these few would be consumed. Isaiah indicated that God, Himself, was putting on the war armor in order to do battle with sin and that God's wrath would be measured and given in return for the sinful acts through the lands.

Isaiah relayed that God would reside with those who turned away from transgressions and reminded the children of Israel of the covenant that God made with their forefathers – "My spirit that is upon thee and my words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of my mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed", saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever."

August 9, 2015

Lesson Title: A Choice to be Just

Lesson Scripture: Ezra 7:1, 6, 21-28; Jeremiah 7:1-15

Print: Jeremiah 7:1-15

Devotional Songs: #377, #251, and #243

Key Verse: "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your doings, and let me dwell with you in this place" (Jeremiah 7:3).

The prophet Jeremiah was instructed by God to give the children of Judah a final warning of God's displeasure with the interaction of His children and the holy temple. God indicated through Jeremiah that He was not pleased with those who had broken the covenant by committing such practices as oppressing strangers, mistreating orphans and widows, committing murder and adultery, and practicing idol worship, and then came to the temple for forgiveness and left to continue a sinful life as if all was well. God relayed that the children of Judah should look back in history to the days of the children of Israel and the relationship that the Israelites had with the Temple of Shiloh. God indicated that He had given the children of Judah countless opportunities to repent and to hear God's voice, but God indicated that He had had enough and would turn His back to the children of Judah and no longer hear their prayers. God's presence would leave the temple of the children of Judah just as His presence left the temple at Shiloh.

In reading the lesson and considering the world's ongoing social decay, believers must be thankful that Jesus became the gateway between the temple and God. As a result, they can stand within the temple and confess their sins and God hears and forgives. Persons, now as renewed Christians, can go back into the world as a better people to do as Jesus has commanded, to love their neighbor.

August 16, 2015

Lesson Title: A Call for Repentance

Lesson Scripture: Ezekiel 18; Proverbs 21:2-15

Print: Ezekiel 18:1-13, 31-32

Devotional Songs: #412, #84, and #243

Key Verses: "Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit!" (Ezekiel 18:30-31).

In this lesson God spoke through the prophet Ezekiel. God started out by reminding Ezekiel of a proverb where the parents eat sour grapes

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Church School Lesson Overview – August 2015



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and the kids will then in turn sin. God indicated that this is not true and the children of Israel should cease in spreading this falsehood (there is a similar bible passage, Exodus 20:5 that indicates the sins of the fathers will be visited upon the third and fourth generation, "if" they are sinful. Here the word "if" should be noted to indicate agreement to Ezekiel 18:2-3).

God reminded Ezekiel that He holds only the individual sinner responsible for his/her sin. In verses 5-9, God indicated that if a person is righteous – does not worship idols, does not commit adultery, does not approach a woman who is on her menstrual period, does not oppress anyone, pays what he/she does not steal, feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, does not charge outrageous interest in lending, does not partake in sinful acts, assists in administering fair judgement between parties, obeys God's statutes and ordinances, and lives faithfully; that person will not be judged and he/she will live.

God, however, in verses 10-13, spoke to the nature of a sinful son/daughter of a righteous person (noted above) and indicated that He would hold the sinful son/daughter accountable for his/her acts and that son/daughter would be answerable of his/her acts even if it meant death.

In verses 30-32, God through Ezekiel pleaded with the children of Israel to repent and turn from their sinful ways and to get a new heart and a new spirit. God asked the children of Israel and the present man/woman, "Why should you experience eternal death?" God indicated that He had no pleasure in the death of anyone. God asks people to turn from their wicked ways and live.

August 23, 2015

Lesson Title: God Demands Justice

Lesson Scripture: Zechariah 7:8-14, Isaiah 30:18-28

Print: Zechariah 7:8-14

Devotional Songs: #424; #258; and #243

Key Verse: "Thus says the Lord of hosts: render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another; do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the alien, or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another" (Zechariah 7:9-10).

er' (Zechariah 7:9-10).

The prophet Zechariah was given a message from God for the children of Israel (Jews) living in Judah and Jerusalem. God's message was a reminder of how the Jews were to treat one another. They were to administer justice amongst each other, not to oppress the widows, the orphans, strangers or poor; nor do evil against their neighbor. The listing of actions were those of treating one's neighbor with dignity and respect – tending to the needs of one's neighbor. These actions were also noted in previous lessons.

As Zechariah instructed the Jews on how to treat one another, the message was not well received. The Jews, living in Judah and Jerusalem, took a stubborn position against the prophet (both Zechariah and earlier prophets). The Jews turned a deaf ear and hardened their hearts against God's laws and words. God became angry and His response was to turn His back to the Jews. God also allowed their land to become desolate, which made the Jews leave their home and become strangers scattered amongst other nations.

This reviewer's take on this lesson is that great sin towards God will result in a greater wrath from God.

August 30, 2015

Lesson Title: Return to a Just God

Lesson Scripture: Malachi 3:1-12; Matthew 7:12

Print: Malachi 3:1-10

Devotional Songs: #97, "I Want Jesus to Walk with Me"; and #243

Key Verse: "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

In reflecting on the previous lessons, a common theme of sinfulness appears to have run rampant throughout the lives of the children of Israel. They had forgotten the relationship that God had with the past generations. God, through the prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah), was pleading with the Israelites that the ways of the righteous were not a hard living. God pleaded with the Israelites not to turn their ears and hearts away from Him.

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Get Off the Fence

By Paulette Bargon

Are you on the right side of the fence or the wrong side of the fence? As Christians we celebrate being on the right side of the fence. We pray, read the bible daily, tithe, feed the hungry, and many other Christ-like acts. But oftentimes some of us are straddling the fence. We pray but we are reluctant to pray in public. We may witness in church or to close friends but we won't tell strangers how we feel about God, church or even tell them that God really loves them and He will forgive them for their sins if they just ask and believe. We think that someone else can minister to a troubled family or a sick colleague. Yes, a lot of us are reluctant because we are afraid to say the wrong thing or do something that will make us look ill-advised but sometimes we have to jump off that fence and step out on faith.

We have to get off that fence and study the word so that we can have the confidence to tell others about how we met and how we experience Jesus. *2 Corinthians 5: 18-21... We are Christ's ambassadors and God is using us to speak to you... Every believer is an ambassador of Christ to a nonbelieving world.*

Sitting on the fence means not making a decision. He wants us to make a decision to serve Him fully. God does not deserve a partial decision. *Joshua 24: 15... Choose today whom you will serve... But as for me and my family we will serve the Lord.*

We must get off that fence and make a decision to tithe with our money and our time. We must give because God commands it and it is an act of love and thankfulness of what He has already given us. *1 Chronicles 29:6-14... Everything we have comes from you and we give you only what you have already given us.*

We have to be willing to get off the fence and make that next step. The minute we do that, He will have more for us. So if we want to experience all the big things God has for us then we have to take the risk and get rid of the fence! We do not want to lose God's promise when we do not have to do so. We would rather be at risk with God than to be secure without Him.

Church School Lesson

(Continued from page 17)

God wanted the relationship reconnected between the children of Israel before it became too late.

In this lesson, the prophet Malachi relayed the coming of a messenger. The messenger was coming to prepare the way for God's judgment against the children of Israel. It was foretold that the messenger would be as a refiner shifting the children of the Levites dividing them into the righteous and sinners. Then God would swiftly judge the sinners (the adulterers, false swearers, sorcerers, those that do not fear God; and those who oppress the widow, the orphans, and strangers). History indicates that before the messenger came, God was silent in scripture for four hundred years. Past and present scholars have indicated that the messenger was none other than John the Baptist.

The lesson concluded with God reminding the children of Israel that He had not changed. The righteous of the children of Israel would not be consumed. And again, God pleaded with the nation of Israel, who had forgotten His ordinances, to return to Him and He would return to them.



Church Picnic Planned for August 15th

The committee is gearing up for the annual picnic. Sign-up sheets are posted on the board outside the main office. Please SIGN UP so that the committee can begin working on a head count for food and activities.

Grab your folding/lawn chairs, and come out for a day of fellowship, fun and food. The theme is "Picnic at the Farm." The location is Alabama A&M University Agricultural Research Farm and the time is 3-7 pm on August 15. There will be games, sports, music, line dancing, and entertainment for all ages.

J. F. Drake State Community & Technical College Names Building in Honor of St. John AME Church Member

By Barbara Johnson

Mrs. Norma L. Powers-Jenkins, deceased (November 8, 1997) member of St. John AME Church was honored posthumously, on Monday, June 29th in a dedicatory ceremony organized by her former students and the administration of J. F. Drake. Mrs. Powers was an exemplary instructor and leader at Drake State for 32 years, leaving a legacy of countless individuals she influenced and trained. Mrs. Powers-Jenkins established the cosmetology curriculum at Drake State in the 60's and trained hundreds of beauticians throughout the Huntsville-Madison County area. She was an entrepreneur. She established Frau-Lyn's Beauty Shop on Meridian Street. The purpose of the beauty shop was to make available a professional training center for her students to become proficient in their delivery of cosmetology services. Later, she opened Frau-Lyn's Beauty and Barber Supply Shop on Oakwood Avenue to provide the clinicians with the products they needed to service their clientele.

The students and previous administration spoke highly of Mrs. Powers-Jenkins and her love for her students and her profession. Students, many of whom are practicing beauticians, still remember her fondly and owe their success to her tenacity and determination as a wonderful, kind and generous, yet firm and deliberate instructor.

The Norma L. Powers' Salon Management Center of Excellence is a testament to her legacy of learning and love for her students. It houses the barbering lab, cosmetology lab, spa management center which includes a pedicure and manicure facility.

Mrs. Norma L. Powers-Jenkins was the daughter of the late Mrs. Dicie Powers, sister to the late Mrs. Aileen Wilkins and Mrs. Mary Johnson. She was also the sister to Mrs. Susie Powers-Akins and sister-in-law to Mrs. Mary Powers. A host of nieces and nephews are also part of her extended family, several of whom are members of St. John AME Church.





BACK TO SCHOOL SOON: THINGS I WISH THEY TAUGHT US GROWING UP

By Janette R. Smith

Certified Strategic Intervention & Mindset Coach

YES. Summer is winding down and soon the kids will be heading back to school. Though many of us are not heading off to classrooms - there are tons of things I WISH we had learned while still in the classroom. I am talking about vital life skills and fundamental living mindsets to better empower us to succeed in life. Not everything that is worth knowing is chalked up on black boards, at least not yet. Here are five (5) things we could benefit from learning early in life.

1. Spotting a Scam

As a rule, schools do not tend to teach children about how to spot the signs of a swindler, and getting fleeced at least once is currently the only way to learn about the incredible amount of scams that plague the world. Knowing a dodgy deal when you see one is something that comes in handy in today's world, especially in a day and age in which so many are able to hide behind the shifting face of the internet. Teaching students to spot a scam can allow them to go a long way in life.

2. Negotiation

In most classrooms, there is very little room for negotiation. It is a shame, really, since when you enter the big, bad world of adulthood, being able to negotiate is vital in order to help get you out of some seriously sticky situations. Negotiation strategies come particularly in handy in the world of business, and teaching children how to master this skill from a young age can end up having all kinds of benefits in later life.

3. Self-defense

It is never nice to think about, but that does not stop the fact that there are depressingly high numbers of dangerous people out there in the world who one day might target you personally for a number of reasons. To stay safe, it is important to learn the very basics of self-defense - both in terms of being able to protect yourself through the art of speech as well as physically, if it ever needed. Self-defense can boost your confidence, keep you happy, and allow you to live a highly successful life.

4. Mental Health

Occasionally, schools will host workshops and activity days where various health representatives will totter from classroom to classroom, but for the most part, the aspect of mental health is left entirely up to the school's counselor, if they have one. More can be done with today's youth in the area of education on mental health issues like depression, which can be misunderstood. Raging teenage hormones are not the same as someone who is dealing with depression, and high-quality mental health education is needed in every school in order to help everyone learn about the more troubling conditions of the mind.

5. Socializing & Networking

Managing your internet profile is about so much more than having a high number of "likes" on Facebook these days. It can be the difference between being offered a terrific job opportunity and facing an endless string of rejections. Keeping your appearance online professional and in check will make potential employers recognize your maturity as a person, and schools really ought to widely teach the art and discipline behind crafting your very own unique internet identity.

You can reach Janette with your questions and comments at janette@janettesmith.com. For more articles visit www.UBeEmpowered.com. Follow Janette at:



Experts taken and edited from Gareth Lloyd, "15 Things You're Not Taught in School That Determine Your Success," www.lifehack.org, (May 18, 2015)

August 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 9:30 am. Dance Ministry
2 8:00 am. Worship 9:45 am. Church School 10:30 am. Worship AMEN DEADLINE	3 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	4 6:00 p.m. VIP Chdr Rehearsal	5 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	6 6:00 p.m. 4th Quarterly Coffee & Ice Gospel Choir Rehearsal	7	8 9:30 am. Dance Ministry 10:30 am. AMEN Staff Meeting
9 8:00 am. Worship 9:45 am. Church School 10:30 am. Worship	10 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing	11 6:00 p.m. Sons of Allen Mtg. VIP Chdr Rehearsal	12 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	13	14	15 9:30 am. Dance Ministry 11:00 am. Church School Book Club Children's Choir Rehearsal 12:00 p.m. YPI Meeting YWI Children's Dance CHURCH BONIC
16 8:00 am. Worship 9:45 am. Church School 10:30 am. Worship	17 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing	18 11:30 am - 1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN 6:00 p.m. Trustee Board Mtg.	19 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	20 6:00 p.m. Mass Choir	21 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	22 9:30 am. Dance Ministry Women's Ministry 8 BHB Barwick Home Gravette Chapel AMEN
23 AAMU SUNDAY 8:00 am. Worship 9:45 am. Church School 10:30 am. Worship at AAMU	24 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing	25 11:30 am - 1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	26 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	27 6:00 p.m. Mass Choir Media Ministry	28 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing	29
30 8:45 am. Church School 10:00 am. Worship	31 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing					



St. John AME Church
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Mrs. Arelis B. Davis, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Doctor Patrick Clayborn, Pastor



Important Dates to Remember

July 12-21, 2015

18th WMS Quadrennial Convention, Indianapolis, Indiana
July 12-15 - YPD, July 17-21 - WMS

July 18, 2015

America's Best Praise Dance,
featuring St. John Liturgical Dance Ministry
6:00 pm, Von Braun Center

August 2-6, 2015

34th Biennial Session of the Connectional Lay Organization,
Charleston, South Carolina

August 15, 2015

Church Picnic, 3-7 pm, AAMU Agricultural Research Farm

August 22, 2015

SBHB Harvest Home, Gravitts Chapel, New Market, AL

August 23, 2015

AAMU SUNDAY

September 15-19, 2015 North west Alabama Annual Conference, Birmingham, AL

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



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 20 Issue 8

August 2015



Pastor Patrick D. Clayborn, Ph.D.

Pastor's Message

Free to Worship

John 8:36-37

This summer, I turned 40 years old – truly a milestone for me! (And, thanks for all the well wishes and gifts many of you gave last month. They are much appreciated.) In the spring before my birthday, I asked God, "How do we, as a church, experience more of You?" God replied quite simply, "Worship Me more." I immediately responded to God by inquiring, "How do we do that?" After a few moments of silence, I then heard God say, "Be free." God did so as Sheri and I stood in line to get a picture with Anthony Brown (yes – the same Anthony Brown from Anthony Brown and group therAPy!) at Bishop T.D. Jakes' Pastors and Leaders Conference in Orlando, Florida. God nudged me as I looked at Anthony Brown and said, "He will help you." As Mr. Brown signed a CD for us, I asked him if he would be willing to come and lead us in worship if we called him. He told us that if we called him, he would come. As you can see from the pictorial display in last month's issue of AMEN and in the article/poem beautifully written by Ms. Barbara Johnson in the pages to follow, we called and Anthony Brown and group therAPy came! They ministered to us through musical worship and praise in our Free to Worship event and even performed a couple of selections from their new album, which at the time had not been released yet.

However, before I say more about them, I need to share more about the impetus for their coming to be with us. After God told me the persons who would help our church to be free to worship, God gave me a direction for how we were to get free: we have to make room for worship. In John 8, Jesus told some argumentative Jews that his identity as Messiah and message of love would not resonate with them (even to the point of them seeking to kill Him) "because there is no place in [them] for [His] word" (John 8:37). They were going to miss all that Jesus had to offer because they did not have room – no, they would not MAKE ROOM – for His word in their lives. When we have so filled our lives that there is no room for God's word in us, how do we make room? "Then Jesus said to the Jews who *had believed* in him, "If you *continue in my word*, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:31-32). To make room for Jesus' word, we must have faith in Him. Faith frees us to follow God into the unknown and place our lives in God's hands. Faith is our choice to give our heart to Christ. This certainly makes room for God's word in us. Alongside faith, consistently obeying God's instructions allows us to make room. Jesus was clear that they had to continue in His word, which means that He had already given them the word they needed to keep obeying. Jesus told Nicodemus to be open to spiritual births (growth) in chapter 3. He told the Samaritan woman to be open to spiritual locations in chapter 4. In the same chapter, he told the official to be open to spiritual direction. Jesus told the man at the pool in chapter 5 to be open to spiritual healing. When we have faith and continue in Christ's word by being open to spiritual births/growth, spiritual locations, spiritual directions, and spiritual healing, we are made free for worship.

Bringing Anthony Brown and group therAPy to St. John demanded us to have faith and to be open to spiritual growth, spiritual locations, spiritual directions, and spiritual healing. They challenged us to expand our worship – to participate beyond our comfort zone. They pushed us to make our worship heard. They encouraged us to invite God's presence so that God would in-

(Continued on page 9)



An Ode to Friday Nite Live

Free To Worship

Featuring

Anthony Brown and Group Therapy

*The atmosphere was ripe with excitement and delight,
For a new kind of worship was in store this night.
There was scampening about and whispering around back,
While the congregation came in and quickly relaxed.
A new kind of worship had come to town
In the undeniable form of
Group Therapy and Anthony Brown.*

*Rev. Sheri opened the altar for reverent prayer
There was plenty of room at the altar down there.
As "Jesus, You Are the Center of My Joy" was played,
Even the folks in the pews fervently prayed.*

*A passionate and spiritual portrayal of God's love and devotion,
Was demonstrated in the Dance Ministry's emotion.
The waving of the blue silks symbolized the flowing of the sea,
Made apparent to resemble the tides that engulf you and me.
As the climax came and the drama drew to a close,
The Dance Ministry emphasized whose hands we should hold.*

*The Praise Team (Ensemble) pressed forward in one accord--one voice.
Asking, answering, responding to the choice.
What's your purpose? Do You Know why you're here?
Living up to His Plan, Seeking your Destiny... You've nothing to fear.*

(Continued on page 3)

*An Ode to Friday Nite Live
Free To Worship
 Featuring
 Anthony Brown and Group Therapy*

(Continued from page 2)

*Can't have Friday Nite Live without a sermonette in this joint.
 And Rev. Clayborn, God Bless him, did not disappoint.
 Bringing our attention to the Samaritan Woman's state at the well,
 Radical Hospitality was the focus, we could tell.
 Radical Hospitality has to be above the norm,
 It must meet a stranger's need in any shape or form.
 Real Worship... Real worship is in spirit and in truth.
 No room for excuse, after excuse, after excuse.
 The Lord asked the Samaritan woman for a drink.
 What would you do? What would you think?
 Give Him your all. Put God to the test,
 See what He'll do, when He gives you, His best.*

*The pump was primed. The spirit was high.
 The congregation was ready, we were ready to fly.
 The adults were up out of their seats,
 Even the youngest kids were seen on their feet.
 Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, You were welcomed in this space,
 As Anthony Brown and Group Therapy took their place.
 Hands raised, shouts of Amen, hands clapping even louder
 Everyone was up.....this was Jesus' Power Hour!
 New songs, old songs, and a little Sly Stone,
 Hymns even, brought the entire concert home.
 We waited anxiously, Yes, for the song Brown had birthed,
 That's when he opened with the heart felt- WORTH!*

*Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Friday Nite Live was coming to a close.
 Hands raised, tears streaming down our face, so glad we had chose,
 To come and be a witness to how we could feel,
 When our worship was loud! When our worship was real!
 With resounding prayer at the altar and praise all around,
 Thanks to the remarkable, music master
 Group Therapy and Anthony Brown.*

.....Barbara Johnson



Free To Worship
Featuring
Anthony Brown and Group Therapy



iTHRIVE Worship Service: Free to Worship

by Ashley Humphrey



Guest preacher, the Reverend Dominique Robinson

A few days before, on Friday July 10th, St. John had already begun to worship with a concert given by Anthony Brown & Group Therapy. So the church was quite eager to continue to be Free to Worship on Sunday, July 12th for the iTHRIVE Worship Service.

A video entitled "This is Our Church" was shown and it emphasized the point that St. John is not a perfect church but it is a church striving to do the will of God and live in the love of God. The Praise Ensemble led praise and worship with "Holy, Holy, Holy" by Byron Cage and "Worth" by Anthony Brown & Group Therapy. St. John Ministry Arts Crew presented a video called "Get Connected." It featured youth, who are members of St. John, explaining their ideas and thoughts on what connected them to St. John and God. They also spoke on things Pastor Clayborn had preached or taught that helped them thrive in the will of God for their lives.



The Praise Team ministers in song, led by Brother Reginald Pearson

The children's choir, led by Mrs. Mary Rankin, allowed the spirit of God to flow through them, as well, with two beautiful song selections. The dancers ministered to us with a heartfelt dance and also put a twist "We Give Thee but Thine Own" by translating it in motion. The VIP choir worshipped through song throughout the service under the direction of Brother Reginald Pearson.



The Children's Choir was directed by Mrs. Rankin and the Dance Ministry was led by Dr. Patterson.

Pastor Clayborn then introduced the speaker of the morning, the Reverend Dominique Robinson. The Reverend Robinson began her journey in preaching when she was 13 years old. She earned her B.A. from Georgetown University and a Master of Divinity and Master of Theology both from Emory University. The Reverend Robinson is currently working on her doctorate from Columbia Theological Seminary. Her sermon was entitled "Messed Up but Still Anointed to Be Blessed: The Drop was Necessary." The text was from Second Samuel 4:4 and 9:1-11. In the

(Continued on page 6)

iTHRIVE Worship Service: Free to Worship

by Ashley Humphrey

(Continued from page 5)



Pastor Clayborn addresses the worshippers.

sermon, the Reverend Robinson told worshippers the story of Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, who was dropped and rendered cripple. Later David found him, gave him land and servants, and promised that Mephibosheth would always have a seat at the King's dinner table. The Reverend Robinson emphasized the point that one cannot expect people to carry them because God has to do that. She stressed the point that unfortunate things that happen in people's lives are instrumental in preparing them for the blessing and callings God has on their lives.

In closing the sermon the Reverend Robinson shared her amazing testimony of having been abandoned by her parents at sixteen and being homeless for the remainder of her high school career. Triumphantly, through the grace of God, she managed to be accepted to not one top university, but three!

She let listeners know that God sends people their way for the specific purpose of blessing them; if only they would trust and believe in God.

Pastor Clayborn held a special altar call and issued the invitation to Christian Discipleship. The Reverend Robinson gave the Benediction and the sanctuary was filled with music as the parishioners left. The congregants also had an opportunity to speak to the Reverend Robinson after the service as she autographed copies of her book, *Unspoken Praise*.

This was indeed a service moved by the Holy Spirit and ordained by God. AMEN.



The 2015 WMS Quadrennial - From the Delegate

By Monica L. Dillihunt, Ph.D.



St. John missionaries with Ninth District WMS President, Carolyn Cummings

The 18th Quadrennial Session of the Women's Missionary Society of the African Methodist Episcopal Church convened in Indianapolis, Indiana July 17-21, 2015. More than 1,300 delegates and observers met to conduct the business of the Missionary Society. The 4th Episcopal District, under the leadership of Bishop John and Supervisor Cecelia Bryant met Missionaries in grand style. This year's theme was "Transforming Lives... Building Communities... Impacting the World," based on the scripture Romans 12:1-2.

Bishop Reginald T. Jackson used this year's theme as the opening message, challenging Missionaries to truly understand what it means to transform lives, build communities and impact the world. He focused on getting back to the basics and taking back communities instead of waiting on others to do the job. He reiterated that unless African Americans do something different for ourselves soon, we are going to be a lost people. Later Friday afternoon, the business session was called to order. After greetings from the President, Bishop Vashti McKenzie, Executive Director of Global Witness, and other affiliates and ecumenical partners, the Service of Remembrance was held; remembering the lives of deceased members of the Societies around the world. Next was the seating of the delegation which totaled 1,215 delegates.

Connectional Officers' reports and District reports were given throughout the week highlighting all of the wonderful things being done by Missionary Societies around the world. During the President's report, Dr. Shirley Cason-Reed highlighted 6,101 new members, with 1,402 young women; increased attendance at NGO Conference; WMS Disaster Teams now serve 18 Episcopal Districts; Robing ceremony at Cape Town, South Africa; and more. In addition to the report, the President unveiled plans to build a clinic for women who have no place to receive medical attention in Porto-Prince, Haiti. This building will be named *Bishop Sarah F. Davis Outpatient Health Center*. All 20 Districts either pledged or paid varying amounts totaling over \$100,000 to get this project started.

The constitution and bylaws of the Missionary Society were also presented for changes and amendments. The age range of the Young People and Children's Division was a big debate; however the change in age was again voted down. There are several changes that were voted on and will be ratified at the General Conference in 2016.

(Continued on page 21)

Back to School Feature

By Tawanda Buford



August is here again! The time has finally come as the lazy days of summer gradually slipped away. As Kindergarteners anxiously await their first day of school, and High School Seniors anticipate the excitement of taking senior portraits and graduating; it is an exciting time for our youth as well as for parents. Although these are major milestones in the life of youth, they often have a tough time adapting to the transition of going back to school.

During the summertime most youth were involved with summer activities/camp, taking family vacations, and playing with friends. Do not forget about the quality time spent on the computer surfing the net or playing games, watching movies on ipads, listening to music on ipods, or playing Nintendo/Wii/Xbox Video Games. For the older generation, use of the cell phones consumed most of their time whether texting or video chatting. During the summer months it was a fun time for many, especially not having a designated bed time.

Times are different now. Gone are the days where kids would stay outside from sunrise to sunset playing Hop Scotch, visiting the local library for the joy of reading books, or having a lemonade stand to raise money for a certain cause. Nowadays kids can play games with another kid in China or even make video calls to friends using Facetime. Time is spent excessively on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or Flickr. It is quite obvious that gadgets and social media compete with other activities and consume the youth of today.

Now that kids are back in school, it is an adjustment time for all. Getting a new school year off to a good start can influence children's attitude, confidence, and performance both socially and academically. The transition from August to September can be difficult for both children and parents. Even children who are eager to return to class must adjust to the greater levels of activity, structure, and for some, pressures associated with school life. The degree of adjustment depends on the child, but parents can help their children manage the increased pace of life by planning ahead, being realistic, and maintaining a positive attitude. Due to the increased energy level for parents and kids, listed are helpful tips to ease the back to school stress:

- **GET ENOUGH SLEEP:** Parents should establish a reasonable bedtime so that kids will be well rested. Adequate hours of sleep promote increased school performance, good behavior, and great attention to detail and memory.
- **EATING A HEALTHY BREAKFAST:** Since breakfast is the most important meal, it provides the necessary energy and nutrients that lead to increased concentration needed in the classroom.
- **BEING SUPPORTIVE:** Parents can assist their child with writing down important information to help remember details such as class schedule and time, locker combinations, homework, bus number, teachers' and/or bus drivers' names.
- **ORGANIZING:** Use a wall calendar or personal planner to record when assignments are due, tests will be given, and dates for school activities/functions. School clothes should be determined the night before to avoid the hassle of deciding what to wear the next morning.

Kids and parents should take care of themselves by getting the appropriate amount of rest during this transitional phase. Before you know it, the Monday thru Friday routine will be done with ease and less stress.

As students begin the 2015-2016 school year, parents, must keep students motivated and encouraged as the students immerse themselves with the gift of learning. After all, the youth of today are the future leaders of tomorrow.

(Continued on page 16)

9th District Supports Bishop at General Board

By Monica L. Dillihunt, Ph.D

Members of St. John: Dr. Thalia Love, Dr. Monica L. Dillihunt, her mom, Ms. Gwen Fugh Dillihunt, Ms. Ernestine Barnes Ivery, and Mr. Willie Sandifer joined Pastor Clayborn, Reverend Sheri, and their children, Patrick II (P2) and Joya, to support the Ninth District's Servant Bishop James L. Davis in New Orleans, Louisiana as he preached the sermon for the Opening Worship Service of the General Board. St. John members were among the over 200 members from across the Ninth Episcopal District who attended to support Bishop Davis.

Bishop Davis' sermon, "A Legacy of Faith," with text from II Timothy 1:1-9 (one of his favorite scriptures) reminded listeners that *"There is a Today Because There was a Yesterday."* He reiterated that if we do not have respect for our heritage, then the next generation must surely rise against us. Bishop Davis reminded us that as African Americans but more importantly as members of African Methodism: (1) The legacy begins in the house. We have to remember the teachings of our parents and grandparents as well as the faith that they had for us to be who we are today. (2) We have to be continuously productive. We cannot stand still and pray that things will happen. We have to do something, just as our forefathers did. We have to be change agents. (3) Our faith has to be bold. We have to step out and make others notice. We cannot sit back and talk a good game without doing something. Make bold moves! have bold actions. (4) We have to *"Stir up the Gifts"* – God gave us all gifts that we have to use to make a difference. We cannot wait on others to do what we know to do. Ordinary is not enough anymore. We have to be a people to move to the next level, so that we can have a legacy to leave. We cannot keep doing the same old thing – we have to *"Stir up the Gifts."*

With resounding AMEN's the Connection agreed it is time. In light of all the things that are happening to people of color and members of the AME denomination it IS time that the people and the CHURCH *"Stir up the Gifts."*

Thanks to technology, many St. John members were able to watch the service via live-streaming. In addition to the opening service, members attended the Investiture Ceremony for Bishop Julius McAllister, Sr. the new President of the Council of Bishops. Bishop McAllister will serve for one year.

