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ST. JOHN A.M.E.N NEWSLETTER



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 21 Issue 1

January 2017



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

The Dream Revisited in the Wake of a New Election

By Bridget J. Floyd

January 15, 2017 would have marked the 88th birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The internationally acclaimed civil rights leader was born in Atlanta, Georgia and earned his bachelor's degree from Morehouse College and his doctorate from Boston University. He was drafted into action as the young pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama after Mrs. Rosa Parks did not adhere to the rule of

sitting in a certain area of the city bus (although there was reportedly no room in the area designated for African Americans). Over time he became the iconic leader of the civil rights movement from the 1950's until his assassination in 1968. He developed nonviolent protests based on Ghandi's nonviolent philosophy. Dr. King and those who participated in the Civil Rights Movement participated in peaceful, nonviolent protests, even in the face of brutality and numerous arrests. Dr. King's home was bombed and he lived under the threat of death. He famously seemed to anticipate his death in the speech given the night before his death, in which he noted that while he might not get there with those that he led, he had been to the mountain top and seen the Promised Land (ala Moses who led the children of Israel).

Dr. King was also known for his letters written during his arrests, and coordinating the March on Washington where he famously gave his "I have a Dream" speech. King looked to Mahatma Mohandas Ghandi for his philosophy/strategy of nonviolent, civil disobedience to achieve independence for India from the British. Dr. King spoke of his belief / dream that one day future generations would experience justice, equality, economic opportunity for all and a time of mutual respect and brotherly love that would make this a natural occurrence. He focused on voting rights for African Americans in an effort to have a say in government and laws at all levels; that is, from municipal officials to President of the United States.

Historically, in 2008, the United States and the world saw what many labeled a representation of that "Dream" coming to partial fruition. That is, a man of African descent was elected (and subsequently re-elected) President of the United States/Leader of the Free World. President Barack Hussein Obama, the son of a Kenyan father and American Caucasian mother, has completed two terms and history will determine his legacy.

News reporters, political pundits and others have noted the unique demeanor, method of communicating, and campaigning that has been employed during the campaign for the next president of the United States. This has included critical statements about persons of Mexican descent and the Muslim faith; females; persons with disabilities or who are otherwise deemed not suitable in terms of appearance. There have been statements that seemed to encourage violence at campaign rallies, for example, offering to pay legal fees for supporters who were violent towards others with dissenting political views. The positions taken and/or campaign rhetoric have reportedly resulted in stated support from neo-Nazi and white supremacy groups. Generally, there have been no overt statements or patterns of behavior that suggest that the new leader and / or associates promote or set as a high priority, the tenants/philosophy of Dr. King, such as justice and equality, mutual respect and brotherly love, nonviolence, to name a few. [There are legal cases on record where the next leader of the free world allegedly engaged in housing discrimination against African Americans and that restricted membership in golf resorts that he owned.]

One might ponder, what would Dr. King think about the events surrounding the 2016 election? Given the above, one might speculate that there would be concern about those tenants of justice, equality, mutual- respect, religious tenants/spirituality, and nonviolence. **The Dream is still a work in progress.**



"Miracle on Church Street" Celebrated the Christmas Story

"Miracle on Church Street" was the title of the Christmas Program that was presented by the Music and Christian Arts Ministry of St. John. Dr. Monica Dillihunt, Christian Education Director, led the team of teachers, musicians, dancers and advisors who coordinated this event. The program was held at 10:50 am on December 18.

The anticipation was high as participants, planners, and parents buzzed around the back hallway and fellowship hall in preparation for the program. The sets were in place for the manger scene and other supporting stations for the drama. Participants of all ages brought the Christmas story to life through drama, speeches, music and dance.



The lighting of the Advent Candles (third Sunday in Advent) included prayer, scripture and readings on peace by participants Alijah Webb, Joy Wright, DeShaun Hardin, and Kyle Washington. Narrators were Mrs. Claudinette Purifoy Fears and Mr. Ronald McIntosh. The Children's Choir, the Voices in Praise Choir, and the Praise Team rendered selections "Love Has Come," "Emmanuel," "Behold the Lamb," and "The Night When Christ Was Born." The Dance Ministry ministered to "Breath of Heaven," "There is No Christmas Without You," and "The Night When Christ was Born." The story of the real meaning of Christmas was told with such passion and drama that those characters who were initially focused only on the secular events of the holiday season were convinced by the end of the play that Jesus is the reason for the season.

Thank you Dr. Dillihunt and the Music and Christian Arts Ministry for presenting "The Miracle on Church Street."



Christmas Celebrated with Candlelight and Morning Worship Services

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service



2016 provided an opportunity for two special Christmas Worship Celebrations within twenty-four hours. Worshippers gathered Christmas Eve at 7 pm for a candlelight service. The call to worship was "O Love Divine!" from the choral postlude, "Heavenly Light" by Alexander Kopylov. The lighting of the Christ Candle on the Advent Wreath was led by Ms. Barbara Johnson and Ms. Angeline Brownlow. The music was rendered by the Mass Choir. Christmas songs and scripture reminded worshippers of the joy of this special night. The program stated a meditation by Pastor

Wright, but he preached! The message was entitled "It's Not About the Wrapping" with text from Luke 2:7. He began by sharing how beautifully wrapped gifts raise expectations about the content. He also noted that gift wrapping is a two billion dollar business. The preacher used this background on "wrapping" to contrast the gift that God gave. The gift of His Son had no wrapping. This was the greatest gift God could give the world and it far exceeded its wrap-

ping. To further emphasize how the wrapping takes the focus off the gift, he share three kinds of wrapping that reflect spiritual truths. The wrinkled wrapping—although the wrapping may be wrinkled the best that God can give is on the inside because the Lord does not see as man sees. The size of the gift does not represent the quality of the gift. The baby Jesus was in a small manger. The wrapping is not the gift. On Christmas morning the real gift is seen. It is not about the wrapping, it is about Jesus, love, and salvation.

The service concluded with the lighting of candles across the sanctuary as the light was passed from person to person and the Benediction.



Christmas Morning Service

Worshippers gathered again on Christmas morning for a 10 am service. There was a joyful spirit and greetings of "Merry Christmas" were shared throughout the day. The priority of the day was to offer praises to God for his Indescribable Gift of His Son. The call to worship from Christmas Eve was again used to begin this service and the Christ Candle was lit. The congregational songs and choir selections all focused on the birth of Christ. The sermon

was entitled "Don't Return the Gift" with text John 1:1-11. After pointing out reasons gifts are returned, he focused on the importance keeping the gift of God's only Son as a valuable presence in the lives of those who have received Him. The Gift should be kept because it brings new life, new vision and light. The new look is the way one appears to other

when they have the Gift. The new vision is to see good things in bad situations. The light speaks against injustice and social evil. When persons speak negativity, doubt, disbelief, or feel unloved, they are returning the Gift. Pastor Wright emphasized that the gift is available and free to anyone who accepts Christ and urged listeners to not return the Gift.



The Benediction was a blessing as those in attendance prepared to depart in love and service.

St. John Celebrates New Year's Eve: Watch Night

By Charlie Brooks

As members gathered to begin the 10:00 p.m. Worship Service many were drawn to the history of Watch Night Services that Pastor Wright included on the back of the "Clock-faced" bulletin. The description of the age-old celebration took many back to their childhood days. The watch night service could not be missed. For many the tradition dates back to 1862 when the first Watch Night Services were celebrated in Black Communities in America; however, the actual history dates back to the days of John Wesley.

In the Black church Watch Night was also known as "Freedom's Eve." On that night Black slaves and free Blacks came together in churches and private homes all across the nation awaiting news that the Emancipation Proclamation actually had become law. At the stroke of midnight January 1, 1863, all slaves in the Confederate States were declared legally free. When the news was received, there were prayers, shouts and songs of joy as many people fell to their knees and thanked God. Congregations still gather in churches annually on New Year's Eve to praise God for bringing them safely through another year.

The service at St. John began amid the fog and rain as worshippers forged together in praise sought a new beginning in the new year. The call to worship was led by the Reverend Joretha Wright, followed with the invocation by the Reverend Charles Glover. The Reverend Glover's fervent prayer echoed the powerful call to worship which included: "I WON'T GIVE UP...SHUT UP...LET UP...until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, and worked up for the cause of Christ. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ. I must go 'til He comes, give 'til I drop, teach all known and work 'til He stops me. And when Jesus comes, He will have no problems recognizing me because He'll remember: I was the one He gave POWER." The Praise Team rendered selections "How Great is Our God" and "Alpha and Omega."

Pastor Wright reminded those in attendance that they were at the "Praise Party" and led in singing "I Love to Praise Him". This was followed by individual testimonies. Sister Rivers read the scripture for the services. The Mass Choir sang and the Praise Dancers ministered in dance.

The proclamation of the Word was offered by Pastor Maurice Wright, II. The message was entitled "...And The Lord Gave Job Twice as Much as He Had Before" with text from Job 42:10(b).

Pastor Wright began, "As we gather in the final day of 2016, we've all had different kinds of days. We've had good days, shiny sun and rain. Sometimes nothing went right." He compared these situations to Job's situation which can be set up for a divine purpose. Some did not know that. We are sometimes set up for a COME BACK. James 1:2 reminds us that things happen for us to develop our Faith. "When you go through things that you don't think you'll survive, he stated, these things are for your good and for your comeback." This text, deals with Job's end. They prepared for his funeral, but Job had patience and faith. Chapter One describes Job as (1) Perfect, (2) Upright, (3) Righteous. He stayed away from evil. He could not back down. 1. We were reminded not to focus on our stuff. Matthew 6:19 reminds us that where your treasure is, there is your heart. 2. Don't focus on other people. Psalm 118:8 - Trust God, not friends and family. Job gave God "in-spite of praise" after losing his family and possessions. God is looking for people who can still have reason to give Him praise. (Job 1:22). 3. We have to focus on our Faith. Romans 10:17 says Faith comes by hearing the Word. WE MUST FEED OUR FAITH. (James 1:22) Tell yourself that everything will be okay. Do you want something better in 2017? Tell your story! We each should have a Testimony...I've been through,,,but I'm coming back. Pastor concluded by emphasizing it was a "Set up" for a comeback!

The Invitation to Christian Discipleship was given, followed by the "Yoke Release" and the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Yokes were released by worshippers tossing their yokes (written on squares of paper) at the altar as they received the communion elements. The blessing of the food was offered and then the Benediction.

The Steward Board provided a wonderful breakfast feast after the service! Food prepared by Brother Hodges Washington

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St. John Celebrates New Year's Eve: Watch Night

By Charlie Brooks

and company included sausage, bacon, eggs, grits, fruit, biscuits, juices and coffee. A special pancake station was manned by Brother Guy Ginn and Brother Sam Walton. Sister Whitehead led the transformation of the fellowship hall to a 2017 celebration room. It was beautifully decorated with blue, gold and silver. Beautiful bulletin board and door decorations welcomed the 2017 year. A 2017 photo booth was available for photo shoots. Entertainment included a performance by "Mo and Jo" (ask someone who was there about this). Below are some of the snapshots that captured the fellowship.



Kiah, Lessie and Joy Wright



The Harbin Family



Mo and Jo



Pastor Wright, Rev. Rita and the Steward Board



Stewards Rankin and Johnson

Presiding Elder Allen Holds Planning Meeting for 2016-2017



Presiding Elder and Mrs.
Oliver Allen, Jr.

Presiding Elder Oliver Allen led the South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer (SBHB) District in its Annual Planning Meeting on December 17. The meeting was held at Bethel AME Church in Homewood, Alabama where the Reverend Wm. Jermaine Richardson is the pastor. Both ministers and lay gathered in eager anticipation of the report of plans for the conference year. In the letter of greetings Presiding Elder and Mrs. Allen elaborated on this year's theme. "Our theme for this year's planning is 'A New Beginning.' We will accomplish our mission by reading the word of God, our source of power; looking around and seeing the problems; and developing a plan to accomplish our mission." Using the text of Deuteronomy 2:1-3, Presiding Elder Allen said that the District should, like the Israelites, turn north and try something different.

The organization of the SBHB District was presented and detailed instructions were provided on preparing and presenting quarterly conference reports. The District will be using electronic technology to receive reports and information about activities will be posted on the website. Churches were reminded of the importance of continued support of the Ninth District's food bank and community gardens. They should also continue the monthly "I Believe" campaign that provides much needed funds for the maintenance of Daniel Payne Community Plaza.

There was also good fellowship and food. Congratulations to Presiding Elder and Mrs. Allen on a productive meeting. Pray for them as they lead the SBHB District through this conference year.

The SBHB District consists of twenty-three churches in Huntsville, Scottsboro, Fackler, Gadston, Birmingham, Bessemer, Trussville, Madison, Albertville, New Market, Homewood, Guntersville, Tarrant City, and Anniston.

"Together we must move forward and continue to have the Same Mission in mind by accomplishing it by ways of New Methods." - Presiding Elder Oliver Allen Jr.

The 32nd Annual WMS Convention held at AAMU

By Mary Powers



The Ninth Episcopal District WMS held its 32nd Annual WMS Convention in Huntsville on the campus of Alabama A&M University. The Reverend Sherita Moon Seawright is the Episcopal Supervisor and Mrs. Susie Jones Bonner is the District WMS President. The District theme, was "Bridging the Gap: Community, Literacy, and Healthcare Disparities."

The convention opened on Friday, December 2, 2016. With 3rd Vice President Tamara Giles presiding, the opening event was billed as an Evening of Culture. The Reverend Robert Turner gave the invocation and Sister Djuana Duncombe Wilson gave the welcome address. The YPDers and YAMs were showcased as flaggers for the prelude to the theatrical production "FLIGHT 309." The flaggers danced as a musical selection was given by the ALABAMA A&M UNIVERSITY CHOIR. The play followed this musical selection and was directed by Mr. Perry McNeil.

On Saturday, December 3rd, the business session was held with Sister Susie Bonner, Episcopal President, presiding. The Devotion was led by Sister Dorothy Davis, Episcopal Worship Leader. The opening selection was "Joy to the World" followed by prayer and scripture from Corinthians 5:18-21. Greetings and welcome were extended by Sister Mary Powers, host church WMS president, and the Reverend Joretha Wright who stood in for her husband, host church Pastor Maurice Wright.

The business session was followed by the awards luncheon. 1st Vice President Sister Adrienne Rowland presided. By nature of her position, she was also the organizer for compassionate care projects for the District. The project this year supported the Domestic Violence Center in Huntsville. The WMS members donated underwear for women and children, as well as, Walmart gift cards that totaled \$1,400 dollars. Before and during lunch, Supervisor Sherita Moon Seawright made remarks. She also delighted the WMS with some true and humorous life stories that said it is ok to face your truth, whatever it is, and move on because until

(Continued on page 2)

Thank You

By Kaitlyn McClung

Lord, I thank you
for separating yesterday from tomorrow
Though my past be sinful,
I thank you
for the promise of forgiveness.

Lord, I praise You
for each day comes a new blessing
Though I know not if tomorrow brings life or death,
I thank You
for the promise of life everlasting.

Lord, I magnify You
for being God all on Your own
Today, while begging Your mercy and grace upon this altar,
I thank You
for the promise of Your love and salvation.

In the name of Jesus,
Amen.

Kaitlyn is the daughter of Kathleen Dulaney and a life-long member of St. John. She is a student at Alabama A&M University.

The 32nd Annual WMS Convention held at AAMU

By Mary Powers

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you face it you can't fix it. The workshop speaker was A. Faye Boykin Calhoun who is known for speaking Spiritually, Truthfully, and Radically. She spoke on how the Black church is behind the times on speaking truth to young people to prepare them to face life's issues.

Mrs. Calhoun is the author of Been Through the Fire but Didn't Get Burned 100%, No Testimony Without a Test, In Due Season, and several other books.

The meeting closed with a song, prayer, and the Missionary Benediction.



Greetings from the Soup Kitchen

By Charlie Brooks

NEW YEAR'S GREETING

Almighty Creator God:

We are pilgrims at the start of a new and unknown year,
taking our first hesitant steps on an untraveled road.

We thank You that You know the road
and every obstacle along the way;

that You want to be our Leader and Guide
and show us the way to the eternal Father's house.

Help us to take Your hand in faith
and to follow You unconditionally.

We thank You that You will be in the future
just as You were in the past,

that You will lead the way through all our tomorrows
with the same love as yesterday and the day before.

Thank You that nothing and nobody can snatch us from Your
hand, even if we stray from You in stubborn willingness.

Grant that we will begin and end this year with Faith in You;
that nothing will steal our joy and peace in You.

We want to venture onto the road ahead
With the courage and faith of mature Christians.

Lord Jesus, we want to follow in Your footsteps,
footsteps of service, love and sacrifice.

We pray this in the name above all names:

JESUS OUR LORD

AMEN

The St. John Soup Kitchen is open on the third and fourth
Tuesday of each month. Volunteers are always welcome.

January is a Time for a Healthy Fresh Start

By Bridget J. Floyd

January is often a time when people decide to have a fresh start or make beneficial changes in their lives. Thus, there are many "New Year's Resolutions" made. Plans and intentions are sincere, but often the actions last through February or March at best. Having information to inform the person's rationale for these changes can serve to increase motivation and commitment to 'hang in there for the long haul'.

Some of the most popular changes / goals focus on improved health and healthy living. The foundation for this includes healthy eating habits, good sleep habits and exercise. This can serve to prevent health problems or to improve physical and emotional health and wellbeing.

The key to healthy eating is to insure that one eats because one is actually hungry. Often people will eat for other reasons such as boredom, comfort or sometimes they misread the cue from their brain; that is, they are actually thirsty. So it is important to stop and consider what is driving the 'hunger'.

Be careful to not engage in 'automatic eating' while watching television or because of boredom. Some people eat when they are anxious, stressed, and/or sad. This not only increases weight due to greater food intake but the types of food. Emotional distress can trigger cravings for carbohydrates, salty and sugary foods.

Drink water because that might be the actual message from the brain. The recommended water intake is a bit more than the familiar eight glasses per day. According to a report at nih.gov, the recommended water intake for men is thirteen (13) cups and for women, nine (9) cups. It is important to drink water rather than sugary soft drinks, tea, energy drinks, etc. Water can be flavored by adding lemon, lime, or orange. Also no-calorie seltzer or sparkling water can be less bland for those who complain about water.

Decrease added sugar intake. Artificial sweeteners should be avoided. Diet foods and beverages are more salty or sweet to taste and will serve to increase the desire for and intake of salt or sugar. One does not have to do without sugar totally. Try to reduce added sugar (e.g. one teaspoon or less in a cup of tea or coffee). Honey or agave can be used instead of sugar. There are natural sugars in fruit, roasted vegetables, plain yogurt, and whole grains. With these and other such foods, there are additional nutrients such as protein, calcium, fiber, Vitamins A, C, and D.

Getting appropriate amounts of sleep is important. Eight hours of sleep is a good guide. It should be noted that teens tend to need nine to ten hours of sleep. Research has shown that older adults often sleep four to six hours per night. Some have problems with insomnia. If there are major problems with inability to get to sleep or awakening frequently once asleep, a physician should be consulted. Good sleep hygiene is important. Having quiet time of at least an hour before bedtime is helpful. Light can interfere with sleep as well. *It is recommended that the bedroom be set up for sleep only.* That is, no television or computer in the bedroom.

Exercise is important for good health. Exercise contributes to good physical and mental health. There are simple, even easy, activities that can serve to keep the person moving. Health experts typically recommend thirty (30) minutes of exercise daily. This can be spread throughout the day. A gym membership (and attendance) is good but simple things like using the stairs instead of the elevator, parking a good distance from an entrance, walking to the office of a colleague rather than e-mailing or phoning the person. Weather does not have to be an issue. Often men and women are seen putting in their paces as they make laps in the mall (rather than strolling from store to store). Swimming is an excellent exercise as there is less ground impact than in walking or running, so joints are protected. There is more resistance however, and so there is a good work out. Household activities such as making a bed, vacuuming, washing dishes can burn calories. Adults as well as children should limit video game time, television, and other sedentary activities. *Get up and move!*

Wishing you healthy habits and good health in 2017!

Always consult your physician before making any changes in dietary or exercise habits.

Holiday Food Boxes Distributed at Christmas



Maeola Peoples
prepares food boxes.

St. John provided over fifty food boxes to needy families for Christmas. The boxes contained food for a Christmas meal and more.

Thank you St John for your generosity and thank you committee for your selfless service in shopping, preparing and distributing the food boxes.

Membership Canvassing Coming Soon

Calling all members!

It is that time of the year when you are asked to update your membership information. The stewards will begin contacting you from January 29, 2017-February 19, 2017. An adult member from each family must verify the information. Thank you very much.

The Stewards of St. John AME Church



AME Proud

The book (now a major motion picture) *Hidden Figures* was written by Margot Lee Shetterly. It tells the story of black mathematicians who began working as "human computers" during World War II and later played key roles in calculations for NASA's greatest achievements in the space program.

Dorothy Vaughn (played by Octavia Spencer) and Mary Jackson (played by Janelle Monae) were both active and life-long members of the AME Church. Dorothy Vaughn was a graduate of Wilberforce University.



Church School Book Club

Discussion Date: January 21, 2017
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

***Red Hats*, Damon Wayans, 2010**

Discussion Date: February 18, 2017
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

***Till You Hear from Me*, Pearl Cleage, 2010**

Just when it appears that all her hard work on Barack Obama's presidential campaign is about to pay off with a White House job, thirty-five-year-old Ida B. Wells Dunbar finds herself on Washington, D.C.'s post-election sidelines even as her twenty-something counterparts overrun the West Wing. Adding to her woes, her father, the Reverend Horace A. Dunbar, Atlanta civil rights icon and self-described "foot soldier for freedom," is notoriously featured on an endlessly replayed YouTube clip in which his pronouncements do not exactly jibe with the new era in American politics.

The Rev's stinging words and myopic views do not sound anything like the man who raised Ida to make her mark in the world. When friends call to express their concern, Ida realizes it is time to head home and see for herself what is going on. Besides, with her job prospects growing dimmer, getting out of D.C. for a while might be the smartest move she could make.

Back in her old West End neighborhood, Ida runs into childhood friend and smooth political operator Wes Harper, also in town to pay a visit to the Reverend Dunbar, his mentor. Ida does not trust Wes or his mysterious connections for one second, but she cannot deny her growing attraction to him.

While Ida and the Rev try to find the balance between personal loyalties and political realities, they must do some serious soul searching in order to get things back on track before Wes permanently derails their best laid plans.