Pastor's Message



(Continued from page 1)

habit our praise. What resulted was a praise party of the highest order! Their ministry helped us to grow in our worship and freed so many to enter a new level of praise. Testimonies are still being reported. Some speak of how they felt their physical infirmities lessen in the midst of the Free to Worship service. Others talk of how they experienced God move in a new way in their lives. Some others mention how they no longer care what others think when they give God praise in public. Yes, there are some who testify that God answered their prayers in the worship experience.

With this event (and all that transpired therein) happening only a few days before my birthday, it is one of the best presents I received! To be 40 and free to worship is an amazing feeling. To be in church with other believers and to sense that all are free to worship is even more amazing! I praise God that our worship and praise has been taken to another level. I know that this is just the beginning.

We are free! Praise the Lord we are free!!

FREE TO WORSHIP!!!!

6th Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference

Tuesday, September 15, 2015 – WMS Annual Convention
Wednesday–Saturday, September 16-19, 2015 - Business, Training & Worship

St. John A.M.E. Church, Birmingham, Host Church
Daniel Payne Community Plaza
1500 Daniel Payne Drive, Birmingham, AL 35214
The Reverend Mashod A. Evans, Host Pastor
The Reverend Dwight E. Dillard, Host Presiding Elder

Conference Agenda and Daily Schedule

Tuesday, September 15

Pre-Conference Activities and Services
WMS ANNUAL MEETING

12:00 p.m.

Unity Day Rally

4:00 p.m.

OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 6TH SESSION
OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

6:30 p.m.

WMS Night in White Candlelight Service

Wednesday, September 16

8:45 a.m.

Devotion

9:15 a.m.

Morning Glory Bible Study

9:45 a.m.

Conference Institute

10:45 a.m.

BUSINESS SESSION

Reading of Minutes, Financial Reports, Conference Component
Reports, Pastor's Reports

12:30 p.m.

Mid-Day Worship Service
(Sons of Allen – Worship Leaders and Program Participants)

3:00 p.m.

Business Session
Administrative Committee Reports, Pastor's Reports

6:30 p.m.

OPENING ANNUAL WORSHIP SERVICE

Thursday, September 17

8:45 a.m.

Devotion

9:15 a.m.

Morning Glory Bible Study

9:45 a.m.

BUSINESS SESSION

Reading of Minutes, Pastor's Reports

MIRRORING, COMMITTEE REPORT & DISCUSSION

Ministerial Efficiency Committee Report, Daniel Payne College

Report, Daniel Payne College Legacy Village Foundation Report

12:30 p.m.

Mid-Day Worship Service
(Lay Organization – Worship Leaders and Program Participants)

3:00 p.m.

Business Session
SEATING OF THE DELEGATES TO THE LAY ELECTORAL COLLEGE

(Continued on page 11)

6th Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference

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Conference Agenda and Daily Schedule

(Continued from page 10)

6:30 p.m.	A NIGHT OF REVIVAL
Friday, September 18	
8:45 a.m.	Devotion
9:15 a.m.	Morning Glory Bible Study
9:45 a.m.	BUSINESS SESSION Reading of Minutes, Pastor's Reports
11:30 p.m.	ORDINATION AND COMMUNION SERVICE
3:00 p.m.	Business Session Literary Reports, Statistician Report, Retirement Acknowledgements, Disciplinary Questions
6:30 p.m.	A NIGHT OF REFLECTION, THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE
Saturday, September 19	
8:00 a.m.	YPD Session
9:30 a.m.	YPD Program
11:15 a.m.	Praise Service
11:30 a.m.	CLOSING AND COMMISSIONING SERVICE



The Annual Conference delegate from St. John Huntsville is Brother Guy Ginn. Sister Abbiegail Hugine is the alternate. The delegates to the Lay Electoral College are Sister Cassandra Ingram Thompson, delegate, Sister Nedra McDaniel, alternate delegate, and Brother Jason Gilmore, young adult delegate.

All members of St. John are invited to share in the Annual Conference experience. The schedule and sign-up sheets for transportation are posted outside of the main office.



"UNITY DAY RALLY"

September 15, 2015
12:00 Noon

Dear Pastors and Co-laborers,

The 9th Episcopal District is honored to welcome The Honorable Robert J. Bentley, the Governor of Alabama, to our Unity Day Rally on Tuesday, September 15, 2015, at Noon at the Daniel Payne Community Plaza, 1500 Daniel Payne Drive, Birmingham, Alabama. Governor Bentley will receive the Inaugural Rosa L. Parks Profile of Courage Award. He will be honored for his moral courage in taking a bold step in removing a divisive symbol of Alabama's history, the Confederate flag. The theme of the rally is "One Nation Under God: Lord, Let It Be."

This is an occasion you should not miss. Every church pastor and church leader in Alabama is expected to be in attendance to bear witness to this historic event. We have an opportunity to articulate the mission of the AME church directly to the Governor of our state. In doing so, we make our voices heard and solidify our relationship with the highest office in Alabama for our present concerns and for future generations. God has positioned our church to take the lead in making our state and our country a better place. Now is the time to seize the blessing.

The rally will feature Bishop John R. Bryant, Senior Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, ecumenical leaders throughout the state of Alabama, elected representatives, and university officials.

I look forward to seeing you and your congregation in Birmingham. We expect no less than 2,000 AMEs from across the state to be in attendance. Please plan to remain for the official opening of the 6th Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference at 4:00 p.m., and the Women's Missionary Society Night in White Candlelight Service at 6:30 p.m.

Let us join together with so many others who are ready to stand with the AME Church in unity to make a difference. There is much work to do. The Unity Day Rally is the first step.

Please share the flyer on the next page with your congregation, family, and friends.

In the Spirit of Unity, I remain

James L. Davis
Servant Bishop





AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
9TH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Basal Pangea Community, Dept. 2, 1585 Basal Pangea Drive,
Nemah, Alabama 36244 • Tel: 205-449-0100



SPONSORS:

Unity Day Rally

Special Honoree: The Governor of the State of Alabama



The University of Robert J. Berkey
Institute of Education

References

One Nation Under God:
"Lord, Let It Be"

'Our Invited Ecumenical Guests'



Andrew John B. Wilson
David George A. Lee
and
John C. Smith



Working Journal L. Thore
Wednesday, August 20th
in Laramie District
and a few



Building Smart Business Budgets
Producing Power at the
South A. Electric
www.enr.com 21 Nov



By: Christopher
Dunn, M.D.



Robert K. Rasmussen
James A. Smith
Nathaniel S. Jones
et al.



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Keywords: *gender inequality, gender discrimination, gender equity, gender equality, gender justice, gender equity, gender equality, gender justice, gender equity, gender equality, gender justice*



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Representative John F. Wright
 State of Alabama
 Chapter 12



Dr. Andrew Shapiro, D.
President
American ABA Council



Stephen O. Westwood
First Adjunctive of the
Church of Jesus Christ

Tuesday, September 15, 2015
12 Noon

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic
 which it stands for: one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Saint John African Methodist Episcopal Church

229 Church Street | Huntsville, Alabama

An Appreciation Service for
Reverend Patrick Clayborn and First Lady, Reverend Sheri Clayborn

Pastor's Appreciation Service



Philippians 3:14

I press toward the mark for the prize of the
high calling of God in Christ Jesus.



08.30.14 | 10:00am
St. John AME Church

ALL ARE INVITED
TO
ATTEND

August is Cataract Awareness and Children's Eye Health and Safety Month

By Rosemary Wells

Cataract Awareness Month is sponsored by the American Academy of Ophthalmology. Cataracts are the leading cause of reversible blindness in the USA and in the world.



THIS IS HOW A PERSON WITH CATARACTS SEES THE WORLD.

What is a cataract? If you think of the eye as a camera, the lens is the piece that focuses the picture. A cataract is a clouding of the lens of the eye.

Cataracts develop as part of the aging process, so everyone is at risk. By age 75, about 70 percent of people have areas of the lens that become cloudy as protein in the lens begins to clump together.

Less common types of cataracts, not related to normal aging, include congenital or developmental cataracts. This type of cataract can occur in infants or children. They may be hereditary or they can be associated with some birth defects. Some cataracts occur without any obvious cause.

Non-age-related cataracts are caused by other eye disease or previous eye surgery. Chronic disease can make one more likely to develop cataracts; for example, diabetes has been proven to increase risk for cataracts. Excessive use of steroid medication can spur development of this type of cataract as well.

Traumatic cataracts are related directly to an eye injury. Traumatic cataracts may appear immediately following injury or they can develop several months or even years later.

During a comprehensive, dilated eye exam (where the pupil is widened with eye drops), the ophthalmologist will examine and test eyes to make a cataract diagnosis. The most common procedure used for removing cataracts is called phacoemulsification. A small incision is made in the side of the cornea (the front part of the eye), where a tiny instrument is placed that uses high-frequency ultrasound to break up the center of the cloudy lens and carefully remove it with suction. After the cloudy lens has been removed, the surgeon will replace it with an intraocular lens (IOL) implant made of plastic, silicone or acrylic. The IOL becomes a permanent part of the eye. Cataract surgery can be conducted even if previous Lasik or other laser vision correction surgeries have been done. After the surgery, patients will spend a short period of time resting in the outpatient recovery area before they are ready to go home.

August is also Children's Eye Health and Safety Month. It is sponsored by Prevent Blindness America chosen to highlight children's eye health as school starts and children may begin to have problems focusing.



The American Optometry Association recommends that children have a comprehensive eye exam every two years. There is a big difference between a quick screening and a comprehensive eye exam. A screening lasts 3-5 minutes; by contrast, a comprehensive exam lasts 30-60 minutes and is much more thorough. Screenings are intended to catch patients with obvious symptoms and refer them for further assessment. Comprehensive eye exams are diagnostic; they provide a complete assessment of vision and eye health, while identifying the problem and the proper course of treatment or evaluation. There are no set standards for who performs a screening. An eye exam, by contrast, is performed by an eye doctor—an optometrist or ophthalmologist—who has specialized medical training in the eye and who diagnoses and treats eye conditions all day, every day. In a comprehensive eye exam the doctor dilates the patient's eyes and carefully examines the inside of the eye with a slit lamp.

(Continued on page 16)

Back to School Feature

By Tawanda Buford

(Continued from page 8)

Heavenly Father

*Lord, please bless all our teachers and students
as they begin the mark of the 2015 – 2016 school year.
Give students the imagination, wisdom, and creativity to excel in their academic studies.
Give them the strength to do the right thing and make sound judgments and decisions.
As students travel to school and walk up and down the hallways, keep them safe from anyone
who tries to do harm, protect them from those who are bullies.
Give teachers the strength to endure. Help them to say the right words of encouragement for each
student. Supply them with an abundance of energy as they begin to teach.
Give parents willing hearts to be actively involved with their child's academic success.
Let this be a truly wonderful year for everyone involved in the lives of our future leaders.
This is our prayer.....AMEN!*

Reference: http://kid shealth.org/parent/positive/learning/back_school.html

August is Cataract Awareness and Children's Eye Health and Safety Month

By Rosemary Wells

(Continued from page 13)



The American Optometry Association recommends the following schedule for pediatric eye exams:

- First 12 months –infants, particularly premature babies, should have an eye exam in the first 12 months.
- Age 2 or 3 years- Preschool is a critical time for learning. Preschoolers should have an eye exam when they are old enough to understand and respond to the exam.
- Age 5-Kindergarten is also a critical time for learning. Kindergarteners should have an eye exam before entering school.
- Children without identified vision problems should then have a comprehensive eye exam every two years.
- Children who wear glasses or who have other eye conditions should see the eye doctor at least annually, or more often, as recommended by the doctor.

For more information go to www.geteyesmart.org

9th District Schedule of Annual Conferences



Northwest Alabama Annual Conference
September 15 – 19, 2015

Southeast Alabama Annual Conference
September 23– 26, 2015

Alabama River Region Annual Conference
October 7 – 10, 2015

Northeast Alabama Annual Conference
October 14 - 17, 2015

Southwest Alabama Annual Conference
October 21 - 24, 2015

Pre-Plenary Meeting
November 11, 2015

Plenary Meeting
November 12 - 13, 2015

2015
Last Series of
Annual Conference
this
Quadrennial

Stewards Led Celebration of Pastor's Birthday

Pastor Clayborn's birthday was July 15 and Stewards led in the celebration of his birthday after the 10:50 am service on Sunday, July 19. The S. S. Fellowship Hall was decorated for the occasion and cake and punch was served.



*Happy
Birthday
Pastor
Clayborn!*



Technology Tip

By Ricardo Williams

Google Search

Many people use Google on a daily basis to search for various things on the internet. Sometimes they may not retrieve as much information on their search. By using proper search techniques, one can obtain better search results. This article takes a look at some of the techniques that can improve the search results.

First, group the search query by surrounding the exact phrase in quotes. For example, when searching for soccer balls, place "soccer ball" in the search bar including the quotes. This method retrieves far more results with the quotes. Also, when looking for particular types of soccer balls during certain years, add the year as 2013...2015.

Next, try to be as simple as possible. Start with small simple words that relate to the information for which you are searching. More descriptive words can be added afterwards to narrow the search. These simple words should also be the words or descriptions of things that one is expecting to be found on the sites returned from the search. For example, instead of searching for "my leg hurts" search for leg pain.

Also, do not worry about spelling the word correctly or whether proper capitalization was used. Google's spell checker will take care of the misspelling and capitalization. Another smart feature of Google is to use the voice search option. To do this, the device must have a microphone. Once the microphone is paired with the device, speak "Ok Google" to start using the voice search.

Besides the voice search option, one can also use Google's image search. If there is an image that is close to what is needed, the reverse image search can use the image to search for things related to that image.

These were some of the most common methods used to search the web using Google. There are many other tips that can improve the search experience when using Google.

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Online giving is easy!

You may also donate by sending funds through PopMoney to stjohnameh@aol.com.

Ninth District Scripture of the Month



2015 Habitat Home Dedicated

By Tami McGhee



Another family has been blessed because of St John's support of the 2015 Habitat for Humanity Spring Build. The Potts Family Home, located at 2505 Cornerstone Circle, was dedicated on Saturday, July 11, 2015. Pastor Patrick Clayborn delivered

the home blessing. Special thanks to all St John members who volunteered at the work site and to those who prepared and delivered lunch for the volunteers.



Pastor Clayborn and St John members Tami McGhee and Jesse Johnson pose with the Potts family.

Prayer Time

Weekly Prayer Time each Tuesday at 8:00 am.

Conference Call Credentials
US Toll Number (530) 881-1212
Meeting ID: 876-883-940

Listen to the playback any time.
Playback Number (530) 881-1219
Meeting Id 876-883-940.

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



Soup Kitchen

Do Not Lose Heart!



"...in due season, we shall reap if we do not lose heart." Galatians 6:9

Cooking can become tedious work when you do it three times a day, week after week. One gets tired of peeling, cutting, slicing, mixing and then waiting for the food to bake, grill or boil. BUT EATING IS NEVER TEDIOUS! It is something people truly enjoy even though they do it day after day.

Paul used the illustration of sowing and reaping because he knew that doing good can be tiring. He wrote, "Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." It is difficult to love our enemies, discipline our children, or pray without ceasing. However, reaping the good we have sown is not tedious! What a joy when we do get to see love conquering strife, or children following God's ways or answers to prayer.

While the cooking process can take hours; serving faithfully on the 3rd and 4th Tuesday Soup Kitchen, food that is consumed in a few minutes, is the reaping that Paul talks about that will be eternal.

Lord, we thank you for the opportunity to do good and pray that the workers of St. John will not grow weary or tired. We are thankful for the opportunity to serve. Amen



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<http://www.ame-church.com>

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The Fixer Upper

By Paulette Bargon

"I'm too blessed to be stressed." That is what a friend of mine always greets me with when I ask her how she is feeling. Then after a few minutes she starts complaining about how her children are driving her crazy, how her manager and a co-worker are plotting against her, and that her lazy husband will not take out the trash. She is also worried about her sick parents. She is having problems with her blood pressure so her doctor changed her prescription to a stronger medication and he also gave her a prescription for anxiety. After hearing all that news, I am stressed.

That is how some of us are. We live our lives not realizing that we are stressed out. Some of us think that stressful situations are a normal way of life. Then we wonder why we are so sick. We try escaping our anxiety by medication, over eating, alcohol, shopping or anything else that we think may bring relief.

I do not have a solution for your problems, but I can tell you that God is the ultimate problem "Fixer Upper." Just like we can fix our homes, He can fix our mind, body and spirit. No, He may not wave His hand over you and tell you that everything will be solved and you will live happily ever after. The answer to stress is not found in a bottle of pills, but in times of solitude with the Lord.

It is likely Jesus experienced stress. After feeding the five thousand, Jesus sent His disciples away in a boat and went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. *Matthew 14:22-23*. That was one of His many examples of seeking solitude with His father to pray (a stress reliever).

Spending time alone with the Lord is a private way to communicate with Him. Just sit in your closet and tell Him about your dilemmas and your successes. Just talk to Him the way you want to, with no distractions. This is a guaranteed stress reliever.

But in my distress I cried out to the Lord; yes I called to my God for help, He heard me from his sanctuary; my cry reached his ears. 2 Samuel 22:7

2015 WMS Quadrennial

(Continued from page 7)

With a total of 1219 Delegates from all 20 Districts, elections were held. Newly elected officers are: President: Shirley Cason Reed, 2nd District; 1st Vice President: Deborah Taylor King, 10th District; 2nd Vice President: Lisa Carol Halfacre, 13th District; 3rd Vice President: Hilda Matshoba, 20th District; Recording Secretary: Tanya Trescott Harper, 7th District; Assistant Recording Secretary: Precious Ncube, 20th District; Corresponding Secretary: Yvonne Stovall, 12th District; Treasurer: Jeanette C. Harris, 3rd District; YPD Director: Wanda Ringgold, 1st District; PME Director: Margaret Anne Maske, 2nd District; Histogrammer/Statistician: Frances H. Gofield, 5th District; Editor to the Missionary Magazine: Ida Tyre Hyche, 9th District; Associate Editor: Potlako "PJ" Molomo, 18th District; Worship Leader: Marlyce A. Roberson-McCants, 3rd District; and Member at Large: Sylvia Blake, 7th District. All officers were installed and welcomed by the Connectional Society.

Delegates and observers were asked to commit hours of time in the "Wailing Room." Posters depicting the sacrifice of life that persons around the world suffer just to show their Christian beliefs were displayed and there was an altar for prayer and meditation.

In addition to the business sessions, a wonderful celebration of "Service and Sacrifice" was held for the retiring Episcopal Supervisors, where each supervisor was presented with a special tribute and thanks from Congressional leaders, Districts they have served, friends and family. This was a beautiful evening to honor some very special women.

The 4th District also hosted "WATER: A Sacred Confluence of the Arts, Ecology and Activism" which featured the 48-Piece Black Pearl Chamber Orchestra conducted by African American female Jeri Lynne Johnson. This event also featured dancers and a choir from the 4th District. Monies raised were donated to build water wells in Africa. Highlights of the need for these wells and how we waste water were depicted during transitions.

Members from St. John in attendance were: Mrs. Mary Allen, Ms. Eleanor Burnett, Dr. Monica L. Dillihunt, Mrs. Ernestine Barnes-Ivery and Mrs. Mary Powers.

Church School Lesson Overview – September 2015

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

September 6, 2015

Lesson Title: Prayer for Boldness

Lesson Scripture: Acts 4:1-31

Print: Acts 4:23-31

Devotional Songs: #307 [], #272 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly" (Acts 4:31).

The nine verses of today's lesson come at the very end of the larger textual section. The chain of events occur within a two-day time frame. These events were preceded, of course, by the birth of the church on the Day of Pentecost in AD 30.

The first link in the chain of events that leads up to our lesson text is the healing miracle, which took place in the temple precincts. That miracle resulted in an opportunity to teach the crowd that gathered. Peter's gospel message did not sit well with "the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees". So they arrested Peter and John, holding them in custody to answer to the Jewish religious authorities the next day. Those authorities constituted "the Sanhedrin."

Referring to the miracle, the question the council posed to the two apostles was straightforward: "By what power or what name did you do this?" The bold response by the two "unschooled, ordinary men" was startling. The fact that the man who had been healed was standing right there was an enormous complication for the Sanhedrin!

The best the members of the council could do was to order Peter and John "not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus". Peter and John, however, already had received orders that superseded those of the council, and they fearlessly said so. The end of the council proceedings brings us to today's lesson.

September 13, 2015

Lesson Title: Sharing with Sincerity

Lesson Scripture: Acts 4:32-5:11

Print: Acts 4:34-37; 5:1-10

Devotional Songs: #412 [], #251 [], and #243

□

Key Verse: "There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, [and] brought the money from the sales" (Acts 4:34).

The number of disciples had been steadily increasing since the birth of the church on the Day of Pentecost. Threats from the Jewish authorities did not deter the preaching of the gospel; the apostles knew their higher calling to be obedience to the command of God.

As a result of their faithful witness, God blessed the Jerusalem church with unity. Satan had been unsuccessful in using outside opposition to stop the spread of the gospel message, so he changed strategies: he attempted to use something positive that was happening within the church to derail its growth and influence.

In this lesson we see Peter's reaction to an internal threat. Ananias and Sapphira were pretenders and deceivers. They pretended to have donated all of the money that they received for the land they have sold, while actually holding back part of the proceeds. Their motives for doing so are unstated, but they have allowed Satan to influence them so that they seem to have no qualms with their premeditated and not spur of the moment plot.

September 20, 2015

Lesson Title: Speaking up for God

Lesson Scripture: Acts 5:12-42

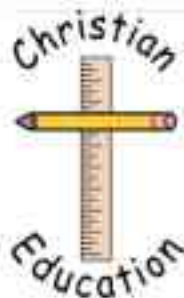
Print: Acts 5:27-29, 33-42

Devotional Songs: #377 [], #77 [], and #243 []

Key Verses: "Peter and the other apostles replied: 'We must obey God rather than human beings!'" (Acts 5:29).

Official opposition mounted as the apostles continued to speak. They were arrested again and thrown into jail, but an angel from God opened the door and sent them back to the temple courts to preach. When the Jewish religious authorities sent for the prisoners, the jail was discovered to be empty. Soon someone reported that the apostles were preaching again—right back in the same place where they had been arrested! With considerable frustration, the authorities brought them in yet again. What could be done to make these Christians stop talking?

(Continued on page 23)



Church School Lesson Overview – September 2015

(Continued from page 22)

The Sanhedrin met daily, except for Sabbaths and feast days, and functioned as something like a modern supreme court. To Sanhedrin members it seemed appropriate to render a verdict on the preaching of these Jews who are proclaiming that the Messiah has come. The Sanhedrin had brought them in once already and threatened them. The apostles went right back to speaking in the temple courtyard about Jesus. The council tried again to decide what action it should take to make the apostles stop.

The Sanhedrin's reaction should not have come as a surprise to the apostles. Jesus already had warned that they would face such persecution; if people hated Jesus, they will also hate His disciples. The time will come even when "anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God" (John 16:2).

Peter and the other apostles do not waiver. They know their duty is to speak up for Jesus, and they were not intimidated by any human authority that said otherwise. The Sanhedrin may have been the "supreme court" over all of Israel, but it was not supreme over God.

September 27, 2015

Lesson Title: Standing Firm against Opposition

Lesson Scripture: Acts 7:1-53

Print: Acts 7:2-4, 8-10, 17, 33, 34, 45-47, 52, 53

Tentative Devotional Songs: #424[]; #258 []; and #243 []

Key Verse: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? Says the Lord. Or where will my resting place be?" (Acts 7:49).

In this lesson, thousands already had become followers of Christ in the earliest days of the church. Even many Jewish priests had become believers. The first-century church had taken seriously the call to be a genuine fellowship and to share with those in need. Caring for widows was part of this; one of the seven men chosen to serve the church in that regard was Stephen.

Stephen was involved not only in the church's benevolence ministry, he also "performed great wonders and signs among the people".

He spoke out boldly for Christ, so much so that unbelievers became hostile. A source of this hostility was "the Synagogue of the Freedmen". There were more than 400 synagogues in Jerusalem at that time, and the membership of this one was made up largely of former slaves who had gained their freedom.

False accusations began to flow when Stephen's opponents were unable to refute the wisdom and spirit with which he spoke. Ultimately, Stephen found himself being hauled up before the Sanhedrin, which was the ruling Jewish council, to answer these accusations.

Stephen's speech enraged the members of the Sanhedrin. He had stood firm for the truth, but they could not endure it. So they stoned him to death. Stephen became the first Christian martyr.

Church School Book Club

Discussion Date: August 15, 2015
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Go Set a Watchman, Harper Lee, 2015

Discussion Date: September 19, 2015
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Twelve Tribes of Hattie, Ayana Mathis, 2013

In 1923, fifteen-year-old Hattie Shepherd, swept up by the tides of the Great Migration, flees Georgia and heads north. Full of hope, she settles in Philadelphia to build a better life. Instead, she marries a man who will bring her nothing but disappointment, and watches helplessly as her firstborn twins are lost to an illness that a few pennies could have prevented.

Hattie gives birth to nine more children, whom she raised with grit, mettle, and not an ounce of the tenderness they crave. She vows to prepare them to meet a world that will not be kind. Their lives, captured here in twelve luminous threads, tell the story of a mother's monumental courage—and a nation's tumultuous journey.





Things I Wish They Taught Us Growing Up

(Part 2)

By Janette R. Smith

Certified Strategic Intervention & Mindset Coach

It is AUGUST. Summer break is over and the kids are back to school. Last month I started sharing with you a 'life hack' list of sorts. It was a list of things I WISH we would have learned while we were still in the classroom. I am talking about vital life skills and fundamental living mindsets to better empower us to succeed in life. Not everything that is worth knowing is chucked up on blackboards. Do you agree? Here is the rest of the list.

6. Self-assessment

Taking a long, hard look at yourself and acknowledging what you're truly good at, as well as what you are not so good at, is probably one of the most challenging aspects of life. Few people can truly do it. It takes practice, and being able to come to terms with what you need to improve on can make you a much better person in all aspects of your life.

7. Balance

School rightly encourages you to work hard at improving your academic performance, but what it does not truly teach is the ability to balance your life so that you achieve high levels of gratification in every aspect – from having quiet family time, to working hard, to partaking in joyful evenings with your friends. Achieving a great sense of balance is paramount in order to live a happy, healthy life.

8. Coping with Harsh Realities

Simply put: life is not fair. If you expect it to be, you are going to be disappointed. Sometimes things will go your way, and on other occasions they will not. It is enough to make you want to claw your hair out, but by learning to cope with harsh realities, you'll be able to live happily without succumbing to the pangs of stress that life can so cruelly impose upon you.

9. Money Isn't Everything

It is terrific to have a well-paying job, a big house, and a glossy car in your driveway. We know this because this is what school facilities drum into our heads from day one. It is a simple equation: Working hard at school = Better grades = Better prospects = More money. But money is not happiness. On the contrary, cash can actually be toxic if handled in the wrong way and has the ability to bring out the worst in people who are unable to separate it from joy. Wealth and happiness are two very different things, and schools ought to make a conscious effort to instill this in pupils' heads before they depart from lower education.

10. Learning from Failure

No failure is a catastrophe if you learn from it. Understanding what went wrong and why something did not turn out as planned can help to curb your lifestyle so that it never happens again. It can, and will, turn you into a stronger, more successful person.

You can reach Janette with your questions and comments at janette@janettesmith.com. For more articles visit www.UBeEmpowered.com. She's SOCIAL! Follow at:



Excerpts taken and edited from Gareth Lloyd, "15 Things You're Not Taught in School That Determine Your Success," www.lifehack.org, (May 18, 2015)

September 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	3	4 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing	5 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry
6 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	7 Labor Day Office Closed	8 6:00 p.m. VIP Choir Rehearsal	9 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	10 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	11 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing	12 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 10:30 a.m. AMEM Staff Meeting
13 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	14 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing	15 6th Annual Northwest Alabama Annual Conference Daniel Payne Community Plaza—Birmingham, Alabama 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN				
20 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	21 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing	22 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	23 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	24 6:00 p.m. Mass Choir	25 5:00—6:00 p.m. Line Dancing 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	26 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry Women's Ministry
27 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	28 Revival at Fellowship Presbyterian Church, Huntsville Pastor Clayborn and Rev. Sheri, Revivalists September 28—October 1, 2015					



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Mrs. Arelis B. Davis, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Doctor Patrick Clayborn, Pastor



Important Dates to Remember

August 22, 2015

SBHB Harvest Home, Gravitts Chapel, New Market, Alabama

August 31, 2015

Pastor's Appreciation, 10:00 a.m.

The Reverend Gregory Bentley, Pastor of Fellowship

Presbyterian Church, Guest Preacher

September 15-19, 2015 North West Alabama Annual Conference, Birmingham, Alabama

September 28– October 1, 2015

Revival at Fellowship Presbyterian Church, Huntsville

The Reverend Gregory Bentley, Pastor

Pastor Clayborn and Rev. Sheri, Revivalists

*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 20 Issue 9

September 2015



Pastor Patrick D. Clayborn, Ph.D.

Pastor's Message

We've Come This Far by Faith

Hebrews 11:1

Summer is rapidly coming to a close as we enter a brand new school year. Some children are entering a new grade while others are entering a new school. Some students are entering college for the first time, and others are entering graduate school. As people are hustling to get new backpacks, lunchboxes, school uniforms, and books to begin a new endeavor, they are also ending a time of vacation, rest, repositioning, and exploration.

We, too, are opening and closing simultaneously. We are ending one annual conference year and beginning a new one. It is in these moments where we must pause and sing, "We've come this far by faith, leaning on the Lord!"

Yes, we have come this far by faith! The 2014-2015 conference year has been AMAZING! God has blessed in radical and numerous ways. Let me just give a snapshot because if I were to tell the whole story of our year, the newsletter wouldn't be able to contain it. St. John, we have gone through the Prayer Journey, the Dream Builders, WOW – Women of Worth, Men of Honor, and Free to Worship. In each phase, God has cultivated us, challenged us, listened to us, propelled us, healed us, positioned us, and guided us. The dancers danced with all their might. The choirs and praise team sang with power. The musicians played with anointing. The ushers welcomed us. The media team gave us lights, camera, sound, and visuals. The stewards helped organize the CPR (Caregivers – Prayer – Respite) ministry. The trustees installed new projection screens and media equipment. The soup kitchen fed thousands. The stewardesses kept the Lord's Table and gave care to the sick. The WMS and YPD looked after the less fortunate. The Church School incorporated family fun nights within their curriculum. The Women's Ministry and Sons of Allen embraced the new bible studies geared toward them. The AMEN newsletter celebrated 19 years of service in addition to a fabulous Taste Tea. iThrive helped lead the way in our Free to Worship Service. The Koinonia made sure that our young adults had fellowship. The Christian Education Department hosted a packed Vacation Bible School along with tremendous Christmas and Easter programs.

As well, this church celebrated 130 years of ministry with our very own Bishop James L. Davis. We had worship of all kinds: from worship through comedy with Chocolate at our Thankful People Service to our Free to Worship Service with Anthony Brown and group theAPy. We cheered at baptisms and weddings. We cried together at our Selah Memorial Service and at the funerals of Dr. W. Mingo Clark, Mr. Earnest Jones, and Mrs. Altonette Buikes. We studied the Bible together, prayed or had love feasts on Wednesdays. We even played together as we did last month at our church picnic on Alabama A&M's farm.

This has been a difficult year for me personally. As many of you know, my mother has had major bouts with illnesses of varying kinds. Traveling home to care for her and my father and making sure to be here to care for my own family and church has been a trying journey. Yet, as the song says, "[God's] never failed me yet!" God has begun healing in my mother and has continued to bless my family and this church! For these blessings, I am truly thankful!

(Continued on page 6)

Pastor's Appreciation Service for the Reverend Patrick DeWitt Clayborn & Family

By Paulette Bargon
Photography by Bridget Floyd

This writer believes that everyone who attended worship on Sunday, August 30, 2015, would agree that God blessed worshippers with two special gifts. The first gift was that He opened their eyes that morning. The second special gift was that He allowed them to worship in the spirit filled Sunday service honoring Pastor Patrick D., First Lady, the Reverend Sheri, Patrick II and Joya Clayborn. It was a day of showing love and appreciation for their diligent labor and love for the St. John family and the community.



The Dance Ministry and Praise Ensemble minister during service.

A welcoming ambiance was set as the ushers graciously greeted members and visitors like their very own special guest. The worship service began at 10 a.m. and was led by members of the Steward Board of St. John. Steward Roselyn Akins read the announcements followed by the Doxology and call to worship led by Steward Jeanette Jones. The St. John AMEC Praise Ensemble continued to lift the Holy Spirit with their praises of songs as the Dance Ministry exuberantly accompanied them. Steward Clifton Miller offered a gracious prayer of love and concern for all. Steward Pamela Whitehead read the scripture from Isaiah 6:8. Steward James Heyward greeted and welcomed the visitors, followed by a gracious occasion written and presented by Steward Abbiegail Hugine. A few highlights of the occasion are included. She emphasized that the main reason the congregation of St. John AME Church came together this Sunday was to pay due respect, to honor and show appreciation to the Reverend Dr. Patrick Clayborn and his family.

the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn, "P2" and Joya. She thanked Pastor Clayborn, on behalf of the St. John church family, for his service and indicated her hope was that the appreciation program rendered unto him the honor and love that was rightfully due to him as the church's spiritual leader. Steward Hugine congratulated Pastor Clayborn on another year of preaching the inspired word of God and leading the congregation to a new height of worship.

Congregants were blessed with an inspiring song from the guest ensemble, "In One Accord," during the offering. Steward Marcus Hill introduced the guest preacher, the Reverend Gregory Bentley, pastor of Fellowship Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Prior to the message, In One Accord blessed the congregation with a soul stirring version of "Even Me."

The Reverend Bentley's sermon was entitled "A Shepherd Keeping Watch by Night" and the text was from Luke 28. The Reverend Bentley stated that everyone begins their journey in the dark.



The Reverend Bentley delivers the message.

(Continued on page 3)

Pastor's Appreciation Service for the Reverend Patrick DeWitt Clayborn & Family

By Paulette Bargon
Photography by Bridget Floyd

(Continued from page 2)

Some are in the night because of the loss of a child, loss of a job, or a relationship. Some are in the night because they are dealing with hurts and pains of the past or maybe a rebellious child. There are many forms of night time with which people are dealing. "But be of good cheer St. John", declared the Reverend Bentley, "because God has sent you a good shepherd who keeps watch by night." He went on to say that there are four pieces of evidence that St. John has a good shepherd that keeps watch by night.

1. He is keenly aware of his context. He is aware of the problems of the people of Africa. He is aware of this region in which he operates. How we endured slavery for 250 years, 100 years of Jim Crow and segregation and now, massive incarcerations prosecuted under the guise of war on drugs which is really a war on the poor and people of color.
2. He cares about the flock. He is always on call, tending to the sick, praying with the bereaved and for the many problems of his sheep. He also has to contend with some of his sheep. Sometimes he has to corral and contain the sheep to keep them from diving over a cliff.
3. He is in community with other shepherds. Historical and contemporary examples were used to make this point. For example, he Reverend Clayborn is a son of Richard Allen, first Bishop of the AME Church, Morris Brown, second Bishop of the AME Church, Jarena Lee, first woman authorized to preach by Richard Allen. He is also the son of Jacqueline Grant, William Hooper Council, Homer McCall and many other great spiritual leaders. The Reverend Clayborn is also in community with shepherds beyond the AME Church.
4. He conveys the good news with conviction. The Reverend Clayborn has been to the manger for himself to see the babe. He saw His lovely face. He heard His lovely voice. We have a shepherd who knows the Good Shepherd. He can carry out his ministry because he knows the Good Shepherd.



Following this outstanding message and the Invitation to Christian Discipleship, Steward Guy Ginn introduced the "In One Accord" Ensemble. In One Accord is under the leadership of St.

(Continued on page 4)

Pastor's Appreciation Service

(Continued from page 3)

John's lead musician, Brother Roberto Burton. This group was formed in 2012. There are currently 16 members from various areas of Huntsville. On July 23, 2015, they released a single, "He Will Provide." Their first full album will be available in late fall. This amazing group kept the spirits of worship high as they lifted their voices to praise God. The single can be purchased on iTunes.

Special presentations were made to Pastor Clayborn and his family by the St. John Steward Board. They presented gifts and tokens of love from the St. John Church family. The Reverend Sheri and Pastor Clayborn thanked the St. John Church family and friends for their love, support and all acts of kindness shown to them during this conference year. Pastor concluded the remarks by singing the wonderful song "God Is Not Through Blessing You."

It was a glorious event. CDs/DVDs of the program are available for those who missed the service or want to experience it again. Thank you to the dedicated and talented Media Ministry of St. John for making these available.



Stewards with Pastor Clayborn, the Rev. Sheri and the Rev. Bentley

St. John Holds Annual WMS Sunday

"Transforming Lives... Building Communities... Impacting the World"

By Staff Writer

Photography by Darwin Washington

At the 10:50 Service, August 9, 2015, members of St. John's Women's Missionary Society wearing white with a touch of blue, prayerfully led the worship services for the hour.

After the Doxology, YPDer Alicia Brownlow led in the call to worship. Missionaries Eleanor Burnett and Janice Hereford led respectively the morning prayer and scripture. The welcome and occasion was delivered by Missionary Claudinette Purfoy-Fears. Missionary Fears gave a comprehensive overview of the purpose of the organization, stating that they are women called to discipleship. Missionaries are challenged to help one another engage in ministry and action beyond the doors; to grow and respond to God's redemptive plan for the church, the society and the world. She also shared that St. John's WMS ministry is named in honor of Mrs. Betty E. Derrick who was a long-time member of St. John; a prayer warrior, a loving servant who established



Mr. Wilson directs the Gospel Choir.



Missionary President (center) with the Clayborns (right) and the Catos (left).

the pattern that all Missionaries try to emulate. Missionary Fears also welcomed all to the service.

Missionary Lorraine Parham led the missionaries in the morning litany, "We've Got to Have Heart." YPDer Mariah Gullatte, with zeal and warmth, welcomed the guests and visitors. At this juncture, Mariah also asked members and friends to greet each other with authentic smiles and greetings. Beautiful music flowed throughout the service provided by the Gospel Choir with Mr. Cleveland Wilson, Director.



The Reverend Alice Cato preaches.

Following the order of worship, was the introduction of the guest preacher by Dr. Monica Dillihunt. The speaker of the hour was the Reverend Alice Cato, Itinerate Deacon, AMEC. The Reverend Cato is married to the Reverend Terrence Cato. The Reverend Alice received her call to preach in 2003 and has served in many districts of the AME Church. She is employed as a Contract Manager for the U. S. Government and is the proud mother of two beautiful children.

The Reverend Cato greeted Pastor and Rev. Clayborn and the church with Jesus' Joy. After

(Continued on page 6)

St. John Holds Annual WMS Sunday

(Continued from page 5)

her prayer; she stated "She felt alright". Her text was from John 4:5-10; 20-29. Topic: "I've Got a Story to Tell." In today's scripture the name or age of the woman is not stated, we know however this is the longest conversation in the Bible with Jesus concerning worship. Jesus, who was tired was led by the Holy Spirit to Jacob's well. He asked for a drink: (A) Jews did not speak to Samaritans, (B) Men did not speak to women without the presence of their husbands; (C) She was considered unsavory.

Immediately, we see that Jesus was willing to disregard these facts. He asked straight away, "Do you know what gift I bring?" The Reverend Cato pointed out that water, then as now, is a precious and important substance and many of persons today are thirsty and unfulfilled. This thirst can only be fulfilled with Jesus as the provider. Jesus was not thirsty, but pulled her into conversation and she was saved. The Reverend Cato challenged the congregants to tell someone about Jesus, just like the woman in the text. She went into town and told them her story about the man who knew all about her. She brought the people back. He calls all missionaries to carry the Word and spread it in the streets.

Those present were encouraged to care for the unloved, the rejected and the thirsty and tell them the story of Jesus who is all-knowing, who gives power; who will not leave or forsake believers, and shares His amazing grace. The Reverend Cato then shared her story. When she found Jesus she became somebody. She continued her personal story of how God spared the lives of her family in a potential deadly accident that injured her husband, but left her and her children unscathed. She had a story to tell! Her conclusion: Go out and share, testify, CHANGE A LIFE. Missionaries, impact the World; share the Word. Go out and tell the story.

Dr. Clayborn joyfully thanked the preacher and led the invitation to Christian discipleship. Missionary Donnie Thompson, WMS President, gave remarks/testimony as she thanked God for keeping her, even when she did not think she could serve as WMS president. The service concluded with the Missionary Benediction.

Pastor's Message

(Continued from page 1)

I am also thankful for the people of St. John. For the love you poured on me and my family at the Pastor's Appreciation, I am humbled and honored. Rev. Gregory Bentley preached with power and boldness on that day. For his family, friendship and ministry, I am forever grateful. Mr. Roberto Burton and the In One Accord choir blessed us with rich, varied, and anointed music. The praise they rendered was truly God ordained. I am overwhelmed by the gifts they shared and appreciative of all their labors. I give thanks to the stewards, the officers, and the members for a wonderful day of worship and affection.

Yes, this denotes the end of our conference year; but as the song says, "Ooooooh! Can't turn around! We've come this far by faith!" I see great things ahead. I see more souls getting saved. I see more bodies getting healed. I see more families being brought back together. I see more love coming back into marriages. I see more joy coming to those who've been in despair. I see more passionate worship at our church. I see more radical hospitality in our ministries. I see more extravagant generosity in our giving. I see more intentional faith development in our teaching. I see more risk taking mission and service in our focus. I see growth! I see anointing! I see deliverance! I see miracles! And, I see them happening RIGHT HERE!!! It's only the tip of the iceberg. "Eyes have not seen...." Get ready for what God has next! What am I saying? A "sho' nuff" blessing is on the way!!!!

St. John, thank you for a wonderful conference year. Thank you for your sacrifices of time, talent, and treasure. Thank you for your support and your love. Thank you for your graciousness and your faithfulness. Thank you for your trust and your availability. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Let's be sure to keep moving forward because we "can't turn around" now!

May God bless each and every one of you!

St. John Goes to AAMU for Worship Service

by Bridget Floyd

Photography by Darwin Washington



Dr. & Mrs. Hugine greet students.

On Sunday, August 16, 2015, St. John A.M.E. Church hosted a worship service for the Athletic Department of Alabama A and M University (AAMU) at the Earnest Knight Center on the campus of AAMU. This is the second year that St. John "hosted" the student-athletes on their campus. The goal was to make the service more convenient and to offer the best hospitality possible for the student-athletes. The Voices in Praise (VIP) Choir directed by Mr. Reginald Pearson and accompanied by Mr. Roberto Burton, Mr. Swain Dennis and Mr. Brandon Prigg, provided energetic and inspirational worship through music. The St. John Praise Team also offered harmonious selections.

The Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn served as worship leader. President Andrew Hugine and Mrs. Abbiegail Hugine welcomed the student-athletes, coaches, cheerleaders and other students in attendance as well as the other AAMU administrators and faculty. He highlighted the St. John AME/AAMU connection in terms of both having William Hooper Council as founder. Director of Athletics, Mr. Brian Hicks, introduced the athletes, coaches, staff and cheerleaders. The scripture and prayer were offered by student-athletes. St. John's Dance Ministry featured a hip hop-style that was well-received by the student athletes.



Praise Ensemble



Dance Ministry



VIP Choir



Student-athletes

Pastor Clayborn preached from Joshua 6:7 highlighting the instruction in the text, "Go Forward". He gave a synopsis of The Dream Giver from which he has preached during the year. He brought the student-athletes up to speed regarding the hero "Ordinary" in the land of "Familiar"

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St. John Goes to AAMU for Worship Service

by Bridget Floyd

Photography by Darwin Washington

(Continued from page 7)



who faced "Border Bullies" that served to push one back to a comfort zone, essentially preventing a start toward the dream. After enduring the "Wilderness" and reaching the "edge of his dream", the formidable "Giants" worked to obstruct completion of the dream. Dr. Clayborn noted that this may be in the form of lack of resources (e.g. no money to go to college) or an "immovable system" or "intimidating circumstances" (scholarship recipient with parent who is seriously ill). Pastor Clayborn made the significant point that "Unbelief is much more dangerous to your dreams than any giant". He noted that the "giant" wants to drain your faith.

The Reverend Clayborn noted that in the text the wall was the giant for the Israelites. He stated that one should "go straight to your giant" face the giant... *Go Forward*. First, he recommended Go Forward into a Deeper Relationship With God. That is, one should reach a level of maturity that recognizes that love rather than material possessions is more important (which may mean giving up things that are near and dear).

Secondly, Pastor Clayborn indicated one must Go Forward into Transition. He described the transition in the text, which required that the Israelites give up the manna that was provided by God prior to obtaining the sustenance on the other side of the wall in the Promised Land. He asked those in attendance, "What are you willing to let go of so God can give you what you need?" Transition calls for change in that which worked successfully in the past but might be useless or not have the same efficacy in the present.

The final suggestion was to Go Forward into God's Plan. Pastor Clayborn noted that "God's plan may not make sense to you", citing the example of the instructions in the scripture. He proposed that marching around the wall, sounding the trumpets served as a distraction from the methodical dismantling of the wall that provided the promised crumbling of the wall. So the marching and

the sounding of trumpets did not seem to be the logical precursor to the wall falling down, but he added that "crazy plans fool giants". Pastor Clayborn noted that "prayer, courage, sacrifice, a smile in the midst of pain... giants don't know how to fight against that". Pastor Clayborn urged those in attendance to "study in the library, practice your sport, start your business... God fights your enemies... GO FORWARD... GO FORWARD!" The sermon was pertinent whether a student, athlete, coach, employer, employee, retiree, or church member. There are sufficient giants out there for everyone.



Student-athletes being recognized by athletic director.

The Reverend Clayborn ended in prayer as the musicians played "Moving Forward" and the choir sang softly with the support of the voices

of the student – athletes. There was one who came forward to join St. John as an affiliate member when the invitation to discipleship was offered. After the benediction, another joined the church so that he could be a part of the St. John family during his time at Alabama A and M University.

Gift bags were distributed to the "special guests" of St. John as they transitioned to the cafeteria at the Knight Center.

Church Picnic Held at the AAMU Farm

On Saturday, August 15, the members of St John assembled at the Alabama A&M University Farm for fun, food and fellowship. The committee, led by Mrs. Erica Harbin and Dr. Thalia Love, planned every detail. There were games for all ages. The children (ages 12 and under) displayed their talents. The menu included the popular picnic foods and there was plenty for all.



Church Picnic Held at the AAMU Farm



Reverend Sheri Inspires as Evangelist at Lowe's Chapel Revival

By Bridget J. Floyd

On Wednesday, August 12, 2015, the St. John A.M.E. church family supported the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn as she preached the final revival sermon at Lowe's Chapel United Methodist Church. According to their pastor, the Reverend Waymond K. Smith, this was the first year that the revival services featured a different evangelist each night, starting Sunday, August 9th and culminating on Wednesday, August 12th. An uplifting and inspirational tone was set by the Gospel Choir, directed by Mr. Cleveland Wilson, accompanied by Mr. Swain Dennis and Mr. Brandon Prigg. The congregants responded with much enthusiasm and were ready for a most inspirational sermon from the Reverend Smith Clayborn, who preached on the topic "Focus" from Luke 13: 10 – 17.

While this is a familiar text for many, noting the criticism of Jesus for healing on the Sabbath, the Reverend Sheri went to a deeper level; using it to "focus" on "how to deal with our enemies even if that is the person we see in the mirror". The answer for the person who has been their "own worst enemy" is to "focus". The same answer was offered for unsuccessful attempts to "get back at" enemies and when the enemies seem to have power despite prayer. The ultimate answer is to "hold our peace and let the Lord fight our battles".

The Reverend Smith Clayborn noted that in the text Jesus was teaching in the Synagogue on the Sabbath, but stopped teaching as He "noticed the need in the room... focused on the woman who had a *spirit* that had crippled her for eighteen years". To make the point, the preacher for the evening took the posture of a person bent over as she gave the first recommendation: *Focus on the Blessing*. She asked "what spirit is responsible for you being bent over... you may have to decide to *let it go*." The Reverend Sheri noted that the woman in the text "had to let go of the evil spirits that had her bent over for eighteen years", in order to respond to Jesus calling her to Him to be healed. The preacher further recommended, "leave it behind... go to where Jesus is... prioritize what Jesus is offering." The Reverend Sheri indicated that in the text the woman "immediately stood up and began praising God when she received her healing". The preacher then posed the question "Have we thanked God?"

The second recommendation was *Focus on Letting Jesus Handle It*. As many recall the text, the leader of the synagogue [or 'enemy'] was outraged that Jesus healed on the Sabbath. The Reverend Sheri highlighted that he spoke to the crowd, not Jesus; to the woman as well as others who might seek healing; he "picked on her, not Jesus". However Jesus addressed all the people when He said, "You Hypocrites!" The Reverend Sheri distinguished "being still" [let God do His part] from "doing nothing".

Thirdly, the Reverend Sheri recommended *Focus on What God is Doing in Your Life*. She noted that in the text the woman's praise (for being healed) combined with Jesus' action, "freed people", in that "the crowd was also bound". The woman praised as Jesus' opponents tried to put her (and Him) to shame. The Reverend Sheri indicated that the woman in the text shifted her focus to what Jesus had done. The preacher for the evening asked, "What is your focus tonight?!! With conviction and to responsive attendees, the Reverend Sheri declared, HE IS WORTHY! HE IS WORTHY!...

St. John members as well as others in attendance proudly and enthusiastically expressed appreciation for a most outstanding worship/revival experience.

Let's Celebrate

By Paulette Bargon

Have you ever thought about how often in a day God does something for us or how often He helps us in a day. Have you ever thought about how much God has given us? For the greatest gift He could ever offer; His Son, I do not think we could ever thank Him enough.

I am Thanking You Right NOW
Dear God

I want to thank You
for what You have already done.
I am not going to wait until I see results or receive rewards;
I am thanking You right now.
I am not going to wait until I feel better or things look better;
I am thanking You right now.
I am not going to wait until people say they are sorry or until they stop talking about me;
I am thanking You right now.
I am not going to wait until the pain in my body disappears;
I am thanking You right now.
I am not going to wait until my financial situation improves;
I am going to thank You right now.
I am not going to wait until the children are asleep and the house is quiet;
I am going to thank You right now.
I am not going to wait until I get promoted at work or until I get a job;
I am going to thank You right now.
I am not going to wait until I understand every experience in my life that has caused me pain or grief;
I am thanking You right now.
I am not going to wait until the journey gets easier or the challenges are removed;
I am thanking You right now.
I am thanking You because I am alive. I am thanking You because I made it through the day's difficulties. I am thanking You because I have walked around the obstacles.
I am thanking You because I have the ability and the opportunity to do more and do better.
I am thanking you because FATHER, YOU haven't given up on me.

- Author Unknown

Thanking God is a celebration. Let's celebrate often.

Give thanks to the LORD and proclaim HIS greatness. Let the whole world know what HE has done.

-1 Chronicles 16:8

Recordings of Services Available

The media ministry has audio and video recordings of St. John worship services available for purchase. Please complete a media form and submit to the office to purchase a recording of any service.

Help Support Huntsville Assistance Program While Shopping at Kroger



The Huntsville Assistance Program (HAP) provides assistance and referrals to needy individuals and families of Madison County, Alabama. This ministry focuses on the non-homeless and strives to

achieve its mission by the pooling of volunteers, information, and financial resources of its member churches. St. John participates with a monthly financial contribution and refers persons who contact the church for assistance to HAP.

HAP also participates in the Kroger Community Rewards Program®. This does not cost the shopper anything, but the shopper does have to use a Kroger Rewards Card when they shop and have it scanned when they check out. Before that, the card has to be registered online with HAP's program number, 17480 at krogercommunityrewards.com.

- Click on Sign In/Register
- Click on My Account and use the registered email address and password to proceed to the next step.
- Click on Edit Kroger Community Rewards information and input the Kroger Plus card number.
- Update or confirm the information.
- Enter NPO number 17480 click to confirm.

Members who registered last year, must re-enroll for this year to continue benefits.

Members who do not yet have a Kroger Plus card should sign up at the customer service desk at any Kroger. All St. John members who shop at Kroger are urged to participate. Contact Nedra McDaniel for more information.

Mental Illness Awareness Week

By Bridget J. Floyd



Mental Illness Awareness Week for 2015 will be October 5th through October 11th.

This was established by the U. S. Congress in 1990 due to efforts by the National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) for the purpose of educating and increasing awareness of mental illness. It occurs each year during the first full week in October. Many communities use this time to raise awareness through events such as fundraisers, health fairs, candlelight vigils, etc.

One in four adults suffers from a diagnosable mental illness such as depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and others. Stigma is a major deterrent to persons seeking treatment. This is the reason education is so important.

In some areas the week coincides with National Depression Screening Day. Depression and other mental illnesses are treatable via psychotherapy and psychotropic medication. This year, National Depression Screening Day will be on October 8th. October 10th will be National Bipolar Disorder Day as well as Worldwide Mental Health Day. The month of October is designated ADHD Awareness Month.

There will be more information in the October issue of the AMEN.

Prayer Time

Weekly Prayer Time each Tuesday at 8:00 am.

Conference Call Credentials
US Toll Number (530) 881-1212
Meeting ID: 876-883-940

Listen to the playback any time.
Playback Number (530) 881-1212
Meeting Id 876-883-940.

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



Soup Kitchen



A Prayer of Compassion

"Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed him" --Matthew 20:34

Lord make me an instrument of thy peace
Where there is hatred, let me sow love,
Where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled
as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved, as to love.
For it is in giving that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Let this familiar Prayer of Compassion by St. Francis of Assisi move in hearts as St. John shows love to those who suffer. This ministry uses its hands with the hand of the Lord to continue to provide food for the hungry as they open St. John's Soup Kitchen each month on the third and fourth Tuesday. Pray that hearts continue to remain open to serve the suffering in the community and join in this prayer of compassion as they strive to serve others in love and peace.

St. John Ministers to Preach at Fellowship

The Reverend Patrick Clayborn and the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn will be the guest revivalists for Fellowship Presbyterian Church's Revival. The Revival will be Monday through Thursday, September 28-October 1, 2015. St. John choirs will sing on Monday and Thursday evenings. The Reverend Gregory Bentley is the pastor. The church is located at 3406 Meridian Street, Huntsville, Alabama.

St. John members are invited to support Pastor Clayborn, the Reverend Sheri and the Fellowship congregation with their prayers and attendance.

Church School Lesson Overview – October 2015

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

October 4, 2015

Lesson Title: The Spirit is not for Sale

Lesson Scripture: Acts 8:9-25

Print: Acts 8:9-24

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

Key Verse: "Repent therefore of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you" (Acts 8:22).

Phillip and Stephen were among the church's first appointed deacons. Phillip fled from Jerusalem to Samaria, where he confronted long-established religious and racial prejudices that created extreme hatred and separation between the Jewish people and the Samaritans.

This lesson confirms that "God shows no partiality but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34-35). Phillip and Saul emerge from this lesson as two heroes although neither one intended to gain notoriety as a champion of evangelism and diversity in the body of Christ.

After Samaria, Phillip witnessed to and baptized an Ethiopian eunuch. Saul's, later known as Paul, positive contributions came late. Believers owe Paul and Phillip a lot of gratitude for their contribution to the inclusion of Gentiles, including those reading this review today, into the body of Christ.

October 11, 2015

Lesson Title: Saul Earns Credibility

Lesson Scripture: Acts 9:19a-31

Print: Acts 9:19a-31

Devotional Songs: #412 [], #251[], and #243 []

Key Verse: "Immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, 'He is the Son of God'" (Acts 9:20).

This lesson begins with a short introduction of Saul after his "Damascus Road" experience, and Ananias' unwilling ministerial intervention that led to restoration of Saul's sight, and to his being baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit.

Saul showed how seriously prior reputations could effect new Christian converts. Saul quickly began transitioning from his old life and identity to this new life in Jesus Christ by spending time with the disciples in Damascus before going to the synagogues where he proclaimed Jesus to be "the Son of God."

The large gap, between Saul's long-established reputation and the new identity he presented, along with his changed perspectives on Jesus Christ were not easily reconciled with either the Jews or the Christians.

This lesson is applicable to all Christians, from new converts to those converted many years ago. Credibility is essential to successful ministry. As in Paul's case, it also must be earned. Because credibility is fluid and subjective to other peoples' perceptions, Christians must rely on God and His Word to establish and maintain credibility for effective Christian ministry.

October 18, 2015

Lesson Title: Peter Takes a Risk

Lesson Scripture: Acts 10:1-44

Print: Acts 10:24-38

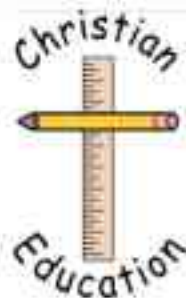
Devotional Songs: #364[]; #77[]; and #243[]

Key Verses: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation, anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34-35).

In this lesson, Peter's boldness is manifested in his willingness to risk his status and reputation within both the Jewish culture and the emerging Christian community as he willingly responded to God's instructions to visit and witness to Cornelius, who was a Gentile. By obeying God's instructions, Peter knowingly violated several Jewish cultural norms and religious traditions.

Peter's motivations and behavior patterns differ from those he exhibited during his life with Jesus. Peter was previously noted for impetuous speech and spontaneous behavior that often clashed with his discipleship. The new Peter, on the other hand, showed great restraint and faith as he questioned God to confirm the truthness of his vision and his interpretation. After finally being convinced that the Holy Spirit was speaking to him directly, Peter obeyed. The remainder of this story shows boldness and

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Church School Lesson

(Continued from page 14)

determination as Peter follows through with his convictions.

October 25, 2015

Lesson Title: Trusting the Spirit

Lesson Scripture: Acts 11:1-18

Print: Acts 11:1-18

Tentative Devotional Songs: #377[]; #258[]; and #243[]

Key Verse: "If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?" (Acts 11:17).

The Jews in Jerusalem divided themselves into two groups. One group believed salvation was only available to Jews because it was to them that God gave His law. This group was also Antichristian. They did not accept Jesus Christ as the Messiah, and they totally rejected his views on salvation. The other group believed Gentiles could be saved, but they had to become Jews first. The second group believed Gentiles should have to earn the right to inclusion and salvation by learning and sanctioning all Jewish laws and customs, including those relating to circumcision.

This lesson demonstrates that conflict is inevitable, and that it can be a vital link to new discoveries and deeper understandings of God's word. Through Simon Peter's changed behavior and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit with both Cornelius and Peter, there are confirmations of the Holy Spirit's ability to inform, empower and transform believers. Applying this lesson enables believers to see and respond to conflict in a God-like manner.

Ninth District
Scripture of
the Month



Online Giving is Easy!

Online contributions may be made to St. John by using your PayPal® account.

Within PayPal, send donations directly to St. John at stjohnameh@aol.com. Select the option to transfer from your banking account or PayPal balance and specify donate/friends and family.



Online giving is easy!

You may also donate by sending funds through PopMoney to stjohnameh@aol.com.

Church School Book Club

Discussion Date: September 26, 2015
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Twelve Tribes of Hattie, Ayana Mathis, 2013

Discussion Date: October 17, 2015
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Sinners and Saints, Murray & Billingsley, 2012



Victoria Christopher Murray and ReShonda Tate Billingsley bring their favorite heroines together in a novel that will delight their legions of fans.

Jasmine Larson Bush and Rachel Jackson Adams are not your typical first ladies. But they've overcome their scandalous and drama-filled pasts to stand firmly by their husbands' sides.

When a coveted position opens up—president of the American Baptist Coalition—both women think their husbands are perfect for the job. And winning the position may require both women to get down and dirty and revert to their old tricks. Just when Jasmine and Rachel think they're going to have to fight to the finish, the current first lady of the coalition steps in . . . a woman bigger, badder, and more devious than either of them.