Saint John African Methodist Episcopal Church
229 Church Street | Huntsville, Alabama 35801

Visit us at <http://www.stjohname-hsv.org/>



College & Emphasis Sunday

Sunday, January 29, 2017

Church School 9:00AM Worship Experience: 10:00AM



Inviting ALL COLLEGE STUDENTS. Come Get Connected!



UAH
The University of Alabama in Huntsville



ATHENS STATE
UNIVERSITY



Transportation and lunch provided.

For more information contact the Church Office at 256.534.3265



The Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor

Church School Lesson Overview – February 2017

The lesson reviews were written by Brother Ken Parham.

February 5, 2017

Lesson Title: Re-created to Live in Harmony

Lesson Scripture: Galatians 3:26-4:7

Print: Galatians 3:26-4:7

Devotional Songs: #450, #323, and #243

Key Verse: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

In this lesson, Paul provided assurance to the new converts in Galatia concerning being heirs to the kingdom after their denouncing Judaism and accepting the teachings of Jesus (Christianity). Paul provided comfort to them by giving them an analogy between young heirs not fully come into their inheritance and slaves with no inheritance. He indicated that as minors, the heirs were no better than slaves though they were still owners of their inheritance. The minor does have a guardian watching over them and their inheritance until they reach proper age. Paul indicated that so it is with the promise of salvation to those outside the Law. He indicated in verses 4-7 that although Jesus was born under the law to redeem those under the law, God made provisions to adopt the children outside the law by sending the spirit of His son into their hearts. Once adopted; the ones that accept Christ are no longer considered slaves but children. And, if children, they are then entitled heirs.

February 12, 2017

Lesson Title: New Birth Brings Freedom

Lesson Scripture: Galatians 4

Print: Galatians 4:8-20

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

Key Verse: "Now, however, that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits? How can you want to be enslaved to them again?" (Galatians 4:9).

In this lesson, Paul wrote to the Jews who chose to accept the new religion of Christianity in Galatia. Paul is troubled by their reverting back to customs and wanted to express his concern as to whether or not his work in Galatia was in vain. Paul noticed the following changes in the new converts: a regression back to observing customs, contempt towards Paul for his rebuke of their regression, and new

converts were seeking the advice of Judaism teachers known for not telling the truth concerning the teachings of Jesus.

February 19, 2017

Lesson Title: Freedom in Christ

Lesson Scripture: Galatians 5:1-17

Print: Galatians 5:1-17

Devotional Songs: #424, #258, and #243

Key Verses: "For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another." (Galatians 5:13).

Here again, Paul addressed the converts in Galatia in this text. He had heard that the converts to Christianity were in the process of practicing circumcision, a Jewish tradition based on a covenant made between God and Abraham (Genesis 17:10-14). Paul was wondering what was going on in that the converts were doing so well.

Paul pointed out that Jesus did not care about one being circumcised or uncircumcised and indicated that the practice would cut them off from Jesus and God's grace. Paul indicated that reverting back to practicing Jewish traditions would only allow them to become slaves to self-indulgence. The teachings of Jesus' love would allow the Galatians to be free to serve one another as noted in the second greatest commandment, "... love thou neighbor as thou self...". Paul closed by cautioning the new converts to not be consumed by following traditions for some only satisfied the desires of the flesh and what the flesh desired is opposite to what Spirit desired.

February 26, 2017

Lesson Title: Christ Creates Holy Living

Lesson Scripture: Galatians 5:18-6:10

Print: Galatians 5:18-6:10

Tentative Devotional Songs: #345, #251, and #243

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

In this passage, Paul explored what it meant to take on

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Church School Lesson Overview February 2017

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Christ-like characteristics and walk in the Spirit. The text provided a listing of human characteristics (hatred, envy, adultery, fornication, idolatry, drunkenness, strife, etc.) that man takes on because of being under the law. The Life Application Study Bible indicates that the character traits of the spirit (i.e., joy peace, gentleness, kindness, etc.) are under Jesus' control and the only way that man can obtain these character traits is to join his life with Jesus. It is noted that dealing with sins (crucifying them) does not mean that believers will not have these desires, but as Christians they have the power to overcome sin (2 Corinthians 5:17 – if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things have passed away ...).

Paul reminded the Galatians that if they walked in the spirit they must also be guided by the Spirit. He indicated that some will go out of their way to seek approval of others, but those following God with the right heart will not need to seek approval. And in keeping with working in the spirit, believers should help one another.

Finally, Paul commented on working in the Spirit. He warned that they would sow what they reaped. For if in doing right, believers are planting seeds for later. He indicated that even if there is no recognition for doing God's work, do not be dismayed and do not cease. God is watching and will reward in due season.

Here We Grow Again!

St. John welcomes the persons who have recently joined the church:

Mr. Roderick A. T. Green

Ms. Lisa R. McCraw

Welcome to the St. John family!

Membership Canvassing

Stewards will conduct their annual membership canvassing during the month of February. Members will be contacted by a steward to review their information and ministry participation.

New 9th District Website

Visit the newly designed website at
<http://www.ninthamechurch.org/>.



The vision for the Ninth Episcopal District is to

"Encourage, Empower and Enable the People of God!"

Like St. John on Facebook

STJOHNNAMEHSV

Be sure to view the special MLK tribute on our Facebook page.

Visit to Museum Planned

The Fifty Plus Auxiliary will venture to the Scottsboro Boys Museum Cultural Center on February 9, 2017. The bus/van will leave from the church at 9:15 am. Please contact Dr. Lee Williams at 256.859.1332 to reserve a seat.

Weekly Bible Study Wednesday, 12 pm and 6 pm

Pastor Wright leads Bible Study each Wednesday at noon and 6 pm (unless otherwise noted on the church calendar).



Members are urged to grow spiritually through this weekly study. Currently the lessons are based on the book Connected: My Life in the Church by Thom S. Rainer. You may purchase the book from Lifeway or other local and online bookstores. There is also an APP available on this bible study series.



February 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
			12:00 p.m. & 5:00 p.m. Bible Study	6:00 p.m. Male Choir Rehearsal		8:00 a.m. Love Feast Steward Board Mtg. Trustee Board Mtg.
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship Communion Sunday AMEN DEADLINE	9:30 a.m. Fifty-Fifts Meeting 5:00 p.m. Office Board	6:00 p.m. Stewardess Board Mtg.	12:00 p.m. & 5:00 p.m. Bible Study	6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal		9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 10:30 AMEN Staff Meeting
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship FOUNDERS DAY		6:00 p.m. VIP Choir Rehearsal	12:00 p.m. & 5:00 p.m. Bible Study	6:00 p.m. VIP Choir Rehearsal	6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	Presidents Day	11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study		6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry
26	27	28				
8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship		11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN Shrove Tuesday				

PRAYER for the MONTH Heavenly Father, thank you for a new beginning in 2017. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you more, to tell more people about Your love, Your gift of salvation through Your Son and spread Your love. Guide us each day of 2017 to be who You want us to be. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Scripture for the Month— In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

- John 1:1 (NRSV)



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

Return Service Requested

E-mail: stjohnameh@aol.com

Website: stjohname-hsv.org



The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright, Bishop
The Reverend Sherita Seawright, Episcopal Supervisor
The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder
The Reverend Maurice Wright II, Pastor

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Important Dates to Remember

January 28, 2017	Leadership Training Day 9:00 a.m. Stewardess Board 1:00 p.m. Steward Board and Trustee Board 4:00 p.m. All Leaders Please note that these times are subject to change. Please contact the church office for more information.
January 29, 2017	College Emphasis Sunday, 10:00 a.m. Service, Church School 9:00 a.m.
February 12, 2017	AME Church Founders Day
February 28, 2017	Shrove Tuesday
March 1, 2017	Ash Wednesday

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 21 Issue 2

February 2017

CELEBRATING AFRICAN METHODISM

Submitted by Sister Marie Nathan, 9th District Christian Education Director

It is during the month of February that the African Methodist Episcopal Church observes Founder's Day. Special worship services and other celebratory events are planned to honor the memory of Richard Allen, the founder of our great Zion. The founder of the church was also the first consecrated bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. We must also celebrate Sarah Allen, the wife of Richard Allen, and the first missionary in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

We are "African" because our church was organized by people of African descent. The church, however, is open to people of all races.

We are "Methodist" because our roots are in the Methodist church; thus we are a member of the family of Methodist churches. We follow the Methodist doctrine and the order of worship.

We are "Episcopal" because our church operates under an episcopal form of government. The episcopal form of government means that the chief executive and administrative officers of the AME Church are the Bishops of the church.

While we celebrate the rich history of our AME Church, I invite you to go to the AME website and read it for yourself. You may also find the history in *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2012*. So let us celebrate the AME Church, which has made such a positive impact on our lives. We can do this by living out the true meaning of our AME motto: "God Our Father, Christ Our Redeemer, Holy Spirit Our Comforter, Humankind Our Family."

DO YOU KNOW YOUR AME CHURCH?

1. Founder and first consecrated Bishop of the AME Church _____.
2. Name the church where Richard Allen was worshiping before he and other blacks walked out. _____.
3. The place where the group who left St. George's Methodist Church met. _____.
4. The Name the group gave themselves after they left St. George's Methodist Church. _____.
5. The basic foundation of beliefs of the AME Church are found in these two documents _____.
6. These four persons known as "The Four Horsemen" were pioneers, instrumental in the development of the AME Church _____.
7. WMS stands for _____.
8. YPD stands for _____.
9. CLO stands for _____.
10. You are a member of the _____ Episcopal District, _____ Conference, _____ PE District.

Answers on page 18.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities are not only relevant, they are Life Savers

By Jeanette Jones



Education Changes Lives and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are truly life savers. For years, HBCUs have provided educational opportunities to all, especially to minority and underprivileged students who were denied access to educational institutions due to their race, economically disadvantage backgrounds and systemic prejudices. HBCUs, like Alabama A&M University (AAMU), provide quality education, scholarships, and offer supplemental field-specific experiences to students which correspond to developing, safeguarding, and preserving a diverse workforce for the future across several disciplines. Just as at any university or college, the quality of education at an HBCU is only as good as the student's desire to learn.

HBCUs are indeed a source of accomplishment and great pride for the African American community and the entire nation. The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, defines an HBCU as: "...any historically black college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and is, the education of black Americans, and that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association". HBCUs offer all students, regardless of race, an opportunity to develop their skills and talents. These institutions train young people who go on to serve society domestically and internationally in the professions as entrepreneurs, as well as within the public and private sectors (*White house initiative on historically black colleges and universities, 2016*).

Are HBCUs still relevant? Yes, they are indeed relevant and very necessary. There are approximately 107 Historically Black Colleges and Universities, including public and private institutions, community, four-year institutions, medical, law, and other health professional schools. HBCUs represent only 2 percent of all Colleges and Universities in the nation, yet they enroll approximately 12 percent of all black college students and produce 25 percent of all college graduates who are black. Data also shows that 41 percent of all degrees in the STEM disciplines (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) were obtained from HBCUs. In the health care professions, data also indicates 38 percent of the black health professionals were graduates of HBCUs. According to UNCF, HBCUs produce approximately 70% of all black doctors and dentists, 50% of black engineers and public school teachers and 35% of black lawyers. Needless to say, HBCUs play a very important role in ensuring the nation has a well-trained and diverse workforce.

HBCUs are primarily minority serving institutions meaning they are educational institutions for African-Americans and for women and men of different sociocultural and economic backgrounds. HBCUs enroll peoples of all backgrounds and ethnicities. They play a vital role in providing an education to those who have been marginalized by the education system.

"HBCUs, like Alabama A&M University, founded by an ex-slave, Dr. William Hooper Council, prepares and instills within their students the philosophy that they can come to AAMU, and obtain a good education which can take them anywhere in life." HBCUs have laid the educational foundation for achievers like retired Chief of Contracts and Management, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sharon Butler, AAMU graduate; Retired Director, Security Assistance, U.S. Army Missile Command, Adrienne P-K Washington, AAMU graduate; Judge Martha Lynn Sherrod, Fisk University graduate; Retired UAH Professor Emeritus, Dr. Lee Williams II, Knoxville College graduate; AAMU President, Andrew Hugine, Jr., South Carolina State University graduate, Entrepreneur and Football Hall of Famer, John Stallworth, AAMU graduate; physician and a former vice admiral in the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, Dr. Regina Benjamin, Xavier University graduate; AAMU Provost, Dr. Daniel K. Wims, Fort Valley State University graduate; Col. James O. Heyward, South Carolina State University graduate; Pastor Maurice Wright, St. John AME Church, Morehouse College graduate; and the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr., Morehouse College graduate; all of whom are notable alumni of HBCUs who have made substantial contributions to the nation in their field.

The establishment and existence of an HBCU is a vivid reminder of the victory realized in communities as people of African-American descent fought for the right to be educated. HBCUs were established with the assistance of several well-known

(Continued on page 10)

President Barack Hussein Obama: Forever Etched in African American (and all) History

Bridget J. Floyd



In 2008, Barack Hussein Obama was elected the 44th, and first African American, President of the United States of America. He was re-elected in 2012. The son of a Kenyan father and Caucasian – American mother, Barack Obama grew up in Hawaii and Indonesia, and completed his higher education at Columbia University and Harvard Law School. Prior to his presidency he worked as a community organizer, law professor, Illinois State Senator, and United States Senator from Illinois (his adopted home being Chicago, IL).

The legacy of President Obama will be determined over time. As his term came to an end, President Obama had high approval ratings overall (although when broken down by political party he typically received low ratings from Republicans and very high ratings from Democrats). Mr. Obama took office in the

midst of a major recession. Despite the declaration by Republicans in Congress that they would oppose any legislation proposed by the President to insure that he would be a one-term president, a number of significant accomplishments occurred. In the first one hundred days of his first term, a multi-billion dollar stimulus bill was passed and the banking, housing and automobile industry were provided with necessary capital to avoid an economic collapse. New regulations for Wall Street were put in place to prevent recurrence of the problems. He signed legislation to support equal pay for women.

The signature legislation proposed by Mr. Obama was The Affordable Care Act (referred to by detractors as "Obamacare"). This was passed and survived opposition efforts which went as far as the United States Supreme Court. Interestingly, at the time of this writing, citizens have begun to protest efforts to "repeal and replace" Obamacare (although this was the campaign promise of the current President and his party). The most popular components are that access to healthcare is available to those who have "pre-existing conditions" and children can stay on parents' insurance policy until age twenty six (26).



Bishops of the AME Church pray for the then candidate Obama in 2008.

A dear component of President Obama's legacy is the fact that he filled two Supreme Court positions: Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan. However, his third nominee, Merrick Garland, was not allowed to go forward for a vote. This resulted in an eight-member Court for the last year of his final term.

President Obama approved a special forces mission that resulted in the death of Osama Bin Laden, the al-Qaeda leader who was deemed responsible for the "9/11" terrorist attack. Tragic incidents during his presidency resulted in unsuccessful efforts toward gun control. The gun lobby was very formidable. Other events included Trayvon Martin's death, the Boston Marathon bombing, and murders at Mother Emmanuel AME Church where Pastor Clemente Pinkney and eight members were killed. President Obama eulogized the Reverend Pickney and was highlighted as he brought clergy to their feet as he ended his eulogy by leading them in singing "Amazing Grace".

Mr. Obama received the Nobel Peace Prize as he began to reach out to countries around the world. He did meet with criticism by the opposition party as "an apologist". However, he gave an initial impression as a leader/person who wanted to unify. He initiated an agreement with Iran to limit the capacity to develop nuclear weapons and to allow inspectors to monitor

(Continued on page 16)

Dr. Renita Weems Featured at Dr. Martin Luther King Celebration

Bridget J. Floyd



Dr. Renita Weems

The Greater Huntsville Interdenominational Ministerial Fellowship (GHIMF) annually celebrates the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Emancipation Proclamation. This religious and patriotic celebration of the renowned civil rights leader and official freedom of enslaved African Americans in the United States. The event is always held on the actual birthday of Dr. King at 7 p.m. This year it was Sunday, January 15, 2017, at Progressive Union Baptist Church. The host pastor was the Reverend Wayne Snodgrass. Dr. Renita Weems, renowned AME Itinerant Elder who now serves as co-pastor (with her husband) at Ray of Hope in Nashville, Tennessee.

The program began with the presentation of the colors by the Boy Scouts and a youth processional of international flags. Inspirational music was provided by a mass choir consisting of voices and directors from numerous churches in the community. Similarly liturgical dance featured interdenominational

representation as well. Program participants were pastors from the community. A youth challenge was presented by perhaps a future pastor, Alabama A & M student, Jerrian Crutcher the grandson of the Reverend Jerry Crutcher. Dr. Weems was introduced by the Reverend Dr. Julius Scruggs, pastor of First Missionary Baptist Church.

Dr. Weems preached with an interesting/intriguing combination of pathos and humor. Her topic was "But We Had Hoped" from Luke 24. She chronicled the history of the creation of a national holiday to celebrate Dr. King and noted that she had broken the two rules of homiletics, one of which is to "preach your specialty". Despite her doctoral training (and uniqueness as an African American female) in the Old Testament, she was tonight preaching from the New Testament – and preach she did!

While Dr. Weems did not have "an aspirational" or positive title (the other rule) she reflected on the text which described a time when disciples were recounting the events of Jesus' crucifixion and the associated sadness and loss of hope. She also noted that the disciples were so caught up in this sad mood/grief that they did not recognize that Jesus was in their midst. Throughout her sermon, Dr. Weems alluded to (at that time) the upcoming 2017 inauguration of the new President of the United States.



Pastor Wright, Dr. Renita Weems and the Reverend Endia Scruggs

She referred to a soap opera title and introduction "Like sands through the hour glass, so are the days of our lives" and the referenced "fake news". She noted that in the text they were likely reflecting on their hopes and she referred to current times when people talk about "hope in hard times". She made the comparison of a president who engendered so much hope to the "incoming" president (at that time) and noted that there might be *disappointment*, which can turn into *discouragement*, which can turn into *depression*, which can turn into *despair*. She noted that all of this can occur if a person is not *prayed up or in touch with God*. Dr. Weems indicated that "the mature Christian knows things don't turn out the way they want, but that *God is in Control!!*"

(Continued on page 13)

Leadership Conference Promotes Informed Leaders

By Nedra L. McDaniel

A leadership training session was held at St. John on Saturday, January 28, 2017. The workshop focused on the roles of Stewards, Trustees, Stewardesses, and board, auxiliary and ministry leaders. The Right Reverend Carolyn Tyler Guidry (Retired), 122nd elected and consecrated bishop of the AME Church was the keynote presenter. The Reverend Wilhelmina Devone-Harvey (Rev. Wil), Esquire, Legal Advisor to the AME Church, and Pastor Maurice Wright II also presented sessions.



Pastor Wright, Bishop Tyler Guidry and Rev. Wil

The morning session of the leadership training consisted of separate sessions for Stewards, Trustees and Stewardess. Each group rotated among presenters Bishop Tyler Guidry, Rev. Wil and Pastor Wright. Bishop Tyler Guidry emphasized the role of the particular board to which she spoke and allowed for questions and discussions regarding these roles. She covered the qualifications and duties of each office. Her years of experience and wisdom provided enlightening information for these officers. She was thorough in her answers to questions about the material that was presented.

Rev. Wil provided information on "Sexual Misconduct Policy Training: Awareness and Prevention." She provided information regarding the definitions of sexual contact, sexual misconduct, sexual abuse, child sexual abuse, as well as mandatory reporting and Alabama rules regarding sexual abuse and misconduct and children's supervision. The presentation included real-life

scenarios that demonstrated the importance of leaders being aware of and enforcing laws on sexual misconduct and abuse. Many questions were triggered that led to in-depth discussions on the topics. Her experience in representing the AME Church in cases relating to sexual misconduct was evident in the discussions.

Pastor Wright led a session on communication with each of the three groups. He began with an exercise where teams were given a stack of paper and a few minutes to attempt to build the highest paper tower. Team members were not allowed to talk during this exercise. After discussing what happened in this exercise, the teams were given a second opportunity to build the highest paper tower, but this time they were assigned a team leader and were allowed to talk. The contrast between the two exercises was the foundation for a discussion on the importance of communication and team work. The session highlighted concerns that affect leaders and prevent growth: always playing defense, knowing the difference in managing and leading, fear of rocking the boat, not enough Jesus, and failure to communicate.

Following lunch, a combined session was presented by Bishop Tyler Guidry. Leaders from the boards, auxiliaries and ministries joined the stewards, trustees and stewardesses for this session. Again, Bishop Tyler Guidry shared wisdom from her many years of work in the church and the community. She noted that a leader must be a Christian, a member "in good and regular standing," and understand the Church. She emphasized that the ministries of the church cover the areas of education, missions, evangelism and worship. Bishop Tyler Guidry discussed the two sacraments of the church, baptism and Holy Communion. She also noted that the church has the responsibility to offer its members education, worship, fellowship, service and pastoral care. In return, members have the responsibility of discipleship, regular attendance at worship, fellowship, evangelization, missions and stewardship.

The training session was very insightful. The level of engagement of attendees indicated this was training for which there is much interest. All presenters were well informed and passionate about their presentation areas. This type of training is the foundation for great church leadership.

College Emphasis Sunday Celebrates College Students

By Media L. McDaniel

Photography by Darwin Washington



Pastor Wright, Bishop Tyler Guidry, Rev. Rita and Brother Crutcher

Sunday, January 29, 2017, was college emphasis Sunday at St. John. College students from all of the colleges in the Huntsville area were invited to worship at St. John. The guest preacher was the Right Reverend Carolyn Tyler Guidry, retired bishop of the AME Church. The guest choir was the Voices of Oakwood University. Members and students wore attire from their alma mater or favorite college.

The service began with welcome by Pastor Wright and moments of praise by the St. John Praise Team. Prayer was offered by the Reverend Charles Glover and scripture was read by Sister Lillie Rivers. Dr. Andrew Hugine, president of Alabama A&M University, gave greetings and emphasized the importance of education. He introduced Brother Jerrian Crutcher, a student at Alabama A&M University, who gave words of inspiration. Brother Crutcher spoke on three groups of friends in one's life. He stated the

groups are friends behind, beside and above. He spoke on how these groups shift with maturity. Brother Crutcher further encouraged students and adults to mentor, volunteer and create a space for discussion.

The Voices of Oakwood University rendered several music selections. Instead of standing as a choir in the choir loft or front of the church, the director arranged the choir along the walls of the church and the center aisle. He indicated this arrangement was to provide a "surround sound" effect, which it did. The talented voices' selections included "Lamb of God" and "Marvelous."