- Amazon



Janette R. Smith

EMBAKED, AUTHORITY CERTIFIED LIFE STRATEGIST & MINDSET COACH
BETTER DECISIONS. BETTER LIVING

STEP INTO YOUR PURPOSE WITH PASSION

Do you hear it? That still small voice that beckons you to pursue your greater purpose is calling. Maybe you stopped listening to that voice, but it is far from silenced. That voice of inner wisdom is back – with a reminder that you still have so much more to offer this world. It's time for you to fully become what you were always meant to be. The distance between your dreams and reality is full of obstacles, but if you know how to work through those challenges – the dreams of your past can be the reality of your future. In this guide, I share the stories of dream building from being an Emmy award-winning journalist to entertainment host, mega-ministry media director, consultant to gospel icons, and finally Certified Life Strategist and Mindset Coach. I understand the process of repositioning and building dreams and I want to help you uncover your own strengths, define your purpose, and reconnect with that inner wisdom, so you can push past stuck, navigate the path of dream building and become your own success story.



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Dream It. Believe It. Build It.



October 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	Fall Revival Fellowship Presbyterian Church September 28—October 1 Pastor Clayborn and Rev. Sheri, Revivalists St. John Choirs will sing on Monday and Thursday.					3 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry
4 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	5 9:30 a.m. Fmly. Plns Mtg. 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	6 6:00 p.m. VIP Chdr Rehearsal Stewardess Board Mtg.	7 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	8 6:00 p.m. Steward Board Meeting Gospel Choir Rehearsal	9	10 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 10:30 a.m. AME Staff Meeting
11 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	12	13 6:00 p.m. VIP Chdr Rehearsal Sons of Allen Mtg.	14 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	15	16 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	17 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry
18 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship PINK SUNDAY	19 6:00 p.m. Lay Organization Mtg.	20 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. 80 UP KITCHEN 6:00 p.m. Thistle Board Mtg.	21 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	22 6:00 p.m. Mass Choir	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 10:50 a.m. Worship	26	27 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. 80 UP KITCHEN 6:30 p.m. Church School Board Mtg.	28 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	29 6:00 p.m. Mass Choir	30 6:00 p.m. Thank or Treat and More	31 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry



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The Right Reverend James L. Davis, Servant Bishop

Mrs. Arelis B. Davis, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Doctor Patrick Clayborn, Pastor



Important Dates to Remember

September 15-19, 2015 North west Alabama Annual Conference, Birmingham, Alabama

September 28- October 1, 2015

Revival at Fellowship Presbyterian Church, Huntsville

The Reverend Gregory Bentley, Pastor

Pastor Clayborn and Rev. Sheri, Revivalists

September 23-26 2015 Southeast Alabama Annual Conference

October 7-10, 2015 Alabama River Region Annual Conference

October 14-17, 2015 Northeast Alabama Annual Conference

October 18, 2015 Pink Sunday

October 21-24, 2015 Southwest Alabama Annual Conference

November 12-13, 2015 Plenary Meeting

*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 20 Issue 10

October 2015



Pastor Patrick D. Clayborn, Ph.D.

Pastor's Message

It's Time to Stretch

Luke 6:8-11

Welcome as we begin our new annual conference year! I am so thankful to God for being appointed to the best church anywhere – St. John A.M.E. Church in Huntsville, Alabama. I thank my leadership – Bishop and Mrs. James L. Davis and Presiding Elder and Mrs. Oliver Allen, Jr. – for their continuing faith in me and for their giving me the opportunity to serve. I thank my church family for all of their love, prayers, and support. I am expecting God to bless us with an amazing year!

However, my expectation is not detached from our present reality. I have noticed that many of our experiences relate to the man with the withered hand in Luke 6. To be withered is to be shrunken, dried up, and immobilized. What is withered is the man's *right* hand. This is probably his stronger hand and the one with which he works. Some believe that he was a mason. As a result, this withering would have ended his employment. Please note that his hand was not always withered. In the end of the story, his hand was *restored*, implying that his hand – which was once strong – became weak before his encounter with Jesus. Look at how strengths have become withered weaknesses around us. Violence against minorities by rogue law enforcement agents persists. Jails continue to be primarily populated with minorities and poor people. Voting for minorities in Alabama seems on the verge of being disenfranchised by the state government's preparation to close down over 30 drivers' license offices (mostly in African American counties where government ID for voting can be attained). Public education is constantly devalued and underfunded. Widespread political support for raising the minimum wage and establishing equal pay for women is nonexistent. Issues such as awareness of HIV/AIDS, breast cancer, and domestic violence receive little to no attention in a host of churches. According to *Autopsy of a Deceased Church* by Thom S. Rainer, many mainline churches are in the process of a slow death because their agendas have only sought to maintain what they achieved instead of progressing beyond their achievements.

All of these issues impact our families greatly. More fathers are now in jail. Many mothers do not make as much money because of their gender. Myriad families struggle because the minimum wage becomes a destructive obstacle. Scores of children receive a subpar education. The right to vote becomes less attainable. Numbers of us leave our churches with a shout and a dance (and some leave with less than that), but we do not walk away with tools to equip us to face the harsh challenges of life. **OUR RIGHT HANDS ARE WITHERED!**

I believe that this is our time to **STRETCH!**

Jesus tells the man with the withered hand to come. And, the man **GOT UP!** We, too, have to get up. We have been down too long. We must wake up – stir up – raise up – stand up. Organizations with the machinery (like the NAACP) should have their lawyers in place to sue the state of Alabama if they go through with closing all these driver's license offices. We – as individuals, churches, and communities – must raise our voices to our elected officials and give them our true feelings. Making our desires known holds them accountable. We must stir up our

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Pastor's Message

(Continued from page 1)

schools by showing up at PTO/PTA meetings, school board meetings, and city council meetings. Let us show up with constructive suggestions in addition to our detailed critique.

Jesus told the man to stand next to him. Jesus asked the man to make a public declaration – to choose him over the Pharisees and scribes that were against healing on the Sabbath. Jesus asked the man to declare his allegiance before he got healed! To bring about change we will have to confess our allegiance to Christ – in the presence of our detractors – before Christ blesses us. We have to *STAND* with Jesus! When we wake up, stir up, raise up, and get up by making our voices heard and our wills known, we must be sure to align our voices and wills with God's will. We have to do this work where others can see. Our light must shine regardless of the outcome. The three Hebrew boys in the book of Daniel had this same sentiment. They told the king that they wouldn't bow down to the idol god even if God didn't deliver them from the fiery furnace. They stood with God before God blessed them with deliverance. This means saturating our strategies for justice in God's Spirit with no thought of the risk. When we raise our voices against the closing of driver's license offices; the stagnation of the minimum wage; no equal pay for women; and the lack of HIV/AIDS, domestic violence, and breast cancer awareness in many churches; we must begin by acknowledging that this is Christ's agenda. We have to declare that our effort is a Godly endeavor before we see any benefits.

Jesus told the man to stretch out his hand. To stretch is to extend, deploy, spread, or give all. Yes, we must follow this instruction to *STRETCH* as well. But, we must not overlook the key of authenticity. Jesus tells the man to stretch out his own hand – not the hand of another. This year, we have to stretch ourselves. Therefore, we have to bring our whole selves to the task. We must put our whole hearts in our service, in our giving, in our praising, in our studying, in our working, in our marriages, in our families, in our relationships, in our commitments, in our spiritual formation, and in ourselves.

It's time to *STRETCH*!

When we stretch, we get restored! Go ahead and stretch!

STRETCH – Walk by faith and not by sight.

STRETCH – Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not to your own understanding.

STRETCH – Seek first the kingdom of God and God's righteousness.

STRETCH – Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Christ.

STRETCH – Get up, even if no one gets up with you.

STRETCH – Stand with Jesus regardless of who stands against you.

STRETCH – Hold yourself and others accountable to what is right.

STRETCH – Use every bit of what God has given you for the task at hand.

STRETCH until justice is proclaimed.

STRETCH until hungry souls are fed.

STRETCH until the weak say I am strong.

STRETCH until families are made whole.

STRETCH until the whole church has new life.

STRETCH until what is impossible becomes possible.

STRETCH until God rains down miracles for all of God's people.

STRETCH!

Father, we *STRETCH* our hands to thee!

Northwest Annual Conference Held in September

By Guy Ginn



The Sixth Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference of the 9th Episcopal District of the AME Connectional Church was held starting Thursday, September 15, through Saturday, September 19, 2015. All events took place at the 9th District's new Daniel Payne Community Plaza in Birmingham, Alabama. The Reverend Mashod A. Evans and the members of Saint John AME Church of Birmingham graciously hosted this year's conference. Presiding Elder Dwight Dillard was the host Presiding Elder. Guy Ginn was the St. John delegate to the Annual Conference and Abbiegail Hugine was the alternate delegate.

Pre-conference activities started off with a Unity Rally on Tuesday September 15. Presiding Elder Dwight E. Dillard presided over the rally. Bishop Davis provided opening remarks and greetings were made by Birmingham Mayor William A. Bell, Sr., AME Senior Bishop John R. Bryant, and Alabama A&M University president and St. John's own Dr. Andrew Hugine. Dr. Hugine's was a bit more than a greeting. His presentation was entitled "Education, the Gateway to Opportunity-HBCUs are Still Needed." Christian and Islamic leaders offered prayers for Prisons and the Criminal Justice System; Economic, Political and Social Justice Systems; Educational Opportunity and Educational Systems; Homelessness, Hunger, Poverty and Health Care Systems; The Community of Faith as a Unified Body and Model for Healing and Reconciliation; Global Outreach for Human Rights to Improve All Peoples Quality of Life Worldwide; and Guidance and Protection of our Children. The Alabama A&M Choir provided musical selections that included a stirring rendition of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

The Annual Conference's Women's Missionary Society hosted the evening's worship service with the theme "Missionaries Serving and Working in Unity." Worship was directed by Sisters Hattie Huggins and Adrienne Roland. St. John's own Sisters Mary Powers and Monica Dillihunt gave the Call to Worship. The guest speaker was the Reverend Maria Mallory White of Tallahassee, Florida. The Reverend Mallory White is a noted journalist and a second-generation AME preacher.

Wednesday's agenda included devotion, bible study, business reports and pastors' reports. A midday service was led by the Sons of Allen. Bishop Davis prepared the Conference to receive the Mirroring Report that was to be presented on Thursday. He told the Conference that he was not embarrassed by telling the truth and admonished the AME Churches to have the same mindset. He recommended a book entitled The Autopsy of a Deceased Church. Bishop Davis indicated that the book gives the Mirroring Report some context and gives seven symptoms of the dying church, noting that these symptoms are not always easily identifiable. He went on to say that according to the book, churches with two of the seven symptoms are in critical condition. He stressed that churches that seek to be healthy must tend to its obligations to others outside the church.

Presiding Elder Dwight Dillard was worship leader for the Conference's Opening Service on Wednesday evening. Pastor Clayborn stirred the congregation with a passionate Prayer of Invocation. The sermon was delivered by the Reverend Dr. Robert A. Turner. After the introduction by Bishop Davis, Dr. Turner preached from Jeremiah 1:17 on the topic "When We Stand Up." He pointed out that when one stands up s/he should be authentic. He said that he would rather be hated for who he is than to be loved for who he is not. He also stressed that believers should get ready to stand up by studying to know for themselves what the Lord has said.

After Thursday morning's devotion, the congregation was treated to an informative bible study on Spiritual Discipline by the Reverend Joseph Parker, a candidate for the office of Publisher of the AME Church. He highlighted ten (10) reasons to read the Bible every day; having a Mary's heart in a Martha's world; Developing a lifestyle of sitting at the feet of Jesus; and daily prayer tools.

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Northwest Annual Conference Held in September

By Guy Ginn



(Continued from page 3)

Bishop Davis continued to discuss the book, *The Autopsy of a Deceased Church*, by Thom Rainer. Indicators of a deceased church are significant numerical decline, prolonged times of apathy, occasional times of intense conflict, the church is not known in its community, the revolving door of pastoral leadership, new members are rare, and the love of the good old days. Following bible study, Mr. Hoffman, retired Finance Director of Birmingham's Children's Hospital, spoke to the Conference in support of an increased minimum wage. He pointed out that \$10 per hour in Birmingham would get a person above the poverty line and eligible for a \$50 per month Affordable Health Care Act insurance policy. Because Alabama opted out of the Medicaid Expansion and since the Alabama minimum wage is much less than \$10 per hour, current minimum wage earners are not eligible for the Affordable Health Care policy and are unable to afford healthcare insurance. He indicated that the positive impact on the economy outweighs the negative arguments against the wage increase.

The Northwest Conference Mirroring Committee made its report. The categories were "progressing," "maintaining," and "declining." St. John fell in the "progressing" category. The full report is available at the church office. A midday worship service was led by the Northwest Alabama Conference Lay Organization. The Reverend Dr. Ronald Sterling, pastor of St. Paul

AME Church, Smithfield, delivered the sermon. His message was entitled "Dressed and Ready." The message was centered on Ephesians 6. The Conference was urged to put on their spiritual warfare armor and wait on the Lord.

The afternoon session included additional pastoral reports. Pastor Patrick Clayborn made

his pastoral report representing St. John. He emphasized the Anthony Brown "Free to Worship" service; the holiday food baskets; that more than three thousand meals were served by the Soup Kitchen; and the twenty-nine (29) persons who joined the church. Additionally the financial efforts/blessings of the church were highlighted by Bishop Davis. A delegation of St. John members stood with Pastor Clayborn as he presented his report. The delegate, Mr. Guy Ginn, spoke on behalf of the church. He emphasized Pastor Clayborn's sermon on intentional faith development and how it works in conjunction with passionate worship. He humbly and sincerely asked for the return of Pastor Clayborn and Presiding Elder Oliver Allen, Jr.

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Pastor Clayborn makes his report.



Delegate Guy Ginn speaks on behalf of the church.



St. John members stand with Pastor Clayborn.

and sincerely asked for the return of Pastor Clayborn and Presiding Elder Oliver Allen, Jr.

ST. JOHN'S BETTY E. DERRICK WMS PARTICIPATES IN THE NORTHWEST ALABAMA CONFERENCE WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETIES 6TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE CONVENTION

By Charlie Brooks

Five o'clock a. m. arrived way too early on September 15, but thankfully the bus departed after prayer, with dedicated, determined St. John WMS members, led by President Donnie Thompson. The delegation arrived at the Daniel Payne Community Plaza, Birmingham, Alabama to registration kits and a hot breakfast.

Shortly thereafter, the official WMS Annual Conference began with opening prayer by Missionary Susie Jones Bonner. The attendees were greeted by Conference President Patricia Smith, Ms. Carolyn Cummings, Episcopal President, and Mrs. Arelis B. Davis, Episcopal Supervisor. The local Conference Theme "Missionaries Serving and Working in Unity", Romans 12:4-5, coincides with the 2015-2019 Quadrennial Theme: "Transforming Lives...Building Communities...Impacting the World". Romans 12:1-2.

Next, the election of officers for the ensuing year was held. The election was conducted by Episcopal President Cummings and the swearing in ceremony by Episcopal Supervisor Arelis Davis. The meeting continued with the roll call of WMS members. The morning business session also included the Quadrennial Report by delegate Dr. Monica Dillihunt.



All present came to attention at the procession for the Unity Day Rally, led by Bishop James L. Davis. The Unity Program began with the Reverend Dwight E. Dillard, Presiding Elder, presiding. Devotion participants included the Reverend Dr. Farrell Duncombe, (Call to Unity); the Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr. (The Invocation). The music was delivered quite beautifully by the Alabama A & M University Choir. Resounding opening remarks were made by the Right Reverend James L. Davis. Bishop Davis addressed the delegation with clear words by sharing the purpose for holding the Unity Service. He stated, "This event is to pay tribute to The Emanuel Nine, Charleston; as well as to honor others who made outstanding strides to serve our nation to bring unity." He stated that Governor Bentley was honored because he removed the Confederate Flag without hesitation. This Act showed courage and bravery, the same courage and bravery that Mother Rosa Parks showed years ago. The Governor was used by God, even though he might not have been aware of that. God moves in mysterious ways. "Another reason for the celebration," he continued, "is to show that injustice still remains in our communities." We also hope that today's services will encourage young men and women to seek to serve our cities and country. One of those young persons may become the next governor or president. This theme "Unity" reflects that together, we can change the quality of lives for our people. He stated that in Michelle Obama's book, "The New Generation", she shared that rights are denied to those who have given their time and energy to lead others to better lives. He stated "There is no respect for our heroes. We acknowledge all these heroes today."

Bishop Davis charged attendees to register people to vote. He said that this will be stressed throughout the conference. What is done today can serve as a back drop for AME churches to make the world a better place for all. Through efforts today, maybe other faith communities can share in teamwork to remove disturbing issues in today's society. The bishop concluded, "...that

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Northwest Annual Conference Held in September

By Guy Ginn

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The Conference held elections of ministerial and lay delegates to the 50th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference of the AME Church, to be held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 2016. Pastor Clayborn was elected a ministerial delegate. Ms. Nedra McDaniel was the delegate and Mr. Jason Gilmore was the young adult delegate to the Lay Electoral College from St. John.



Worship service was held on Thursday evening. This was "A Night of Revival."

Friday morning bible study was led by the Reverend Percy W. Jones. The topic was "The Second Touch" with text from Mark 8:22-29. The business session from Friday morning included reports from the various Conference committees, including the Board of Examiners (of which Pastor Clayborn is a member) Report and the Conference Board of Trustees Report. Dr. Jeanette Jones read the report for the Conference Trustees and it was received by the Bishop with accolades for the Trustees.

Bishop Davis stated that in addition to the evangelistic quotas, each church will be given a quota for the number of people they are to register to vote. Pastors/churches are to ensure that every member is registered. Pastors are to assign quotas to the Stewards. The goal is for the district to register five thousand (5000) people before the mid-winter conference in March.



The Ordination Service was held with Bishop Gregory G. M. Ingram serving as the preacher. His sermon was entitled "A Cutting Edge Ministry" with text from 2 Kings 6:1-7. He noted that too many ministers have an axe, but no "cutting edge." The points highlighted in the sermon were that the tragedy in the text was the loss of equipment; when the student realized he had lost something, he asked for help; and the Holy Ghost shows up, anyhow. In conclusion, he said that "too many are gifted, but not grounded."

Friday night was a night of reflection, thanksgiving and praise. Pastor Clayborn and the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn participated in the service. Included in the service was a skit with a comical portrayal of the combining of the Conferences that occurred after Bishop Davis came to the Ninth Episcopal District.

Saturday morning included the Young People's Department (YPD) Business Session followed by the YPD Program. The theme was "Keeping it 100 - Celebrating a Century of Global Service." The Church School was held at the same time as the YPD program.

The Closing Service for the Sixth Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference was led by Presiding Elder Oliver Allen. Music was rendered by the Conference Choir. Bishop Davis delivered the sermon, "A Nighttime Angel" with biblical text from Acts 5: 17 - 24. The main points included that 1) During the night the Lord has a special angel; 2) God through the angel brought them out; 3) Nonbelievers are at a loss for words. Following the sermon, the pastoral appointments were read by Bishop Davis. St. John is thankful for the return of Pastor Clayborn and Presiding Elder Allen.

This was the last Northwest Annual Conference under the leadership of Bishop and Mother Davis. Accolades were given throughout the Conference for their outstanding servant leadership of the Ninth Episcopal District for two quadrennials. Bishop and Mother Davis expressed their thanks and love for the Ninth District.

ST. JOHN'S BETTY E. DERRICK WMS PARTICIPATES IN THE NORTHWEST ALABAMA CONFERENCE WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETIES 6TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE CONVENTION

By Charles Brooks

(Continued from page 5)

He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." Philippians 1:6. One nation under God. "Lord, Let It Be."

As the program continued, greetings were brought by dignitaries including the Senior Bishop of the AME Church, the Right Reverend John R. Bryant and St. John member Dr. Andrew Hugine, President, Alabama A & M University. Dr. Hugine touched the hearts of all present as he presented the accomplishment of HBCU's, despite the discrepancies in federal funding and the lack of support that graduates of HBCU's return to their Alma Maters. This led the Bishop to lift an impromptu offering for Alabama A & M University and Morris Brown College. A beautiful litany, followed music presented by the A & M University Choir. The Reverend Sheryl Shipman and the Reverend Anne' Faush led the timely litany. The congregation then read the Prologue To Unity Prayers followed by multi-faith ministers for a multifaceted number of community prayer concerns. Each prayer was unique, moving and piercing.

The WMS Night and White Service began at 8:30 p.m. The preacher was the Reverend Maria Mallory White, Immanuel Temple AME Church. The evening program paired a WMS senior member with a WMS Young Women's Initiative (YWI) member. Included in the pairs were St. John WMS life member Mary Powers and YWI member Monica Dillihunt. Music was interspersed by the Northwest Conference Choir.

Briefly, the profound Word was delivered with power and authority by the Reverend White. Her text was Genesis 16:1-11 and the sermon was entitled "A Strange Path to Prosperity." After prayers she stated, "We celebrate another conference year. When we look back, we have come a long way." Each year, she said, has been different. Her message was for someone who looked to a time when they have been in a bad place. This is the story of the young slave woman in the text. This is a text of dynamic drama: a young woman who, too, wanted things to go differently for her. In the 4th verse she is in a hard place. Soon, however, Sarai wanted what Hagar had. She said that this servant was like some people today. The preacher stated that today, people do the jobs and work and do not always get credit for the sacrifices that they make. Those present were reminded to not count God out. Sarai, too, learned she should have waited on God. Hagar had no choice. No empathy was shown her. She, however, carried an heir, a promise, a legacy. After her experience in the wilderness, she was told to not fret, but to return after she "cools off". Believers, too, must stand with God. He

is there through it all. Hagar's life began anew when she returned to her mistress. Hagar had to go back to her situation, because God told her to go back. The preacher stated in conclusion, when one walks with God, He will lead them to prosperity and wholeness. When they go back, He will cover them. He prepares a table for His people and will be with them. All too often, the Reverend White, concluded, people have to travel that strange path to prosperity. The service concluded with remarks from Bishop Davis, Invitation to Christian Discipleship, the candlelight ceremony, and the Missionary Benediction.

This ended this year's well implemented Northwest Alabama Conference of The Women's Missionary Society of the AME Church.



St. John members participate in WMS Service.

St. John's "Dynamic Duo" Preach for Fall Revival at Fellowship Presbyterian Church

Compilation of coverage by Paula Elliard, Bridget Floyd and Nedra McDaniel



The "dynamic duo," the Reverends Patrick and Sheri Clayborn

Pastor Patrick and the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn were the revivalists for the four-night Fall Revival of Fellowship Presbyterian Church, which began on Monday, September 28, 2015 and culminated on Thursday, October 1, 2015. The services began each night at 7 p.m. with dinner available at 5:30 p.m. Monday was "Children, Youth and Young Adult Night", Tuesday was "Women's Night", Wednesday was "Men's Night", and Thursday was "Friends and Family Night". There was a different worship leader and choir each night. Host Pastor Gregory J. Bentley, introduced the guest preachers each night. The first night he noted that he had made an exception in inviting evangelists to return to preach revival rather than his usual emphasis on featuring different evangelists for each revival. He gave accolades to this partnership in the Lord as well as marriage.

On Monday and Thursday nights the Reverends Clayborn united in preaching the sermon. On Women's and Men's Nights, the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn and Pastor Patrick Clayborn were featured, respectively. They were most inspiring.

Monday's service was led by youth worship leaders Destine' Brown and Demetrius Davis. St. John's Voices in Praise (VIP) Choir ministered under the direction of Brother Reginald Pears on. They opened the service with a most appropriate offering with words noting 'we've come to praise the Lord'. Praise selections were also offered by the Fellowship Youth Choir and the Children's Choir.

The "dynamic duo" united in interpreting Acts 20:7-12 with the two sermon titles – "Resurrection Ministry" with the "youth title" of "Straight Out of Church" (reflecting on the movie title "Straight out of Compton"). They emphasized that the Church should be a resurrection ministry to young people; that is, should restore and redeem. The preachers indicated that the Church should have positive things to say to young people, do not underestimate them, make the necessary adjustments to make contact with them, and the young need to know that *they* have a testimony. In the text, Paul was preaching late into the night, and a young man was sitting in the window, but fell asleep and fell three stories to the ground. Paul stopped what he was doing, changed his position as well as his point of contact by ministering to the boy who ultimately survived. Paul went his way and the boy did as well. This required noticing that the boy had fallen, making the noted changes/adjustments to meet the need of the boy. Just as the Church today needs to reach out to help the youth, the youth must not give up even if they "get sleepy" (as all persons do). The youth should ask for help. The revivalists indicated that "young people in the window need people to hold them up".



The Reverend Bentley introduces the preachers.

This first night of rapid fire, tag team, inspirational preaching and worship in song, set the tone for a wonderful fall revival.

On Tuesday, the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn preached from John 11:1-8, 38-44 with the sermon title "Unbind Her and Let Her Go". She spoke on the story of Mary, Martha and Lazarus and how this family's relationship compares to women functioning in the church. The question was posed, "If it were not for the women of the church, where would we be?" The Reverend Sheri expressed that sometimes women/believers have to loose things in their lives in order to move forth in their faith and work. Likewise, they

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St. John's "Dynamic Duo" Preach for Fall Revival at Fellowship Presbyterian Church

Compilation of coverage by Paula Eliard, Bridget Floyd, and Nedra McDaniel

(Continued from page 8)

need to believe in order to see the glory of God! She asked the congregants to think back on the story and ask who they are most like in the text. Are they most like Mary in their worship, or like Martha in their work? Or do they have some things they need to unbind and let go, in relation to Lazarus coming from the tomb. This was demonstrated by women in attendance being invited to unbind a live representative who came to the pulpit. There were women and "future women" who came to the pulpit to engage in this visual aid for the sermon – to loose the woman who was bound, just as Lazarus was unbound after Jesus called him from the tomb. Reverend Smith Clayborn noted "when Jesus prays people live...Jesus expects you to do your part".

The worship leader was Elder Sarah Ford. Special music was rendered by the Fellowship Presbyterian Church Unity Choir, with Mrs. Brenda Davis, Director. They sang several beautiful musical selections, "Every Praise to Our God", "They That Wait on the Lord Shall Renew Their Strength" and other songs from the African American Heritage Hymnal with emphasis on the Negro Spiritual. It was Women's Night and it was a rewarding time for all that attended.

The Wednesday night service was Men's Night and the worship leader was Brother Thomas Ross. Special music was rendered by the Kappa Chorus of the Huntsville Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated. Mr. Chris Calhoun was the director. The sermon was entitled "The Reclamation Project" from the text 1 Samuel 30:1-8. The Reverend Doctor Clayborn used the passage of scripture where the women and children of David's camp had been captured at Eklat and his godly actions to reclaim what was taken, to challenge the men on their night of emphasis. He noted that David had to go back to holiness to reclaim what was lost. First he had to honor his feelings. David and the people were bitter in spirit for the loss of their children. The people had to honor the boundary that had to be set around their feelings. They were angry at David although they were the ones who decided to go with him. David had to honor the God within him. Although tempted to believe those around him, he "encourage himself in the Lord". With God's answer to pursue, David went ahead to pursue and rescue the women and children. They had to fight the Philistines to get back what they wanted. The preacher noted that this says that persons have to get to work using their God-given gifts. They had to fight all day, and even leave 200 men behind. Yet, they got everyone and everything back, and more. Even those who were left behind benefited from the abundance. Men, as well as all in attendance, were urged to keep fighting and praying, believing, working, and fasting, and watch what happens!

On Thursday, the worship leader was Sister Betty Dixie and the music was provided by The Mass Choir of St. John AME Church under the direction of Brother Reginald Pearson. The sermon title was "Go" and the text was Isaiah 6:1-9 (key verse Isaiah 6:9).

The dynamic Clayborn duo preaching tag team was back for the closing revival sermon. The preachers used this familiar passage of Isaiah accepting the call to "go", even in the midst of King Uzziah's death, to command the hearers to accept their command to "go". They noted that Isaiah was not getting strength to serve in another place, but for where he was. They used his vision to tell worshippers who find themselves in the midst of emotional, cultural, intellectual, or spiritual death and to "go" for God in the following points.

1. The vision had abundance (v1), "the train filled the temple". Just a little of God gives more than is needed.
2. The vision included worship (v2), the seraphim in the temple covered their faces and feet and humbled themselves before God.
3. The vision had an outward expression (v3), "They cry, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts."
4. The vision had a sign. In verse four the temple was filled with smoke. The manifestation of worship is love, walking in faith, working as to the Lord, education, taking care of one's self.
5. The vision brought renewal (v5) in the form of transformation. Isaiah's eyes were opened and he saw the real King. When God transforms lives, there is a release of freedom to hear

(Continued on page 12)

St. John's CPR Ministry Holds Second Caregiver's Workshop

By Barbara Johnson



Mrs. Rosa Walker, Mrs. Brittney Lively, and Mrs. Abbiegail Hugine

The Caregivers Prayer and Respite (CPR) Ministry held its second workshop on Saturday, September 12, 2015. Two guest presenters were invited from The Alabama Cooperative Extension Services at Alabama A&M University. Ms. Brittney Lively, North Alabama Respite Training & Resource Specialist, Alabama Cares, was the first presenter. Her specialty is respite and resources available to Caregivers who are caring for a family member. Mrs. Julie Cothren was the second presenter. She is a Benefits and Crisis Intervention Specialist with American Senior Assistance Program (ASAP). Her topic included Long Term Care Insurance & Medicare/Medicaid Benefits.

Who is a caregiver? Anyone who cares for or provides, unpaid care at home for someone who needs help with basic everyday care (i.e. dressing, feeding, household chores, financial duties etc.).

What is respite? Respite is the temporary relief for family caregivers.

Why is Respite important? Respite is important for the caregivers because it,

- (1) reduces stress and fatigue.
- (2) improves family functioning and satisfaction with life.
- (3) improves attitudes towards the care recipient.
- (4) helps sustain the caregiver's health and well-being.
- (5) helps avoid/delay out-of-home placement and
- (6) reduces the likelihood of abuse and neglect.

Ms. Lively gave several examples of typical respite care.

- (1) In-home respite care, where someone comes in to relieve the caregiver.
- (2) Adult Daycare, where the recipient is taken to a facility which specializes in adult care.
- (3) Short-term nursing home respite, where the recipient is temporarily placed in a facility for several days to several weeks, to give the caregiver some respite.
- (4) Day Hospital placement is another temporary placement for an extended amount of time.