The guest preacher, Bishop Tyler Guidry, was born in Jackson, Mississippi and spent her early life in the Jackson area. She was very active in the NAACP in Jackson and was the chairperson for women's voter registration. She continued her career and ministry after relocating to the Los Angeles, California area. She pastored several churches and set records as the first female pastor of a major metropolitan church and was the first female appointed to presiding elder in the Fifth Episcopal District. In 2004 she was elected a bishop in the AME church. During her service as a bishop, she presided over the Sixteenth and Eighth Districts. She retired from Episcopal service in 2012; however, she continues to be the voice of African Methodism in church polity and social action.

Bishop Tyler Guidry preached from Esther 4:7-14. The sermon title was "What Is Your Purpose?" with a subtitle "Stay Woke." The subtitle, which to today's generation is a rallying call to be socially conscious and engaged, set the tone for a message that reached worshippers of all generations. She told the story of Esther in a most comical way. She stated that

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Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations: How St. John Measures Up

By B. Johnson



One or two years ago, the congregation was encouraged to read Robert Schnase's *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*. The premise behind the request was to determine if St. John was doing those things that successful churches are doing to meet the needs of the members, and grow the church; if not, what improvements could be made? The Great Commission is that "we go and make disciples of all nations." However, it starts right in the church. As Wendy Williams would say with gusto and attitude, "Howya doing?" How is St. John doing in practicing these five principals? If the church is to "Grow, Glow and Go for Christ", how is it doing? Does it show "Radical hospitality?" Is "Passionate worship" exhibited? Is faith development intentional and is the church a risk-taker when it comes to mission and service? And lastly is generosity extravagant? Each practice deserves an in-depth examination therefore; this article will look at one practice each month. This month's focus will be **Intentional Faith Development**.

Schnase reveals what a true practice of intentional faith development should look like. He stated that, "We learn the life of Christ and will of God by studying God's Word and through experience with other people of faith. By joining a Bible study or class, we place ourselves in the circumstances that are most advantageous for growth in faith. Bible study is not just about self-improvement but about setting ourselves where God can shape us, intentionally opening ourselves to God's Word and call. God uses faith-to-faith relationships to change us. The practice of learning in community gives us a network of support, encouragement, and direction as we seek to grow in Christ."¹

The practice of intentional faith development takes a thousand forms. Some come as pre-packaged, high commitment learning experiences such as Rick Warren's *Forty Days of Purpose*. Other faith growth experiences are designed specifically to meet the needs of the congregation, such as prayer circles or mission teams. "Churches that practice Intentional Faith Development not only offer high quality traditional adult Sunday school classes for learning and fellowship, they also initiate and support weekday evening studies, home groups, "Brown Bag" lunch Bible studies and a host of opportunities for faith studies." Do not forget that Jesus taught on a mountainside, at a well and in the upper room over dinner. There are lots of opportunities outside of church for faith development.

Here are four key principals that churches that practice intentional faith development do:

1. They not only provide new and varied small group ministries for their long-term members; they also start new groups adapted to the needs of new members, visitors, and people not yet attending the church.
2. They develop ways of using technology, such as web blogs. Churches also make sermons, special lessons and presentations downloadable so that members, friends and guests can listen at their convenience.
3. Intentional Faith Development is also practiced through support and impact of task-oriented small groups such as the choirs, praise dance ministries, cooking crews and mission teams.
4. Congregational leaders consider the full life cycle of members and look for ways the church forms faith at every stage. They inventory their annual programs of ministry to discover any gaps in services and needs.

So, how does St. John measure up in providing opportunities for intentional faith development? Here is a summary, but by no means conclusive, of the intentional faith development opportunities available. These are faith development activities which occur outside of worship as means of helping people to study, learn, experience, and practice the faith.

(Continued on page 8)

¹Schnase, Robert C. (2007). *Five practices of fruitful congregations*. Nashville, TN Abingdon Press.

Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations: How St. John Measures Up

By B. Johnson

(Continued from page 7)

*Stewards	*Stewardess Board
*Trustees	*Ministerial Staff
New Members Class	Sons of Allen
Sunday School Classes for all ages	Koinonia Ministry
Vacation Bible School for all ages	Food Service Ministry
Mid-week Bible Study at 12:00 & 6:00	Soup Kitchen Ministry
Greeter Ministry	Caregivers Prayer & Respite Ministry (CPR)
Praise Dance Ministry for all ages & mobility	Media Ministry
Habitat for Humanity Project Mission Team	Usher Boards, Senior and Junior
Women's Missionary Society	Young Peoples Division (YPD)
AME Newsletter Staff	Music Ministry—Mass Choir, Gospel Choir, Male Chorus, VIP Choir, Praise Team, Children's Choir
Drama Ministry	50+ Auxiliary
Christian Education	Lay Organization
College Student/Campus Ministry	Military Ministry
Hospitality Ministry	IThrive Ministry

* Membership is either elected or appointed.

We have the opportunities for each member to grow intentionally in their faith. At each meeting, the question should be asked, what are we doing to grow our faith, support each other in their faith development and fulfill the great commission, to go and spread the gospel to all the nations of the world?



Wednesday Bible Study



Adult Church School Class

"A picture is worth a thousand words," and is also evidence of our efforts to grow intentionally in our faith. The group pictured in the Bible Study class with Pastor Wright, had just finished a robust discussion on what it means to serve. There is

(Continued on page 9)

Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations: How St. John Measures Up

By B. Johnson

(Continued from page 8)

room for you at 12:00 noon and 6:00 pm. New members are engaged in learning the doctrine of the African Methodist Episcopal Church with the Reverend Johnson. If you are new to the AME Church, there is room for you here. The adult Sunday School class has room for you. The teachers are well prepared to teach and they challenge students to think openly and collaboratively about faith issues. How we reach out to others, not only deepens our faith, but also shares the love of God with others, what we are supposed to be doing; the Soup Kitchen Crew shares their faith with many each third and fourth Tuesday of the month. There is room to develop your faith here.



Soup Kitchen volunteers Karen Minor, Paulette Williams, Templea Stanley, Mary Rankin, Pearlean Myland, Maeola Peoples and Carol Ball.



Ms. Jennifer Thompson with Dr. James R. Johnson in New Members Class.

Membership is open to every member for any of the already formed groups. Every member is welcomed. If there is a need not being met, because that group has not been established, talk with the Reverend Joretha Wright, Executive Minister. There may be others in need of that faith development group.

"It only takes two or three gathered in [Jesus'] name to experience the presence of Christ and to grow together in faith."



**Habitat
for Humanity**

their time to make a positive difference in communities by building homes and providing hope for families. Habitat for Humanity has been part of St. John's community outreach for over two decades.

Habitat for Humanity of Madison County is an ecumenical, grassroots, Christian housing ministry that seeks to eliminate poverty housing from communities and to make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action. Habitat volunteers donate

The 2017 Habitat Spring Build will begin next month. St. John will partner with other local churches to build a 5-bedroom home on Maywick Drive, near Winchester Road. Pastor Wright has selected four St John work Saturdays: **March 11, 2017, April 8, 2017, May 6, 2017, and June 3, 2017.** On these days, everyone who is physically able to come out and help should plan to do so. There is something for everyone to do at some point during the build. The build schedule and sign-up sheets will be posted on the Habitat Bulletin board that is just outside the sanctuary. Work times are from 7:00 a.m. to noon Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, so if you cannot make any of the Saturday work dates there are other days you can volunteer. If you have questions, please contact Tami McGhee at 256-603-0466 or the church office.

ELLIPSIS

EXPERIENCE

2017 CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN & TEEN GIRLS
More to your Story... From Surviving to Thriving



April 28, 2017 thru April 30, 2017

WOMEN'S REGISTRATION

\$55 (weds 2-12:00 / Thurs 5-7:30 / Fri 7-9)
(until sold out)
\$40 One Day Registration

TEEN REGISTRATION

\$10

FULL REGISTRATION INCLUDES: (1) Swag Bag, (1) Reception, (2) Breakfasts, (2) Lunches, All worship experiences/Workshop experiences and materials.

It is officially Ellipsis season!!! Get the early registration rate while it lasts. The \$55 registration fee includes a fabulous swag bag, five (5) meals, and all worship and workshops, including materials!!! Girls receive the same deal for only \$10. Go to www.theellipsisexperience.com to register NOW!!! See Rev. Rita for more information.

HBCUs

(Continued from page 2)

religious organizations, including the African Methodist Episcopal Church. HBCUs affiliated with the A.M.E. Church include Allen University, Wilberforce University, Paul Quinn College, Edward Waters, Shorter College, Payne Theological Seminary and Turner Theological Seminary. Though meagerly funded, while surviving and thriving, HBCUs would be the institutions where anyone with the desire for higher education could attend, if they wanted to make a better life for themselves and their families. They are monuments as birthplaces of historical civil rights movements which changed the course of American History and its future. That is why the Historically Black College or University is still relevant and important to our future.



Soup Kitchen Ministry

By Charlie Brooks

ARE YOU HUNGRY OR THIRSTY?

"Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life. Whosoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."
John 6:35 (NRSV)

"Are you hungry? Are you thirsty?" We can remember our mothers asking these questions when we returned from playing or from school, especially when we played outside in the extreme summer heat. If we said no, then they asked again, "Are you sure?"

For all of us regardless of our position in life, these questions face us all. For all humans and creatures are susceptible to physical hunger and thirst. Fulfilling these needs are essential.

"Jesus soon saw a huge crowd of people coming to look for him. Turning to Philip, he asked, 'Where can we buy bread to feed all these people?' Philip replied, even if we worked for months, we wouldn't have enough money to feed them! Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to God and distributed them to the people." John 6: (NLT)

We are charged to feed the hungry. "Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon." Isaiah 58:10 (NLT)

Please join St John's Soup Kitchen each 3rd and 4th Tuesday to serve in the "Soup Kitchen". You can be the face of God offering food, water and the love of Christ to those who come.

Gracious God, thank you for offering bread and water to our hungry and thirsting souls and bodies. Amen

Greeter Ministry

The Greeter Ministry is in need of a ministry leader and greeter volunteers. If interested, please contact Rev. Rita at stjohnfirstlady@gmail.com or complete an interest form located on the ministry board.

St. John Goes to the Movies

By Charlie Brooke



Octavia Spencer and the cast of *Hidden Figures*.

On Friday, January 13, 2017, the St. John church family overflowed the reserved theater to a second theater to see the movie *Hidden Figures* which is based on the book by the same name.

The New York Post's movie review said that *Hidden Figures* pulled off a surprise victory at the Screen Actors Guild awards, making it the most serious challenger to other Oscar favorites. This movie is about three black women working as NASA mathematicians in the early days of the space race. It is a movie for anxious times, offering patriotic balm for current fractured race relations. The review goes on to say that American history has its blemishes and horrors. *Hidden Figures* offers an alternative. "The idea that black women had been recruited to work as mathematicians at the NASA installation in the South during the days of segregation defies our expectations and

challenges much of what we think we know about American history. It's a great story, and that alone makes it worth telling," wrote the book's author, Margot Lee Shetterly. The women are the heroines and this is a great story that alone makes it worth telling.¹

Miss Tami McGhee offers this view of the movie. "After watching the movie, *Hidden Figures*, with sorority sisters and friends, I left the theater with feelings of excitement and gratitude. As an African American female engineer at National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)-Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC), I was excited that someone decided to document the incredible story of the contributions these courageous, brilliant women made to the space agency's missions during the early years."

"I am thankful that I do not have to deal with the segregation policies and inequalities these women initially experienced, but there are still challenges. I am grateful for the career opportunities that are available to me at NASA. I am further motivated to continue with pride the work I do for NASA, standing on the shoulders of extraordinary women, such as Mary Jackson, Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan and many others who have paved the way for me." - Tami McGhee

Mrs. Karen Minor attended the movie with her granddaughter, Channing, and offered the following thoughts. "I took my granddaughter Channing to see the movie because I wanted her to see how black females can succeed in mathematics. At times Channing does struggle with math, but with hard work and persistence she can succeed in life. This movie sent this message to her and to me. It was a movie that pictured reality. Channing and other young folk in attendance could see that Black women can achieve greatness in this world."

This movie is recommended for all to see. It is based on the lives of three women who were graduates of HBCU schools, AME's (two of the three women), active in their communities and all were actively involved in Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Everyone should also read the book *Hidden Figures* by Margot Lee Shetterly for a broader view of the lives of the women featured in the movie as well as others who worked at Langley Research Center from the 40's through the late 70's. There is a young reader's version of the book that is a must read for all youth.

¹ The all-American appeal of "Hidden Figures"/New York Post <http://nypost.com/2017/02/06/>

Highlighting St. John's Youth



St. John observed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. day on Sunday January 15 during both worship services. Youth of the church led the congregation in a special litany. Pictured above are Anthony Harbin, Michael Clark, Joy Wright, Eddie Whitehead, Jr., and Martine Hill.



Male members of the Youth Usher Board pose with Pastor Wright after service on January 15. Pictured from left to right are Josiah Gullatte, Daniel Haygood, Michael Clark, Anthony Harbin, Eddie Whitehead, Jr., and Pastor Wright.

New Members Welcomed After Completing New Members Class



Mashonda White, David Norwood, Patricia Norwood, Jennifer Thompson and Roderick Green

Church School Book Club

Discussion Date: February 18, 2017
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Till You Hear from Me, Pearl Cleage, 2010

Discussion Date: March 18, 2017
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Who Asked You? Terry McMillan, 2015

When *Who Asked You?* begins, Trinetta leaves her two young sons with her mother, Betty Jean, and promptly disappears. BJ already has her hands full dealing with her other adult children, two opinionated sisters, an ill husband, and her own postponed dreams—all the while holding down a job delivering room service at a hotel.

Her son Dexter is about to be paroled from prison; Quentin, the family success, can't be bothered to lend a hand; and taking care of two lively grandsons is the last thing BJ thinks she needs. But who asked her?

An Evening of Spirituals

St. John AME Church

February 26, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.



AME Proud

The Council of Bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church issued an Episcopal Statement on January 31, 2017 in response to the views and actions of President Donald Trump since his inauguration on January 20, 2017. The statement expressed opposition to four (4) executive orders and two (2) Executive Memoranda. The Bishops also made a call for action for the Social Action Commissions of each Annual Conference to meet with Congressional delegations to express the views of the AME Church.

For a copy of the Episcopal Statement, go to the AME Church website—<https://www.ame-church.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Episcopal-Statement-Council-of-Bishops-re-Trump-Actions.pdf>.

Dr. Renita Weems Featured at Dr. Martin Luther King Celebration

Bridget J. Floyd

(Continued from page 4)

Dr. Weems cited examples of laments, "We thought the cancer would be cured, that I would get in my first college choice, I would get the raise, the marriage would work out." She also noted that one can doubt God and question, "Why... Where was God?" She referred to the book of Job and highlighted Job's uniqueness in his position that God should not be questioned in the hard times, as He was not questioned in the times of blessings.

Dr. Weems again referred to the text, noting that the disciples were so sad, but Jesus was "right there" and they did not realize it. She queried the congregants, "How many times have you done this when God was making a way?" She encouraged those present to "Be grateful He is with you in the bad times even when you are not aware".

Dr. Weems transitioned to the focus of the celebration, Dr. King. She stated, "We had hope!" She noted that "we like our prophets dead...King is a prophet now!" She returned to the topic "We had hoped" and noted that "people" have hope and that "We hope for the presence, peace, manifestation, Kingdom of God." She encouraged that "as God has brought us in the past, he will bring us through the future". She recited the words from the hymn, "My Hope is Built". She noted the history and that God brought African Americans "through the middle passage, Jim Crow, etc."

Dr. Weems exclaimed, "We Have Hope!!!" She stated that the baton is passed to the young person on program who offered the "youth challenge", and noted that he and other youth are "facing your Pettis Bridge and Berlin Wall."

The congregation responded to an outstanding and timely message that was very passionate, humorous and direct in pondering what the future might hold. Despite deviating from the "rule" of an aspirational title for the sermon, the preacher left those present with the message / reminder that God is present and working on their behalf, even in difficult (seemingly hopeless) times.

A highlight for St. John members who were present, was the acknowledgement that former St. John pastor, the Reverend Dr. Homer L. McCall, was present for the event. It was then stated that with his entrance, all past presidents of the GHMF were present at the event. There was a rousing response to Dr. McCall's presence.

A Black History & Founders Day Moment

By Paulette Bargon

Things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, but tell the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, And His might, and the wonders that He has done.

- Psalm 78:3-4



Jordan Winston Early - The Reverend Jordan Winston Early (1814-1903) was a A.M.E. minister, considered to have been one of the pioneers of African Methodism. Early was born a slave in Franklin County, Virginia. His mother died when he was three years old. He was raised by an elderly woman known as Aunt Millie, who cared for the plantation's slave children. She was a devout Christian. Early attributed the

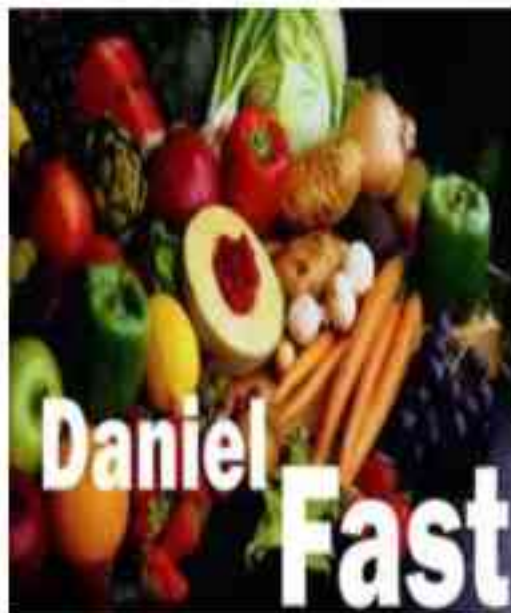
fact that he became a "useful and intelligent man", due to her influence.

In 1836 Early moved with the Early Family to St. Louis, where he frequently visited camp meetings and listened the white ministers' sermons. When Early was 18, he was given reading lessons by a Presbyterian minister and a mate on the boat where Early worked taught him how to write. In 1833 he was licensed as an exhorter in the Methodist Episcopal Church. It was thought that he purchased his freedom at the same time.

In the mid 1830's William Paul Quinn, a pioneer minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, came to St. Louis to evangelize on behalf of his predominantly black denomination. Early was one of the first to switch his affiliation to the new church and he soon rose in its ministerial ranks. The St. Louis AME congregation grew rapidly. By 1840 they bought land and built a substantial brick church. After the Nat Turner rebellion in 1831, slave patrollers kept a close watch on the black church, but the mayor of St. Louis stopped the patrol from interfering with the church because Early had earned much respect among the people of the city.

Over the next 13 years Early organized AME Churches in Burlington and Dubuque, Iowa, Galena, Illinois, New Orleans and at least nine locations in Missouri, all without financial help from his church. Early faced great danger while

(Continued on page 16)



*Fasting
and
Prayer*



March 1st- April 16th

Lent

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. Our 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.

The contemporary church observes the Lenten season with the following observances:

Penitence: Lent is a time of self-denial. This means that we must repent of our sins and the damage that they do, and deny ourselves of those items that separate us from a closer walk with God.

Teaching: As a means of growth in the knowledge of the faith, this period is used as a time of intense teaching and

catechizing, as a continuation of the early Christian preparation of new converts for the Easter baptism.

Outreach: This is a time when the cross and its significance to the individual and the faith is lifted up with special witness being given to its redemptive message.

This year the focus at St. John during Lent is prayer and fasting. Join the Wednesday morning devotional call at 6 a.m. The conference call number is 530.881.1212 and the meeting id is 876-863-940.

College Emphasis Sunday Celebrates College Students

By Nedra L. McDaniel

Photography by Darwin Washington

(Continued from page 6)

Mordaci "stayed woke." He kept his ears open and he acted on what he saw. She used this example to encourage hearers that it is not enough to just sit and cry; sometimes action is required. Throughout the message, she emphasized "Stay woke" and remember that although people are always plotting, God is still on the throne.

Following the service, a delicious meal of fried and baked chicken, green beans, macaroni and cheese, potato salad, rolls and cake was served to students and members. Everyone was encouraged to enjoy the meal and fellowship.



Church School Lesson Overview – March 2017

The lesson reviews were written by Willie Sandifer, Church School Superintendent.

March 5, 2017

Lesson Title: Perfect Love

Lesson Scripture: 1 John 4:7-19

Print: 1 John 4:7-19

Devotional Songs: #Love Lifted Me, #272, and #243

Key Verse: "Dear friends, since God also loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4:11).

The apostle John has been credited with writing three letters called 1, 2, and 3 John. Having written them after AD 90, he may have been the last of the twelve original disciples of Jesus still alive.

Although they may appear odd at first glimpse, John uses absolute statements like "God is light" and "God is love" without seeming contradictory. John uses this technique in his writing and his statements about people show them in a polar-opposite light. We see this technique in this lesson.

The three letters provide evidence of bitterness in John, likely caused by false teachers that were decried by John. The commentator suggests that an elderly John appeared out of touch to other leaders who desired to go in new directions with the churches.

March 12, 2017

Lesson Title: Great Love

Lesson Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-10

Print: Ephesians 2:1-10

Devotional Songs: #364, #323, and #243

Key Verse: "[God] made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved" (Ephesians 2:4).

Because Paul mentioned being confined physically as he wrote, his letter to the church in Ephesus is considered one of his "prison epistles". Paul did not mention where he was imprisoned, however, the commentary speculated that he was likely in Rome. The commentary tied it to the house arrest situation at the end of Acts where Paul was waiting for a hearing in front of the Roman emperor.

The Jewish people during that time had a lengthy history of looking down on the Gentiles. However this did not appear to be an issue in Ephesus as it was in other places. Paul was careful to show that Jesus had gotten rid of any necessary division between Jew and Gentile. This formed a single

body of God's people. Keeping the Jewish law, earned neither Jew nor Gentile salvation. It is brought into being in the grace of God.

March 19, 2017

Lesson Title: Matchless Love

Lesson Scripture: John 15:1-17

Print: John 15:1-17

Devotional Songs: #This Little Light of Mine; #258; and #243

Key Verses: "My command is this: Love one another as I have loved you." (John 15:12).

The fruit produced in a vineyard was a staple in the ancient world because it was a source of sustenance the entire year, as the harvested grapes were converted into raisins and wine to be eaten later. One of the alluring descriptions of the Promised Land was its fruitful vineyards. A massive cluster of grapes were brought back by the spying expedition into the Promised Land.

In Jesus' day, vineyards were common all over Galilee, Judea, and Samaria. This lesson is considered by some to be a parable and by others to be an illustrative comparison or a plotless extended metaphor.

March 26, 2017

Lesson Title: Christ Creates Holy Living

Lesson Scripture: Joel 2

Print: Joel 2:12, 13, 18, 19, 28-32

Tentative Devotional Songs: #77; #251; and #243

Key Verse: "Rend your heart, and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity" (Joel 2:13).

The final twelve books of the Old Testament are called the Minor Prophets. Joel is one of those twelve books. The books are referred to as minor because of their lengths and not because of their contents. The importance of the content is seen in the quotations, thirty of them, which show up in the New Testament.

Joel's name means "the Lord is God." Not much is known about this man or when the book was written. Conventionally, Joel was thought to have lived as early as 837 BC. This places Joel in the days of King Joash, although Joel refers to enemies that place him in an earlier time period.

A Black History & Founders Day Moment

By Paulette Bargon

(Continued from page 11)

doing his missionary work in the south. He feared the patrolers, police and the slaveholders. In 1846 he was called before a grand jury in Missouri and was interrogated about the transportation of fugitive slaves on the Underground Railroad. He denied having any knowledge of an escape network, but on several occasions, he did help to purchase a slave's freedom.

Throughout the years Early went on to pastor many churches in Illinois, Kentucky, and Tennessee. In 1881 Early was appointed presiding elder for the AME churches in eastern and middle Tennessee. He retired from the ministry in 1888. Jordan Early's place of death was unknown.

Pioneer black ministers like Jordan W. Early were mainly responsible for the tremendous growth in the south and the west regions of the AME church. They accomplished much despite severe persecution and great poverty among the people they served.

Reference: *AFRICANA, The encyclopedia of the African & African American experience.*

This is just a fragment of the life of the Reverend Jordan W. Early. Read more about his complete history in the above reference.

Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations; ask your father, and he will show you, your elders and they will tell you. Deuteronomy 32:7

President Barack Hussein Obama

By Bridget Floyd

(Continued from page 1)

same. Diplomatic relations with Cuba were implemented as well. Troops were reduced in Iraq and after an escalation, subsequent troop-reduction occurred in Afghanistan.

Mr. Obama facilitated the Paris Agreement and generally national and international changes to protect future problems related to global warming.

There is a poignant photo capturing the AME clergy as they prayed for then-candidate Obama. One could argue that this was a component of an outstanding job under difficult circumstances. President Obama and his accomplished wife, Michele Robinson Obama, and their young children, Malia and Sasha, exemplified intellect and professionalism, and operated with integrity and compassion. One might argue that they exhibited grace under pressure. Even when President Obama's approval ratings declined, Mrs. Obama's ratings were routinely very high/positive throughout. The Obama's presented a more accurate (non-stereotypical) representation of the African American family and there were indications that America recognized this. Generally a large segment of the American people and the world viewed President Obama in a positive manner.

May God bless the Obama family and may God Bless the United States of America.

New 9th District Website and Logo



Visit the newly designed website at <http://www.ninthamechurch.org/>.

The vision for the Ninth Episcopal District is to

"Encourage, Empower and Enable the People of God!"

Here We Grow Again!

Welcome to the St. John family!

Lisa McCraw

Weekly Bible Study

Wednesday, 12 pm and 6 pm

Pastor Wright leads Bible Study each Wednesday at noon and 6 pm (unless otherwise noted on the church calendar).



March 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 6:00 a.m. Devotion 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Ash Wednesday Love Feast	2 6:00 p.m. Male Choir Rehearsal	3	4 8:00 a.m. Love Feast Steward Board Mtg. Trustee Board Mtg.
5 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship Communion Sunday AMEN DEADLINE	6 9:30 a.m. Fifty-Five Meeting 6:00 p.m. State of the Church	7 6:00 p.m. Stewardship Board Mtg.	8 6:00 a.m. Devotion 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	9 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	10	11 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 10:30 AMEN Staff Meeting Habitat Work Day
12 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship 4:00 p.m. Pastor's Reception Daylight Savings Time Begins	13	14 6:00 p.m. VIP Choir Rehearsal	15 6:00 a.m. Devotion 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	16 6:00 p.m. VIP Choir Rehearsal	17 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	18 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry
19 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	20	21 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	22 6:00 a.m. Devotion 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	23	24 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	25 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry
26 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	27	28 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	29 6:00 a.m. Devotion 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	30 9th District Mid-Year Convocation March 30-April 1, 2017 Daniel Payne Legacy Village	31	

PRAYER for the MONTH - Dear God, Thank You for Your instructions on how we should live. Help us to do Your will each day by being loving and kind to everyone. In Jesus' name. AMEN.

Scripture for the Month— He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8 (NRSV)



St. John AME Church
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Huntsville, Alabama 35801
(256) 534-3265

Return Service Requested

E-mail: stjohnameh@aol.com

Website: stjohname-hsv.org



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The Reverend Sherita Seawright, Episcopal Supervisor
The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder
The Reverend Maurice Wright II, Pastor

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Important Dates to Remember

February 26, 2017	<i>Black History Observance—An Evening of Spirituals, 6:00 p.m.</i>
February 28, 2017	Shrove Tuesday
March 1, 2017	Ash Wednesday
March 6, 2017	State of the Church, 6:00 p.m.
March 11, 2017	Habitat for Humanity Build 2017 Work Day
March 12, 2017	Daylight Savings Time Begins
March 12, 2017	Reception for Pastor and First Lady Wright and Family, 4-6 pm
March 30– 31, 2017, April 1, 2017	Ninth District Mid-Winter Meeting
April 10-13, 2017	Holy Week Revival Maundy Thursday
April 16, 2017	Resurrection Day

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

INDNJC

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



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 21 Issue 3

March 2017



Pastor Wright and Rev. Rita

Getting to Know Pastor Wright

By Bridget J. Floyd

Pastor Maurice Wright II, recalls with clarity his call to the ministry. He was ten years of age. It was June 24, 1986, a Sunday night, when he experienced the call of God as he was at the altar in church. At that young age, he did not fully understand what had occurred, but his parents had him speak with his godfather who gave sage, prophetic advice. That is, to allow him to "be a child and at the proper time God will manifest in him" what He intends.

At age thirteen, he preached his first sermon, "You Got What You Wanted but Lost What You Had". This was based on the biblical query "What does it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" noted in eighth chapter of Mark and 16th chapter of Matthew. The next significant moment was at age sixteen when the budding pastor had a dream which represented/revealed the enlightening impact of his speaking. It was at this point that he knew this was the time to move forward in his calling.

Pastor Wright noted that he "*vowed always to follow God's lead...pointing others to Jesus*" and embraced the importance of "*telling everybody you can about the saving grace of Jesus*". This conviction is associated with two poignant incidents when in late adolescence, Pastor Wright experienced the death of two friends within a two year period. In the first instance he spent time with his friend, which turned out to be the day before his friend's death. Subsequently he lamented not speaking to his friend about his soul being saved during that time. This was "a defining moment" according to Pastor Wright. In the second instance, Pastor Wright was inspired to mention the importance of having a saved soul to his friend, followed his inclination, and that friend subsequently met with an untimely death as well.

It was clear from the first time that Pastor Wright served communion at St. John, Huntsville, that he appreciated and encouraged congregants to appreciate the significance of the commemoration of the sacrifice of Jesus for the sins of others. The Reverend Wright recalled serving his first communion at St. Paul AME, Zanesville, OH, at which time he was "overtaken" by the significant/sacred nature of the "sacrifice of Jesus...He gave His life for us...none is worthy". And so, St. John, Huntsville's current pastor stated, "Communion is so sacred to me!"

The other special aspects/memories of his ministry, besides Communion, is that "three have answered the call" under his pastorate/tutelage. One of whom is his wife, the Reverend Joretha Wright ("Reverend Rita").

When asked about the challenging aspects of the ministry, without hesitation, Pastor Wright stated, "Losing members...dealing with the passing of someone's family is a hard pill to swallow". He noted that whether he was at the bedside of a 100 year-old or an 18 year-old, he has had "a heavy heart" and felt the loss with the family. He noted that people are "taught not to question God...in the Bible Mary and Martha questioned. Jesus did in the Garden of Gethsemane". So it is hard when families do, to address the family's questions.

Getting to Know Pastor Wright

By Bridget J. Floyd

(Continued from page 1)

The other challenge that Pastor Wright has faced is that his family is called to the ministry as well. He noted that their children have "sacrificed time with their father". He gave an example of his youngest child at approximately age eight, having trouble understanding his having to leave when called to the hospital. He noted the importance of his being present for dinner and homework.

Pastor Wright has had a "cross country" experience as he transitioned from Minister of Music in Portland, OR to Pastor of St. John AME Church, Huntsville, AL. His appointment to St. John, Huntsville, was Bishop Harry Seawright's first appointment as a Bishop and as presiding prelate of the Ninth Episcopal District. While employed as a teacher, he left his job in Portland and matriculated to Wilberforce University (OH). He noted that Bishop John Bryant is one of his father's in the ministry. The other was the late Reverend Ronald Williams. Upon visiting the Reverend Williams' widow, a member of Big Bethel AME in Atlanta, GA, he met Bishop James Davis, then pastor of Big Bethel. Bishop Davis immediately offered the Reverend Wright a job and a solution to the impediment of his being a student at Wilberforce University; that is, to enroll at Morehouse College. And so, he worked full time for a year and then enrolled at Morehouse. Later Bishop Carolyn Tyler-Guidry called him to Louisiana to pastor. In another instance of adaptation, the Reverend Wright pastored the church in Louisiana from November to May (graduation) by driving after class for nine (9) hours each weekend. He noted that he conducted all activities in three days – Bible Study, meetings, etc., then returned to Morehouse. Pastor Wright noted that God protected him over those months, with no accidents while traveling. After graduation in May, Pastor Wright moved to Alexandria, LA for six years. The next transition was at the call of Bishop Davis, resulting in the pastorate of St. John, Fort Mitchell, Alabama. He was there for five years and led in completion of the building of a church. For the record, Pastor Wright has made many transitions: Washington, Oregon, Ohio, Georgia, Louisiana, and Alabama (Ft. Mitchell and Huntsville). He noted "I understand the itinerancy".

Pastor Wright stated that he believes in giving because he knows it will come back, and that he is thankful. He added, "God has proven Himself to me over and over again". He reflected on his current pastorate and noted, "I believe God has positioned this church to go into a glorious future". He indicated that he is "honored to follow" former St. John pastors, the Reverends Homer L. McCall and Patrick D. Clayborn. Pastor Wright stated that he was "excited to be here". He indicated that he feels that the move to St. John was a move from "a comfort zone" and he sees this as an opportunity to refocus. He stated that he views the current placement as a function of God knowing what Pastor Wright and St. John needed.

He indicated that he sees "expansion" for St. John, which he noted is a "light in this community". Examples of expanding the ministry include 1) pod casts 2) streaming live 3) technology to spread the gospel, 4) social media. He indicated that it is important for the church to "update", noting that "in a 4G society fax machines are obsolete". He referred to the book entitled, *The Sticky Church*, with the premise that "no matter how many come in the front door you will lose them if the back door is left open". The pastor noted that his goal is to "make sure the back door is closed". A challenge can be getting everyone on the same page, not having a small percentage of the members doing most of the work, but having total involvement. He noted the importance of *good communication and growth*.

Pastor Wright's vision is for St. John "to be the best". That means that "what we do, we need to do well". The key is outstanding worship, energizing *good communication and growing* Christian Education and Bible Study. He indicated that "we must understand the needs of the community, youth, and families." The pastor noted that "We must stretch in worship, hospitality and giving. Giving is a matter of faith and trust in God".

St. John has an executive minister, the Reverend Joretha Wright ("Reverend Rita"). Pastor Wright enthusiastically described the experience of having a partner in marriage and the ministry. He indicated that he *values the uniqueness* that she has provided when compared to his grandmother having the role of "first lady, wearing the traditional hat". He noted that his wife prays for his success in the ministry and his strength – "We work as a team". He expressed that he is *thankful*. He highlighted that "she has sacrificed, moving all across the country" and adjusted to new locations without the connection of family of

(Continued on page 13)

Black History Month at St. John

Photography by Darwin Washington

St. John observed Black History Month with special emphasis each Sunday. The events were coordinated by the Christian Education and Music and Christian Arts Departments.

- The first Sunday members dressed in African attire. The collage below is of pictures from the 8 am service and Church School.
- The focus on the second Sunday was AME Founders Day. The Richard Allen Documentary was shown during the service. (If you have not seen this informative documentary on the founder of the AME Church, please view at <https://www.motherbethel.org/allen/version2/index.html>)
- The third Sunday observance was nuggets of Black history presented by youth and adult members.
- The Evening of Spirituals was the final event in the month's celebration. Please see page 4 for the article on this service.



Evening of Spirituals Earned A Rousing Response

By Bridget Floyd and Nedra McDaniel
Photography by Darwin Washington

St. John presented "An Evening of Spirituals" on the last Sunday of Black History Month to an overflowing audience. The service was sponsored by the Music and Christian Arts Department, under the direction of Music Director, Mr. Reginald Pearson. Spirituals were sung during slavery as a form of communications. They are an integral part of Black History.

Miss Erica Fox Washington of 90.9 WJAB radio introduced the talented participants. Choirs and soloists included the St. John Mass Choir, Alabama A&M University, Voices of Oakwood University, Montview Elementary Singin' Mustangs, Mr. Walter Williams, the Reverend Janette Kotey, Ms. Kelsey Wilson and Pastor Maurice Wright. St. John musicians were Mr. Roberto Burton, Dr. Wayne Bucknor, and Mr. Steven Blackmon.

The opening selection was an arrangement of "Lift Every Voice and Sing" which was sung by the Alabama A&M University Choir, and set the tone for this outstanding program. The St. John Mass Choir sang "Holy Ghost Fire" and "Hold Out." Mr. Walter Williams of St. John sang "Stan' Still Jordan" and "Walk Together Children." The Alabama A&M University Choir, conducted by Dr. Horace Camey, sang "This Little Light of Mine" and "O h Elijah." The Reverend Doctor Janette Kotey, Staff Minister of Music Worship and Arts at First Missionary Church in Huntsville and a well-known singer/musician in the city, sang the familiar Mahalia Jackson selection "How I Got Over."

The Montview Elementary Singin' Mustangs were a talented group of young people, directed by Mr. Phillip L. Pugh, Jr. Their selections were "All My Sins" and "Witness," arranged by Mr. Pugh. Ms. Kelsey Wilson, a graduate student at Alabama A&M University and member of St. John, sang "Give Me Jesus" and her arrangement of "Precious Lord." The Voices of Oakwood University was conducted by Mr. Justin Jordan. Their three selections were "Great Day," "A Little Talk with Jesus," and "An' I Cry." Additional, Conductor Jordan sang "God is a God." St. John's pastor, the Reverend Maurice Wright II, sang "Deep River" and "Crucifixion."

The closing song, "Total Praise," was sung by the choirs, soloist and congregation. Just as the song built to a closing crescendo, the spirit and appreciation for this inspirational evening of spirituals, did so as well. Each performance, be it by choir or soloist, served as a reminder of the rich musical heritage of the African American people. The spiritual is a genre of African American music that should not be forgotten. Programs such as this, can/should continue not only to entertain but to remind (and inform young people) of the historical significance of this uniquely African American music.

The inspirational renditions brought attendees to their feet numerous times during the program. This would be a lovely annual event.



Ms. Kelsey Wilson



Pastor Maurice Wright

Evening of Spirituals Earned A Rousing Response

By Bridget Floyd
Photography by Darwin Washington



"The Investment Factor: Challenging, Motivating and Empowering" Hour of Power Revival

Phillips Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

By B. Johnson



The men of Phillips CME Church invited the Reverend Maurice Wright, II, Servant Pastor of St. John AME Church, to preach the evening Hour of Power Service on Friday, February 10, 2017. St. John's Male Chorus accompanied Pastor Wright and provided the spiritually uplifting music in solos by Bro. Reggie Pearson, with "Right Now Lord," "Who's On the Lord's Side" and "Jesus Christ is the Way," led by Dr. Clifton Pearson. The message was opened with scripture from Proverbs 12:28, "In the way of righteousness there is life; along that path is immortality."

The Reverend Wright preached from the sermon titled, "What Men Must Do." He began by sharing a thought from his father, "Boy, you're worth something to God, to me and to others." He stated that he understood his worth, so that he could invest in himself. He went on to affirm that, "As Black men, we have not invested in ourselves. We have not always reached back to help others or fully accepted responsibility for our own demise. We have to stop putting everything off on others and accept responsibility; and it begins by developing and improving our relationship with each other and with God."

Four essential points, answered the question, "What does it take for men to walk uprightly with God?" The Reverend Wright expressed that;

1. **Men must live a righteous life by living out their purpose.** Men must come out of the shadows of others and desire and seek out the standard set for them by God. Proverbs 20:7, "the righteous lead blameless lives, blessed are their children after them."
2. **Men must know God for themselves.** Real men stand up for the Lord. To stand up for the Lord means you are not afraid to share your faith with others. You are not afraid to be seen carrying your Bible to church, Church School or Bible Study on Wednesday night.
3. **Men must walk in the right crowd.** Places that you go, the people that you know, and the things that you do are a reflection of the God in you. The man who walks righteously does not spend his time creating mess, stealing, back biting, belittling others or holding grudges. Men were reminded of Psalm 1:4, as to the consequences of being wicked, "the wicked are like chaff that the wind blows away." Let go of those who mean you no good.
4. **Lastly, men must have a made-up mind.** Righteous men must not be double-minded; be not conformed to this world, Learn how to make up your mind like Joshua 24:15, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

The Reverend Wright closed in his usual, dynamic and prophetic way by stating empathically, that when a man walks righteously with God, he can sing with great conviction and enthusiasm, "Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me."

Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations: How St. John Measures Up—Part 2

By B. Johnson



In his book, *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*, Robert Schnase identified five practices that grow and develop churches and congregations. Last month looked at the practice of *Intentional Faith Development* and identified many ways in which St. John is practicing that principal. This month we look at the practice of *Extravagant Generosity*. By the age of 10 all who attended Sunday School, were well acquainted with the verse, "It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35)." We tithe and give our ten percent and give an offering when asked. We strive to be cheerful givers. So, how does giving our tithes and offerings compare with extravagant generosity?

Extravagant generosity describes "practices of sharing and giving that exceed all expectations and extend to unexpected measures." It describes "lavish sharing, sacrifice, and giving in service to God and neighbor."

Here are just 5 of the many key principals which are demonstrated in churches that practice Extravagant Generosity:

1. Vibrant, fruitful, growing congregations teach, preach and practice proportional giving with a goal toward tithing. They encourage members to grow in the grace of giving as an essential practice of Christian Discipleship and as a congregation they practice generosity by their extraordinary support of missions, connectional ministries, and organizations that change people's lives.
2. As people grow in their relationship to Christ, they grow also in the practice of Extravagant Generosity, offering more of themselves for the purpose of Christ. They provide the resources that strengthen ministry and that help the church touch lives of more and more people in the same way their own lives have been transformed by God.
3. Generosity is a fruit of the spirit, a worthy spiritual aspiration. Generosity is the opposite of selfishness. To practice extravagant generosity requires self-control, patience, kindness, faith, and love of God and neighbor.
4. They offer seminars, workshops, and retreats that help their congregants with money management, debt management, financial planning, estate planning, preparing wills, considering legacies, bequests and endowment giving.
5. Churches that nurture the practice of Extravagant Generosity take seriously the stewardship of the resources entrusted to them by their members. They take extraordinary precautions to protect the integrity of their financial systems by providing proper checks and balances for those handling money, preparing regular and accurate financial reports for church leaders and anyone who requests them, and furnishing annual audits to appropriate trustees and financial officers. They operate with transparency.

When St. John's generosity, is measured, in comparison to the Extravagant Generosity yard stick, we are grateful. We share our time, and talents, as well as our finances on the local, state, national and connectional levels. Our sharing with our



Soup Kitchen volunteer is serve 1000's of meals a year.



CPR presenters: Mr. Rickey Gosa, Financial Advisor, Edward Jones & Mr. Willie Sandifer, Prime America Representative.



Members supporting New Beginnings Academy.

(Continued on page 8)

Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations: How St. John Measures Up

By B. Johnson

(Continued from page 7)

neighbors has not only transformed the lives of others, but has been a testament to our faithful relationship with God. As we review our giving, it is in no way to be boastful, but to glorify and praise God for His abundance. Here are just a few ways in which we have demonstrated *Extravagant Generosity*.

Extravagant Generosity has been shown;

- In the Soup Kitchen Ministry. The soup kitchen went from serving meals only once a month to serving meals twice a month. From serving maybe 150 meals to serving over a thousand meals. In November and December hot meals were delivered to our sick and shut in members. The soup kitchen provides meals for The Harris Home for Children and First Stop Ministry.

Impacting the lives of others, while praising God for His abundance.

- St. John honored the Reverend Dr. Homer L. McCall for his 40 years of ministry by establishing an endowment at Alabama A&M University in the amount of \$25,000. The interest, beginning in 2018 will provide scholarships for deserving students for years to come.

Impacting the lives of students, while praising God for His abundance.

- St. John supports education efforts beginning with pre-k programs. The church donated book bags at the beginning of the year and then made a substantial financial contribution to New Beginnings Academy during its fund raising campaign. St. John has always believed in supporting education. This belief has been supported by the provision of honorariums for all our graduating high school and college graduates. All made possible through the generosity of members.

Impacting the lives of students, while praising God for His gift of abundance.

- The Caregivers', Prayer and Respite (CPR) Ministry has for the last two years organized workshops to provide not only caregivers, but the congregation with information regarding Medicare Benefits, Social Security Benefits, and Respite Care for families. Most recently, the focus of the workshop was on financial security, and How Money Works.

Financially impacting the lives of members and millennial's, while praising God for His abundance.

- The Sons of Allen have assisted in building ramps for the disabled. The Adult Sunday School Class, the WMS, the usher board, and the 50+ Auxiliary have provided gifts during the holidays for The Salvation Army Angel Tree Angels and women's shelters in the community.

Impacting the lives of community members, while praising God for His gift of abundance.

- St. John partnered with Habitat for Humanity in 1995 providing affordable housing for families in this community. For the last 22 years, St. John has donated over \$100,000 financially and provided many volunteers, to ensure parents and children have a safe and affordable place to live.

Praise be to God for His abundance to impact the lives of so many families!

- When a member of this congregation is in need of assistance, this congregation responds to the call immediately with extravagant generosity. This congregation fills the void with their time, comfort, care, concern, prayers, and



Habitat family and volunteers.



Fifty-plus members read to students during Read Across America Week.