Other options were:

- (1) Possible respite care provided by community agencies such as churches. Four churches in the Huntsville area rotate providing respite care, four Friday nights each month. Weatherly Heights Baptist Church is just one of the four.
- (2) Using Social Media to locate agencies which provide care in the community.
- (3) Communicating with local universities. Some students need internship or volunteer hours. Students in nursing (Oakwood University) or students in social work (AAMU) might be able to provide respite. Call the departments at each school and discuss the possibility with the department chair.
- (4) and lastly, don't neglect the valuable resources available through support groups.

Mrs. Julie Cothren, the second presenter, spoke in depth on Medicare and Medicaid Benefits. She attempted to dispel the myths and misunderstandings regarding the alphabet soup of Part A, Part B, Part C and Part D of medical plans.

(Continued on page 11)

St. John's CPR Ministry Holds Second Caregiver's Workshop

By Barbara Johnson

(Continued from page 10)

When a person applies for Medicare, they are automatically enrolled in the Part A Plan. Part A is the hospital insurance plan. It covers nursing care and hospital stays, although not doctors' fees. Part A also covers some home health services, skilled nursing care after a hospital stay and hospice care. Part B covers doctors' and other health care provider's services and supplies that are medically necessary to treat health conditions. This can include outpatient care, preventive services, ambulance services, and durable medical equipment.

She also stated that Medicare does not cover all medical expenses. Typically, Medicare covers about 80% of Part B-covered doctor and outpatient medical expenses (after the annual deductible is met). The remainder is up to the client to pay. With each passing year, Medicare deductibles and co-payments usually rise. This can leave a costly gap in coverage, gaps that can take thousands of dollars a year out of the patient's pocket. Medicare supplemental policies fill these gaps by covering the costs of eligible services that Medicare does not pay. Mrs. Cothren suggested that everyone on Medicare should invest in a Medicare supplement, such as *First Community* or Blue Cross Blue Shield C+. These were just two of many supplemental plans out there, she said.

Both Ms. Lively and Mrs. Cothren were thanked for their presentations. All those in attendance left with a wealth of information and resources to help them navigate the maze of caregiving, respite care, and medical benefits. A survey conducted at the conclusion of the workshop indicated that the information was most valuable, well received, and that there were additional topics of interest which still need to be addressed.

Additional Resources:

Ms. Brittney Lively, North Alabama Respite Training & Resource Specialist, Alabama Cares.
blively@ucphuntsville.org

Mrs. Julie Cothren, Benefits and Crisis Intervention Specialist with American Senior Assistance Program (ASAP). info@letstalkasap.com

TARCOG, Top of Alabama Council of Governments, Assistance-Advocacy-Answers on Aging, 5075 Research Dr. Huntsville, AL 35805, 256-830-0818
E-mail: tarcoq@adss.alabama.gov www.tarcoq.us

TARCOG's Aging Division, the Area Agency on Aging, provides services to seniors through either local contracts or by direct service provision and assists in the coordination of a variety of aging service programs with other agencies throughout the 5-county area.

Senior Rx, The Madison County Commission's SENIOR Rx Program is designed to assist low-income Madison County residents, age 55 and above, or those who have recently begun Medicare disability and are in the two year waiting period. Residents who meet that criteria and who do not have prescription drug coverage, may obtain medication for a chronic illness or condition for free or at a low cost. The SENIOR Rx staff facilitates access to pharmaceutical companies' patient assistance programs. Funding is provided by the Madison County Commission and the Alabama Department of Senior Services through the TARCOG/Area Agency on Aging. The medication will be mailed directly to you or to your physician, or you could receive a discount card usable at your pharmacy. If you would like to participate please call 256-632-3345.



Step Into Your Purpose with Passion

*From Dream to Reality
Navigating The Path to Your Life Purpose*

Janette R. Smith, Author, Speaker, Certified Life Strategist, Mindset Coach

By Laurretta Teague

St John's own Janette R. Smith, has recently written and published a book which guides persons in repositioning and building dreams to help them uncover their own strengths, define their purpose, and reconnect with the inner voice of wisdom.

No matter where a person may be in their journey, there is always room for growth in every stage of life. How do you create the dream you really want? What is your purpose at this stage? Why do you matter and how do you get to that next level?

The book is an action-guide created and written to provide tools which help you unlock your dream building and creating the life you desire. Personally, if you have been listening to the series Pastor Clayborn has been teaching and ministering to in worship and Bible study, we should be ignited to Dream. Believe. Build.

Get your copy today!

Dynamic Duo" Preach

(Continued from page 9)

what His purpose is for the individual.

With this vision and eye-opening experience, the preachers commanded those in attendance to "Go" and allow God to lead the way, to prepare and to bless. In conclusion that reminded them that all Jesus had to do was "Go" and it is time for believers to "Go".

Before the Benediction was given by Pastor Clayborn, the host pastor, the Reverend Gregory Bentley, the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn and the Reverend Patrick Clayborn made closing remarks and expressed gratitude for those who attended and for all participants throughout the week. This second revival series by the Clayborns at Fellowship Presbyterian Church was a revival for both congregations.

To God be the Glory!

Help Support Huntsville Assistance Program While Shopping at Kroger



St. John participates in The Huntsville Assistance Program (HAP). HAP also participates in the Kroger Community Rewards Program®. To participate, register online with HAP's program number, 17480 at krogercommunityrewards.com.



Members who registered last year, must re-enroll for this year to continue benefits. All St. John members who shop at Kroger are urged to participate. Contact Nedra McDaniel for more information.

Holiday Service Project Announced



THANKSGIVING FOOD BASKETS

If you or someone you know is in need of a holiday food basket, please call or

email the church or sign the Holiday Basket sheet outside of the main office. Be sure to include the following information: Recipient's name, phone number, home address, and number of people in the household. Information should be submitted by Sunday, November 1 and recipients will be contacted by Monday, November 9 if we are able to provide them with a holiday basket. All others will be considered for a Christmas food basket.

Holiday Food Baskets- Please prayerfully consider making a monetary contribution, above and beyond your normal giving, toward the Holiday Food Baskets. The cost of the food basket will be between \$50 and \$60. All funds collected toward this effort will be used toward holiday baskets. Please place your contribution in an offering envelope and indicate that it is for the Holiday Food Baskets. If paying with PayPal, indicate in the memo section of the transaction that the donation is for the Holiday Food Baskets. The more funds we receive, the more baskets we can provide. If you are interested in assisting with the shopping for the baskets or the assembly, please see Sisters Paulette Williams or Maeola Snell-Peoples or Rev. Sheri Smith Clayborn. Thank you in advance for your support.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month Men Can Have Breast Cancer Too!

By Roselyne Akines

Breast cancer awareness month is intended to raise awareness and reduce the stigma of breast cancer through education on symptoms and treatment.

A breast cancer diagnosis is a life-changing one. Breast cancer in men is rare, but it does happen. About one percent of breast cancers in the U.S. occur in men. Although women have higher occurrences of breast cancer than men, breast cancer in men needs some attention as well. Prognosis for breast cancer in men is similar to prognosis in women of the same age and cancer stage.

What is Breast cancer in men? Men possess a small amount of non-functioning breast tissue that is concentrated in the area directly behind the nipple on the chest wall. Like breast cancer in women, cancer of the male breast is the uncontrolled growth with potential for spread to other organs. The most common type of male breast cancer is invasive ductal carcinoma.

What are the signs and symptoms of breast cancer in men? The most common sign of breast cancer in men is a firm non painful mass located under the nipple. Some other signs can be skin changes in the area of the nipple (ulceration of the skin), skin puckering or dimpling, redness, scaling, itching of the nipple, bloody or opaque discharge from the nipple may occur.

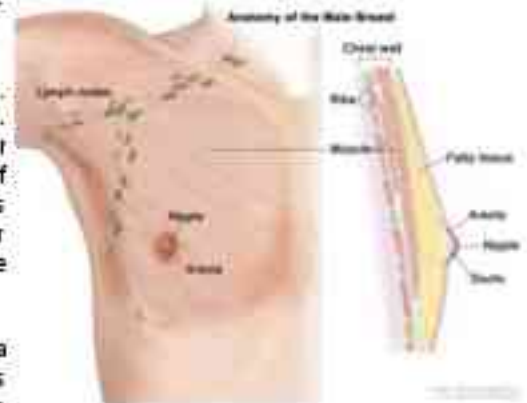
What are the risk factors of male breast cancer? The cause of cancer in the male breast has not been fully characterized. However, environmental influences and genetic factors likely play a role.

- Radiation exposure
- High level of estrogen
- Familial predisposition (genetic mutation)
- Cirrhosis of the liver
- Finasteride use(medication used in men with Benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH)
- Klinefelter's syndrome (chromosomal condition that affects male physical and cognitive development).

What screening is available for breast cancer in men? Routine breast cancer screening is only recommended for men at high risk due to an inherited gene mutation or a strong family history.

What is the treatment for breast cancer in men? Treatment for breast cancer in men is similar to treatment for women. The main treatment for breast cancer in men is surgery to remove the tumor. This is usually a mastectomy. Lumpectomy (also called breast conserving surgery) is rarely used because of the small size of a male breast. Some men may have radiation therapy following surgery, depending upon the stage of the breast cancer. For men with hormone receptor-positive breast cancers, hormone therapy (with tamoxifen) is usually the first drug therapy used. For men with hormone receptor-negative breast cancer, chemotherapy is usually the first drug therapy used.

Reference: <http://www.5komen.org/BreastCancer/MaleBreastCancer.html#sthash.Aw101Don.dpuf>





Mental Illness Awareness

By Bridget J. Floyd

The first full week in October is usually Mental Illness Awareness Week. This is set aside by the National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI). This is a time to educate the community about mental illness with emphasis on reducing the stigma associated with having and/or seeking treatment for mental illness. This unfortunately prevents many from seeking treatment – treatment that can often significantly remediate symptoms and improve quality of life.

Everyone has periods of sadness, worry/anxiety, fatigue, trouble concentration, etc. However, when the person has difficulty functioning in family, social, school, and/or work settings, it is important to seek and evaluation and treatment. Psychotherapy and medication can typically lead to improvement.

One condition that is referred to often is Bipolar Disorder. There are several forms of bipolar disorder, which is more than "moodiness" though it is often the primary behavior/symptom on which they base their label of bipolar. There is a severe pattern of mood change between depression and mania (elation or irritability). This condition previously was known as "manic depressive disorder". In a true manic state a person is likely to need psychiatric hospitalization and at a minimum might engage in risky or dangerous behavior, might be violent, unable to sleep, and has exceptionally positive views of themselves and their abilities. In the depressive cycle, the person might be so depressed that they might engage in self-injurious behavior such as cutting, as well as contemplate or even attempt suicide. There are milder forms of bipolar disorder or mood swings – e.g. Bi-

(Continued on page 15)

Preparing for Flu Season

By Martha Smith

What is the Flu? Flu is short for influenza, which is a virus that causes flu symptoms. The virus can infect cells and cause disease. The flu attacks the lungs. Most people who have the flu get better in a week or two. The people most susceptible to the flu are young children, persons age 65 or older, and persons with health problems.

How do persons catch the flu? The flu spreads in tiny fluid drops. Persons can get the flu when someone near them sneezes or coughs. Persons also get the flu if they touch something with the virus on it and then touch their nose. Anyone can get the flu. The best way to prevent getting the flu is to take the flu shot each year. If by chance a person gets the flu after being vaccinated, it is usually a milder case.

Good Health Habits

These tips can help prevent catching the flu.

1. Get the flu shot.
2. Stay home when sick. (This will help to prevent others from catching the flu.)
3. Keep hands clean. Wash hands often to help protect against germs. Use soap and water, hand wipes, or gel cleaners.
4. Persons should try to not touch their eyes, nose or mouth.
5. Persons should cover their mouth and nose with tissue when they sneeze or cough. This may keep others from getting sick.

Remember: YOU DO NOT GET THE FLU FROM A FLU SHOT!

*Taken from an article distributed by Glaxo Smith Kline

2016 Prison Ministry Volunteer Training Schedule

DATE	LOCATION	CONTACT PERSON
9 AM—12 PM SATURDAY, Nov 7, 2015	Hartselle Church of Christ 700 S Sparkman/Hartselle, AL	Charles Crawford
9 AM—12 PM SATURDAY, Dec. 5, 2015	Whitesburg Baptist Church 7300 Whitesburg Dr./Huntsville, AL	Dick Thomassian
9 AM—12 PM SATURDAY, Jan 9, 2016	Lindsay Lane Baptist 1300 Lindsay Lane / Athens, AL 35613	Robert "Bobby" Moore



Technology Tip

By Ricardo Williams

Checking Internet Links



Photo Credit:
Web Security
Guard

As more people become tech-savvy, the Internet is becoming full of unsafe links/websites that contain phishers, malware, and other hacking avenues. These links can be placed in messages, websites or other Internet places. Most links are legitimate in order to be placed out on the web but there are some that are unsafe. This article takes a look at some of the ways to check links on websites without actually clicking on the link.

Most links on websites that are used for phishing will be disguised. Phishing occurs when there is an attempt to retrieve sensitive information such as username, password, and credit/debit card details. To make sure the link is actually related to what is being viewed on a particular web page, mouse over the link. The actual text to the link will be displayed in the lower corner of the web browser.

Next, read the link carefully. If the link is to a site that is frequently visited or if the text in the URL is familiar, proceed. If there is irrelevant text in the URL that does not relate to the website visited, the link can be a source of phishing. Also check the target of the link by copying the link and pasting it into a search field. If the link is valid, there will be more information regarding the target of the link during the search.

There are also sites that can be used to check links such as VirusTotal and URLVoid. Both of these services allow users to check websites that have been involved in malware, phishing activities or fraudulent activities for free.

Phishing has become a major part of cyber-crime and not only occurs through websites or links but can occur through phone calls as well. Please be aware of the links clicked, whether it may be in an email message, social website or any other internet site.

Mental Illness Awareness

By Bridget J. Floyd

(Continued from page 14)

polar II (two) and Cyclothymic Disorder which do not have true manic phases and are less likely to need hospitalization.

Another condition is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). There is ADHD, primarily inattentive type (formerly known as ADD); primarily hyperactive and impulsive type; and combined type (inattentive, hyperactive, and impulsivity). This is usually diagnosed in children, but may be diagnosed in adulthood. ADHD is typically responsive to medication that addresses problems with inattention and focus, impulsivity, disorganization, following directions, follow through on completing tasks, excess talking and activity level, irritability/anger issues. In some instances, there are problems with telling the truth, taking things that belong to others, roughness with animals and fire setting. Symptoms range from mild to severe. The person may have trouble focusing on a task that they dislike or they consider "work", but they can focus on something they find interesting or fun. Therapy includes behavior management, aiding in modifying the environment—using planner for homework, a things to do list, set alarms/reminders, seating in the classroom that reduces distractions, finding creative ways of teaching or learning material which peaks the person's interest, is not "boring"; e.g. hands-on learning, games.

Treatment is available and should be pursued when needed. A person would likely not think twice of seeking treatment for asthma, diabetes, or allergies. Emotional or mental illnesses deserve the same attention and treatment as these types of disorders to enhance quality of life and daily functioning.





"Extreme"
Energy
Makeover
Program



Extreme Energy Makeover (EEM) Program Available for Qualified Customers

Huntsville Utilities has been awarded \$ 11.7 million through a grant from the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) to launch the Smart Communities – Huntsville Extreme Energy Makeovers (HEEM) project to perform whole-home, deep energy retrofits for qualified customers in 20-year-old (or older) owner occupied homes. The project goal is a 25% reduction in the home's energy usage.

QUALIFYING CRITERIA

- 1) Primary heat source must be electric
- 2) Home must be at least 20 years old
- 3) Applicant must also be the homeowner
- 4) Applicants must qualify as very low income per the HUD Income Documentation System for Madison County.

See: www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/il.html

NECESSARY DOCUMENTATION

- 1) Proof of annual income:
- 2) Proof of home ownership
- 3) Photo identification

APPLICATION CONTACTS

CASA (Community Action Partnership)
Salvation Army
United Way of Huntsville
Or Community Development
leigh.bee@huntsvilleal.gov 256-427-7498

GENERAL QUESTIONS: call 256-706-7500 or e-mail extreme@hsvutil.org.

More details are available in the church office or contact Randy Love. Share this information with persons who may qualify for assistance.

Prayer Time

Weekly Prayer Time
each Tuesday at 6:00 am.

Conference Call Credentials
US Toll Number (530) 881-1212
Meeting ID: 876-883-940

Listen to the playback any time.
Playback Number (530) 881-1212
Meeting Id 876-883-940.

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

Soup Kitchen



Living a Fruitful Life
By Charlie Brooks

"Bring the best of the first fruits of your soil to the house of the Lord your God." Exodus 23:19 NIV

In September and October, we gather in the fruits of the summer's growing season. Beautiful, bountiful autumn, with its crisp apples, plump pumpkins, bales of sweet hay, naturally inspires thoughts about the fruitfulness of our lives.

One of the key elements of a productive life is service to other people. This doesn't take anything away from us. On the contrary, it invigorates us. Service is hands on - like volunteering. It can also be spiritual; through praying for other people's needs. You can be of service by donating time, food, and prayer for the soup kitchen that faithfully operates each 3rd and 4th Tuesday at St. John. We stand in need of your support and service to make someone's life better and that will in turn make you feel fully alive in yourself.

Consider helping in the Soup Kitchen and consider yourself a "good tree" that bears "good fruit". Nothing is too small.

"Autumn is the mellower season, and what we lose in flowers we more than gain in fruits."

- S. Butler

Online Giving is Easy!

Online contributions may be made to St. John by using your PayPal® account.

Within PayPal, send donations directly to St. John at stjohnameh@aol.com. Select the option to transfer from your banking account or PayPal balance and specify donate/friends and family.

Online giving is easy!

You may also donate by sending funds through PopMoney to stjohnameh@aol.com.



Church School Lesson Overview – November 2015

This month's reviews were written by Brother Kenneth Parham.

November 1, 2015

Lesson Title: Prayer Works

Lesson Scripture: Acts 12:1-24

Print: Acts 12:1-11

Devotional Songs: #307, #272, and #243

Key Verse: "While Peter was kept in prison, the church prayed fervently to God for him" (Acts 12:5).

Research indicates that Peter was arrested during the Passover. This was the time that many Jews were in the area. It was noted that King Herod's intent was to have Peter put to death as he had James (the brother of John) put to death. Herod was appointed by the Roman government to serve in the territories of Galilee. Herod, being part Jew, was on a mission to win the favor of the Jewish leaders by persecuting the followers of Jesus (Christians).

In this lesson, God's power is displayed in removing Peter from harm even though he was chained, surrounded by guards, and in prison. Upon reflecting on how God moved to free Peter, one may wonder why James was put to death and/or why others may have to go through tribulations. The answer is hidden from humankind. God sees all and, even though He may allow evil to run rampant in the world, He knows that evil will come to an end and that suffering will strengthen and provide an opportunity to glorify Him.

In this lesson it is noted that the earnest prayers of the church significantly affected the outcome of Peter's situation. Prayer changes things, so pray often and with confidence and conviction.

November 8, 2015

Lesson Title: God Makes No Distinction

Lesson Scripture: Acts 15:1-35

Print: Acts 15:1-12

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

Key Verse: "God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us; and in cleansing their hearts by faith he has made no distinction between them and us" (Acts 15:8-9).

In this lesson, Paul and Barnabas met with the Jewish leaders to get an understanding of where all stood on the issue of Gentiles following Jewish law. In meeting with the leaders, all were in agreement that following Jewish law, including circumcision, was not essential for salvation. So both Paul and Barnabas traveled to Phoenicia and Samaria where they evangelized and converted many Gentiles to Christianity. Paul and Barnabas then traveled to Jerusalem where they were elated to spread the news of the conversions. However, a sect of Pharisees were unhappy and demanded that the newly converted be circumcised.

Here it appeared that Paul is one of the many considering the request of circumcision. However, Peter was steadfast in his position (based on Jesus' dealings with the Pharisees and Sadducees on the topic of salvation). Peter spoke out not only for the new converts but also to ensure that Christianity did not become a sect under Judaism. Peter indicated that it was through him that the Gentiles would receive the Good News and be saved. Peter indicated that God judges the heart and makes no distinction between Jews and Gentiles. Peter also requested that the Jewish leaders reflect on how keeping the law had always been a heavy burden to the Jewish people. He closed by asking that the Jewish leaders not cripple the Gentiles, that it is only by the grace of the Lord Jesus that one is saved.

Peter's protection of Jesus' teachings, with the assistance of Paul's evangelism, helped to spread Christianity throughout the world. In 2012 research there were approximately 2.2 billion Christians versus 14 million who practice Judaism.¹

¹ "The Global Religious Landscape." The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. Pew Research Center. 18 December 2012.

November 15, 2015

Lesson Title: God Makes No Distinction

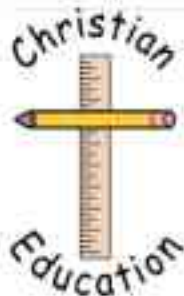
Lesson Scripture: Acts 16:1-15

Print: Acts 16:1-5, 8-15

Devotional Songs: #205; #77; and #243

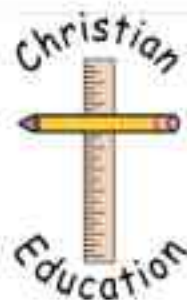
Key Verses: "When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them" (Acts 16:10).

(Continued on page 18)



Church School Lesson Overview – November 2015

(Continued from page 17)



Key Verse: When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them. Acts 16:10

As Paul continued his travels, he met Timothy, a young man highly regarded by other believers. Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him but first he had Timothy circumcised. Paul was still following the practices of Judaism. Paul may have decided that having Timothy (voluntarily) circumcised would ensure acceptance of a Greek descendant among the Jewish community that he would be encountering. The lesson indicated that during their travel from town to town, relaying the decisions previously reached by the apostles and the elders, it was noted that all were receptive and that the newly established churches were strengthened in faith and believers were added daily.

Paul had planned to make stops in Asia and Mysia (verses 6-7), but the spirit did not allow them to stop. They continued traveling and eventually reached Troas, but before landing the spirit moved on Paul to continue travel to Macedonia (Greece). Once in Macedonia, they eventually reached Philippi. Here Paul prophesied to a group of women near a river outside of Philippi. One woman in particular was Lydia, a seller of expensive purple cloth. Lydia's heart was described as being opened and she received the things that Paul was teaching. Lydia also professed her newly found faith by having her entire household baptized (a public sign of identifying with Christ).

In an attempt to tie the content of the lesson with the title, sometimes one must do more than the minimum (i.e., practice of certain cultural customs) in order that their testimony reaches the intended audience. Throughout history God has not shown any gender or cultural distinctions in moving among His people.

November 22, 2015

Lesson Title: Turning the World Upside Down

Lesson Scripture: Acts 17:1-32

Print: Acts 17:1-4, 10-12, 22-25, 28

Tentative Devotional Songs: #424; #251

and #243

Key Verse: "For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I came to proclaim to you" (Acts 17:23).

This lesson detailed Paul and Silas' travel through Thessalonica, Berea and Athens. It described their visiting Jewish synagogues (in the first two locations cited) to proclaim and strongly discuss the necessity of the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead and that the Messiah was indeed Jesus. The lesson indicates the climate and reaction of each location towards Paul and Silas, as well as Paul's change in tactics where needed.

At Thessalonica, the Jews were a persistent people in their observance of the Law and were persistent in contradicting the gospel of Christ, even arguing with Paul on the scriptures. Even though Paul was unsuccessful in convincing the majority of the Jews, he did convert a few Jews and also a multitude of Greeks and many leading women who were present during the discussions that took place. But shortly after receiving converts, the non-believers were in envy and set the city in an uproar (verse 5, "they indicated that those who followed Jesus and turned the world upside down had come to Thessalonica") and were looking to harm Paul and Silas.

Paul's encounter with the Jewish community of Berea was smoother. The Jews and others eagerly listened with open minds, however, they examined the scriptures daily to see if what Paul was saying was indeed so. Based on Paul's message and their research, many of the Jews along with many Greek women and Greek men of high standing were converted. However, those wishing him harm in Thessalonica learned that Paul (along with Silas and Timothy) was in Berea and they were now in pursuit. Paul leaves Berea without Silas and Timothy and flees to Athens.

Paul's final stop, documented in this lesson, was in Athens. Being amongst Greeks, Paul took a different approach in order to discuss his belief amongst a pagan community. First Paul observed and realized that the Greeks

(Continued on page 21)



The Author's Corner

St. John AME Member Releases a New Book

On Amazon - October 2015

Janette R. Smith

From Dream to Reality: Navigating the Path to Your Life Purpose

ANATOMY OF A DREAM

An Excerpt

*There are two great days in a person's life — the day we are born
and the day we discover why.*

~ William Barclay

I personally believe God gives everyone a dream that if fulfilled, will meet a specific need, and solve problems for others. This is why you may often hear the word 'calling' used to define what we've been referring to as our 'life's dream.' A calling is your assignment, driven by purpose, revealed to you in a dream.

If you believe there's a power greater than yourself then you must also believe that Power — which I acknowledge as God — sees the big picture down here on earth. He knew we would need doctors, firemen, superb mothers, teachers, poets, musicians, artists and architects. So, when he decided what color your eyes would be, your hair color, and height, he also placed an assignment on the inside of you. It's 'seed' — your dream.

Consider a real 'seed.' An apple seed looks different than a watermelon seed. There are no instructions attached to either seed on what to do, how to grow or even what to be. It is what it is. The instructions, seed's internal genetics dictate that each seed produce a very specific fruit. What we do know about seeds is that you have to plant it in good soil and nurture it with the necessary resources. Eventually it will grow and produce something very specific. The same is true with that 'seed' on the inside of you. And like a real seed, if you don't get planted, rooted and grounded nor nurtured, the seed dies.

Survey your friends and you'll find that everyone has a unique set of talents, interests and skills. We didn't pick what we ended up with (or else I would have Beyoncé's voice.) From the time we began growing and learning we were also discovering or uncovering our dreams. Those desires in our heart grow stronger, and like a magnet the longing pulls us in the direction of our destiny.

Sometimes we lose connection with our dream. This happens for various reasons: life's demands can pull us off track, or we wrongly judge our dream based on damaging misconceptions. Have you shared these thoughts?

- Dreams should be logical and realistic.
- Dreams unfold on their own.
- Divinely inspired or authentic dreams come with step-by-step instructions.
- Dreams are a vehicle to meet my personal needs, wants and desires.
- Every Dream is attached to stardom.
- I'm not qualified to pursue my dream.
- It's too late to follow my dream.

This line of thinking often produces acts of self-sabotage. I call them 'dream blockers.' Any one of these beliefs can mislead, overwhelm, or trap you in a web of confusion. As a result, doubt may prevent you from ever beginning the journey from dream to reality. Let's address these statements so you can be clear.



Church School Lesson Overview – November 2015

(Continued from page 18)

were indeed religious people. Paul changed tactics and seized the opportunity to speak to the audience on a common topic – a belief in a higher deity. Paul proclaimed that the God that Paul served, the creator of heaven and earth did not dwell in temples and "in Him we live and move and have our being." Paul departed Athens as it was clear that it is impossible to convert the Greeks to Christianity, they simply did not believe the concept of Christianity.

November 29, 2015

Lesson Title: Teaching God's Word

Lesson Scripture: Acts 18

Print: Acts 18:1-11, 18-21

Tentative Devotional Songs: #221, #25, and #243

Key Verse: One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city." (Acts 18:9-10).

In this lesson, Paul arrived in Corinth, a merchant city with a large population of Jews. Here he met Aquila and his wife, Priscilla. Aquila had just arrived from Rome (the Roman leader Claudius had commanded that all Jews leave Italy). Paul befriended Aquila, a fellow tradesman. Both Paul and Aquila were tent makers and while in Corinth, they decided to live and work together.

On Sabbaths, Paul took the opportunity to witness to the Jews and Greeks in Corinth. Just as in previous Jewish communities, the Jews were unreceptive and reviled what Paul was teaching - that Jesus was the Messiah. Even though Paul did convert many of the Corinthians (Jews and Greeks), he did appear to be frustrated with his progress. It was noted that the Lord appeared to Paul in a vision, giving him assurance that his work was not in vain and that there were many in the area that had heard and needed to hear Paul. The Lord assured Paul that He was with him and would not allow harm to come to him.

After eighteen months evangelizing in Corinth, Paul (accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla) decided to leave and sail to Syria. Here Paul

left his companions and entered the local Jewish synagogue. Paul met with the Jewish leaders to discuss his teachings. The Jewish leaders asked Paul to stay longer, but he refused and indicated that if it was God's will, he would return.

Church School Book Club

Discussion Date: October 17, 2015
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Sinners and Saints, Murray & Billingsley, 2012

Discussion Date: 21 November 15
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Choir Director, Carl Weber, 2011

Bishop T.K. Wilson has done all he can to make First Jamaica Ministries a success. But with his last choir director getting caught in a scandal, attendance and cash flow are down. To fill the pews and collection plates, Bishop is counting on a new choir director, the charismatic Aaron Mackie, to revive the church.

Aaron has been waiting his entire life to prove he has what it takes to be a big-time choir director. But his ways around women, past and present, could cost him more than his job. Soon, the Bishop is dealing with in-fighting, jealousies, and personal vendettas. But a final piece of the puzzle has yet to be revealed: Someone has been robbing the church blind. Someone whose connection to the Bishop is far too close for comfort.