(Continued on page 9)

Celebrating Founder's Day at Greater St. Paul Scottsboro

By Charlie Brooks

Photography by Darwin Washington



All on one Accord. On Sunday, February 12, 2017, 3:00 pm. St. John celebrated Founder's Day with fellow church, St. Paul, Scottsboro, Alabama. The Reverend Deborah Peppers, officers and members warmly welcomed St. John members, the Reverend Maurice Wright, and family to Scottsboro. As the service began, all joined in the processional and singing "Marching to Zion". After prayer by the Reverend Charles Glover and scripture, the Reverend Peppers welcomed Presiding Elder Allen and Mrs. Allen and visitors. The Reverend Allen introduced the preacher of the hour, the Reverend Maurice Wright, II, Presiding Elder Allen summarized his introduction with, "Rev. Wright is old enough to speak for himself." The Reverend Wright pointed worshippers to the cross and then introduced his wife, the Reverend Joretha Wright and family. He thanked the Reverend Peppers for inviting him, "to a place he had not been before."

His text was from Galatians 5:7. His sermon was entitled "Unstoppable". Someone interrupts your activities, distractions get in your way. Do those things hinder us from our relationship with the Lord?" He continued, Satan can get us going around in a circle for he doesn't want you to enjoy the Joy of the Lord and he also wants your Power. We

have a Story-Line. He said we don't need a "re-run"; we have a new season, a new story line; the Power and we rely on the Word. In the text, the message to the church was not to go back to the past. We were urged to stop conversations that hinder you. Paul also made athletic comparisons in this letter. Three things to do to be unstoppable. 1) Don't back up. Eliminate unimportant stuff. 2) Don't back down. We are not to be fearful. It takes courage to keep going forward as did Joshua 1:9. 3) Live right-stand strong. Stand strong as Richard Allen. Our Founder's story tells us we can take a stand! Don't back out of your service to God," he said.

Finally, we must not be hindered, we don't have the same questions as in Acts 1:11. What would cause you not to be confident? For we know God will make away. Hold on, endure, for joy is coming in the morning.

After the call to Christian Discipleship, blessing of the food, and dismissal, a delicious fellowship meal was served. The Mass Choir provided music for the service and a large number of St. John members travelled for the celebration of Founder's Day with St. Paul, Scottsboro.

Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations: How St. John Measures Up

By B Johnson

(Continued from page 8)

acts of kindness, financial support and LOVE for each other.

Impacting the lives of our brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ, while praising and giving thanks to God for His great gifts of supreme abundance!

These were just a few examples of how the members of St. John have demonstrated Extravagant Generosity. If each organization were polled, and if individuals were surveyed, the list could go on and on regarding how this congregation has been blessed, and has blessed others in this community. Remembering the description of extravagant generosity; the practices of sharing and giving that exceed all expectations and extend to unexpected measures. It describes lavish sharing, sacrifice, and giving in service to God and neighbor, we strive ever more to do the things which we have been called to do by the Word of God. It is the least we can do, when we remember that God gave his only Son...which was an *extraordinarily* **EXTRAVAGANT** act of **GENEROSITY**.



Margaret White



Jesse Johnson

Habitat for Humanity of Madison County is an ecumenical, grassroots, Christian housing ministry that seeks to eliminate poverty housing from communities and to make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action. Habitat volunteers donate their time to make a positive difference in communities by building homes and providing hope for families. Habitat for Humanity has been part of St. John's community outreach for over two decades.

The 2017 Habitat Spring Build has begun. St. John is partnering with other local churches to build a 5-bedroom home on Maywick Drive, near Winchester Road. Pastor Wright has selected dates St John to work: April 8, 2017, May 6, 2017, and June 3, 2017. On these days, everyone who is physically able to come out and help should plan to do so. There is something for everyone to do at some point during the build. The build schedule is listed below. Work times are from 7:00 a.m. to noon Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, so if you cannot make any of the Saturday work dates there are other days you can volunteer. If you have questions, please contact Tami McGhee at 256-603-0466 or the church office.

2017 SPRING BUILD SCHEDULE

6314 Maywick Rd.

DATES	DAYS	TASKS
Mar. 14, 16, 18 Mar. 21, 23, 25	Tue., Thur., Sat. Tue., Thur., Sat.	Deliver wall to site and erect. Straighten, brace and sheath walls Erect trusses and deck roof (by others). Install house wrap. Install windows and exterior doors.
Mar. 28, 30 Apr. 1 Apr. 4, 6, 8	Tue., Thur., Sat. Tue., Thur., Sat.	Install fascia, roof bracing, dead wood, hurricane clips, attic access Start vinyl siding. (Roofing, plumbing and electrical rough-in by others.)
Apr. 11, 13, 15 Apr. 18, 20, 22	Tue., Thur., Sat. Tue., Thur., Sat.	Caulk openings, install wall insulation, continue vinyl siding (Sheetrock by others) finish vinyl siding
Apr. 25, 27, 29 May 2, 4, 6	Tue., Thur., Sat. Tue., Thur., Sat.	Paint interior walls, clean floor, paint base board, doors and trim Install vinyl floor tile, sheet vinyl
May 9, 11, 13 May 16, 18, 20	Tue., Thur., Sat. Tue., Thur., Sat.	Install interior doors, baseboard, window trim, cabinets (Plumbing and electrical fixtures by others) Install door hardware door stops, closet shelving, window blinds
May 23, 25, 27 May 30, June 1, 3	Tue., Thur., Sat. Tue., Thur., Sat.	Landscape, touch up paint, clean and wax floors, work punch list Catch-up (Dedication to be announced)

The schedule is contingent on weather and subcontractors. We will work 7:00 AM to noon.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS:

From North Memorial Pkwy, go west on Winchester Road. At the bottom of the hill, turn right onto Sandia Rd. Go 0.6 miles, turn left onto Desha, go about 300 ft. and turn right onto Maywick.

ELLIPSIS

EXPERIENCE

2017 CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN & TEEN GIRLS
More to your Story... From Surviving to Thriving



MADISON MAXELL
Teen Host

JENNIFER
WATLEY MAXELL
Conference Host

April 28, 2017 thru April 30, 2017

WOMEN'S REGISTRATION

\$55 (w/meal 2/28/17 - 3/31/17) \$75 (3/31/17 - 4/30/17)
(until sold out)
\$40 One Day Registration

TEEN REGISTRATION

\$10

FULL REGISTRATION INCLUDES: (1) Swag Bag, (1) Reception, (2) Breakfasts, (2) Lunches, All worship experiences/Workshop experiences and materials.

It is officially Ellipsis season!!! Get the early registration rate while it lasts. The \$55 registration fee includes a fabulous swag bag, five (5) meals, and all worship and workshops, including materials!!! Girls receive the same deal for only \$10. Go to www.theellipsisexperience.com to register NOW!!! See Rev. Rita for more information.

Here We Grow Again!

Welcome to the St. John family!

Annie Cook

Angie Rush

Rebecca Rush

Rosalie Rush

Philip Alan Green

Tristan Myles

Anthony Fears



Soup Kitchen Ministry

By Charlie Brooks

Service is Not an Option

"For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people." Titus 2:11

When asked who were servants of God, the average churchgoer would most likely point to the pastor or some Christian celebrity. They almost would never say, "We are all God's servants". Often believers are divided into two groups—those in full time ministry—and the lay. Paul states in Ephesian 2:10 that believers are saved so that they might SERVE.

If there were no other reason to serve God besides gratitude for salvation, that would be cause enough. We are rescued from torment and given eternal life with the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence. Service is but a small acknowledgement of the Father sending His Son to be sacrificed in payment of the sin debt we owed. Believers have no right to withhold our gifts or time.

When Pastor Wright asks for help in our bi-monthly "Soup Kitchen" many think he is speaking to someone else because "certain people" have training in how that help works, or I have a busy schedule.

Service is not an option. God calls us to be servants so we can invest our lives in an eternally valuable purpose: the salvation of unbelievers and the acceptance of Him in their lives. Our job may seem insignificant or our limitations great, but we are vessels of Christ with a role of building His kingdom.

Join us in Service on the 3rd and 4th Tuesday of each month. There is a job for you! And Thanks.

Greeter Ministry

The Greeter Ministry is in need of a ministry leader and greeter volunteers. If interested, please contact Rev. Rita at stjohnfirstlady@gmail.com or complete an interest form located on the ministry board.

In Memory of Brother Jerry Baldwin



Brother Baldwin was a member of St. John for over 40 years. He was a member of the Steward Board where he served faithfully for many years. He was very supportive of the ministries of the church and encouraged those who led and/or participated in the ministries. He was faithful in attendance, even though he had health challenges over the past few years.

Brother Baldwin was the husband of Sister Gwendolyn Baldwin and father-in-law of Sister LaTosha Baldwin.

Colonel James Heyward spoke on Brother Baldwin as a church member and friend during the homegoing service. He noted that he became associated with Brother Baldwin in the early eighties when he joined St. John. They served together in many roles and activities in the church. He also noted that they served together in Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. Colonel Heyward stated that "Brother Baldwin was a quiet man, but an effective one, a leader in his own right. He had a strong spiritual focus. He always worked for that which was best for the church as he served on the Steward Board for many years." He also said "Jerry developed the ability to listen to others and became very perceptive, he was very helpful to others in times of crisis, always willing to lend a helping hand. He also possessed a sense of humor and occasionally would enjoy a good joke especially coming from the late Dr. Willie Mingo Clark."

Brother Baldwin was retired from Marshall Space Flight Center of NASA where he served in many positions. He was also very active in the Huntsville community. He received numerous awards for his community service. He volunteered at his son's band and Boy Scout activities.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain. Revelation 21:4

Mother DeLois Pippen Remembered



Upon relocating to Decatur in 2012, Mother Pippen united with St. John where her son and his family are members. Although her health prevented her from attending church, she was certainly in the hearts and prayers of the St. John congregation. Mrs. DeLois Pippen was the mother of Mr. Glenn Pippen, mother-in-law of Mrs. Regena Pippen and grandmother of Ms. Paula Pippen.

Hodges and Juanita Washington often visited Mother Pippen and shared these memories.

As We Knew Her

From the day we introduced ourselves to her, we were immediately drawn to her as a "Mother" figure. Mother Pippen was a warm, loving, kind and nurturing person. From the first visit to our last, she treated us like we were one of her own. The conversations were always centered around her family. She loved her family and expressed her love with pictures (in her room) and stories about her family.

Mother Pippen had a love for word puzzles and NIP's "sugar free" candy. We quickly discovered that she was a word puzzle enthusiast. We remembered one visit where as we walked into the room, without the intent of staying very long, and she was on the phone having a conversation with her devoted son, Glenn. She quickly said to him, guess who just walked in, the Washington's, I will speak with you later; I am going to go and enjoy my visitors.

Mother Pippen looked forward to her hair and nail appointments. She loved looking her best, at all times. Her nails were not one of just nail polish, but of beautiful elaborate designs. She exemplified her beauty and warmth as a person through her appearance and character. We will truly miss her and we would like to say to the family, stay strong, trust in the Lord and remain steadfast.

*"No longer in our lives to share,
but in our hearts you're always there."*



Fasting and Prayer



March 1st- April 16th

Pastor Wright

(Continued from page 2)

origin and friends. His wife stopped going to school in order to allow him to complete his education and then resumed her education. Pastor Wright indicated that *the Reverend Joretha "Rita" Wright is "a wonderful spouse, mother of our children, protective of our family. She's a lot of fun. There's never a dull moment in our house"*. They are *"colleagues in ministry"*. He noted that the Reverend Rita pastored two churches, at which time he supported her pastorate. He indicated that she has embraced her calling and ministry in ways other than pastoring.

Pastor Wright indicated that his charge is *"to pastor all of the people...to bring together one congregation with time and prayer. I love people...I want to serve"*. He refers to himself as *"servant pastor"*. He credited Bishop James Davis with emphasizing service as Jesus humbled himself. He also reflects on another influential person in his life, Ms. Dorothy McHenry, a Sunday School teacher, who advised him to *"keep your name clear...people will forgive you but won't forget"*.

Pastor Wright noted that he will focus on *development* at St. John. Two areas include the men's department and the young people's department. He indicated that *"if the Lord grants it I would like to build [a church]. I want to build people"*.

St. John has a pastor who has demonstrated a commitment to his calling, and the capacity to adapt and respond to the challenge of change and transition, over his greater than twenty years as an ordained minister. He has taken on this pastorate while serving as Vice President of the Music and Arts Department for the AME Church (since his election in 2012). He will run for president next year. He is Co-Director of Evangelism for the Ninth District of the AME Church. He is the Servant Pastor of St. John, husband and father.

St. John members and the Huntsville community are getting to know Pastor Wright as a dynamic preacher, confident, and committed leader, and consoler and prayer warrior in difficult times. He has shared his musical gifts. This article is an effort to offer additional insight into the man who leads this flock. We look forward to the development, communication, growth, and worshipping/functioning in one accord/as *"one church"*, and helping to spread the word and serve the community – aspiring toward the vision of Pastor Maurice Wright II.

Welcome to the Reverends Wright and family!

This year the focus at St. John during Lent is prayer and fasting.

Join the Wednesday morning devotional call at 6 a.m.

The conference call number is **530.881.1212** and the meeting id is **876-863-940**. (You can speed dial from the cell phone at **530.881.1212, 876-863-940**). The call back number to listen to the recorded devotional is **530.881.1219**.

Devotional Leaders

March 1	Retired Bishop John R. Bryant
March 8	The Reverend Carmen Walker
March 15	The Reverend Reginald Crump
March 22	The Reverend T. Eric Nathan
March 29	The Reverend Doctor Mark Tyler (Mother Bethel AME Church)
April 5	The Reverend Jennifer Watley Maxell
April 10	The Reverend Myron D. Hill
April 11	The Right Reverend Ann Henning Byfield
April 12	The Reverend Arthur B. Carter
April 13	TBD
April 10-12	Holy Week Prayer Revival - 6:00 p.m.
April 13	Maundy Thursday Service - 6:00 p.m.
April 16	Resurrection Sunday Sunrise Service - 6 a.m. Easter program - 9 a.m. Worship - 10:50 a.m.

Church School Lesson Overview – April 2017

The lesson reviews were written by Claudinette Purifoy Fears (April 2) and Willie Sandifer, Church School Superintendent.

April 2, 2017

Lesson Title: The Lord is My Shepherd

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 23:1-6

Print: Psalm 23:1-6

Devotional Songs: #This Little Light of Mine, #272, and #243

Key Verse: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1).

This well known and often repeated scripture, referred to as a prayer, can help turn around negative thinking and assist with fears. King David, the author of this psalm, grew up and worked as a shepherd. He loved the metaphor of seeing God, as a shepherd. The shepherd's job is to care for his flock, making sure they are safe, nourished, calm and happy at all times.

Sheep are vulnerable to danger from predators because they cannot run very fast, and they are not always smart enough to avoid danger. To care for them correctly and safely, sheep require a shepherd to take them to the fertile areas to graze, to protect them from dangers, and keep them together so they do not stray from the group. Sheep have a strong instinct to follow the sheep in front of them. When one sheep decides to stray, the rest of the flock usually follows, even if it is not a good decision.

The Good Shepherd cares for His people and provides protection even when they encounter opponents or those who wish to do harm. The Lord gently or firmly prods them when they deviate from Him. He promises those who follow Him that they will have all of their needs met and will know peace and harmony. He will give rest so that they can become rejuvenated. God promises His protection forever as long as one's attention is focused on Him and submits to His will.

April 9, 2017

Lesson Title: God's Saving Love in Christ

Lesson Scripture: John 3:1-21

Print: John 3:1-16

Devotional Songs: #412, #323, and #243

Key Verse: 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" (John 3:16).

This lesson examines a passage that envelopes the message of Jesus' love. The author shares that the Gospel of John is the one that highlights Jesus as the Son of God more than other aspects of His being. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke show Him as King, Servant and a perfect man, respectively. John highlights His deity more than the other Gospels.

Jesus was met with two responses to His life and message throughout His earthly ministry. From among the large crowds that usually followed Him, He was accepted by some in the crowds and rejected by others. He was hated more by those who were knowledgeable of the Scriptures than those who were common people. Nicodemus, came to Jesus with an earnest desire to know the truth about Him and His message.

April 16, 2017

Lesson Title: God's Love Triumphant

Lesson Scripture: John 19:38-20:10; 1 Peter 1:3-9

Print: John 20:1-10; 1 Peter 1:3-5, 8-9

Devotional Songs: #Love Lifted Me; #258; and #243

Key Verses: "Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulcher, and he saw, and believed" (John 20:8).

The memories of Easter for most people include sunrise services, family dinners, and, for some, the bunny, eggs, and Easter baskets. Imagine what it was like on the first Resurrection Sunday morning. God's love is shown in the death of Christ on the cross for the sins of the world. Were it not for Christ's resurrection, His death would not mean anything and the King would be defeated; leaving His followers without the hope of salvation. This lesson shows that there is more to the resurrection than an event celebrated every springtime.

April 23, 2017

Lesson Title: God's Reconciling Love

Lesson Scripture: Romans 5:1-11; 8:31-39

Print: Romans 5:6-11; 8:31-39

Tentative Devotional Songs: #364; #251; and #243

Key Verse: "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus

(Continued on page 16)



Technology Tip

By Ricardo Williams

Getting Fit Using Technology



This year many have set new goals or milestones for the year. One of the most favorable New Year resolution is to set a goal to get fit or to lose or gain weight. Nowadays, there are several smart gadgets that can assist with meeting those goals. Most of the gadgets are in various price ranges and ability to assist with meeting those goals.

First, look at smartphones. On a daily basis they are used for various reasons. Both Apple iOS and Android devices can be purchased with mobile apps that can assist with getting fit already installed. The mobile apps manage nutritional intake, calories consumed, daily steps and also prescription medications. There are also other apps such as Nike Run and Runtastic that can accurately track workouts. The tools also allow for setting goals to complete along with challenges to stay on track to complete the goals.

Another technical gadget that many people use to assist with meeting their get-fit goals is a pair of great ear buds. The ear buds can be used to enhance the workout by providing the ability to listen to music or podcasts while exercising. Ear buds, such as a Jabra Sport, allow users to track pace, cadence and other stats through built-in sensors. Ear buds are perfect for any runner or cross trainer by offering a great sound ability to get pumped up for the workout. Listening to music or podcast through the ear buds can all be done by using Bluetooth technology. This allows the ability to work out while listening to music without the interference of wires.

Lastly, another great gadget that can enhance the workout experience is a GPS watch. GPS watches have been used by athletes for a long time now. Different from previous GPS watches, there are now particular GPS watches that track elevation gains and descents. This is an excellent feature for cyclists and runners. Some of these same watches have a feature to manage mobile devices, which prevents the interfer-

©Donna Williams for page 15

Church School Book Club

Discussion Date: March 18, 2017
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Who Asked You? Terry McMillan, 2015

Discussion Date: April 15, 2017
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Obsession, Nora Roberts, 2017

Naomi Bowes lost her innocence the night she followed her father into the woods. In freeing the girl trapped in the root cellar, Naomi revealed the horrible extent of her father's crimes and made him infamous. No matter how close she gets to happiness, she cannot outrun the sins of Thomas David Bowes.

Now a successful photographer living under the name Naomi Carson, she has found a place that calls to her, a rambling old house in need of repair, thousands of miles away from everything she's ever known. Naomi wants to embrace the solitude, but the kindly residents of Sunrise Cove keep forcing her to open up—especially the determined Xander Keaton.

Naomi can feel her defenses failing, and knows that the connection her new life offers is something she's always secretly craved. But the sins of her father can become an obsession, and, as she's learned time and again, her past is never more than a nightmare away. - Amazon

Weekly Bible Study

Wednesday, 12 pm and 6 pm

Pastor Wright leads Bible Study each Wednesday at noon and 6 pm (unless otherwise noted on the church calendar).



St. John Congratulates Minority Leader Anthony Daniels

Photography by Darwin Washington



On Sunday, February 19, St. John offered congratulations to State Representative Anthony Daniels on his election as Minority Leader for the Alabama House of Representatives. This election is historic because Representative Daniels is the first African American and the youngest representative to hold this position. Pastor Wright presented Representative Daniels with a plaque from the church and members greeted him at a reception in the vestibule of the church after each service.



Church School Lesson Overview

(Continued from page 14)

our Lord" Romans 8:38-39).

This lesson shows what God's reconciling love looks like. It is sad when relationships are severed because a divide exists between friends or family. Sometimes it is very difficult to ask for forgiveness and offer to do what it would take to restore the relationship that was once alive and vital. The Lord, however, did what it took to restore people's relationship with Him. Jesus died and took the penalty they deserved. He paid the price incurred by their own sin—the very sin that broke the relationship. This kind of love is one that only God can express.

April 30, 2017

Lesson Title: The Good Shepherd's Love

Lesson Scripture: Romans 5:1-11; 8:31-39

Print: Romans 5:6-11; 8:31-39

Tentative Devotional Songs: #Lead Me, Guide Me; #251; and #243

Key Verse: "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep" John 10:14-15).

This lesson looks at the Lord Jesus as the Good Shepherd. The author suggests it is the New Testament counterpart to Psalm 23. The focus of this week's lesson is on Christ as the Good Shepherd in contrast to the hireling who flees when danger comes. The author shares the theme of God exhibiting a shepherd-like love appears in many biblical passages. It is not surprising that Jesus compared Himself to a shepherd and His followers to sheep.

Technology Tip

By Ricardo Williams

(Continued from page 15)

ence of answering the cellphone during a workout. There are several other gadgets that can be used to enhance the journey on getting fit. Most of these devices can be synced with each other to allow viewing of data captured during the workout on more than one device at a time. The data can also be uploaded to a tablet or laptop. After all, to meet "get-fit" goals you have to have a way to track your progress.

April 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----



2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship <i>Communion Sunday</i> AMEN DEADLINE	9:30 a.m. Fly-Plus Meeting 6:00 p.m. Official Board	6:00 p.m. Stewardess Board Mtg.	6:00 a.m. Devotion 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal		9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 10:30 AMEN Staff Meeting

9	10	11	12	13	14	15
PALM SUNDAY 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	Holy Week Prayer Revival 6:00 p.m., nightly			 6:00 p.m. MUNDY THURSDAY	GOOD FRIDAY	9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry

16	17	18	19	20	21	22
6:00 a.m. Sunrise Service Breakfast 9:00 a.m. Easter Program 10:50 a.m. Worship		11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study		6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry

23	24	25	26	27	28	29
8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship		11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study			9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry
30						
9:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship						

PRAYER for the MONTH - Dear God, Thank you for your loving kindness. Help us to use the sacrifices of this Lenten season to grow closer to you. In Jesus' name. AMEN.