I CAN DO
EVERYTHING THROUGH
CHRIST
WHO GIVES ME
STRENGTH

(Colossians 3:1)

November 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship AMEN Deadline	2 9:30 a.m. Fifty Plus Mtg. 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	3	4 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	5 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. Quarterly Conference	6	7 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry
8 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship HARVEST SUNDAY	9	10 6:00 p.m. VIP Chdr Rehearsal Gospel of Allen Mtg.	11 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	12 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal 9th District Planning Meeting	13	14 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 10:30 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting
15 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship	16	17 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN 6:00 p.m. Turkey Bd. Mtg.	18 Thankful People Service 6:00 p.m.	19	20 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal 9th District Lay Convention	21 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry
22 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:30 a.m. Worship	23	24 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	25	26 	27	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	30					



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Mrs. Arelis B. Davis, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Doctor Patrick Clayborn, Pastor



Important Dates to Remember

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <i>October 18, 2015</i> | <i>Pink Sunday, Wear pink or a touch of pink.</i> |
| <i>October 21, 2015</i> | <i>Worship Service (Initial Sermons) and Church Conference, 6:00 p.m.</i> |
| <i>October 21-24, 2015</i> | <i>Southwest Alabama Annual Conference</i> |
| <i>October 23, 2015</i> | <i>Trunk or Treat, A Night of Family Fun, 6:00 p.m.</i> |
| <i>October 28, 2015</i> | <i>Worship Service (Initial Sermons) and Church Conference, 6:00 p.m.</i> |
| <i>October 29, 2015</i> | <i>Classic Revival at St. John, Birmingham, 7:00 p.m.,
The Reverend Patrick and The Reverend Sheri Clayborn, preachers</i> |
| <i>November 1, 2015</i> | <i>Daylight Savings Time Ends...fall back one hour.</i> |
| <i>November 6, 2015</i> | <i>"Acquire the Dream" Workshop, 6:00 p.m.</i> |
| <i>November 5, 2015</i> | <i>First Quarterly Conference, 6:30 p.m.</i> |
| <i>November 12-14, 2015</i> | <i>Plenary Meeting, Daniel Payne Community Plaza,
Birmingham, Alabama</i> |
| <i>November 21, 2015</i> | <i>South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer Planning Meeting</i> |
| <i>November 21-22, 2015</i> | <i>Ninth District Lay Convention, The Kellogg Center,
Tuskegee, Alabama</i> |

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



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 20 Issue 11

November 2015



Pastor Patrick D. Clayborn, Ph.D.

Pastor's Message

O Give Thanks

Luke 17:15-18

I am amazed at how easy it is to slip into the ungrateful place. Do you know that place? It is the place of complaining, whining, murmuring, excuses, pride, assumed privilege, quick fixes, no accountability, and lack of discipline. It is here where we only focus on our problems, our pains, our woes, our shame, our grief, our despair, our low self-image, our lack, and our obstacles. It is in the ungrateful place where we only focus on how grand and glorious we are, on how much we have accomplished, on everything we've ever done, on how much others admire us, on how others cannot make it without us, and on what we did to earn our success - as if we had no help from anyone, including God!

It is so easy to fall into the ungrateful place. Just the intoxicating whisper from the lips of another on how wonderfully well we performed that task; the approval from people whose attention we've been craving; that overflow of blessings that seems like it will never end; that unexpected tragedy coming after you've done everything the right way; that failed relationship that crushes your heart; that financial calamity that turns your world upside down; or that circumstance - which is no fault of your own - that causes you to be without employment are all ways that we can tumble into the ungrateful place. In this place, we are consumed by a spirit of forgetfulness. We easily forget how God blessed us, how God forgave us, how God healed us, and how God delivered us.

The children of Israel, while in the wilderness and only moments removed from their miraculous Red Sea deliverance from Egypt, complained and murmured to Moses. They talked about going back to Egypt and even built an idol god to worship. They continually fell into the ungrateful place.

In the story of the ten lepers in Luke 17, Jesus seems to point to the ungrateful place. After the one leper comes back to give thanks, Jesus asks him, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?"¹ Jesus does not just praise the one who returns to give thanks; he questions the absence of the other nine who do not return in thanks to God. These outcasts had been healed with just a word from Jesus. Certainly, they followed his directive to show themselves to the priest. That act would certify their healing and allow them reentry into all facets of their communities.² However, Jesus never said that they should not return thanks unto God in the immediacy of their healing. It appears that the other nine were Jewish while the one who returned was Samaritan. This is significant because the other nine should have been more grateful than the one. The Samaritan after his healing would still face oppression and discrimination because of his ethnicity; the nine Jews, on the other hand, would be restored fully to their communities.³ It stands to reason that the nine would have had more gratitude since they were gaining "more."

(Continued on page 2)

¹ Luke 17:17-18.

² Chapters 13-14 of Leviticus detail how the priest in ancient Judaism would examine and determine one's healing from leprosy.

³ Paul W. Barnett, *Following Jesus to Jerusalem: Luke 9-19* (Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, UK: Paternoster, 2012), 89-92. Barnett describes Jewish-Samaritan relations in this context.

Pastor's Message

(Continued from page 1)

According to bible scholar Paul Barnett:

Those Jewish lepers, all of whom had been healed, were ungrateful. Only the 'foreigner' appreciated his healing sufficiently to take the trouble to express his praise to God. Through his narrative, Luke tells his readers of the wider failure of the Jews to appreciate the Messiah who had come among them. The Gentiles, however, welcomed the message of Jesus the Messiah.⁴

The ungrateful place that these nine shared was a reflection of the larger Israelite community. Barnett raises the question: Why would this lack of appreciation have existed in this context? He feels there is not sufficient data in Luke to answer. Instead, he brings the challenge to his readers and says that current human failure to be grateful to God stems from pride.⁵ I find that Barnett's comments are spot on!

"Our pride places us in the ungrateful place."

Our pride places us in the ungrateful place. Pride shows up in the sentiment which says, "I deserve this blessing I have received. Why should I trouble myself to give thanks? If I do that, it will slow down my ability to get to the priest and get back to the life I'm supposed to have!" That kind of pride makes us forget the cry of desperation during our affliction and God's mercy during our miraculous deliverance. Pride also shows up in the sentiment which says, "I don't deserve the trouble in which I find myself. I have done nothing wrong, or the wrong I've done doesn't deserve this level of punishment. Why should I give thanks? My problems are unending, and my pain is unbearable. I do not have the time, space, or energy to thank God. Why should I be thankful in the midst of my hardships?" This pride pushes us only to focus on the negative as if life is not full of trouble. Even though it happens in the time of challenge, this pride still makes us the center of the universe. It persuades us to forget all of the blessings God has bestowed and to believe that God no longer has the power to free us from our issues. For the sake of clarity, pride should not be confused with honest emotion. One can be honest about his or her feelings, especially in rough situations, without giving in to pride. Furthermore, this is what God wants from us in those moments. What God does not want is for us to make our focus on our problems a bigger priority than our focus on God. When we make our problems bigger than God, then we succumb to pride and fall into the ungrateful place.

How do we cut through pride to find the place of gratitude? The Samaritan could have easily fallen into the ungrateful place. He could have looked at his life and thought, "Even though I'm healed, I will still face discrimination and have a hard life." Or, he could have thought, "It's about time I got healed. God needs to do more. This healing isn't enough. I need God to rectify the other maladies in my life." Yet, he does not fall into that ungrateful place. Rather, he finds the grateful place. The Samaritan noticed that he was healed. He turned back and went to Jesus. He praised God loudly. He bowed before Jesus and thanked Him.

If we want to find the grateful place, we must follow suit. We must look for God's blessing in the midst of our circumstances. Regardless of how hard or how wonderful our lives may be, if we look with an open heart, all of us will find a blessing on our lives that we have to acknowledge as God's blessing for us. When we find that blessing, we need to return to the source of that blessing. That can be either a physical (going to a place or person), emotional (returning to a memory),

(Continued on page 3)

⁴ *ibid.*, 90.

⁵ *ibid.*, 90-91.

Pastor's Message

(Continued from page 2)

or spiritual (prayer) movement. As we make that movement, we must also testify to others. When the Samaritan praised God loudly, he let the world know the source of his blessing. When we return to the source of our blessing, we have to submit (or resubmit) our lives to God. This is what the Samaritan did when he bowed at Jesus' feet. Finally, we must tell God, "Thank You!" All of these steps are to be done in faith. It takes faith to overcome pride!

Faith in God helps us to find our blessing in tough times. Faith keeps us humble when blessings arrive. Faith leads us to the source of our blessings. Faith gives us the courage to testify. Faith allows us to submit our lives to God. Faith gives us the grace to give thanks. This is how we find the grateful place.

"The blessing of finding the grateful place is awesome."

The blessing of finding the grateful place is awesome. Jesus tells the Samaritan that his faith made him whole.¹ Jesus declared that this man went from just being healed to becoming whole. When we find the grateful place, we, too, make the same movement from healing to wholeness. Our blessings won't be limited to just one area of our lives; they will spread so that we are holistically blessed. Those who live lives of gratitude can testify to the same. In the face of cancer, bereavement, financial calamity, loneliness, marital bliss, family happiness, career success, or setting a lifelong dream, the blessing of God will overtake us as we put our focus on God as the source of our blessing.

As we here at St. John enter this holiday season, we will be looking for the place of gratitude. We will pack holiday baskets and distribute them to families in need on the week of November 15, 2015. On November 22nd at 10AM, we will have our Thankful People Service. Beginning December 1st, we will enter thirty days of prayer to thank God for the year that is closing and to look to God for the year which approaches. We will pray to be a fruitful congregation. We will pray individually, in our families, and as an entire church. We will pray to foster better relationships with ourselves, others, and God. We will celebrate Advent. Our Christmas program will be held on December 13th at 10AM, and our Candlelight Service will be held on Christmas Eve at 8PM. We will take communion each week in December as a part of our Yoke Release month activity. We will write down all of the things that we are leaving behind in 2015. This year, however, we will also keep a list of what we will move toward in 2016. The former list we will burn at our Watchnight Service on December 31st at 10PM. The latter list we will raise as the other is burned that evening. We will also organize with our servant leader Bishop James Davis to register voters, form a food bank, and set up community gardens within the state of Alabama in the new year.

"Come find the grateful place with us."

Come find that grateful place with us! We would love to see you at any or all of the above activities. If you cannot make it here, we encourage you to participate from where you are. We are expecting that our blessing will not be limited to mere healing; we are anticipating wholeness. This comes from our declaration that our God is the source of our blessings and is greater than our blessings. We then choose to worship God over our blessings! Our testimony is that in all things God is good; therefore, in all things, we give God thanks! Hallelujah! We are on our way to the grateful place! Please meet us there!

¹ Luke 17:19.

We Give
THANKS

New Beginnings Celebrated

By Nedra McDaniel

Photography by Darwin Washington

St. John began the conference year with the exciting announcement that six (6) members of the congregation had accepted their call to preach. Each will be licensed to preach in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, per *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2012*, and will serve under the leadership of Pastor Patrick Clayborn. The six (6) were presented to the Steward Board and then to the church. They were given the opportunity to preach their initial sermons at special Wednesday night worship services on October 21 and October 28. Following each service a church conference was convened and the candidates for ministry were overwhelmingly received. These persons were presented at the first Quarterly Conference and issued licenses to preach by the Presiding Elder, the Reverend Oliver Allen.



Rev. Sheri, Ashley Humphrey, Jennifer Patterson,
Justin York and Pastor Clayborn

Sister Jennifer Patterson is a native of Birmingham, Alabama. She currently serves as the ministry leader of the Dance Ministry, attends bible study and Church School weekly, and is a member of the Koinonia Ministry. She is the wife of Julian Patterson and the mother of Jordan Patterson. She is seeking itinerant ministerial orders in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Sister Patterson's initial sermon was entitled "The Sixth Hour Experience Survival Guide" and the biblical text was John 4:1-28, 39-43, with emphasis on verse 3. She used this familiar passage of the Jesus encounter that the Samaritan woman had at the well to support the three points of survival. These points were to remember that God will meet persons where they are, persons must draw closer to Christ and God will provide a change within that empowers one to testify and to step into their purpose.

Brother Justin York is a native of Mobile, Alabama. He currently serves as a Trustee, president of the Sons of Allen and a member of the Kitchen Ministry. He attends bible study regularly. He is the father of Zaria York and the son of the Reverend Marlene Calloway and Mr. Lavada York. He is engaged to be married to Crystalyn Cook. He is seeking itinerant ministerial orders in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Brother York's initial sermon was entitled "Experience Greatness Through Faith" and the biblical text was Romans 12:2. After comparing what one might consider as greatness in material things and the moments of greatness received when one seeks God, he gave points on how to experience greatness through faith. God created humankind to be great and past experiences are sometimes what they need. God gives signs of confirmation. Christian experiences make ones faith stronger. Believers can be great together by finding strength in the faith of others.

Sister Ashley Humphrey is a native of Huntsville, Alabama. She currently serves in the Music Ministry and Media Ministry. She has taught in Vacation Bible School at St. John and regularly attends bible study. She is the daughter of Dr. John Humphrey and the Reverend Dorothy Tiller and the sister of Sherill Humphrey-Luwoye. She is seeking itinerant ministerial orders in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Sister Humphrey's initial sermon was entitled "We Are Loved, We Are Safe, and There Is Work

(Continued on page 5)

New Beginnings Celebrated

By Nedra McDaniel

Photography by Darwin Washington

(Continued from page 4)

to Be Done. The biblical text was Romans 8:34-38. She indicated that the sermon title was the three points for the message. Even though people are raised being told that God loves them, sometimes they have to learn to love themselves before they will believe what they are told about God's love for them. Being safe in God's love means being free from some things as the scripture states that "there is no condemnation in those who love the Lord." Third, believers are safe to work through some things because the scriptures state that nothing will separate believers from God.

Sister Sherrill Humphrey-Luwoye is a native of Huntsville, Alabama. She currently works in the Drama Ministry and works with special worship services. She attends bible study regularly. Sherrill is married to Henry Luwoye. She is seeking to serve as an evangelist at St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church.



Rev. Sheri, Sherrill Luwoye, Janette Smith, Lillie Rivers and Pastor Clayborn

Sister Luwoye's initial sermon was entitled "In Position but Out of Order" with biblical text Mark 15:12-15. She noted that "position" is nice; however, in the text, Pilate was in the position of governor, but out of order in how he handled Jesus' case. The preacher said that Pilate went with the crowd and was more afraid of man than of God. She proclaimed that God honors order over position. Her final point focused on the fact that Jesus was in a bad position (lied on, crucified, laid in a borrowed tomb), but because He was doing the will of God, He was still in order. Her concluding statement was "God sees your order and will put you in good position."

Sister Janette R. Smith considers Huntsville, Alabama her home. She currently works in the Music Ministry, Media Ministry, and as the ministry leader for iTHRIVE Ministry. She has taught the Teen Vacation Bible School Class and regularly attends bible study. She is the daughter of (the late) Lt. Col. John Smith and Sister Eva Smith and the sister of Marc Smith. She is seeking to serve as an evangelist at St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Sister Smith's initial sermon was entitled "The Middle Place" with biblical text from Jeremiah 29:11. She spoke of keys to survival in the middle place (The time when God has given a promise, but has not shown the clear path). Seek God and make the best of a bad situation, even if the situation is like that of the Israelites who would be in captivity for 70 years. Serve while in the middle place because this is a time of preparation. Third, seize the promise of God because He knows the plans He has in store.

Sister Lillie Rivers is a native of North Carolina. She currently serves as a Church School teacher and a member of the Music Ministry. She regularly teaches Vacation Bible School and the Adult Church School Class. She attends Church School and bible study weekly. She is married to Jeffrey L. Rivers. She is seeking to serve as an exhorter at St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Sister River's initial sermon was entitled "This Is My Story. What is Yours?" She spoke from several scriptures, Proverbs 22:6, John 14:1 and Philippians 1:6. Using Proverbs 22:6, she spoke of how her life was shaped by the foundation laid by learning about Christ as a child. She used the

(Continued on page 6)

New Beginnings Celebrated



New preachers pictured with Pastor Clayborn and Presiding Elder Allen after they receive their licenses at the first Quarterly Conference of the 2015-2016 Conference Year.

visual example of pouring drink mix into a bottle of water to illustrate the transformation when one accepts Christ. She used John 14:1 to show that believers should not give up on God because He is with them in every situation. The passage from Philippians 1:6 was used to emphasize that God has begun a good work in the lives of believers and He will see them through.

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

Prayer Time

Weekly Prayer Time each Tuesday at Noon,
(Weekly prayertime will be at noon on Tuesdays during the month of December.)

Conference Call Credentials
US Toll Number (530) 881-1212
Meeting ID: 876-863-940

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 Military Ministry

By Paula Eliard



Did you know that St. John AME has a ministry dedicated to the caring for those in the military? Well, if not, November is a wonderful month to introduce readers to this ministry! The Military Ministry teams with Pastor Clayborn, church leadership, chaplains and other ministries to provide resources to current and former military members during tough times. Examples of areas that are supported by the Military Ministry are:

- Resources for military members transitioning to civilian life
- Resources for at-home spouses discussing fears, challenges, encouragement, and prayer
- Phone calls and cards of encouragement for family members, and deployed troops
- Care packages for the deployed and family members

- Military Appreciation recognition:
 - Month of the Military Child
 - Spouse Recognition Day
 - Patriot Day
 - Memorial Day
 - Veterans Day Ceremony

The Military Ministry will meet monthly on the 2nd Saturday at 9:30 a.m. starting in January 2016. For more information on this remarkable ministry, please contact the Reverend Robert B. Hereford or Sister Felicia Carter.

Also, as Veterans Day is observed this month, take a moment to reflect on the contributions made by those who are serving and have served this country.

The following shows various holidays, events and observances that are specific to the United States military, active duty personnel, veterans, reservists and military families (military spouse, military children).

February 19th	Coast Guard Reserve Birthday
March 3rd	Navy Reserve Birthday
Entire month of April	Month of the Military Child
April 1-4th	Air Force Reserve Birthday
April 23rd	Army Reserves Birthday
Entire month of May	National Military Appreciation Month
2 nd Friday in May	Military Spouses Day
September 11th	Patriots Day- 9/11 Remembrance Day
November 11th	Veterans Day
Entire Month of November	National Military Family Month
December 7th	Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

GOOD SPIRITS*

By Sherrill Luwoye

Good spirits bear great souls like mothers with infants in arms.

They are made holy by the Greatest Spirit.

They sail freely amongst the other sincere spirits which also bear sound souls.

They commune and chorus in league, one song and then another, and are known for trusting greatly in the Greatest Spirit.

They saunter on faith leaping from new mercies to new mercies like forest green lily pads resting under base.

They delight in thanking the Greatest Spirit for every good and perfect gift.

Good spirits share with one another wisdom like treats in the hands of modest children playing under golden warmth.

But what of the other spirits?

Spirits of darkness and shadow or ailment lurking to and fro;

with good light troubling them along their wrong way.

These spirits journey in evil frolic in hopes to destroy the beautiful chorus created by the Greatest Spirit for the good spirits singing what they know and humming what they cannot remember.

Evil spirits seem strong like roaring waters moving quickly and very quickly down colorful streams coercing good spirits down tasteless waters but the Greatest is with us and in us.

The Greatest too goes down the red, blue and white streams,

and as we tumble so does the Greatest Spirit tumble against hollow spirits.

We the good spirits endure water rushing into our souls and look to stars.

We look and wonder of the 50 stars which will twinkle for us?

Which star can the good spirits wish upon?

We have no star?

Well, let the Greatest Spirit take our wishes higher past stripes and stars.

We will wish upon the Greatest Spirit with a familiar prayer in the sound of a new score,

and the Greatest Spirit will hear our great spirits noise.

Without note or lyric, we, the good spirits are heard.

As golden warmth bids time adieu with good spirits and great souls near and far,

we are still heard.

As great souls are pushed seemingly dipping over the scarp,

we are still heard.

As tears from natural home break our already broken spirits,

we are heard by the Greatest Spirit.

Never underlings.

Good spirits that appear to be lost are well at peace.

Not one good soul has landed below for rocks or mire.

The Greatest Spirit reaches its created good with compassion love and gentleness.

Good is lifted high into hidden skies.

and good souls still of earth warring with hollow spirits in fruitless clay?

Look to rise to see!

See!

We see familiar sweet souls flying high and lifted up above the crashing waters.

We see only empty spirits and empty souls belonging to the rocks and mire below.

So let the gone good souls be lifted up past twinge and peril that desire to sift the good spirits as wheat.

(Continued on page 9)

In Honor of National Family Caregivers Month Caregivers' Appreciation Month

By Barbara Johnson

Reference: (2015, Nov./Dec.). Random acts of kindness for caregivers.
AARP, The Magazine, 58 & 60.

You Have Seen Them Care, Now Show You Care About Them

1. Bring her a low-maintenance house plant.
2. Do some holiday shopping for him.
3. Gas up his/her car
4. Do a load of his/her laundry
5. Send her flowers
6. Take him/her out for coffee or lunch
7. Mow the lawn
8. Help compose a letter
9. Take/send them a book of stamps in a card
10. Cook and deliver a meal
11. Rake and bag the leaves
12. Call to check on them
13. Tell them how much they are appreciated
14. Make a CD of their favorite music
15. Bake them some cookies
16. Send her a thinking-of-you card
17. Fix a leaky faucet or make other repairs
18. Let them vent
19. If you are tech-savvy, consider offering to help with a computer problem
20. Offer to drop-off/pick up a prescription for him/her

**Random
Acts of Kindness
For Caregivers**



Check out 80 other suggestions in the Nov./Dec. issue of *AARP, The Magazine*

St. John AME Church CPR Ministry

(Caregivers, Prayer and Respite Ministry)
A Steward Board Sponsored Program
Steward Abbiegail Hugine, Chairperson
"You don't have to do this alone."

GOOD SPIRITS*

By Sherrill Luwoye

(Continued from page 8)

Let them be lifted up.
To the Greatest Spirit
To the Greatest Soul
To rest.

*Copyright 2014-2020 ThePurpleSoap-Box – All Rights Reserved.
This poem was written by Sherrill Luwoye and sent to Emanuel AME Church in memory of the Emanuel9.

St. John "Lived Pink" During October

By Barbara Johnson



Whether it was to honor a loved one who had lost the struggle, or to celebrate someone who had won the battle, or to support someone going through the storm of a breast cancer diagnosis, St. John, "Lived Pink" during the month of October. Pink was everywhere: A huge truck*, pronouncing



"Pouring for A Cure" was staged in the parking lot on the first Sunday, pink ribbons were on display in various locations, pink candles and pink decorations adorned the vestibule. Sunday, October 18th was designated 'Pink Sunday' and everyone dressed in accordance.

The Koinonias, of St. John, sponsored a "Pink Party with a Purpose" on Saturday, October 17th. The purpose was to present an informative conversation about Breast Cancer. Mrs. Rosemary Wells, a registered nurse with 30 years of experience as an RN and 27 years of experience with Veterans Affairs, employed by Birmingham VA and presently working at the Madison Community Based Outpatient Clinic, presented the information.

Mrs. Wells stated that every year, women and men, across the country band together to raise consciousness about being diligent in early detection and in assessing risk within families for breast cancer. Early detection is especially critical for African-American women, because they tend to be diagnosed with breast cancer at a younger age, and are more likely to be diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer, which is an aggressive form of the disease, which has fewer, effective treatment options. Triple negative cancer tends to grow and spread more quickly than other types of breast cancer. As a result, African-American women are more likely to die of breast cancer than Caucasian women.



She also stated that all people, whether male or female, are born with breast cells and tissue. Even though, male breast cancer is very rare, it does occur. Less than 1% of all breast cancer cases develop in men, and only one in a thousand men will ever be diagnosed with breast cancer. Men carry a higher mortality rate than women, primarily because awareness among men is less and they are less likely to assume a lump is breast cancer, which can cause a delay in treatment.

The following were some suggested tips to help reduce the risk of breast cancer:

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Stay physically active
- Eat fruits and vegetables
- Do not smoke
- Limit alcohol consumption
- Perform monthly breast-self exams
- **Women 40 and older should have regularly scheduled mammograms every 1 or 2 years.
- **Women who are younger than 40 and have risk factors for breast cancer should ask their healthcare professional whether mammograms are advisable and how often.

The American Cancer Society recommends that every woman start getting mammograms

(Continued on page 11)



St. John "Lived Pink" During October

By Barbara Johnson



(Continued from page 10)

at the age of 40, and should continue regardless of a woman's age, as long as, she does not have a serious health problem, such as Congestive Heart Failure, end stage renal disease, COPD, or moderate to severe Dementia.

**New guidelines came out just after this workshop that suggested different recommendations for screenings and the ages at which they should be done. For this information, check the internet for the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force (USPSTF) report.

Needless to say, these new recommendations have caused much confusion. The bottom line is for each woman to consider their individual risk factors and continue to discuss the best plan of protection with their physicians.

Early detection provides the greatest possibility for successful treatment. An early detection plan includes performing monthly breast-self exams, visiting the doctor for scheduled, clinical breast exams, and following healthcare provider's recommendations for mammograms.

THE BEST PROTECTION IS...EARLY DETECTION!

* The "Pouring for a Cure" truck was provided by Sequatchie Concrete Company.



Pictured on Pink Sunday - the kids during the children's message, Pastor Clayborn and the Gospel Choir.

Bible Riddles*

Submitted by Paulette Bargon

????? ???

Riddles

with

Answers

????? ???

Here are a few bible riddles that are amusing. This could be an entertaining game for the family after Thanksgiving dinner. Have the children read the riddles and the adults try to answer them. Some are corny and some are cute, but they are still fun.

1. What kind of man was Boaz before he married?
2. What do they call pastors in Germany?
3. Who was the greatest financier in the Bible?
4. Who was the greatest female financier in the Bible?
5. What kind of motor vehicles are in the Bible?
6. Who was the greatest comedian in the Bible?
7. What excuse did Adam give to his children as to why he no longer lived in Eden?
8. What servant of God was the most flagrant lawbreaker in the Bible?
9. Which area of Palestine was especially wealthy?
10. Who is the greatest babysitter mentioned in the Bible?
11. Which Bible character had no parents?
12. Why didn't they play cards on the Ark?
13. Who does the Bible direct to make coffee, men or women?

Answers

1. Ruthless
2. German Shepherds.
3. Noah. He was floating his stock while everyone else was in liquidation.
4. Pharaoh's daughter. She went down to the bank and drew out a little prophet.
5. Jehovah drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden in a Fury. David's Triumph was heard throughout the land. Also, probably a Honda, because the apostles were all in one accord.
6. Samson. He brought the house down.
7. Your mother ate us out of house and home.
8. Moses. He broke all 10 commandments at once.
9. The area around Jordan. The banks were always overflowing.
10. David. He rocked Goliath to a very deep sleep.
11. Joshua, son of Nun.
12. Because Noah was standing on the deck. (Groan...)
13. There is a whole book about it "He brews"

Happy Thanksgiving everyone! Do not forget to invite Christ to the holiday table. Please pray for a glorious and soul saving holiday season.

*Riddles taken from the Rev. Charles P. Henderson's God Web.org

*No matter what happens, always be thankful,
for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.*

1Thessalonians 5:18



Observing the Advent Service

One beautiful tradition of Advent is lighting the candles of the Advent wreath. The purpose of the wreath is to deepen the understanding of Christmas. From the first Sunday in Advent to Christmas morning, the wreath grows in beauty and light as Christians wait in anticipation of the celebration of the birth of Christ.

Historically, the Advent wreath is traced to pagan sources. The custom was adapted by the Christian church to demonstrate how the people dwelling in darkness were so magnificently given light by the Son of God. Since Advent sets a mood of waiting in the dark, and because light began to gain ascendancy over the darkness when Christ was born, lighting the Advent wreath is a most appropriate and meaningful tradition.

The wreath of live greenery symbolizes the everlasting life found in Christ. It reminds us of the eternal, unchanging love of God, made evident to us through His Son. The candles in the wreath signify God's Son as the light of the world. Customarily, there are four candles for the four weeks of Advent. The three purple candles represent hope, love and peace. The pink candle represents joy. The Advent candles are lit throughout Advent, but the Christ candle, the center candle, is lighted on Christmas morning or Christmas Eve. The purpose of Advent is to prepare hearts and minds for the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Stewards Confirmed for Conference Year

Roselyne Akines
Willie Bradford
Guy Ginn
James O. Heyward
Marcus Hill
Abbiegail Hugine
Barbara Johnson
Jeanette Jones
Nedra McDaniel
Clifton Miller
Mary Rankin
Eddie Sherrod
Lauretta Teague
Sam Walton
Pamela Whitehead

Church School Book Club

Discussion Date: 21 November 2015
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Choir Director, Carl Weber, 2011

Discussion Date: 20 December 2015
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Mare's War, Tanita Davis, 2011

Meet Mare, a World War II veteran and a grandmother like no other. She was once a willful teenager who escaped her less than perfect life in the Deep South and lied about her age to join the African American Battalion of the Women's Army Corps. Now she is driving her granddaughters—two willful teenagers in their own rite—on a cross-country road trip. The girls are initially skeptical of Mare's flippy wigs and stilettos, but they soon find themselves entranced by the story she has to tell, and readers will be too.

Told in alternating chapters, half of which follow Mare through her experiences as a WAC and half of which follow Mare and her granddaughters on the road in the present day, this novel introduces readers to a larger-than-life character and a fascinating chapter in African American history... Amazon

Trustees Elected for Conference Year

Lars Avery
Bridget J. Floyd
Celeste Gilmore
Karl Gullatte
Erica Harbin
Jesse Johnson
Carl Lewis
Randy Love
Thalia Love
Curtis Mayes
Glenn Phippen
Claudienne Purifoy-Fears
Arthur Sconiers
Eva Smith
Terry Speight
Gerald Teague
Darwin Washington
William (Bill) Williams
Justin York

Trunk or Treat at St. John AME

By Mariah Gullatte

One fall night I found myself traveling down Church Street on my way to Big Spring Park. Passing over the railroad tracks, I saw the lights, kids, and candy and could not help myself; I had to stop!

Outside of the church, St. John A.M.E, there was a fire trucks, a jumpy, people of all ages, and trunks filled with sweets and treats! Kids of all ages, 2-92, had their share of candy. From sour patch kids, to chocolate of any kind, St. John had it all! Waking past the trunks of candy, it seemed to be a never ending line of kids awaiting the sugar high! Along with the sugar high, there were bouncies, pizza, and a movie, *Hotel Transylvania*! Before dark, there were also friendly games of basketball while others chose to decorate the parking lot in chalk creations.

Seeing all the different costumes reminded me of the audience on Wayne Brady's TV show, *Let's Make a Deal*! I never knew a church could bring so many characters together: Super Woman, Spiderman, Elsa, baby zebras, Power Rangers, cats, Batman twins, and even the Good Witch! But most importantly, this was an atmosphere where the community and church became one. This was fellowship the St. John way, by the little church on the corner.