Scripture for the Month— Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23-24)

St. John AME Church
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The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright, Bishop

The Reverend Sherita Seawright, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor

Important Dates to Remember

March 24, 2017	Midnight Musical, 10:00 p.m.
March 30—31, 2017, April 1, 2017	Ninth District Mid-Winter Meeting Daniel Payne Legacy Village, Birmingham, Alabama
April 10-12, 2017	Holy Week Prayer Revival, 6:00 p.m.
April 13, 2017	Maundy Thursday, 6:00 p.m.
April 16, 2017	Resurrection Day Sunrise Service, 6:00 a.m. Breakfast Easter Program, 9:00 a.m. Easter Worship, 10:50 a.m.

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

ST. JOHN A.M.E.N NEWSLETTER

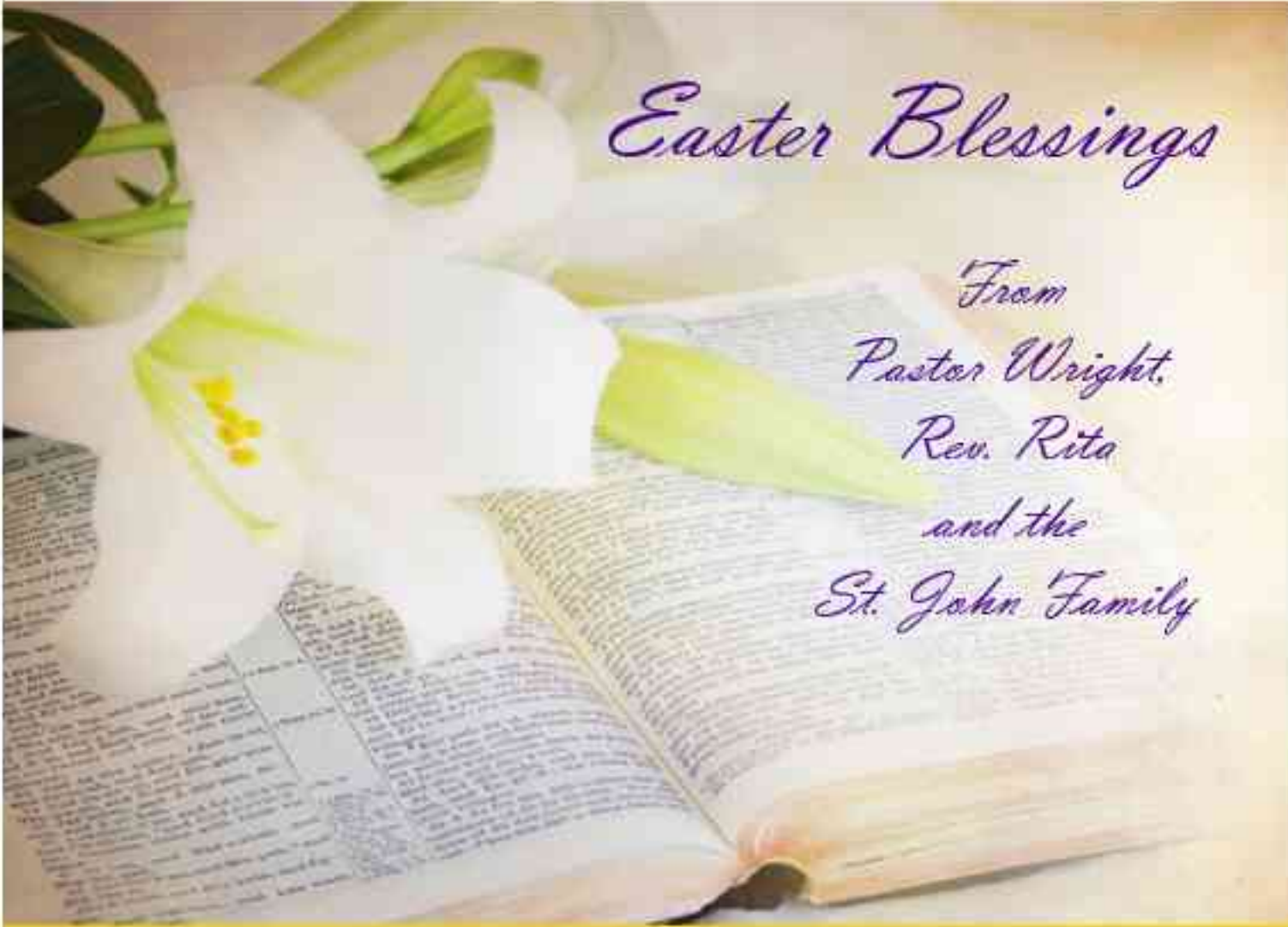


St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 21 Issue 4

April 2017



Easter Blessings

*From
Pastor Wright,
Rev. Rita
and the
St. John Family*

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" Then they remembered his words. Luke 24:1-8

St. John AME Church Under "The Wright Leadership"

By Jeannette Jones

Photography by Darwin Washington



Pastor Wright and Rev. Rita

On Sunday, March 12, 2017, the St. John A.M.E. church family gathered to officially welcome to St. John AME, Huntsville, the new leadership team, Servant Pastor, the Reverend Maurice Wright, II, Executive Minister, the Reverend Joretha Wright, and their children, Joy, Isaiah, Leslie, and Terrence. The Steward Board spearheaded the welcome reception which was held at the Board of Realtors. Steward Hill led the sub-committee and Steward Barbara Johnson coordinated the event site logistics and the refreshments. Mrs. Donna Gullatte transformed the room with lovely decorations.

It was a sunny, bright and beautiful day in Huntsville, as the St. John family, friends and leadership of the Greater Huntsville community gathered to officially welcome the Wrights to Huntsville. It was a cool day, but there were warm hearts and big smiles as the well-wishers came out to extend their hands of friendship to the Wright Family for St. John. The vice-chair of the Steward Board, Marcus Hill, presided over the welcome ceremony. Ms. Kelsey Wilson beautifully sang "The Lord's Prayer." Representatives from the city, county and state, and religious community offered words of support and intentions of cooperation to work for the greater good of the Huntsville community. Alabama A&M University (AAMU) presented Pastor Wright the Presidential Medallion as a signal of its confidence and respect for his leadership. AAMU is uniquely connected to St. John AME Church in that they share the Founder. Dr. William Hooper Council, founder of Alabama A&M University is also one of the organizers of St. John AME Church where several of the former presidents, trustees, faculty, staff and students attend.



Dr. Jones presented a award to Pastor Wright

Pastor Wright responded with words of appreciation and noted his commitment to St. John and anticipation of future endeavors with St. John as well as working with the Huntsville community at large.

The Food Services Committee coordinated with the Stewards in serving the food, which was delicious. The music (live band composed of members of the St. John music department staff) was great and the young people of the church served as the gracious hosts and hostesses for the event. It was "a beautiful day in the neighborhood" and all is well.



Councilman Devyn Keith



Former Councilman Showers



Dr. Abdisa Busha, MD



Mr. Anderson represented the Mayor's Office



St. John AME Church Under "The Wright Leadership"

By Jeannette Jones

Photography by Darwin Washington



St. John Celebrated First Midnight Musical

By Charlie Brooks
Photography by Darwin Washington

*"And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren the singers,
with instruments of music, psalteries and harps and cymbals,
sounding aloud and lifting up the voice with joy."*

1 Chronicles 15:16 ASV

Friday evening at 10:00 p.m. on March 24 St. John's church doors opened to singers and musicians from Madison County and surrounding areas to lift their voices to deliver as to the Lord, their Songs of Praise. And they did just that. The singers offered joyful music as unto the Lord and to those attending.



St. John Praise Team gave their best, leading the evening with renditions: "Freedom" and "You Deserve It."

The anointed master of ceremony Jeremy Kelesy from the All Nations Worship Assembly minced no words, but sang the introduction to the next performers, "Friends". Jeremy encouraged the excited audience and participants to "Be who God says you can be." Friends, the Musical Group, delivered beautiful renditions of "One More Day" and "Come, Lord Jesus and Save Us." Both were beautiful songs.

The Tribe of Judah's Praise Dancers from Hope Community Church offered a beautiful praise dance. Their fiery deliverance was to Ricky Dillard's "Celebrate the King." In One Accord always delivers angelic music. They followed by singing "God Wants A Yes" and "Revive Us Again."



Next were Mr. Courtney Moore and Remnant. Their selection, "The Worship Medley" had the audience standing.

Alex Banks, saxophonist, delivered "We Lift Our Hands In the Sanctuary"

and "O Magnify the Lord." An excellent performance! Alex was followed by Mime ministry by St. John's Khristy Jefferson who had the audience on their feet as she ministered her well-known "BIGGER."

Director, Stan Torain and Continual Praise continued the high praise with, "Great God," "God's Not Done Yet" and ending with "He's Standing Up and Making It Good."

Next was another wonderful dance rendition by the Tribe of Judah Dance Ministry. Both of their deliverances were magnificent.



(Continued on page 5)

St. John Celebrated First Midnight Musical

By Charlie Brooks
Photography by Darwin Washington

(Continued from page 4)



Alabama A&M Gospel Choir

The last performing group was the Alabama A&M Gospel Choir who raised the rafters. They delivered in a mighty way: "Solid Rock," "Got to Tell This World The Lord's Been Good to Me," and ending it all with, fittingly, "To God Be the Glory."

The master of ceremonies ended the jubilant evening (after 12:30 a.m.) with "Let's Give God Continuing Praise for His Goodness."

What a wonderful evening of praise. It was unique and excellent. Hopefully Mr. Reggie Pearson, Music and Christian Arts Director for St. John, will plan many more great musicals like this.



First Jefferson Ministers in Dance



In One Accord



Je remy, Ne Bay



Stan Torain and Continual Praise

Mrs. Sarah "Granny" Bell St. John Member for 84 Years and Counting

By Bridget Floyd



Mrs. Sarah "Granny" Bell was born on May 6, 1919 in Meridianville, Alabama, almost ninety-eight (98) years ago. The eighth of eleven children born to John Davis and Sarah Harper Davis, Mrs. Bell noted, "I am the only one standing". She attended schools in Normal, AL and Chattanooga, TN, graduating at age 18. She married at age 19 instead of attending college as she initially intended. She indicated that "God blessed me with six beautiful children...four living and two buried". St. John member, Ms. Vivian Humphrey is "Granny" Bell's "first born". She cared for a son who lived with her for eighteen (18) years after he sustained a head injury in an automobile accident. She indicated that he lost the capacity to speak as a result of the injury. She did not want him to live in a treatment facility and so chose to have him in her home until his death. She poignantly recalled his last moments after he had been taken to the hospital and she was at his bedside,

with her cheek touching his, whispering to him that it was alright for him to rest after he had fought a long, valiant struggle.

"Granny" Bell noted that she grew up in the church. She recalled attending Sunday School and the Sunday School Convention. She indicated that she recalls Ms. Betty E. Derrick, who is known as the founder of St. John's Missionary Society, which bears Ms. Derrick's name. One fond memory was, as a young child, declining an Easter speech that she felt she could not recite, despite Ms. Derrick encouraging her. Sister Bell indicated that she can remember St. John pastors, starting with the Reverend Lowndes. She was baptized by the Reverend T. R. Thompson in September 1932 at the age of 13. It will be 85 years in September of this year. Over these years she served as secretary of the Sunday School, sang in the choir, was an usher, Stewardess, and was named a Deaconess by retired pastor Homer L. McCall. She listed the St. John pastors in order from the Reverend Lowndes to the current pastor, the Reverend Maurice Wright, II.

While Ms. Bell graciously agreed to be interviewed, several times during the process she emphasized, "I don't like to be fussed over". Her modesty began as a young child, when her mother stated that she was 'different' from her siblings. This brought tears to her eyes until her father explained that this had been a compliment – in that she did not engage in typical childhood behavior of being self-focused and she was inclined to be well-behaved. She also recalled having a horse and spending time with her father as he tended the animals and farmed the land. She described herself as a "daddy's girl" and indicated that to this day she spends a lot of time in her yard, working with her flower garden.

She also enjoys being active. "Granny" Bell indicated that in her youth she would choose to walk, while others would choose to drive or ride to their destinations. She highlighted that until four years ago she took daily, three-mile walks in her subdivision starting 5:30 a.m. She still cuts her grass with a self-propelled lawn mower. Her children reportedly have given up trying to convince her to cease and desist. She shared that she wears a knee brace since injuring her knee twenty-four (24) years ago while playing football with her grandson. For those who do the math, that indeed was when she was seventy-three (73) years of age. Her grandson has taken ownership of this incident/accident of her 'skidding' on her knee during play. That is, he will gleefully ask his grandmother, "How's my knee doing?"

"Granny" Bell described an ongoing prayer life. She noted that despite her "bad knees" she prays daily on her knees. She

(Continued on page 7)

Mrs. Sarah "Granny" Bell St. John Member for 84 Years and Counting

By Bridget Floyd

(Continued from page 6)

kneels at the altar for communion. Again, she harkened back to her childhood where she recalled kneeling beside her father when he prayed. In describing her prayer content, there was a clear theme: Love. She asks God to "give me love in my heart for everybody" and followed by stating, "And he does, too!" She stated, "I pray for everybody, including my family". As she spoke she intertwined her biological family and her church family. She stated, "I love people". She indicated that her church family "has been good to me...I feel so blessed...I feel so loved by family".

Her advice: "Love everybody and pray for everybody". She added that "When I give, I don't give to receive, I give because I want to". She stated, "I'm a child of God and I just love everybody." She indicated "I don't believe in people looking down on anybody." She elaborated in terms of people getting caught up in status, degrees, and material possessions. She returned to the theme of love. She stated that her "motto" comes from the scripture, "...faith, hope, and love but the greatest of these is love".

She is early to bed and early to rise and this seems to yield the results from the familiar phrase/rhyme. "Granny" Bell enjoys word search puzzles. She indicated again that she loves her yard and "can stay in my yard all day", working in her flower garden.

She recalled being a member of the 4-H Club when she was a youngster. She noted that in addition to being a Deaconess at St. John AME, she is also a member of the Order of the Eastern Star. She expressed that she valued her membership in this organization. She recalled babysitting the three children of Pastor and Mrs. Homer L. McCall. While she emphasized that she loves people throughout the interview, "Granny" Bell indicated that "older people and young children are my favorite".

She also reflected on working with children who were in the foster care system for twenty-five (25) years. She was a 'stay-at-home mom' when her children were young, proudly noting that she was waiting for them when they arrived home from school. However, after they grew up she worked as a house parent for Chi Ho Mansion which housed young people in the care of the Madison County Department of Human Resources (DHR). She indicated that she took care of those young people as if they were her own. When asked about the challenge of working with the young people with the knowledge that they would move every so often, she validated the challenge of caring for them, getting attached, and adjusting to their moving and the bittersweet circumstance of the young people returning after they left the residential setting.

It is clear that Mrs. Bell embraces the Christian tenant of love as 'the ultimate'. She has a healthy prayer life. She keeps her mind and her body active. She is a giving and grateful person. She is forthright and speaks her mind. She experiences / receives love from family, both biological and church.

We thank Deaconess Sarah "Granny" Bell for sharing her time and allowing the readers to get to know her. We hope that her birthday will be a blessed and enjoyable one. We congratulate her on 84 years (soon to be 85) as a member of St. John AME, Huntsville.

Faith, Hope, Love
BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE.

1 Corinthians 13:13

Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations: How St. John Measures Up—Part 3

By B. Johnson



This is the third installment in the series on the *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*, by Robert Schnase. So far, the series has reviewed the practice of *Intentional Faith Development* and *Extravagant Generosity*. This month worship is examined; Is it *Passionate*?

At eleven o'clock on Sunday morning, in most every community, one will find church services of many different denominations gearing up. All churches are going to have a worship service where the congregants gather. They arrive, sit in "their" pew, read "their" bulletin, listen to the preacher and sing along with the choir. True enough, this is worship, but is their worship passionate?

Schnase states that: "Passionate worship is described as the type of worship that draws people to Christ, deepens understanding and relationship with Christ, and over time transforms lives as disciples grow in the image of Christ. God works through the church to make disciples of Jesus Christ, and worship plays an essential role in the process."



The congregation joins hands for the Benediction on Pastor Wright's first Sunday at St. John.

There was so much information in this chapter, so much so, that space will not allow for all the essential details. However, here are just a few of the highlights which describe what *Passionate Worship* should look like, feel like and what the congregation should experience. All churches offer similar service formats and include some of the same traditions, so why use *passionate* to describe the practice of vibrant, fruitful, growing churches? Without passion, worship becomes dry, routine, boring, and predictable, keeping the form while lacking the spirit.

- Passionate worship describes an intense desire, an ardent spirit, strong feelings, and the sense of heightened importance.
- Passionate worship speaks of an emotional connection that goes beyond intellectual consent.

- Passionate worship is alive, authentic, fresh, and engaging.
- In Passionate worship, people are honest before God and one another, and open to God's presence, truth, and will for their lives.
- Passionate worship connects people with God and with one another, opens lives to the experience of God's grace and to the hearing and owning of God's word, and forms people into the Body of Christ.
- Passionate worship is not performance, nor is it mechanical motions, merely assembling at 10:50 on Sunday morning.
- Passionate worship leaves people challenged, sustained, and led by the Spirit of God, and it changes how they view themselves and their neighbors. An hour of passionate worship changes all the other hours in the week.
- Passionate worship leads to each person considering what might I do "for the love of God" to make Sunday worship more special.

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Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations: How St. John Measures Up—Part 3

By B. Johnson

(Continued from page 8)

- **Passionate worship** means a church cares enough about service to offer its best, its utmost, its highest. Churches that practice **Passionate Worship** make this sacred time as free as possible from distractions, annoyances, and inconveniences and people sense the deliberate care in preparation and intention.
- Choirs and praise teams offer their work as ministry; they care for one another and pray for one another, and hone their talent to the glory of God. Quality music resonates through congregations who emphasize **Passionate Worship**.
- In churches marked by **Passionate Worship**, people do not merely show up and sit passively in their pews; they are actively engaged, genuinely connected, personally addressed, and deeply challenged. The message touches them, the music moves them and the service changes them.
- **Passionate worshiping congregations** appeal to newcomers because people delight in one another and feel grateful in being together. Visitors choose a community in which they learn, find hope and help, and are warmly and graciously welcomed.

God in Christ changes people's lives through **Passionate Worship**. Worship stirs people's souls, inspires them, and strengthens them. They find such help and courage and belonging and care that they cannot help but talk about the sermons, ideas, stories, music, and prayers during the week. There is a contagious quality to authentic, engaging worship, to relevant sermons and uplifting music and warm community.

The responsibility for the quality of spiritual life in the congregation does not reside only with the pastor. Committees and teams and staff cannot do it on their own, either. What each person brings to the worship service shapes the experience for everyone as much as what he or she finds there. **Passionate worship** begins with each worshipping individual.



Calling Authentic Women

By Bishop Ann Henning Byfield

NOW IS THE TIME

*It's time to become intimidated only by the potential of your greatness
Stop wondering if the light on the ocean is the reflection of the stars
And realize it is the brightness of your own soul
Affirm that it is not arrogant to look in the mirror
and say Hmmm, I'm pretty good
Enjoy the loudness of the silence around you
because you can make your music without accompaniment, and
Live the life God wants you to live.**

Last month we celebrated the brilliance of women, the call for authentic women is critical. The community of believers will only grow when we emerge as whom God has created. All of us are gifts from the Creator and given peculiar gifts. I challenge women of faith to use our collective gifts to represent God's kingdom on earth.

Take this moment to realize that you are extraordinary in Your ordinary. Whether you are a mother or not, single or not, professional homemaker or not, God has affirmed that you are wonderfully made. The core of your inner being is amazing, strong, resilient. Take the plunge with God to do something unusual for the community, your family or yourself. Remember the African American women before you.

- Sarah Boone who created the iron
- Mary McLeod Bethune established Bethune Cookman College
- Harriet Tubman, Ida B Wells, Sojourner Truth, Nannie Helen Burroughs,
- Dr. Shirley Jackson whose telecommunications developments include: the touch-tone telephone, the portable fax, caller ID, call waiting and the fiber-optic cable.
- Marie Van Brittan Brown the first person to develop a patent for closed-circuit television security
- Let's not forget Women of Hidden Figures, Rosa Parks, Black Panther sisters
- Carolyn Rodgers, Nikki Giovanni, Sonya Sanchez, Nina Simone, and Mari Evans.

Take note of something that has been in your spirit. You have special unction: trust God, trust the legacy before you, and trust yourself to produce greatness. **Now Is the Time!**



The Right Reverend Anne Henning Byfield,
Presiding Bishop, 16th Episcopal District
AME Church

*Did You Receive The Press Release?

CPR Spring Workshop Held

By Pat Grier

The St. John Caregivers Prayer and Respite (CPR) Ministry held its spring workshop on Saturday, March 11th. The theme of the workshop was: 'March into Spring by Jumpstarting your Future, Spiritually and Financially'.

The morning workshop began with a light repast and words of welcome from Mrs. Abbiegail Hugine, CPR Chairperson and Congregational Care Steward. Prayer was then offered by Mr. Clifton Miller, member of the CPR Ministry. Mr. Hodges Washington, moderator of the workshop, then gave an overview of the workshop purpose and goals; followed by an introduction of the presenters – Mr. Rickey Gosa, Financial Advisor for Edwards Jones and Mr. Willie Sandifer, St. John member and Agent with Primerica Financial Services (PFS) Investments.

The first presenter was Mr. Gosa. He presented his ten (10) 'Rules of the Road' for taking care of your finances. The ten 'Rules of the Road' shared were:

1. Develop your strategy [set goals for your family or retirement]
2. Understand your risk [beware of market ups and downs and how it affects your investments and family]
3. Diversify for a solid foundation [do not put all your eggs (monies) in one basket – diversify]
4. Stick with quality decisions [beware of fads and stick with fundamentals]
5. Invest for the long term [buy and hold]
6. Have realistic expectations [remember your strategy and goals]
7. Maintain your balance [periodically check for alignment of investments with market]
8. Prepare for the unexpected [always have an emergency fund for the unexpected]
9. Focus on what you can control [stick with time tested principles and avoid predictions]
10. Review your strategy regularly [stay on course by having an annual checkup on your investments]

Mr. Gosa emphasized to the attendees that striving to follow the 'Rules of the Road' would allow stability and reliability in managing their personal finances.

The second presenter was Mr. Sandifer. His presentation was titled 'Building Your Financial House God's Way'. He gave biblical references for practicing good Stewardship with one's monies. He referenced Isaiah 55:8, Malachi 3:10, Luke 16:11, Matthew 6:24, and 1 Corinthians 4:2. Mr. Sandifer then proceeded to tell the attendees how to build their Financial House from the foundation up. He expounded on the following topics as each relates to building a Financial House that will stand through the storms of life:

1. Income Protection and Emergency Fund [preparing for the unexpected]
2. Debt Elimination and having a Will [protecting your family]
3. Income Diversification [growing your assets]
4. Retirement Plans [preparing for the future]
5. Roth IRAs [after 5 years -tax-free income for retirement]
6. Education Plans [providing for family]
7. Accelerate Mortgage [decreasing debt and increasing income]

He stated that by striving to achieve each of the items above, families can gain financial independence, FREEDOM!

(Continued on page 16)

The 2017 Habitat Spring Build continues. St. John is partnering with other local churches to build a 5-bedroom home on Maywick Drive, near Winchester Road. One date remains for the selected **St John work day: May 6, 2017**. On this day, everyone who is physically able to come out and help should plan to do so. There is something for everyone to do at some point during the build. The build schedule is listed below. Work times are from 8:00 a.m. to noon Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, so if you cannot make the Saturday work date, there are other days you can volunteer. If you have questions, please contact Tami McGhee at 256-603-0466 or the church office.



2017 SPRING BUILD SCHEDULE 6314 Maywick Rd.

DATES	DAYS	TASKS
Apr. 11, 13, 15	Tue., Thur., Sat.	(Sheetrock by others) finish vinyl siding
Apr. 18, 20, 22	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Paint interior walls, clean floor, paint base board, doors and trim
Apr. 25, 27, 29	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Install vinyl floor tile, sheet vinyl
May 2, 4, 6	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Install interior doors, baseboard, window trim, cabinets
May 9, 11, 13	Tue., Thur., Sat.	(Plumbing & electrical fixtures by others) Install door hardware Door stops, closet shelving, window blinds
May 16, 18, 20	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Landscape, touch up paint, clean & wax floors, work punch list
May 23, 25, 27	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Catch-up (Dedication to be announced)

The schedule is contingent on weather and subcontractors. We will work 8:00 AM to noon.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS:

From North Memorial Pkwy, go west on Winchester Road. At the bottom of the hill, turn right onto Sandia Rd. Go 0.6 miles, turn left onto Desha, go about 300 ft. and turn right onto Maywick.

Team's MS Walk Commitment Continues

By Pat Grier



Front row: Johnathan Bailey, Pat Grier, David Bailey, Lorraine Parham. Back row: Agnes Gilmore, Kenneth Parham, Lillie Rivers, Phyllis Barrett.



Front row: Johnathan and David Bailey. Back row: Lula Rochelle, Lillie Rivers, Agnes Bailey, Pat Grier.

The 'PJ's Partners' Team has a new name (MS PAC - Praying for A Cure); but the team's commitment is the same - to raise funds to help find a CURE for Multiple Sclerosis (MS). MS is a chronic, often disabling disease that attacks the central nervous system (CNS). MS treatments have increased and improved over the years. But MS still can be a life changing disease if the impairments increase and persist. Finding a cure for MS is so important and why this team participates in the 'Walk MS' event each year.

The '2017 Walk MS' event for Multiple Sclerosis (MS) was held in

Huntsville on April 1st at Providence. The 'MS PAC' team was one of almost 50 teams participating in the Huntsville Walk and to date the team is among the top five teams for fundraising. The 'MS PAC' team knows that their fundraising success is largely due to the generous contributions support of St. John members of this annual team activity and fundraiser. THANKYOU so much! The 'MS PAC' team members participating this year were: Agnes Gilmore (Team Captain), Pat Grier, Lorraine Parham, Kenneth Parham and Lillie Rivers. The Team was also supported this year by Jasmyne Rochelle, Johnathan and David Bailey; as well as Lula Rochelle and Phyllis Barrett, who were both temporarily sidelined for medical reasons.

The team members will be collecting donations through the end of April. To support this worthy cause and if team members have missed contacting you, please contact Agnes Gilmore, the team Captain, at 256-536-9131 or any team member.

Thanks again for your generous support!



Soup Kitchen Ministry

By Charlie Brock

JESUS LOVES ME AND HE LOVES YOU

"Let Him lead me to the banquet hall, and let His banner over me be love."

Song of Songs 2:4-9 (NIV)

When we look back into the insights of the meaning of a basic truth we learned as children: "Jesus Loves Me," sounded so simplistic and believable. Those words were planted in our brain. Sadly, we do not live out that belief today.

God took on human form so He could suffer and die to pay for our sins, which is proof enough of His unconditional love. "And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha... The place of a skull, they gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall... He would not drink. And when they had crucified Him, they parted His garments among them, casting lots; and they sat and watched Him there." Matthew 27: 33-36 ASV.

Jesus is with us every step of the way. Each breath is a gift from Him. The food in our refrigerator and your favorite outfit all come from Him. The singing birds outside, the warmth of a child and the gorgeous sunset: these are all expressions of His love.

A faith-filled life is about loving God and others. It is all about the love He offered us on the Cross. When we serve others it becomes JOY. We can now face trials and troubles, because JESUS LOVES US.

Join us as we move this concept of His great love from our brains to the context of our hearts. We thank Him for His sacrifice for us as we serve others. HIS LOVE changes everything!

The Soup Kitchen Ministry wishes everyone a "HAPPY EASTER" and invites members to show His love and join them on the 3rd and 4th Tuesdays in the Soup Kitchen from 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Here We Grow Again!

Welcome to the St. John family!

Teresa Edwards

Church School Lesson Overview – May 2017

The lesson reviews were written by Kenneth Parham.

May 7, 2017

Lesson Title: Sustaining Love

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 139:1-12; Jonah 1

Print: Jonah 1:7-17

Devotional Songs: #450, #27, and #243

Key Verse: "This terrified them and they asked, "What have you done?" (Jonah 1:10a).

In this lesson, Jonah disobeyed God and ran away from his responsibilities. God had instructed Jonah to go to Nineveh and to preach that God was unhappy with their sinful living. However, it appeared that Jonah wanted no part in rebuking the people of Nineveh and decided to take a ship to another country.

The story continued where the sea became rough, due to strong winds and waves, and the ship was threatened of being sunk. The crew, being unaware, attempted to lighten the load of the ship to no avail. The crew then turned to praying to their gods and when this did not work, they decided to draw straws to see who was the culprit for this situation. Jonah pulled the short straw and immediately confessed that he had disobeyed his God and that his punishment should be to be thrown over the side of the ship into the water. After praying about their perilous situation, the crew yielded and threw Jonah overboard. The sea calmed and it is documented that God created a fish to swallow Jonah or to save Jonah.

The reviewer surmises that God will make one's life uncomfortable if they decide to go against His will. In this lesson, students see where God's sustained love gave the people of Nineveh an opportunity to turn away from their wickedness. It is also noted that God's sustaining love created a fish to protect Jonah from drowning, even though he had disobeyed God.

May 14, 2017

Lesson Title: Preserving Love

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 116:1-14; Jonah 2

Print: John 3:1-16

Devotional Songs: #415, #323, and #243

Key Verse: "I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, 'Salvation comes from the LORD' (Jonah 2:9).

Jonah 2 denotes Jonah's acceptance of his fate for disobeying God as he descends into the belly of the great fish. Jonah reflected upon his life, being a holy man, and prayed earnestly. He thanked God for sparing his life from a drowning death and then asked God for a second chance to prove he was unlike those who prayed to idols, he vowed to keep his promise to be a living sacrifice. God heard Jonah's sincere prayer and had the fish to spew Jonah onto dry land.

Even at a person's darkest or lowest point in life, they should pray expecting God's mercy to see them through. Today's calamities may include incurable diseases, destructive storms, drug abuse or sudden or tragic loss of loved ones, but be assured that God's sustaining love will rescue, even from the darkest moments and give peace, hope and blessings.

May 21, 2017

Lesson Title: Forgiving Love

Lesson Scripture: Acts 11:1-18; Jonah 3; Nahum 1-3

Print: Jonah 3

Devotional Songs: #Love Lifted Me; #258; and #243

Key Verses: "When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened" (Jonah 3:10).

In examining this lesson, students encounter several events that allowed the people of Nineveh to realize that they must repent from their wicked ways to escape the wrath of God. First, it was probably certain that the fishermen returned to land and spread the word of what happened aboard their ship and what they had to do to Jonah to save themselves. Secondly, we can be certain that upon being restored onto dry land, Jonah having an attitude adjustment, was more than willingly to bring God's message of redemption or destruction to the people of Nineveh. Thirdly, we can be more than certain that once the people of Nineveh recognized Jonah as being the one thrown overboard for disobeying his God, hearing the message of redemption or destruction and, remembering what happened to the city of Solomon and Gomorrah in earlier history; the people of Nineveh came to their senses and realized that they were on a destructive path and decided to ask God for forgiveness (through fasting and atonement). And finally, God being a loving heard the people and saw the sincerity

(Continued on page 16)



Technology Tip

By Ricardo Williams

Preventing Software Hacking



Do you know if your private information stored on your computer or laptop is safe? Do you know if someone is watching every keystroke you make when surfing the internet? Do you know if someone is watching you through your home security or home automation system? These are just some of the questions you have to ask yourself when it comes to the privacy and security of your data. Hacking has become a huge security issue when it comes to the privacy and safety of some of our daily activities where we use devices that connect to the internet or some form of network.

To better safeguard ourselves from hacking, this article will take a look at some of the ways to prevent it from occurring. Each piece of software installed on a laptop, tablet, or mobile device has required updates that must be installed and the installation is recommended from the issuer of the software. Often times users may ignore the software update. One way a hacker can access devices is by using software that may have vulnerabilities. To prevent the vulnerabilities from occurring, the issuer or developer of the software has to continue to keep the software updated and updates pushed out to their user community. This also includes constantly using anti-virus software and installing anti-spyware or adware programs. These type of programs can be a great tool in preventing unwanted software or information loaded onto a device during a download from the internet. This is one of the main entry ways for a hacker to gain access to devices.

Another way to safeguard information is to constantly change the password. It is highly recommended to change the password to any electronic device, website which includes banking websites every 90 days. This helps to keep the password refreshed just in case someone may have the pass-

Continued on page 24

Church School Book Club

Discussion Date: April 15, 2017
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Obsession, Nora Roberts, 2017

Discussion Date: May 20, 2017
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

You Know Better, Tina McElroy Ansa, 2002

It is the spring weekend of the Peach Blossom Festival in the tiny middle Georgia town of Mulberry, but things are far from sweet for the Pines women. LaShawndra, an eighteen-year-old hoochie-mama who wants nothing more out of life than to dance in a music video, has messed up...again. But this time she is not sticking around to hear about it.

Not that her mother seems to care; after all, Sandra is busy working on her real estate career and on the local minister. It's LaShawndra's grandmother, Lily, a former schoolteacher, principal, school board administrator, and highly respected cornerstone of the Mulberry community, who is scouring the streets at midnight looking for her granddaughter.

Over the course of one weekend these three disparate women, guided by a trio of unexpected spirits, will learn to face the pain in their lives and discover that with reconciliation comes the healing they all desperately seek. In this magical, deeply resonant novel, Tina McElroy Ansa goes straight to the heart of women's relationships to reveal the soul that bonds us all. — Amazon

Weekly Bible Study

Wednesday, 12 pm and 6 pm

Pastor Wright leads Bible Study each Wednesday at noon and 6 pm (unless otherwise noted on the church calendar).



CPR Spring Workshop Held

By Pat Grier

(Continued from page 11)

Mr. Sandifer encouraged the attendees to have three accounts: short-term, mid-term, and long-term. Short-term is an emergency fund account, mid-term is a personal and/or business account, and long-term is the retirement account. Lastly, he touched on the importance of having adequate life insurance and the difference between term and whole life insurance.

A brief Q&A period followed the presentations with both presenters supplying answers and sources of additional information for the attendees. The CPR Committee is very thankful for the presenters and the information shared and distributed. The committee is also grateful to all those who came out to support this workshop. Your attendance and continued support of this ministry is much appreciated by the CPR ministry members.



Technology Tip

By Ricardo Williams

(Continued from page 15)

word by visible means or has already hacked into the device or system. Never use passwords that are related to birth date, address, kid's name, family members or anything that might identify you. These are the easiest types of passwords that can be figured out.

One must constantly be on the alert to safeguard their private information. Although these are just a few ways to do so, there are many others such as deleting emails from unknown sources, installing a firewall, not sharing wireless network credentials, etc. Please continue to use some of these security measures to prevent malicious hackers.

Church School Lesson Overview

(Continued from page 14)

of Nineveh turning away from their sins and spared the people of Nineveh from a great calamity.

May 28, 2017

Lesson Title: Pervasive Love

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 86:8-13; Jonah 4

Print: Jonah 4

Tentative Devotional Songs: #139; #251; and #243

Key Verse: "Should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?" (Jonah 4:11).

After the people of Nineveh repented of their sins, one would have imagined Jonah rejoicing for bringing God's words of having a second chance to the people of Nineveh. But this lesson encounters Jonah praying to God with an angry heart indicating that he would rather die than be part of the compassion that God had shown to the people of Nineveh. Jonah indicated that he knew in advance that God would forgive the people of Nineveh and that was why he disobeyed God initially.

One should ponder why Jonah, a man of God, should harvest contempt or hatred towards a people. By researching, historians indicated that Nineveh was an Assyrian nation (Persians) and the Hebrews (Jonah's people) despised the Persians, their previous captors (slave owners). God's response to Jonah was to examine Jonah's level of compassion. God took the opportunity to measure the level of Jonah's compassion after Jonah retreated into the desert, east of the city. God allowed a bush to grow instantly to provide shade to Jonah. Overnight God created a worm that attacked the roots of the bush and the next morning the bush died leaving Jonah once again exposed to the heat of the day. Jonah's immediate response, again, was that he was angry and wished he was dead.

God's response to Jonah's plea was immediate. God wondered how Jonah could show such compassion for the bush that Jonah had no part of nourishing, while not understand the compassion that God showed to the people of Nineveh, one of God's creation. God indicated to Jonah that He saw an opportunity to spread His unlimited love and compassion through a foreign nation (150,000 people).

May 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	4	5	6
7 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship Communion Sunday AMEN DEADLINE	8 9:30 a.m. FMY-Plus Meeting 6:00 p.m. Official Board	9 6:00 p.m. Stewardess Board Mtg.	10 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	11 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	12	13 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 10:30 AMEN Staff Meeting
14 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship Mother's Day	15	16 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	17 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	18	19 GOOD FRIDAY	20 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry
21 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	22	23 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	24 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	25	26 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	27 9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry
28 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	29 Memorial Day	30	31 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	Pictures for the new Pictorial Directory will be taken during the month of May. Please watch for more details in the Sunday Bulletin.		

PRAYER for the MONTH - Heavenly Father, thank you for sending Your son to suffer and die for our sins. Thank you that He rose on the third day that we might have eternal life. Amen.

Scripture for the Month— "The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name." (Luke 24:46-47)

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The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright, Bishop

The Reverend Sherita Seawright, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor

Important Dates to Remember

April 16, 2017 Resurrection Day
Sunrise Service, 6:00 a.m.
Breakfast
Easter Program, 9:00 a.m.
Easter Worship, 10:50 a.m.

May 14, 2017 Mother's Day

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

ST. JOHN A.M.E.N NEWSLETTER



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 21 Issue 5

May 2017

Bishop Seawright Blessed Property and Encouraged Growth and Expansion

By Pamela Whitehead

Photography by Darwin Washington



The Wrights, Seawrights and Dr. McCall

Palm Sunday was a jubilant day of worship and celebration in observance of the journey toward the culmination of the earthly walk of Christ Jesus and the beginning of Holy Week. It was also a joyous occasion that celebrated all that God has done for St. John A.M.E. Church in the expansion of its territory! After a wonderful and spirit-filled worship experience, the day continued with a "Service of Thanksgiving and Blessing" of the St. John AMEC property located on Blue Spring Road, Huntsville, Alabama 35810.

Pastor Maurice Wright II and First Lady, the Reverend Joretha Wright along with the Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright, Presiding Prelate of the Ninth Episcopal District, and Episcopal Supervisor, the Reverend Sherita M. Seawright led a motorcade of scores of St. John congregants to the land site for a special service. The Reverend Dr. Homer L. McCall, Retired Pastor of St. John AMEC, under whose leadership the property was purchased, was also present for the occasion. Pastor Wright led the congregation in a very moving litany befitting of the occasion, first giving thanks to the Almighty for His generosity and further beseeching God for His Divine guidance as the church seeks to continue to build up His Kingdom.



Bishop Seawright speaks at Blue Spring Property

After the hymn of praise, "We've Come This Far By Faith," the land was blessed with prayer by Bishop Seawright and words of encouragement were extended. The St. John congregation was reminded that they are the "chosen ones" and the Bishop further gave the charge to let all plans for the Blue Spring property be for God's glory. In closing, the Bishop fervently thanked

God in advance for the souls that will be saved, the ministry that will go forth and for the leadership that is in place.

With great joy, exclamations of praise were rendered by those in attendance in anticipation of what God has in store for St. John AMEC at its Blue Spring location. To God Be the Glory!

Bishop Seawright Blesses Blue Spring Property

Pamela Whitehead
Photography by Darwin Washington

Below are pictures of members who gathered for the blessing of the land



St. John Welcomed Bishop Seawright on Palm Sunday

Bridget J. Floyd



Pastor Wright and Bishop Seawright

Ninth Episcopal District of the AME Church. She brought greetings to St. John and installed the officers of the Betty E. Derrick Missionary Society of St. John.

Bishop Seawright highlighted his praise for the Lord on this Palm Sunday. He also highlighted, as he did throughout, his praise and thanksgiving for his 'miraculous' recovery after a sudden illness. He intertwined his testimony of faith and God's grace in his literally being brought back to life by first responders and others who were used by God as tools of healing and recovery via heart quadruple bypass surgery and the associated rehabilitation.



Stewardesses distribute palms after the blessing.



Ministry in dance.

On Sunday, April 9, 2017, the members of St. John marked Palm Sunday and welcomed the Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright, Presiding Prelate of the Ninth Episcopal District. There was one service held at 10 a.m. A "Service of Thanksgiving and Blessing" was held at the church property on Blue Spring Road, after the worship service.

The AME Order of Worship was followed, with clergy offering prayer, reading scripture, and summarizing The Decalogue. The Mass Choir provided inspirational worship in song and the Children, Youth and Women members of the Liturgical Dance Ministry led worship through dance.

The service began with the processional and the blessing of the palms by the Reverend Maurice Wright, II. Pastor Wright also introduced the Right Reverend Seawright and the Reverend Sherita Moon Seawright, the Episcopal Supervisor of the

The text for the day was Isaiah 53:4-6 and the sermon title was "He Was Hung Up for Our Hang Ups". Bishop Seawright also cited the twenty-third verse of the third chapter of Lamentations, noting that God's grace and compassion is in operation every day. He stated that, "The measures in Heaven never get old... when we trust and believe in God the rewards are extraordinary". As he spoke more of the scripture lesson, Bishop Seawright indicated



Pastor Wright leads worship service.

that he is "so glad He was wounded for our transgressions...and by His stripes we are healed". He further advised to never allow anyone

(Continued on page 4)

St. John Welcomed Bishop Seawright on Palm Sunday

Bridget J. Floyd

(Continued from page 3)



"to cause you to think that you are not good enough or that Jesus does not love you".

He indicated that "God will give angels charge over you". He spoke personally of his treating physician who stated that the Bishop "seemed to have a lot of angels around him". Bishop Seawright noted songs that give him encouragement and should do the same for congregants. The songs included, "I Won't Complain", "I've Seen the Lightning Flashing", and then cited his 'favorite' song, "His Eye is on the Sparrow".

The Bishop emphasized his thankfulness for every day that he wakes up in his right mind and noted that he must give God the praise and just wants to be a witness for God. He indicated that it is this thankfulness that contributes to his stated lack of depression and anxiety as he continues his cardiac rehab (a common occurrence in those who have had a cardiac event and/or bypass surgery). His answer to the medical staff queries: "No, in no way!"

The focus was giving praise to Jesus. Numerous times congregants waved their palms in reverence and praise as well as response to the theme of highest praise coming from the music ministry, liturgical dance ministry and the preaching and testimony of the Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright.



St. John Celebrated Resurrection Day with High Praise

Photography by Darwin Washington

"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" 1 Corinthians 15:55



St. John's celebration of the Resurrection was a day of high praise. Easter lilies adorned the sanctuary and were donated in memory/honor of loved ones of the congregation. Names of doors were read at the 10:50 a.m. service. The altar and pulpit were covered in white paraments, the liturgical color for Easter.

The day began with Sunrise Service at 6 a.m. Worshippers took a pause after the service for breakfast, sponsored by the Steward Board. This was followed by the Easter program (see page 6 for the article on this program) presented by the Christian Education and Music and Christian Arts

departments. The 10:50 a.m. service followed the program.



Pastor Wright led the worship services, assisted by the ministerial staff. Music was rendered by the Mass Choir, under the direction of Mr. Reggie Pearson. The atmosphere was joyous.

The 10:50 a.m. worship service included baptisms. Little Miss Abigail Daniels, daughter of Representative Anthony Daniels and Dr. Teneshia Daniels, and Tony Wright, the brother of Pastor Wright, were baptized.

The Easter message was entitled "A Dialogue with Death." The text was from 1 Corinthians 15:55 and Mathew 28:6. Pastor Wright began by describing a conversation where death was confidently bragging of how everyone had to eventually face him. The dialogue ended with the defeat of death because Jesus conquered the sting of death through His death on the cross and resurrection three days later. The conversation then became a conversation between Jesus and Death where Jesus told of the miracles He performed that showed His power over death. The dialogue concluded with the ultimate victory over death, His resurrection.

Thank God for another wonderful Resurrection Sunday!



Holy Week Prayer Revival and Maundy Thursday Services

By Roselyne Akines
Photography by Darwin Washington

The spirit-filled Daniel Fast during the Lenten season concluded with a blessed Holy Week Prayer Revival. The revival lasted three days, from Monday, April 10, 2017, to Wednesday, April 12, 2017.



Pastor Wright gives revival meditation.



The Prayer team leads in worship.

On Monday April 10th prayer was led by the clergy. The scripture was read from Hebrews 4:16. The spirit-filled message given by Pastor Wright was entitled "Amazing Grace". Pastor Wright pointed out that grace is far more than anyone understands. He raised four main points about "God's amazing grace": 1. God's grace redeems us from sin. 2. God's grace relieves our fears. 3. God's grace reassures us. 4. God's grace rewards us eternally.