After my visit, I am already planning my costume for next year! But until next time, my next stop will be at the dentist's office.

The "Trunk or Treat" event was jointly sponsored by the St. John Church School, YPD, Christian Education Department and Koinonia Ministry.



Scenes from outside and inside of the church on Trunk or Treat Night.

Are We Drinking Enough Water?

By Angelia Daniels

God has given people the freedom to choose life over death. They cannot control all the things that cause disease or accidents, but they can make choices that reduce the risks of disease, premature death and choices that promote health. One of the choices to better health is to choose to drink more water and one can begin to drink more water today, consistently. Here are some reasons why drinking water is important.



Water is essential for life. It is the most basic and abundant substance on earth. Even before there were plants, animals and humankind, God created plenty of water to supply their needs. Even though bodies need water and there is plenty of water, millions are slowly dying and aging quicker from not drinking enough water. Sometimes people do not drink it at all.

Bodies consist of more than 60% water by weight, the brain is about 70% water and the lungs contain more than 90% water. Blood is approximately 83% water. The cartilage lubricates joints, cushions bones, and absorbs shock and water contributes up to 80% of its wet weight.

When bodies do not get enough water, adverse things can happen. The body's natural defense mechanism starts to protect the vital organs, such as the brain, heart and lungs, from inadequate water intake by taking water from less vital areas like skin, joints, hair, etc.

On average, bodies lose 4% of their water every day through urine, feces, sweat and evaporation from our lungs. Thirst is often used as a guide to determine how much water one should be drinking; but experts say that long before the brain's signals to drink water, the person is probably already dehydrated. In other words, thirst is the body's first sign of dehydration. Unless people are proactive in their daily water intake and give attention and focus to their body's need for water, dehydration becomes a way of life. In fact, 75% of Americans are chronically dehydrated and in 37% the thirst sensation is so impaired that it is often mistaken for feelings of hunger. Thus many live their entire lives in this dehydrated state that may result in premature aging, decreased kidney function, diabetes, elevated blood pressure, joint issues, and many other health problems.

Water is vital to maintaining and improving health and lack of it can be more detrimental in the elderly, babies and small children. The elderly are prone to developing a diminished thirst sensation. Severe dehydration is one of the primary reasons for hospitalization in this group. Infants and children can lose more fluid quicker, relative to their weight. This is usually caused by diarrhea, vomiting and fever which may require hospitalization if fluid balances are not restored quickly. Some early symptoms of dehydration are headaches, fatigue, confusion, loss of appetite, flushed skin, dry skin, mouth and eyes, lack of skin moisture and elasticity and a slow metabolism which can lead to weight gain.

The World Health Organization recommends the following for daily water intake under normal health and environmental conditions:

Females- approximately nine (9) 8 ounce glasses

Males – approximately eight (8) 8 ounce glasses

Some experts believe that the above does not include the water in food consumed. Supposedly meals are high in water content, but this may or may not be the case. Instead of counting ounces, experts recommend drinking water throughout the day from a reusable bottle so that one never gets thirsty. The point is to stay hydrated with water.

Remember, coffee, sodas, tea and alcohol are not substitutes for water. Studies have shown that caffeine actually depletes the body of more fluid than it provides. Drinking sugary drinks can cause heart attacks, diabetes, kidney failure and high blood pressure.

(Continued on page 16)

It is Time for the 19th Annual Taste Tea

The AMENewsletter Staff is proud to announce that the 19th Annual Taste Tea will be held on Sunday, December 13, 2015 after the 10 a.m. Christmas Program. For those who are new to the event, this is an opportunity to sample delicious cuisine from the kitchens of St. John members and friends. It will be held in the S.S. Hereford Fellowship Hall of St. John.

Members and friends of St. John are asked to please bring a favorite dish to share and be sure to bring the recipe that will be published in the 2016 edition of the AMENewsletter. Just bring the dish to the Fellowship Hall before services/programs on that day.

There will be a variety of foods including appetizers, soups, salads, casseroles, vegetables, desserts and punch. Please come to the "Winter Wonderland" in the S. S. Hereford Fellowship Hall as we focus on the Christmas season and enjoy good food and fellowship. Please direct any questions to coordinators Bridget Floyd and Claire Philadelphia.

Online Giving is Easy!

Online contributions may be made to St. John by using your PayPal® account.

Within PayPal, send donations directly to St. John at stjohnameh@aol.com. Select the option to transfer from your banking account or PayPal balance and specify donate/friends and family.

Online giving is easy!

You may also donate by sending funds through PopMoney to stjohnameh@aol.com.

Soup Kitchen



To What Do You Look
Forward?

By Charlsie Brooks

Abraham was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and city built by God. (Hebrews 11:10)

As children, people usually looked forward to birthdays and Christmas. They were excited to see what gifts they would receive. As school children, they looked forward to leaving school one day and venturing into the world. They had something to which they looked forward.

Abraham was a pioneer who left his comfort zones and the security of his home to explore new areas, not only in Israel, but also in his faith. God made Abraham certain promises with hope and faith in his heart. Abraham was sure they would be kept and he knew there would be much to experience in the future: a bigger, better life, founded on God's promises. As adults, many people look forward to retirement, comfort of family joy, and the hope that a more glorious life in Christ will be in their future.

Many who come each 3rd and 4th Tuesday to the "Soup Kitchen" come with no hope for their future. They come only with insecurities of this earthly life. Those in the ministry pray that as they serve them they not only offer physical food, but share the love and faith that they have in God who is the builder and designer of eternal life. Members are invited to join this ministry as they offer Christ to those who come.

*Lord God, help us to look at the horizon with
hope in our hearts as we share
Your love to the lost. Amen*

2016 Prison Ministry Volunteer Training Schedule

DATE	LOCATION	CONTACT PERSON
9 AM—12 PM SATURDAY, Dec. 5, 2015	Whitesburg Baptist Church 7300 Whitesburg Dr./Huntsville, AL	Dick Thomassian
9 AM—12 PM SATURDAY, Jan 9, 2016	Lindsay Lane Baptist 1300 Lindsay Lane / Athens, AL 35613	Robert "Bobby" Moore

Church School Lesson Overview – December 2015

This month's reviews were written by Brother Willie J. Sandifer. The reference is The 2015-16 Standard Lesson eCommentary.

December 6, 2015

Lesson Title: The Sabbath Day

Lesson Scripture: Exodus 16:23; 20:8-11; 31:12-18; Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Leviticus 23:3-8; Matthew 12:1-14; Acts 13:42

Print Exodus 20:8-11

Devotional Songs: #112, #272, and #243

Key Verse: "Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8).

The Key Verse Scripture in this lesson highlights God's command to His people Israel to "remember the Sabbath." The commentary states: "The Sabbath was God's weekly time-out for His children of the Old Testament era. It was not for discipline of bad behavior, but to encourage them to remember their Creator and to imitate Him in the important area of rest."

The first part of the lesson comes from Exodus 19, where God gave the Ten Commandments to His people at Mount Sinai. The second part of the lesson is based on Exodus 31 where the Israelites were given instructions regarding the construction of the tabernacle.

The commentary notes that today, people live in a time when it is easy to let Sunday be treated as "just another day" on the calendar. Students should ask themselves if reserving the Lord's Day for worship is a priority for them? They should not let either business or "busy-ness" distract them from this priority!

In concluding the discussion on the lesson, the commentary states "Making time for adequate rest is a matter of stewardship; it is taking proper care of ones bodies. Lack of rest reflects poor stewardship, and it detracts from the ability to serve God faithfully and to the best of their ability."

December 13, 2015

Lesson Title: Acceptable Offerings

Lesson Scripture: Leviticus 22:17-33; 23:9-14, 31-33; Deuteronomy 22:6, 7; Micah 6:6-8; Isaiah 1:10-20; Romans 12:1, 2; 1 Corinthians 10:14-22

Print Leviticus 22:17-25, 31-33

Devotional Songs: #118, #114, and #111

Key Verse: "Therefore shall ye keep my commandments, and do them: I am the Lord" (Leviticus 22:31).

This lesson focuses on God's concern for acceptable offerings. The lesson examines the standards that God expects for offerings.

Leviticus can be a difficult book for today's readers because of the details on the sacrificing of animals and to blood. Also, the regulations about ceremonially clean and unclean foods seem irrelevant for the lives of Christians.

The commentary states "Rather than focusing on the details of the laws and regulations when studying Leviticus, perhaps it is more helpful to consider the book's primary themes of *sacrifice* and *holiness*, both of which play prominent roles in the New Testament as well. *Sacrifice* is important because of Jesus' supreme, once-for-all offering of himself on the cross and because of the responsibility of His followers to offer themselves as living sacrifices. *Holiness* is crucial because the holiness imperative in Leviticus 19:2 is repeated in 1 Peter 1:15, 16 in instructing Christians on how to live. Both themes play important parts in this lesson."

In the conclusion for the lesson, the commentary states "One must keep in mind when studying the laws concerning Old Testament offerings that undergirding all of them is the holiness of God. It is vital that God's holiness not be compromised in any way and that His people learn to honor that holiness in every detail of their lives."

"The requirements given in the Law of Moses regarding offerings are not there because God is a demanding, ruthless tyrant. Rather, they are there to impress upon those who present offerings the nature of the one being worshipped. And in the bigger picture of humanity's redemption, God's requiring "the best" prepares for how He one day offers His own best—His sinless Son—as the perfect sacrifice to die for imperfect people."

December 20, 2015

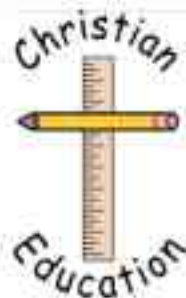
Lesson Title: Dedication of the First Born

Lesson Scripture: Exodus 13:11-16; Leviticus 12:1-8; Numbers 3:5-13; Luke 2:21-39

Print Exodus 13:13B-15

Devotional Songs: #120, #116, and #115

(Continued on page 18)



Church School Lesson Overview – December 2015

(Continued from page 17)

Key Verses: "When the days of her purification according to the Law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord" (Luke 2:22).

In biblical times there was a special position for the firstborn male. This lesson discusses the Old Testament command of God regarding redemption of the firstborn, Mary and Joseph's actions regarding Jesus as the firstborn.

The commentary explained the tradition, "The practice of sanctifying, by redemption, every Israelite firstborn male was so important that it was the second observance commanded of Israel following the exodus from Egypt. The important role of the firstborn male is further seen in his receiving certain privileges, including leadership responsibilities and a greater share of the family inheritance once the father had passed away."

"Being a firstborn male Israelite had great significance because of the unique history of the nation. Regarding the infant Jesus, the Gospel of Luke notes this as carrying out the redemption that Exodus describes."

Next, it explains how the Old Testament Scriptures relate to the New Testament. "The joy of the Christmas season may cause one to overlook how Jesus, God's firstborn, was treated. Yet unlike the firstborn in Israel at the time of the tenth plague, Jesus was not spared from death. He became the substitute for sinful humanity at the cross. He was the Passover lamb who was sacrificed and whose blood now makes it possible for God's judgment and wrath to pass over believers of today."

"Jesus is still the true gift of Christmas, the one that keeps on giving—giving eternal life to those who trust in Him. The cross, the place where God did not spare His own firstborn from death, results in redemption, that believers may be called 'the sons of God'."

December 27, 2015

Lesson Title: A Generous Gift

Lesson Scripture: Matthew 23:1-12; Mark 12:38-44

Print: Matthew 23:2-12

Tentative Devotional Songs: #122; #108; and #108

Key Verse: "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:12).

The text for this lesson from Matthew and Mark comes after Jesus confronts the scribes and Pharisees. According to the commentary, "Scribes served the vital role of copying Scripture by hand in an era that did not have copy machines, electronic texts, etc. A scribe was therefore recognized as an expert in the Scriptures. Scribes were held in high esteem."

Jesus points out the hypocrisy in that they use their position to take advantage of the people. He indicated that this is not what was intended for their position. The positions were to be more like Moses' when he sat and interpreted the law of God to liberate the people.

Further discussion in the commentary follows. "There can be no greater contrast than that between the religious leaders and the poor widow of the first century AD. The leaders sought the approval of people, forgetting God in the process. The widow had been abandoned by people and could trust only in God. The leaders believed that they did great things in the public eye. The widow's great deed was unnoticed by all except Jesus. The leaders' pride left them heartless toward the weak. The widow's need taught her generosity like that of God himself, who gave His Son for all mankind."

Real generosity is not a product of abundance but of humble, lowly trust. The more people know they need God, the more they trust Him. The more they trust, the more they realize His generosity. And so believers in turn are compelled to be generous with others as He is generous with them.

Drinking Water

(Continued from page 15)

Water should be the beverage of choice. It is good for the body and it is absolutely needed for healthy bodies. And when a person does not drink enough water, the consequences can be very detrimental to their present and future health status. If they try, they can drink more water. It is a choice.





The Power of Small Wins

By Javette R. Smith

Certified Strategic Intervention & Mindset Coach

"None of my dreams seem to be getting any momentum, I just don't feel like I'm getting any closer to my goals and aspirations." Have you ever felt this way? We all have. As I was working with a client who was feeling down about what she labeled a lack of measurable success, I thought about a blog I had recently read and an article on "The Power of Small Wins." The blog is written by Daniel Coyle—a New York Times bestselling author. When I shared the concept with her, it seemed to shift her outlook and perspective. I hope you find some nuggets of wisdom in it as well.

Most of us spend a lot of time and energy seeking the big breakthrough - that magical moment when, after a lot of effort, everything finally clicks - when you play the song perfectly, ace the test, win the big game. Those moments are incredibly satisfying, but they are also a problem.

Here is why—focusing on the big breakthrough can cause you to overreach. It can create disappointment (after all, breakthroughs are rare, by definition). Worse, you stop focusing on the smaller, incremental things that really matter.

The best performers and teachers do not get caught up in seeking big breakthrough moments. Instead, they hunt the *little* breakthroughs - the small, seemingly insignificant progressions that create steady daily progress. In short, they love baby steps. Teresa Amabile and Steven Kramer explore this idea in their fascinating book The Progress Principle. In it, they analyze 12,000 diary entries from 238 subjects to get a picture of the subjects' inner work lives. They conclude that the common trait of highly successful subjects is that they are focused on achieving "small wins" - those tiny, daily progressions that don't seem like much but which add up, over time, to big things.

The payoffs of a "small-win" mindset are clear:

- You tend to be less disappointed, and more motivated.
- You stay focused on the present.
- You don't overreach by taking shortcuts and trying to do everything at once.

Perhaps most important, the "small-win" approach is aligned with the way the brain is built to learn: chunk by chunk, connection by connection, rep by rep. John Wooten, one of the most successful basketball coaches of all times stated: "Don't look for the big, quick improvement. Seek the small improvement one day at a time. That's the only way it happens - and when it happens, it lasts."

A few ideas for a small-win mindset:

- Keep a daily notebook: Name the small changes you make each day.
- When you get a small win, freeze: Don't breeze past small improvements; instead, take a few seconds to acknowledge and celebrate them.
- Aim for a daily Smallest Achievable Perfection (SAP). Pick one little thing to perfect in a single day - one move, one action, one chunk. Work on it until it's polished, until you can't not do it right.

Doesn't that take the pressure off of you, for having to ace a big win every time? It puts more emphasis on enjoying the journey, which is crucial. Life is not a sprint to be run quickly, but a marathon where you stop and smell the roses along the way. It is best to appreciate the process, celebrate the big and small wins, and enjoy the ride. I would love to hear if you have more ideas for making small wins.

Visit Me at www.UBeEmpowered.com

Earnest Ellison, Jr. Received the 2015 Fellowship Open Lifetime Achievement Award

By Paula Eliard



Earnest Ellison, Jr.

On August 13, 2015, I had the superb pleasure of witnessing my Dad's, Earnest Ellison, Jr., induction into the Fellowship Hall of Fame in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Each year, the Fellowship Open honors individuals who have had a dramatic impact on the improvement of the lives of people in America, with a particular focus on those who have created more opportunities for the nation's youth. Past recipients include Vell Phillips, Frank Robinson, Henry Aaron, Herb Kohl, Willie Davis, and Junior Bridgeman.

My Dad received the award for making the game of golf more diverse. He is the managing partner of Ellison Consulting Group, LLC, a diversity and inclusion consultancy headquartered in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. His primary focus is to make diversity and inclusion essential within the sports industry while leveraging inclusion to create value for national sports organizations, their partners, and customers. Formerly the PGA of America director of business and community relations, he is widely recognized for his vanguard approach to creating a culture of diversity and inclusion within the world's largest working sports organization. He also changed PGA's community relations image by creating partnerships with organizations that primarily focus on equality and inclusion for the disadvantaged.

During his 17 years at the PGA of America, he earned a reputation as a valuable diversity and community engaging resource for many PGA partners, golf associations, and companies. Prior to the PGA, he spent over 22 years in various financial managerial positions on both domestic and international assignments while working for IBM and Unisys Corporations. Originally from Elba, Alabama, he is also a graduate of Alabama A&M University and is a much sought-after speaker on the subject of diversity within the sports arena. He has received several prestigious awards and honors in recognition of the contributions he has made within communities across the United States. He is the 2014-2016 chairman-elect for the United Way of Palm Beach County; treasurer for the Black Chamber of Commerce Palm Beach County; vice-chairman for the First Tee of Palm Beach, Treasure Coast, and Broward Counties; and serves on the National Diversity Advisory Council of the American Red Cross.

He was extremely humbled to receive this award, and I could not have been a more proud daughter to be in attendance to see him receive it! He was awarded a PGA Honoree Portrait that will be housed in the PGA of America in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, featured in History Makers, which is hosted by Julieanna Richardson, and will be part of the Library of Congress permanent archives. This was indeed a true blessing to him as well as our family!

Editor's Note: This outstanding accomplishment of the father of one of St. John's members is saluted by the church. Parents should encourage their children and youth to read this article as an inspiration for their lives and an appreciation for Mr. Ellison's contributions to diversity in sports.



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The Right Reverend James L. Davis, Servant Bishop

Mrs. Arelis B. Davis, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Doctor Patrick Clayborn, Pastor



Important Dates to Remember

*November 20-21, 2015 Ninth District Lay Convention, The Kellogg Center,
 Tuskegee, Alabama*

November 22, 2015 Thankful People Worship Service, 10 AM

*December 13, 2015 Worship Service, 8 AM
 Christmas Program, 10 AM
 19th Annual Taste Tea immediately following Christmas Program*

December 24, 2015 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 6pm

December 25, 2015 Merry Christmas!

December 31, 2015 Yoke Release Watch Night Service

*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 20 Issue 12

December 2015

Pastor's Message

Advent's Movements of Faith

Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:5-45

The story of Advent is one of faith development. When we survey the primary characters, they are all taken on journeys of faith: Mary, Joseph, Zechariah, Elizabeth, the wise men, and the shepherds. Let's just take the first four for the purpose of this discussion.

Mary moves from fear to favor. After Gabriel greets her, he asks her not to be afraid and to embrace the miracle that she will bear God's son. Fear becomes confusion for Mary, and she asks, "How can this be?" Gabriel insists that the Holy Spirit will take care of everything and that her cousin has experienced a similar miracle. Mary's response is "Let it be." Her movement is from "how can this be" to "let it be." From her interaction with Gabriel, she is able to move from her fears around this miracle to accepting it as God's favor on her life - a movement of faith development.

Joseph moves from divorce to dreams. As he decides to privately divorce Mary after hearing her "fantastic" story behind her pregnancy, he has a dream in which an angel encourages him to take Mary in marriage. The angel verifies Mary's version of the events and correlates it to prophecy of Isaiah. The angel then tells Joseph that he has a role to play; he must name the baby Jesus. When Joseph awakes from the dream, he does everything the angel commanded. From his encounter with the angel, Joseph is able to move from his lack of understanding, which almost brought divorce, to fulfilling the dream that God had given him - a movement of faith development.

Zechariah moves from doubt to deliverance. During his service as a priest in the temple, an angel visits him and informs him that he and his wife will have a son with a holy mission. Zechariah's response is priceless: "I'm old, and my wife is old too! So, how is this going to work?" The angel says, "I stand in the presence of God. Therefore, this message is pure truth. However, since you doubt, your mouth will be closed until the baby is born." Zechariah leaves the temple, unable to speak. He then conceives a child with his wife Elizabeth. This is truly a move of faith because he pushes through his doubt to do the requisite work for the manifestation of the blessing. When the child is born, he gives the child the name prescribed by the angel - John. Zechariah defies the social custom of his time by using a name other than those used within his family. At the moment Zechariah names his son (by writing on a tablet), Zechariah's mouth opens, and he praises God. Zechariah not only moved from doubt to deliverance, but also he moved from pessimism to praise - a movement of faith development.

Elizabeth moves from barrenness to blessedness. Unlike the others, she gets no visitation from an angel. She is barren and seemingly beyond child bearing years. Her barrenness has caused her to be the object of ridicule in her community. One day, her husband Zechariah comes home from serving as a priest in the temple and is unable to speak. The bible never says if he found a nonverbal way to communicate to her what happened. It only reports that they conceived a child in those days. Whether or not Zechariah told Elizabeth what transpired in the temple, he invites her to "be fruitful," and she accepts his invitation. When she realizes that she is pregnant, she exclaims that God took away her disgrace. She had allowed herself to hope again after she had probably gone through depression, bitterness, and apathy - a movement of faith development.

(Continued on page 2)



Pastor Patrick D. Clayborn, Ph.D.

Pastor's Message

(Continued from page 1)

In each case, faith is developed through test, trial, struggle, hardship, setback, uncertainty, challenge, lack of resources, and seemingly impossible circumstances. Yet, in each case, faith is developed through an encounter with God and God's word. That encounter forces the individual to look within and see the gifts that God has given. The encounter also forces the individual to see his/her difficulties as a part of the process of faith cultivation. According to Robert Schnase, this development is not haphazard but intentional:

We seek to have in us the mind that was in Christ Jesus, allowing God's Spirit to shape our thoughts, attitudes, values, and behaviors. Growing in Christ-likeness is the goal and end of the life of faith. The change God works in us through the Spirit results in a deeper awareness of God's presence and will and an increasing desire to serve God and neighbor.... This steady maturing, full of setbacks, distractions, and missteps for sure, is the perfecting of the soul in love, growing in the image of God, fostering of an inner holiness.¹

This fostering of an inner holiness that Schnase describes is what each of us is called to, especially in the Advent season. The birth of Christ beckons us to a deeper level of faith. Those who were involved in that birth went through a process of intentional faith development to perform monumental tasks. We, too, are called to do great works and need our thoughts, attitudes, values, and behaviors refined and shaped into a reflection of Christ for those works to be accomplished. Ultimately, we need a closer walk with God for our faith to be moved to its next stage of development.

Where is your faith moving this Advent? Is it stagnant or in decline? Have the holiday blues begun to choke your faith? Have setbacks or adversity paralyzed your faith? Are naysayers persuading your faith to regress or hide? Is the fear of what God has called you to do causing you to question your faith or the gift within? Have your mistakes or your issues convinced you that no amount of development can help your faith?

While we are journeying through our 30 days of prayer,² be advised that the Christmas angels are still visiting the people of God! They still have the message that nothing is impossible for God. They continue to relay the truth that God hears our prayers. They still insist that God has favored us with gifts and grace and that God has called us to assist in the birthing of God's love into the world. They continue to tell us to not be afraid and that, with God's help, we shall succeed at the most difficult tasks! The angels are still pointing the way to our blessings while we sit in our fields or follow our stars. The angels are still praising God: "Glory to God in the highest!" And, they are still waiting on us to join them in that praise: "Peace on earth, good will to humanity!"

God wouldn't send the angels if God didn't believe that our faith couldn't be developed. So, this Advent and this new year, let's allow our faith to move higher, deeper, further, faster, freer, more boldly, more lovingly, more courageously, more selflessly, more truthfully, more sacrificially, and in line with God's will for our lives! When we do, we will be able to do extraordinary feats! "Have faith in God. Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you. So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."³

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

¹Robert Schnase, *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011), 64-65. Kindle Edition. Schnase identifies intentional faith development as one of the practices that fosters church growth.

²For our readers who are not members of St. John, we are in the midst of "30 Days of Prayer," from Dec. 1st- Dec. 30th. See the November 2015 issue for further details.

³Mark 11:22-24.

A World Under Siege: The Gift of Light In the Midst of Darkness "Keeps on Giving"

By Bridget J. Floyd



Hail the heaven born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Son of righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings
Risen with healing in His wings

In these days and times it does not take much to observe or experience negativity, criticism, maltreatment, aggression, war, the threat of war, terrorism. Life does not appear to be valued. Reading or viewing the news can be depressing. There are individuals and groups who are not valued as their lives seem snuffed out with no rhyme or reason. One might even have second thoughts as to whether it is safe to travel internationally, take in a concert, dine in a favorite restaurant, go to a movie theatre; go to school or work; play in a park, walk in a residential setting, go shopping in a mall or attend bible study. These could turn out to be deadly activities. Is there no sacred / safe place?

It can be depressing to consider the threat to emotional and physical wellbeing that exists in the world today. It seems as though individuals and groups, even religions, are under siege. There are groups/entities that proclaim that certain persons or members of groups and/or religions should/will be killed. There are gruesome images of executions. There are reports of individuals who were queried as to their religious belief and their lives were snuffed out immediately after they acknowledged their faith in Jesus Christ.

Is there hope? Is there a glimmer of light in the midst of darkness? The answer is YES! There is the gift that came into the world to bring light and hope in the midst of darkness. Jesus was "born" to take on the sins of humankind and as such, make available eternal life to all who would believe in Him. He is eternal and His existence did not begin in the manger nor end on the cross.

In celebrating the birth of this gift of hope and light (and eternal life), there is solace in knowing that nothing can overcome the will of God or the Light that is His Son. While there may be difficult times and distressing events, it is imperative to know that there is hope in Jesus. While the negative events are appalling, it is reassuring to know that God gave the ultimate gift to the world - A beneficial gift to a world under siege. Is there sufficient wisdom to embrace the gift, the light, the hope?

There are those who would attack and destroy believers. However, Jesus is the protector and will ultimately banish evil. He will give those who believe in Him the strength to endure. He can inspire change. Through faith and prayer all things are possible. Enemies can become one's footstool. The battle is the Lord's.

The celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ recognizes the beautiful, priceless gift from God - The gift of light and hope; The gift of forgiveness of sin and everlasting life; The gift of knowing that "we can have a little talk with Jesus and He'll make it alright"; The gift of knowing that even in the midst of darkness and feeling/being under siege, The Gift can give peace of mind that allows one to cope with the exigencies of this world.

*In him was life; and the life was the light of men;
And the light shineth in darkness;
and the darkness comprehended it not.
John 1: 4-5.*

Planning Meeting Included Historic Events

By Nedra McDaniel



Bishop and Mother Davis

The Ninth District Planning Meeting was held November 12-14 at the Daniel Payne Community Plaza under the leadership of Bishop James L. Davis and Episcopal Supervisor, Mother Arelis Davis. This meeting focused on using the skills and talents of the Presiding Elders of the Ninth District. The bible studies were led by the Reverend Dwight Dillard, the Reverend Johnny Bryant and the Reverend Jacqueline Dennison. The worship service messages were brought by the Reverend Oliver Allen, the Reverend David Reddick and the Reverend Albert Hyche. Other presiding elders served as worship leaders and in other leadership roles during the meeting.

In a historic move, Bishop Davis returned to each church (the pastor and a steward) a quarter of what was paid last conference year for general budget. The general budget (sometimes referred to as conference claims) is collected annually from each church to support the connectional AME Church. These funds are collected by the Episcopal Districts and forwarded to the AME Finance Office. Because of the Ninth District's investment in the Daniel Payne Community Plaza, the District had funds remaining after its commitment to the connectional AME Church was paid. Therefore, for the first time in the history of the Ninth District and probably in the history of the AME church, local churches were given back a portion of their payments toward the general budget.

Many candidates for episcopal service and connectional offices stopped by to share their vision and appeal for support of the Ninth District at the 50th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

The components of the District met during the planning meeting and also made presentations to the attendees of their plans for the conference year.

The Thursday night opening service was led by the South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer District. Presiding Elder Oliver Allen brought a powerful word. His text was Mark 16:15-17 and the message was entitled "When God's Church Is at Its Best." He proclaimed that the church is at its best when it goes into all the world and is different than the world; when it recaptures a sense of urgency about its belief. He also said that the church is set afire by the Holy Ghost. Indeed, Presiding Elder Allen was on fire for the Lord as he preached the Gospel and there was like spirit in the sanctuary.



The Ninth District paid a special tribute to the Emanuel 9. Over 40 representatives of the families of the Emanuel 9 attended this special service that was organized by the Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn and included a poem written and delivered by Sister Sherrill Humphrey Luwoye. The Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn made a statement on the purpose of the service. Bishop Davis stated "we want to just put our arms around you and say we love you." Mrs. Jennifer Pinkney spoke on behalf of the group. Checks were presented to each family member representative of the Emanuel 9. The total shared with the families was nearly \$60,000. As the service concluded, the family members were encircled by Bishop and Mother Davis, the presiding elders and their spouses, and the ministers and their spouses as prayer was offered by the Reverend Andrew Holtz.

The Noon Day preacher was the Reverend David Reddick, Presiding Elder of the Dothan Eufaula District of the Southeast Alabama Conference. The message was entitled "Let Us Worship Him in Spirit and Truth" and the text was Isaiah 6:1. He summarized how to worship in spirit and truth by saying persons should come with a desire to see the Lord, hear something, and to feel the Holy Ghost and be ready to move.

(Continued on page 9)

Fifty-Plus Auxiliary Led Harvest Service

By Mattie B. Ezell

Seeing Our Father in All Things - With Thanksgiving and Praise

Luke 11:11-12



The Reverend Garrett,
Fifty-Plus President

Of all the things traditional churches celebrate, Harvest Sunday service is amongst the most familiar. Even though harvest is a time for reflection, it is also a time for action. It is a great time for Christians. Not only are Christians thankful for food and its magnificent bounty, but also for all the gifts God's love imparts as the litany Mrs. Charles Brooks so beautifully composed stated.

Harvest is from the Anglo-Saxon word 'haerfest', autumn, which refers to the season for reaping and gathering grain and other grown products. In early times Christians celebrated harvest near the Sunday of the Harvest Moon which falls in the month of September.

Today, however, instead of putting emphasis on reaping and gathering grain, churches focus on harvesting souls, so it's not about that which is planted but about the planters. Jesus said in Matthew 9: 37-38, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore The Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." Acknowledging all of the problems around the world, there are people in offices, schools, businesses, social events, and yes, even in churches who need to be harvested.

The Pew Research Center's findings, as late as 2007, indicate that harvest is still plentiful and laborers are few. According to it, U.S. adults who say they believe in God, while still remarkably high by comparison with other advanced industrial countries, have declined modestly. The share of Americans who say they are absolutely certain God exists has also dropped sharply. Those who say they pray every day, attend religious services regularly and consider religion to be very important in their lives also have ticked down by small but statistically significant margins. (<http://www.pewforum.org/2015/11/03/u-s-public-becoming-less-religious/>)

Even though the Pew Research Center findings offer much more information, any declines suggest that the U. S. public is becoming less religious; therefore, laborers are still needed. The Reverend Willis T. Richie, Jr., the 50+ Auxiliary Harvest Sunday preacher whose sermon: "Prodigious Produce but Limited Laborers," offered possible reasons for the continuous decline and even suggested a viable roadmap for recovery.



The Reverend Willis Richie,
Guest Preacher

Consider these concerns as possible reasons for the decline of the U.S. public's religious values as stated by the Reverend Richie:

- a) Laborers are insensitive to the needs of the other.
- b) Laborers may not know how to engage the other.
- c) Laborers' visions of the other may be limited.
- d) Laborers may feel inadequate in explaining God's words to the other.
- e) some laborers may not have fully established their own true relationship with Jesus.

f.) Some laborers may not appear to be loving, friendly, and even forgiving.

In order to bring people back into the fold, the Reverend Richie suggested that laborers must concern themselves with the total person as Jesus did. He gave specific biblical accounts where Jesus was dealing with the economical, social, spiritual, and physical needs of people. He concluded by saying, "To deal with the soul, laborers must deal with the whole." This is Jesus'

(Continued on page 8)

Stress and Depression During the Holidays: Coping Strategies

By Bridget J. Floyd, Ph.D., Licensed Psychologist

While the holiday season is associated with happiness, celebration, and a good time for all; the holidays are often experienced as a stressful time, even when there is enjoyment as well. Some of the stressors include hosting and / or attending parties; preparing meals; baking; shopping; wrapping/delivering gifts; decorating; cleaning; anticipating an evaluation of the quality of the cleaning, the food served and gifts given, etc. There are times when interactions with family become trying. Traveling during the holidays can be challenging. In large or blended families it may be difficult to coordinate spending time with different branches of the family.



The first holiday season after the death of a loved one can be particularly stressful. There is a renewed or continued grief response because there is a palpable absence. That loss in stark contrast to the celebratory atmosphere surrounding the holidays, can enhance the sense of loss, loneliness and depression. There can be a recurrence each year at Thanksgiving and Christmas. There can also be what is known as "anniversary effects" on the anniversary of the death, birthdays, and other times when celebrations occur/occurred.

There are ways to cope. It is important to manage expectations and use appropriate coping strategies. Changing the traditional celebration can help. This results in differences besides the absence of the loved one. Celebrate at a different location or invite others to dinner or gift exchanges. When desirable, having a tribute to the absent person(s) can be fitting (each person sharing a special memory, a funny story that brings a happy memory to mind and a smile to the face). Understand that tears may occur and accept that as par for the course. Understand that there is no set way to deal with loss or separation - allow for differences.

If there is stress associated with hosting a dinner or celebration, recognize that it is not a requirement that one person do everything. One can provide guests with the opportunity to bring a favorite dish or have a decoration party and ask for help in decorating – just provide pizza and soft drinks for the decorators who would like to partake. This allows each person to operate from their strength which should reduce the pressure for everyone. It might be surprising that people like to share in the duties.

It is important to manage expectations. There is no perfect holiday, meal, gift or host. There will be change – additions to the family, a different place or way to celebrate. A budget is a good thing for setting an amount for purchasing gifts, entertaining, or traveling. Some families choose to draw names for exchanging gifts among family members, especially in large or extended families. A handmade gift, baked goods, or a handwritten note can be cherished by the recipient.

Reaching out to others can bring joy. Volunteering to serve a meal or sharing with/including someone who would be alone otherwise, can increase the joy of the season. Rather than being alone, attend a Christmas concert, ballet, church/religious or other community activities. Give gifts to families/children who would not otherwise have gifts.



Planning is important. This goes beyond a Christmas list or menu. Have a time frame for activities such as shopping for food, gifts, wrapping and delivering gifts. Plan the meal(s), which events to attend, insure that there is adequate time to rest and/or get to the next event without rushing. It is important to pace oneself. It may be necessary to say "no", delegate, or help someone by giving them the name of someone else (besides oneself) to ask to do the task. One person should not have to do it all. If the workplace must be factored into the celebratory season, remove other activities from the schedule.

Rest and respite/good self-care are essential components of a positive holiday season. Eating properly and in a healthy manner before and during the holidays is important. It can be tempting to promise to resume or begin healthy eating habits after the New Year celebration (resolutions?)

(Continued on page 9)

Oh Come Let Us Adore Him

By Paulette Bargon



"O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant; O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem, Come and behold Him, born the King of angels: O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!"

The definitions of the word adore means to love, praise, worship, and to glorify someone deeply. We love our Lord, Jesus Christ so let us adore him by doing the things that we know pleases Him.

Let us adore Him by helping the homeless.
1 Peter 4:10-11

Let us adore Him by feeding the hungry.
Matthew 25:35

Let us adore Him by taking care of our widows and children.
James 1:27

Let us adore Him by nurturing our sick.
Matthew 25:36

Let us adore Him by loving all, no matter what race or religion.
1 John 4:7-8

Let us adore Him by witnessing and bringing others to Christ.
Matthew 28: 19-20

Let us adore Him by reading His word daily.
Joshua 1:8

There are many ways to adore our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, but the most important way is to pray. Let us thank Him for His grace and mercy. Let us give praise for His continuous blessings. Such worship of God is the surest way to give Him the glory that is due Him.

Holy Father, I humbly come before You to give You the honor, reverence, and worship that are Yours alone. Help me to wait in patient quietness for Your divine presence to fill my soul. In the name of Your Son, Jesus, AMEN

Merry Christmas!

District Lay Meeting Held in Tuskegee

By Nedra McDaniel



The Ninth District Lay Organization held its 56th Annual Meeting at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center at Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, Alabama on November 20 and 21. Under the leadership of Mr. James Bonner, president, and Ms. Veronica Wiley, Ninth District Director of Lay Activities, the conference provided worship, fellowship, workshops, recognitions and scholarship awards, and the election and installation of new officers. The host conference was the Southeast Alabama Conference, led by Mr. Robert L. Turner, president.

Bishop James L. Davis was the preacher for the Friday evening worship service. His biblical text was 1 Samuel 10:18-22 and the message was entitled "Stop Hiding Behind Your Stuff." He used the story of Samuel and Saul to parallel Saul's hiding behind "stuff" to the church doing likewise in today's environment. He noted that when one hides behind stuff, they miss God's plan for their lives. The "stuff" that people hide behind can be one's own success or it can be failure. The concluding point was to "come from behind your stuff" to receive the blessings God has planned. This message set the tone for the remainder of the weekend.

Saturday morning workshops/presentations were on health, parliamentary procedures, General Conference delegate expectations, and legislative updates (with a focus on the 19 legislative bills that have been submitted by the Connectional Lay Organization).

The noon luncheon honored outgoing Episcopal Lay District President, Mr. James C. Bonner. He was recognized for his outstanding leadership and service in the Ninth District and throughout the A.M.E. Connection. The President's awards were presented to Lay from across the state. Scholarships were awarded to some of the Ninth District ministers who are currently in seminary.

(Continued on page 8)

PopMoney Makes Budgeting Easy

Most banks offer a feature called PopMoney as an option for online transfer of funds between banks and for routine payments. All that is needed is the e-mail address that is associated with the receiver's online banking account.

PopMoney can be used for a single payment to an individual or payment to another bank account. It can also be used for recurring transactions like transferring an allowance to a college student's account or payment to the church for tithes and offerings.

If tithes are a fixed amount each month, set up a PopMoney transfer to stjohnameh@aol.com and specify the date and amount for the transfer.

District Lay Meeting Held in Tuskegee

(Continued from page 7)

The final business session was the election of Episcopal Lay District officers. Mrs. Bernella Knight Rose was elected president.

Representatives from St. John at this meeting were St. John Lay Organization president, Hodges Washington, and Nedra McDaniel.

Membership in the Lay Organization is open to all un-ordained members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Become an active member in the St. John Lay Organization by attending the meetings or contacting the president, Mr. Hodges Washington. The next Lay meeting at St. John will be held January 18, 2016.

Harvest Service

(Continued from page 3)

roadmap. He thought people were worth saving!

Those who participated in the 2015 Harvest Sunday service were Mrs. Lorraine Parham, announcements; Mrs. Rosetta Williams and Mrs. Agnes B. Gilmore, Call to Worship; Major (Ret.) Clifton Miller, prayer; Mrs. Eva Smith, scripture; Mr. Ronald McIntosh, litany; Col. (Ret.) James Heyward, welcome of visitors; Mrs. Charlsie Brooks, occasion; the Reverend Meriam Garrett, special appeal; Mrs. Mattie B. Ezell, prayer of thanksgiving; and Dr. Jennifer Patterson and the liturgical dancers.



Program participants: Top row (left to right)- Eva Smith, James Heyward, Ronald McIntosh. Bottom row (left to right) Lorraine Parham, Charlsie Brooks, Agnes Gilmore.

Coping Strategies

(Continued from page 6)

but it is preferable to use moderation throughout the holiday season/year. Getting plenty of sleep is recommended at all times, but particularly during the holidays. Restorative sleep and good eating habits provide the foundation for physical and emotional wellbeing throughout the year.

If there are family differences, avoid emotional confrontations/conflict. Do not choose the holidays to work through them. A time other than the holidays can be set to work on relationship issues if it is mutually desirable to do so. Until then, use civility and sincere efforts to get along and compromise to avoid emotional encounters/conflict ("drama").

If stress and depression persist even after taking breaks, having respite, and using calming techniques, consider seeing a professional. Persistent sadness, anxiety, trouble sleeping and eating, would suggest the need to seek a psychologist and/or psychiatrist.



Church Supports American Cancer Society

On the first Sunday in December, Bishop Davis appealed to the churches of the 9th Episcopal District of the AME Church to receive a special offering in support of The American Cancer Society. In this letter of appeal, Bishop Davis stated "According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), overall, about 1 in 2 African American men and 1 in 3 African American women will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime. The African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) is pleased to partner with the ACS to help its important efforts to find a cure for cancer, assist cancer patients, affect public policy, and provide education on cancer prevention.

Thank you St. John for a generous offering of \$800.



Prayer Time

December Schedule

Weekly Prayer Time

Monday at 8 pm

Tuesday at Noon

Conference Call Credentials

US Toll Number (530) 881-1212

Meeting ID: 876-863-940

Planning Meeting

(Continued from page 4)

Friday night the preacher was the Reverend Albert Hyché, Presiding Elder of the Montgomery Selma District. His sermon was entitled "Transformed, Moving Forward; We've Come Too Far and Will Not Go Back." The biblical text was Romans 12:2. The preacher indicated that he had been "transformed" under the visionary leadership of Bishop Davis. The points of the messages highlighted that the mind has to be transformed to hear what God is saying; there must be a relationship with God; and through hard work, commitment and working together believers can do anything because they have been in a praying position long enough to know that prayer makes a difference. His concluding command was to "Use what you have. Go forward."

Several Ninth District service initiatives were announced. The goal is for AME churches in the Ninth District to register 5,000 persons by March 2016. There will be community gardens throughout the District to make healthy food options available to all persons in the communities. There are also plans to have a food pantry at Daniel Payne Community Plaza. Details of how this pantry will serve the entire District will be provided later.

The Northwest Alabama Conference Lay Delegates to the 50th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference of the AME Church were seated during the planning meeting. This delegation includes two members of St. John. Nedra McDaniel was seated as a delegate and Jason Gilmore was seated as first alternate delegate.

This Planning Meeting was very productive and there are exciting plans ahead for this conference year. Look for more information in the future for the appreciation celebration for Bishop and Mrs. Davis as they complete their eight (8) years of servant leadership in the Ninth District.

St. John AME Church

30 DAYS OF PRAYER

Preparing to enter 2016 with POWER!

Beginning December 1st
Ending with a Victory Watchnight Celebration on December 31st at 10PM

Join us for...
Worship
Prayer Calls
Holy Communion
Prayer Gatherings
Action Days
Yoke Release
Dream Building

For the schedule of events,
check our Facebook page
STJOHNAME151




Christmas Blessings from the "Soup Kitchen" Workers!

By Charles Brooks

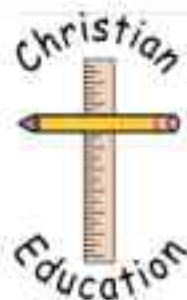
"Those blessings are sweetest that are won with prayer and won with thanks".
- Thomas Goodwin

May the blessings of Christmas come to those you love. The word BLESSING means to consecrate, make holy and give thanks. We all are richly blessed by our loving Savior, whose birth will soon be celebrated. We pass on those blessings to supporters of the monthly Soup Kitchen. The steadfast prayers and assistance from supporters over the past year have brought great blessings to those who work with the Soup Kitchen and those who come.

The many acts of kindness that have been offered come from hearts made tender by love for the Savior. The compassion and mercy you have allowed, enabled us to share with those in need and are examples of our compassionate Savior who deeply loved the suffering and homeless. Thank you for your help in bringing physical care and gifts of sympathy and brotherly love to those whom we were privileged to serve over the past year.

Our Savior has given the miracle of human life and the divine miracle of eternal life, so at Christmastime and in every day of your life, we pray that the light and love of this blessed season be with you and those you love. We hold you always in our most grateful prayers. May the abundant blessings of Christmas come to you and those you love.

Church School Lesson Overview – January 2016



This month's Church School Lessons were prepared by Willie J. Sandifer, Church School Superintendent. The reference is the *Standard Lesson Commentary*, 2015-2016.

January 3, 2016

Lesson Title: A Bride Worth Waiting for

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 28-30

Print: Genesis 29: 15-30

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

Key Verse: "He went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years." (Genesis 29:30).

Esau and Jacob, Isaac's two sons, had a rocky relationship. Jacob went to find a wife from among his mother's side of the family with his father's blessing that he managed to get with the help of his mother. In route he had a vision of a ladder that went from earth to Heaven. The Lord was at the top. The Lord promised Jacob that his seed would inhabit the land of Canaan as a mighty nation as the Lord's people.

Rachel, Jacob's uncle's daughter, was one of the first persons Jacob met when he entered the land of his mother's people. Jacob started to work for Laban, his uncle, by helping to take care of large flocks and herds of livestock and this is where this lesson begins.

When the seven years were complete, Jacob expected to get Rachel as had been promised in the oral contract. Laban, however, changed the terms of the contract without Jacob's knowledge. According to their customs, it was something that he could do, so he made the change. Laban gave Rachel to Jacob after he had been with Leah for a week, but Jacob then had to work for seven (7) more years to pay his debt to Laban for Rachel.

The lesson ends on two happy notes: Jacob and Rachel are united and Jacob upholds the agreement to work for Laban another seven years. However, the family's future is menacingly shadowed because Jacob favors the second wife Rachel over the first wife Leah.

January 10, 2016

Lesson Title: The Most Beautiful Bride

Lesson Scripture: John 10:1-11; Song of Solomon

Print: Song of Solomon 6:4-12

Devotional Songs: #525, #251, and #243

Key Verse: "My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her." (Song of Solomon 6:9).

The poetic dialogue and unidentified speakers make Song of Solomon hard to understand. Naturally, it is easy to picture King Solomon in this drama in the leading male role. However, there are few clues given to align the narrative with a time and place in Solomon's life.

Although Solomon had around 700 wives and 300 concubines, this lesson snapshots his attempted relationship with one woman who is a shepherd girl. The backstory is that the king is in love with a shepherd girl and wants to make her his queen, but she longs for a man that is in her home village.

January 17, 2016

Lesson Title: An Unfaithful Bride

Lesson Scripture: Hosea 1-3

Print: Hosea 1:1-11

Devotional Songs: #412; #333; and #243

Key Verses: "The beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea. And the Lord said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the Lord." (Hosea 1:2).

This lesson starts with a shocking account of counseling by God with Hosea. Hosea was to select a wife from the pool of local prostitutes. The first verse of Hosea places his ministry right at about twenty years starting during the reign of King Uzziah (787 BC) and ending during the reign of King Hezekiah (687 BC), each in Judah, the southern kingdom.

Hosea is not on a mission to mercifully redeem a wayward woman. The people of Israel have been unfaithful in keeping their covenant with the Lord and this is an object lesson for the nation of Israel.

Hosea chooses Gomer to be his wife. Her name means "completion" and may have been her prostitute alias name. Some commentaries suggest that Hosea may have chosen to marry the most popular and most known one and not just any prostitute in the city.

January 24, 2016

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Church School Lesson Overview – January 2016

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Lesson Title: A Wedding in Cana

Lesson Scripture: John 2:1-12

Print: John 2:1-12

Tentative Devotional Songs: #323 []; #258 []; and #243 []

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

The setting for this lesson is a wedding that serves as a backdrop to the first miracle of Jesus. The bride and groom are not emphasized and they are unnamed. Jesus used wedding illustrations because marriages and the celebration of them were something that most were knowledgeable of in life within a village. The celebrations allowed a pause in the hard pace of long work hours and made weddings relished occasions.

Because of the nonstandard way weddings took place, common elements included a meal with a lot of food, drink and dancing. A wedding coordinator or steward would be retained by the bridegroom to handle the logistics of things.

Mary, Jesus' mother, observed a need and made a request of Jesus. The wine ran out and Mary asked Jesus to help. She asked the steward for the wedding to do precisely what Jesus asked him to do. The steward followed those instructions and the celebration continues with wine that was better than the wine served at the beginning of the celebration.

January 31, 2016

Lesson Title: The Death of a Friend

Lesson Scripture: John 11:1-44

Print: John 11:38-44

Tentative Devotional Songs: #77 []; #283 []; and #243 []

Key Verse: "When he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth." (John 11:43).

The backdrop for this lesson is a village funeral, which is also an event where there is a pause from the long work hours. However, the tone in this setting is totally different.

Jesus received a message that His friend Lazarus was very ill and Lazarus' sisters wanted Him to come. Jesus delayed and during His delay, Lazarus died and was buried. Four days

had passed.

Jesus explained that faith was to be the result of Lazarus' death. Martha's confession of faith to Jesus' question "Believest thou?" upon His arrival stood in contrast against the skeptical voices.

The raising from the dead of Lazarus, who died four days earlier, was amid the utmost of Jesus' miracles. Jesus was executing God's plan to bring His followers faith. Lazarus had to die for this raising to happen, although his death brought grief to his loved ones.

Church School Book Club

Discussion Date: December 20, 2015
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Mare's War, Tanita Davis, 2011

Discussion Date: January 16, 2016
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Choir Director 2: Runaway Bride, Carl Weber, 2015

It's been three years since Aaron Mackie succeeded in helping his friend and mentor, Bishop T.K. Wilson, dig his ministry out of financial ruin. Aaron is also responsible for re-energizing the almost defunct choir into something special. His success has drawn national attention, and he's on the verge of signing a huge recording contract. With his life in order, Aaron decides the time is right to propose to Tia Gregory, the church secretary who caught his eye and inspired him to shed his Tiger Woods-like tendencies to become a one-woman man. The stage is set for what might be the wedding of the year, but quickly becomes the disaster of the year when Aaron is left at the altar without explanation.

Now, during his own hour of need, Aaron turns to the bishop for help. Unfortunately, the line he asks T. K. to cross will force the bishop to choose between faith and friendship, or as he puts it, "between heaven and hell." As the investigation into Tia's disappearance continues, the two men are challenged in ways they never imagined.... Amazon



Holiday Health and Safety Tips

By Rosemary Wells



The holidays are a time to celebrate, give thanks, and reflect. They are also a time to pay special attention to your health. Give the gift of health and safety to yourself and others by following these holiday tips:

- **Wash your hands often.**
Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps to take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and clean water are not available, use an alcohol-based product.
- **Stay warm.**
Cold temperature can cause serious health problems, especially in infants and older adults. Stay dry, and dress warmly in several layers of loose-fitting, tightly-woven clothing. Check on children, the elderly and pets.
- **Manage stress.**
The holidays do not need to take a toll on one's health. Keep a check on over-commitment and over-spending. Balance work, home, and play. Get support from family and friends. Keep a relaxed and positive outlook. Get enough sleep.
- **Travel safely.**
Whether traveling across town or around the world, help ensure the trip is safe. Do not drink and drive, and do not let someone else drink and drive. Wear a seat belt every time you drive or ride in a motor vehicle. Always buckle your child in the car using a child safety seat, booster seat, or seat belt according to his/her height, weight, and age. Get vaccinations if traveling out of the country. When traveling by air, take along sanitary hand wipes to clean germs on lap trays, overhead light/fan controls, seatbelts, arm, as well as, head rests.
- **Prevent injuries.**
Injuries from falls and fireworks often occur around the holidays. Use step stools instead of furniture when hanging decorations. Keep candles away from children, pets, walkways, trees and curtains. Never leave fireplaces, stoves, or candles unattended. Install a smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector in your home. Test and change the batteries regularly. Keep potentially dangerous toys, food, drinks, household items, choking hazards (like coins, hard candy), and other objects out of kids' reach. Keep children safe, develop and reinforce rules about acceptable and safe behaviors for all electronic media.
- **Handle and prepare food safely.**
As you prepare holiday meals, keep you and your family safe from food-related illness. Wash hands and surfaces often. Avoid cross-contamination by keeping raw meat, poultry, sea food, and eggs (including their juices) away from ready-to-eat foods and eating surfaces. Cook foods to the proper temperature. Refrigerate promptly. Do not leave perishable foods out for more than two hours.
- **Eat healthy, and be active.**
With balance and moderation, one can enjoy the holidays the healthy way. Choose more vegetables and fruit. Select just one or two favorites from the host of tempting foods. Find fun ways to stay active, such as dancing to favorite holiday music. Be active at least 2 ½ hours a week. Help kids and teens be active at least 1 hour a day.

Holidays are also a time for families to get together and enjoy one another's company, and what better way to spend time than sitting and enjoying a movie together. As families get ready to gath-

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Holiday Health and Safety Tips

By Rosemary Wells



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er 'round the fireplace and the TV, here are a few great movies that are sure to bring holiday cheer!

Black Nativity- Based on the play of the same name written by Langston Hughes, Black Nativity is the story of a troubled youth who moves in with his grandparents. The movie focuses on the themes of family, forgiveness, hope and faith.

Christmas at Water's Edge- Speaking of fine angels coming down from heaven, Pooch Hall plays an angel tasked with helping a materialistic young woman (Keisha Knight- Pulliam) appreciate the true meaning of Christmas and remember there's more to life than possessions.



Jingle All the Way- Each year there is that one coveted toy that sends parents into a panic because of the belief that getting it could make up for all the times they might have let their children down. This movie perfectly expresses the torment that comes with toy shopping. When the Turbo-Man action figure makes an appearance on their son's lists, both Arnold Schwarzenegger's character and Sinbad attempt to battle it out to get the toy on Christmas Eve!

This Christmas- With the appearance of their oldest brother, the Whitfield family is finally reunited and like all Christmas movies, family stress and drama initially divide the clan, but initially bring them back together. Through it all the Whitfield family learns that being truthful to themselves, and supporting each other is the most important thing to help them all enjoy the Christmas holiday!

The KUDZU Christmas- After moving to a small Georgian town Mason and his recently divorced mother attempt to regain the joy they lost during the Christmas season. What is the remedy to do so? Lost puppies! The KUDZU's Christmas is an adorably cute film that has an array of characters that appeal to different audiences. This movie goes to show how hope, love and openness can help those who are angry find solace that they need to heal.

Dear Secret Santa- Dear Secret Santa is a perfect reminder to slow down a hectic life. When Jennifer goes back to her hometown to visit her father, her life gets put on hold when he suffers an injury while putting up Christmas decorations. On top of that, she begins to receive secret admirer letters. This Lifetime original movie is what snuggling up together and appreciating life was made for.

What She Wants for Christmas- This movie is focused on a young girl trying to bring her parents back together. Though there are moments where the movie seems slightly slow, it is definitely enjoyable and children will appreciate the gaiety of the characters, the hope of the protagonist, and the resolution that reminds the viewer that Christmas is a time for family.

A Dream for Christmas- This is an oldie but goodie set in the 1950's but broadcast on the Christmas Eve of 1973. The plot line involves a preacher who moves to the Watt's section of Los Angeles and missions himself to save souls and his church from being demolished. Heart-wrenching!

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Holiday Health and Safety Tips

By Rosemary Wells

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Have a safe, healthy and blessed holiday season!!

And remember...

Jesus is the Reason



Technology Tip

By Ricardo Williams

Using Mobile Wallets

During the holiday season, many people will spend a vast amount of time shopping for special items for family members and close friends. To minimize the carrying of cash or credit/debit cards, many shoppers will be utilizing the new mobile wallet technology. The mobile technology consists of software applications that can be installed on a smart phone by downloading from the app store depending on the type of smart device.

The mobile wallets allow smart phone users the ability to store credit cards or bank account information to carry out transactions such as transferring money to a friend or to a merchant. All mobile wallets do not perform the same functions, which leads some smart phone users to using more than one mobile wallet. All of this may sound great but there are some risks to using the mobile wallets. By consolidating credit or debit cards into a single software application, smart phone users are being exposed to an increased risk of revealing banking information which can lead to identity theft.

If a smart phone is lost and found by an unauthorized user, payments can be made with any debit or credit card that is linked to the mobile wallet application. Once an unauthorized user has access to the smart phone, transaction logs can be viewed that will expose financial habits and activities. Most of the mobile wallets allow social activity such as a feed of friends on Facebook and the options to post transactions to Facebook. Most social media users do not have strict privacy settings. If an anonymous user gains access to a person's social media account, all sorts of personal activity can be exposed including their whereabouts.

Using mobile wallets can be a great benefit when used properly and secured. When choosing a mobile wallet application, take a look at what operating system the application can be used on and where the transactions get stored. Also, ask what security features the application has and its ability to integrate with social media applications. After all, being safe and secure with smartphones does not start with the software applications. Users should take all precautions and safety measures when storing personal data on smart devices. This technology feature will take a look at some of these safety measures later. Stay tuned. Be Blessed!



2016 Dream Building and Victorious Living

By Janette R. Smith

Certified Strategic Intervention & Mindset Coach



If we want to create better for ourselves in 2016, we will have to do things differently. This begins with how we think, how we manage our emotions and what actions we take. The goal is to try different ways to attack the same issues. We can live victoriously by working to get the most out of life by maximizing what we have and what we can achieve, while trusting that God will wrap His super on our natural through favor, grace, wisdom and strength.

Bettering our lives starts with renewing our minds. (*Romans 12:2*) It is my goal with this column to share information and resources that will help readers who are having trouble finding their purpose or their "footing" in this season of life. It is also for those, like some of my coaching clients, who have already achieved great levels of success but still feel unfulfilled in some areas of life. In 2016 we will not only be setting and attaining goals - it is also about enjoying the journey and living fully present along the way.

First, I challenge you to deal with the "if *this*, than *that*" way of thinking. For example, "if only I could lose 50 pounds, than I could be happy." You can still aspire to lose weight, but do NOT resolve yourself to only be happy AFTER you lose the weight. Find ways to enjoy life and be grateful all along the way. There will always be something you wish were different or better. While you work to make changes just remember, there is living, loving, sharing and caring to experience between "this and that."

Secondly, please be honest with yourself about your heart's desires. Proverbs 13:12 says that "hope deferred makes the heart sick." What is it you are pursuing? Why do you want it? Have you stopped to pray and ask God if that is HIS will for you? Is it HIS desire that you have that thing, that person, that experience that spend so much time trying to obtain? If it is not His will for you, you are expending precious time, energy and effort in a direction that will not yield results. It could cause you great anxiety, pain or trouble to keep pursuing what is out of His will.

2016 can be a year of victorious living. This does not mean everything will be perfect. We will never reach perfection, but we can live authentic, loving, meaningful, and joyful lives that glorify God and bring us fulfillment. It all starts with our decisions. Make a decision to go after every dream God planted inside of you. Do not be afraid of the dream! It is the seed of your greater purpose for this season, waiting to be birthed. Nurture it and trust in the gift that you are to the world. Pray and seek guidance and watch God turn your dreams into reality.

Resource: *From Dream to Reality: Navigating the Path to Your Life Purpose*. [Action / Journal]
www.Dream2RealityBook.com

January 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Happy New Year!	2 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry
3 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship Communion AMEN Deadline	4 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	5 Noon Prayer Call 6:00 p.m. VIP Chdr Rehearsal Stewardess Board Mtg.	6 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	7 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	8	9 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 10:30 AMEN Staff Meeting
10 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	11	12 Noon Prayer Call 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. 80 UP KITCHEN 6:00 p.m. VIP Chdr Rehearsal	13 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	14	15 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	16 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry
17 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	18 Martin Luther King Day 	19 Noon Prayer Call 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. 80 UP KITCHEN 6:00 p.m. Thurs. Bd. Mtg.	20 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	21	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 10:50 a.m. Worship	25	26 Noon Prayer Call 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. 80 UP KITCHEN	27 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	28	29	30 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry Women's Ministry
31 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship					Prayer calls are scheduled for noon on Tuesdays: Dial 1-530-881-1212 Access Code: 876863940#	



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The Right Reverend James L. Davis, Servant Bishop

Mrs. Arelis B. Davis, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Doctor Patrick Clayborn, Pastor



Important Dates to Remember

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <i>December 24, 2015</i> | <i>Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 6 pm</i> |
| <i>December 25, 2015</i> | <i>Merry Christmas!</i> |
| <i>December 31, 2015</i> | <i>Yoke Release Watch Night Service, 10 pm</i> |



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