On Tuesday April 11th, the prayer was led by the stewards. The scripture was read from Matthew 16:24. We were again blessed with a spirit-filled message by Pastor Wright entitled "Deal with Your Cross". He pointed out that there are three main crosses with which we needed to deal: 1. The cross of self-denial. 2. The cross of Christian discipleship. 3. The cross of being willing to do what we haven't done.

On Wednesday April 12th, the prayer was led by the leaders of the Men's Ministry, WMS, and Women's Ministry. The scripture was read from Matthew 26:39-42. Pastor Wright closed the prayer revival with a spirit-filled message entitled "The Prayers of Jesus". He pointed out that prayer is a secret weapon that we do not use like we should. He elaborated on three prayers of Jesus: 1. A prayer for divine guidance. 2. A prayer for his enemies. 3. A prayer for his followers.

Thank God for three days of powerful worship and words that revived our spirit and renewed our commitment to God.



Pastor Wright washes the feet of the ministers and stewards.

The Maundy Thursday service replicated the events that occurred on Jesus' last night with His disciples before He went to the cross to bear the sins of the world. Presiding Elder Allen gave the meditation from John 13:1-3, "The Mission of the Messiah." Holy Communion was served and feet were washed. The communion unleavened bread was made by the stewardess. The pastor led the foot washing service by washing the feet of the ministers and stewards. After which, the pastor, ministers and stewards washed the feet of others who were in attendance. This was an humbling servant's

SJBS - St. John Broadcasting System

Easter 2017 ~ Live at Calvary

By Lydia Ash Owens
Photography by Darwin Washington



This year's Easter Program was centered in Jerusalem on the aftermath of the Crucifixion of *Jesus Christ*. The SJBS Reporters were interviewing eye witnesses at the scene to gain their perspective on **WHO** was there, **WHAT** actually happened, **WHEN** it happened, **WHERE** everyone was in the crowd, and **WHY** it happened.

The program opened with the Wilson Twins (Caden and Chole) pulling double duty in welcoming the audience to the set. Prayer was rendered by Breyanna Croan and scripture was read by Jayla Rembert, Luke 24:1-6, followed by a video introduction of the SJBS - St. John AME Broadcasting System; after which the interviewer / journalist led everyone to the stage and directed them to their seat.

There seemed to be a little hostility because of the people she chose to interview: Mary, Pilate, Herod and Peter.



Once everyone was seated, the interviewer began by introducing the story and providing the stations commitment to its viewers. She added that she did not "concur" with those who chose to "believe" in the acts and actions which have been attributed to *Jesus Christ*, and was bringing the story to allow everyone the right to judge for themselves. The interviewer was interrupted and questioned by Mary Magdalene (as she claimed to have first-hand knowledge of the Crucifixion). After that disturbance, the interviewer began to ask the guests for short introductions.

Peter introduced himself first and began to go down a long laundry list of all the things "*he*" was known for or had done. Pilate, being efficient and businesslike, began to tell his life story and didn't dare forget to mention that he was the one who "*found no fault in Jesus*". The interviewer asked the guests to pause for a minute while they went to commercial break.

During the break, we heard a word from sponsors "What's Important", "Easter Promise", "Springtime" and "Dear Friend". Also, souls were lifted with a selection from the St. John AME Youth Choir entitled "*I Love You Lord*," soloist Blake Johnson.

After the commercial break, the interviewer shifted to Herod, who seemed very haughty and disinterested. He commented that he had "little interest in the internal squabble within the silly Jewish community and that ob-



(Continued on page 8)

SJBC - St. John Broadcasting System

Easter 2017 ~ Live at Calvary

By Lydia Ash Owens
Photography by Darwin Washington

(Continued from page 7)

viously, the man was just that – a man". Then she moved on to the Roman Soldier. He appeared very precise and self-assured, after all he was not to "blame" for what happened.... She then turned to Mary Magdalene, who was very friendly and soft spoken. She explained who she was prior to meeting *Jesus* and how He saw a sinner in need of forgiveness. She talked about *Jesus'* character and how meeting *Jesus* changed her life. She even remarked about how the interviewer could use a "touch of the Savior". This seemed to have angered the interviewer so she immediately went to commercial break.



During this break, there were speeches from sponsors entitled "Blessed is the One" and "Easter Joy" and ministry to in dance by the St. John AME Praise Dance Ministry to the song "So Amazing."

After commercial break, the interviewer continued with a direct question toward Peter, who she also referred to as Simon, Rock, Simon Bar-Jona, or "whatever your name is". At this point Peter began to lose his cool as he tried to explain the type of man he was. During the back and forth with Peter, the interviewer began to show a little sarcasm.... As Peter began to explain why he missed so much of what *Jesus* had to say when He was with them, she abruptly interrupted him and accused him of "inventing" some of these events. The next question was to the Roman Soldier to explain what it was like at Calvary. The soldier's voice began to crack as he explained how that day at Calvary was different; different in that he sensed the suffering of those on the cross. The two convicts were crying and begging for mercy while *Jesus* displayed a kind of serenity, as though through it all he was in control. This seemed to shock the interviewer as she quickly went to another commercial break.



During this break, sponsors spread their messages with speeches "Crucifixion," "I'm Glad," "A Dreary Day," and "Good Friday." The music during this commercial was the song "Jesus Keep

Me Near the Cross," soloist Zaria York. Additionally, there was a Spoken Word entitled "Lord I Thank You" by Kaitlyn McClung.

(Continued on page 9)

SJBC - St. John Broadcasting System

Easter 2017 ~ Live at Calvary

By Lydia Ash Owens
Photography by Darwin Washington

(Continued from page 8)

At times the interviewer appeared doubtful, sarcastic and pushy; however she pressed on to the final question of the day: While this drama was being played out... Where Were You? Listening to each of the guests answer this particular question, one could sense the remorse and shame in their voices. However, the satisfaction in knowing Jesus died for each of them seemed to bring a calm presence throughout the audience. Mary Magdalene, the last of the guests to speak, summed it up by saying: *"Praise the Lord that I should be so privileged, I was there at his side. I learned the true meaning of His words, His body broken for me. His blood shed for me. He died for me!"*



During the final commercial break, speeches from the sponsors were entitled "Rejoice - He is Risen!" and "Easter Thanks!"



CREDITS
Director - Alyanah Amendarez
Journalist - Morgan Owens, Simon / Peter / The Rock - Josiah Gullate,
Pilate- Daniel Haygood,
Herod - Wallace Parham, Roman Soldiers - Michael Clark and

De'Shaun Hardin, Mary Magdalene - Marissa Owens

SPONSORS—Martinee Hill, Channing Wilson, Callynn Williams, Derryn Goode, Isaiah Mays, Caylon Mays, Mikayla Washington, Isaiah Wright, Jasmyne Rochelle, Cambridge Wilson, Anthony Mack, Kelson Hill, Samantha Adkins, Kylie Washington, Joy Wright, Tyler Williams, Zaria York, Blake Johnson, St. John AME Church Youth Choir, St. John AME Church Praise Dance Ministry

A Special Thanks to the Easter Program Committee:

Shelby Washington, Malena Warren, Thalia Love Brown, Mary Rankin, Shayla Wilson, Darwin Washington, Willie Sandifer, Hodges Washington and Monica Dillihunt

A Young Mother Shares Her Thoughts on Being a Mother

By Jamela Bradford



The Bradfords—Breanne, Willie, Jamela, and Addison

Growing up, many of my friends and family would call me 'Mama Mela' because I would constantly try to take care of those around me. Although, I was comfortable being in that role back then, I still felt apprehensive about having children of my own someday.

When Willie and I decided to begin our family, I did not have time to take any parenting classes. However, when Addison came into this world, all of my concerns went away. I instantly went into a mothering role and took charge of my little one. Seeing and experiencing the love that Willie and I have for each other materialize as a beautiful baby girl was the highlight of our marriage. Now that we have two gorgeous gifts from God, I have had time to really focus on what I want our family to represent.

My life's mantra comes from a poem by Edgar Albert Guest, "I'd rather see a sermon than to hear one any day." My parents did an excellent job living the life that they preached about to us. As Addison and Breanne's mother, I am going to do my very best to be the example of a God-fearing, God-loving, and God-serving woman that I believe they need to see. Every day they will see a mother who loves and respects her husband, who prays for her family, who works hard to increase the wealth of her household, and who is compassionate and forgiving towards others. They will also see a mother who is modest in dress but still fashionable and well put together.

I have three siblings and we all are different. My parents raised us with the same morals and values but when it came to molding us as individuals, they took into account our personalities. While my punishment for disobedience resulted in my comic books being taken away, my sister's punishment would be washing dishes. In this same way, I will raise my daughters by valuing their uniqueness. It is important to me that I identify and cultivate their talents as well as celebrate their distinctiveness. My vision is for them to be in tune with who they are as individuals and to do my best to celebrate their God-given abilities. In doing so, I believe I can raise confident young ladies who will grow up to become productive citizens.



Breanne and Addison

Being a new mother, I have had a lot of sleepless nights. I have had to give up some 'me' time while I adjust to having two little ones totally dependent on me for their survival. At times, it feels like a huge responsibility, but I know that God gives me the strength and the grace that I need to be successful at parenting every day.

AMEs Participate in AAMU Founder's Day Observances

By Jeanette Jones

Bishop Harry L. Seawright - Community Breakfast Keynote Speaker



Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University celebrated its 142nd Founder's Day Celebration on May 5, 2017, which was held on its beautiful and historic campus. This celebration included the President's Annual Community Breakfast, the Founder's Day Convocation and Gravesite Ceremony.

The Right Reverend Harry Seawright, Bishop of the Ninth Episcopal District of The African Methodist Episcopal Church served as the keynote speaker for Alabama A&M University's Community Breakfast. This breakfast is held each year during the Founder's Day Celebration to recognize individuals who epitomize the university's motto: "Service is Sovereignty", who possess and demonstrate through their dedication and commitment to community service and civic engagement. Alabama A&M University's 11th

president, Dr. Andrew Hugine, Jr., presented the coveted R. D. Morrison award to former Councilman Dr. Richard Showers and Attorney Jocelyn Boustani, former member of the AAMU Foundation Board.

Bishop Seawright delivered a message of encouragement. He shared with the audience his life experiences and reflections during his recent health challenges. The Bishop spoke from the subject "Stay Focused". He began by telling the crowd that he was the first one in his family to complete college. He spoke about an epiphany he had in the 9th grade after hearing a classmate sing, "To Dream the Impossible Dream". It was then that he knew he could do what seemed to be the impossible, go to college. He began going to the library and looking up different colleges and universities. He applied to college, and got accepted, and went on to get, not only a Bachelor's degree, but also a Masters' in Divinity from Howard University, one of the first universities he had read about in the library many years before. He emphasized that he was able to do that because of God's grace and the fact that he stayed focused. It was a stirring and thoughtful message. The audience received his comments with a standing ovation.

The Reverend Dr. Homer Littlefield McCall Scholarship Endowed

During the Alabama A&M University's Annual Founders Day Celebration, the members of St. John AME Church presented a check in the amount of \$26,500.00 to Alabama A&M University's 11th President, Dr. Andrew Hugine, Jr. to establish an endowed scholarship in honor of the Reverend Dr. Homer Littlefield McCall.



Dr. McCall worked for approximately 39 years as professor of English and Chaplain, at Alabama A&M University and 40 years as Senior Pastor of St. John AME church. There is a divine connection between the church that the Reverend McCall pastored and the university, where he worked and mentored legions of students and young faculty members. Because of the Reverend McCall's love and dedication to Alabama A&M University, the members of the St. John AME Church family have given over \$25,000 to establish an endowed scholarship in honor of the Reverend McCall. Many of the members of the church family were present for the presentation and the Reverend McCall gave very gracious acceptance remarks for this great honor.

(Continued on page 12)

AMEs Participate in AAMU Founder's Day Observances

By Jeanette Jones

(Continued from page 11)



The original site of Alabama A&M University is located in downtown Huntsville at the current location of the Von Braun Civic Center. This is approximately three (3) blocks from the current location of St. John AME church. Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University is uniquely connected to St. John AME Church in that they share the Founder. Dr. William Hooper Council, founder of Alabama A&M University is also the organizer of St. John AME Church where the current president and several of the former presidents, trustees, faculty, staff and students worship.

The keynote speaker for the Founder's Day Convocation was Mrs. Pamela Moore McDonald, an electrical engineer graduate of AAMU. Mrs. McDonald currently serves as the Software Acquisition Manager for the Missile Defense Agency. During the Gravesite Ceremony, special tributes were made to AAMU's Founder, Dr. William Hooper Council. The poem "The Founder" was recited by Miss AAMU's Carmen Wright and wreaths were laid on the gravesite. The Golden Class of 1967 participated in a balloon release in remembrance of the life and legacy of Dr. William Hooper Council.

Founders Day Church Service at St. John AME Church and the Return to the Original Site of Alabama A&M University



As a part of the Founder's Day Celebration, Alumni concluded their activities with worship service at St. John AME Church, the church of the founder of Alabama A&M University. St. John's Servant Pastor, the Reverend Maurice Wright, II, graciously welcomed the AAMU faculty, staff, students and alumni. Members of AAMU's gospel choir provided excellent, inspirational music. AAMU President, Dr. Andrew Hugine, Jr. welcomed the alumni and provided his signature acrostic. Dr. Jeanette Jones, church Steward and member of the AAMU Board of Trustees also provided a greetings and occasion on behalf of the Trustees and the church family.

Her comments began emphasizing that the "African Methodist Episcopal Church was founded by Bishop Richard Allen; and the local churches are organized by the local leadership. The Reverend Dr. William Hooper Council was not only the Founder and first president of Alabama A&M University, he was also the local organizer of St. John AME Church. The original site of AAMU is located downtown at the current location of the Von Braun Civic Center, which is approximately three (3) blocks from the church. So, as we celebrate the founding of Alabama A&M University, the members of St. John also celebrate, because we are divinely connected by the Founder and Organizer, the Reverend Dr. William Hooper Council, a visionary leader and a man of God. For years, during Founder's Day, the university family would recite the favorite scripture verses of Dr. Council, Psalm 37:23-37. These verses reflect on leadership and integrity and that the Steps of a Good Man are ordered by the Lord. The steps of Dr. William Hooper Council were ordered and led him to the site where he organized St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church".

After the church service members of the congregation and alumni returned to the original site of AAMU.

The Reverend Maurice Wright II Gives Invocation at Alabama State House

By Barbara Johnson



It was a bright, cool, crisp Tuesday morning, when 21 members of the St. John AME Fifty-Plus Auxiliary, traveled with Pastor Wright to Montgomery, Alabama. The invitation to give the opening prayer had been extended to the Reverend Wright by representative and church member, Representative Anthony Daniels, House Minority Leader. Upon arriving at the State House, auxiliary members were treated to a catered lunch provide by Representative Daniels. They were soon ushered into the visitor's gallery, where they would be able to not only view the Reverend Wright's invocation, but also observe all the representatives in action.

The following is Pastor Wright's invocation.

Eternal God, we come before your great majesty, thanking you for the opportunity to approach your throne one more time. We come to offer a prayer for this legislative body before they begin their work on behalf of the great state of Alabama. We recognize without your manifold grace and mercy, nothing is possible. So, we seek your blessings on this legislative session and each representative.

Father, these are the persons whom we have entrusted to be our voice and even the voice of those who think themselves voiceless. So, Father, please hear our prayer.

As the legislators make decisions that will impact the lives of all citizens, we pray, that you would crown them with wisdom, knowledge, and strength. Grant unto them the courage to do justice, for all, whether, young or old, rich or poor, black or white. God, these are they who are responsible for representing others. I pray that they commit themselves to doing justice, loving mercy and walking humbly, as you require of them.

We pray for those brave men and women who at this very minute are defending our freedom and serving our country. We ask for your continued protection and guidance upon them and their families. For those leaders who make the tough decisions that impact our soldiers and their families we pray a special blessing upon them.

Lord, we desire to be more and more like you. So, implant within us those virtues that reflect your goodness. Use us as your instruments of peace, love and kindness. So, that whomever we encounter will experience you; not only through our words, but also through our deeds.

This is our prayer, in the name of our Redeemer, Our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ, Amen.



(Continued on page 18)

Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations: How St. John Measures Up—Part 4

By B. Johnson



This is the fourth installment in the series on the *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*, by Robert Schnase. So far, we have reviewed the practice of *Intentional Faith Development*, *Extravagant Generosity* and *Passionate Worship*. This month we are examining our hospitality. Are we radical in our hospitality?

Schnase states that, "Christian hospitality refers to the active desire to invite, welcome, receive, and care for those who are strangers so that they find a spiritual home and discover for themselves the unending richness of life in Christ. It describes a genuine love for others who are not yet a part of the faith community, an outward focus, a reaching out to those not yet known, a love that motivates church members to openness and adaptability, a willingness to change behaviors in order to accommodate the needs and receive the tal-

ents of newcomers."¹



Bible text reminds Christians of how hospitality should be shown every day. In Deuteronomy, God reminds the people of Israel to welcome the stranger, the sojourner, the wanderer, for you were once a stranger in the land of Egypt (Deuteronomy 10:19). Jesus taught in Matthew 18:5, "that whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me." Paul implores the followers of Christ to practice an active hospitality. Romans 15:7 reminds us that we should, "Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God." And then Hebrews 13:2 cautions us, "Do

not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it." The point being...hospitality is what we do to show love for Christ and for each other.

Here are just a few examples of how fruitful congregations practice of Radical Hospitality.

- Churches that practice Radical Hospitality do not merely have ushers and greeters; they also train them, teach them, prepare them, and make their service a vital ministry. Their ushers and greeters don't merely point, they escort; they don't merely pass out paper, they make people feel at ease. They take note of names and introduce visitors to the pastor and to others. They constantly seek to understand the perspective of the newcomer and to see church practices and facilities from the visitor's point of view so they can anticipate those needs.

How is St. John doing?

- Churches that practice Radical Hospitality do not merely have a committee; they make Christian invitation and welcome a vital part of the culture of the church, an expectation of every member and of every ministry.

How is St. John doing?

- Churches that practice Radical Hospitality communicate with their members as well as the public

(Continued on page 15)

¹Schnase, Robert C. (2007). *Five practices of fruitful congregations*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations: How St. John Measures Up—Part 4

By B. Johnson

(Continued from page 14)



through mailings, brochures, posters, banners, newsletters, websites, and signs. Throughout all the communications, they are announcing that the church is open to all and that all are invited and welcomed.

How is St. John doing?

- Churches that practice Radical Hospitality do not coast after Christmas and Easter. They organize to focus on the visitors and attendees for these special occasions. They follow up with written thank you letters or phone calls to those visitors.

How is St. John doing?

- Churches that practice Radical Hospitality constantly learn from other churches how to do better with hospitality, visitor follow-up, and new-comer assimilation. Pastors and laity evaluate their work and solicit feedback from newcomers about what helps in offering the genuine welcome to Christ.

How is St. John doing?

- Churches that practice Radical Hospitality do not reduce lists, remove names, ignore inactive members, save postage, and take the easiest way. They focus on how to communicate better with greater numbers of people, and they constantly develop lists of visitors, active and inactive members, Christmas and Easter attendees, constituents, and infrequent guests in order to invite them to special services, new ministries, or service projects. They don't give up on anyone.

How're we doing St. John?

The essence of this series on the *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations* was to consider how St. John measured up and what possible changes could or should be made to bring about some change, if need be. This was not intended to be a scientific, data driven evaluation with results submitted to a particular sub-committee of high ranking entities, but for each person reading the article to introspectively evaluate how they fit into the scheme



of things. It was also intended to show how an individual member of the congregation could contribute to making a change in the church.

How are we doing with our hospitality? How can we make it the Radical Hospitality we see in the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Christ? How are we doing as a church, as a Sunday school class, in our worship services and mission projects and youth programs? How can we do better?

"A church changes its culture one person at a time. Radical Hospitality begins with a single heart, a growing openness, a prayerful desire for the highest good of a stranger. It begins when one person treats another respectfully and loves the stranger enough to overcome the internal hesitations to invite that person into the life of Christ's church."²

²Schnase, Robert C. (2007). *Five practices of fruitful congregations*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

St. John Participates in Ellipsis Experience: A Conference for Women and Teens

By The Reverend Joretta Wright

The Ellipsis Experience was one of the most captivating, comforting, yet exciting and spiritual, events for women and teens that I have recently attended. This year's theme was "The Ellipsis Experience: More to Your Story.. From Surviving to Thriving." The Reverend Jennifer Whatley-Maxell and the Breakthrough Ministry hosted this event with the intent of igniting women and inspire them to move from surviving to thriving. The event was held in Atlanta, Georgia, April 28-30.



St. John attendees at the Ellipsis conference

The event commenced on Friday night with a surprise appearance by the Reverend Jennifer Whatley-Maxell, affectionately known as "Lady J," and her dream team singing a rendition of Janet Jackson's "Control." What an amazing opening appetizer! To add to this marvelous opening was the hilarious comedy of the MC, the Reverend Rita Wright. The fun-filled, inspirational night continued with music, dancing, poetry, open mic panel discussion, pool-side picture taking, podcast interviews, exhilarating interactions, worship, and most importantly, breakthroughs: hugs, tears, laughter, thankfulness. To end the first night of the conference, God used the incredible experiences of noted authors April Monchief, *How My Divorce Saved My Marriage*, and the Reverend

Shonda Nicole Gladden, *Becoming*, to captivate moving and insightful ways for women to authenticate their faith and promote in-depth self-love. Lest I forget the savory food!

Saturday's powerhouse lineup was infused with anointed prayer, dancing, worship, inspiring preaching, profound teaching, intellectual conversation, moments of pause, sign language, singing, more laughter, tears, reflection and many other adjective entities. Women like Fly Music, Latanya Moore, the Reverend Sheleta Fomby, Dr. Cynthia Hale, aka just "Cynthia," reminded us "relax and just be yourself...for real this time!" More gifts were shared by Samantha Majors, teen preacher Jordan Deveaux, Mariah Crews and the amazing teen host Madison Maxell.



Rev. Rita, Kebe Wilson and Shay Williams

(Continued on page 17)

St. John Participates in Ellipsis Experience: A Conference for Women and Teens

By The Reverend Joretta Wright

(Continued from page 16)

Shay Williams shared these thoughts on her Ellipsis experience.

My 2017 Ellipsis Experience was nothing short of amazing! The strength and power of the speakers radiated through each and every one of us at that conference this year. I came in with an expectation of doing the same thing as last year but this year made me think about myself and my spiritual walk in a totally different way. The candid frankness of the women was the best part overall! They showed that through adversity, trials and tribulations that we can make it through the storm with GOD as our helper and way-maker but also sometimes it requires a girlfriend to have your back. The closing day with worship experience at the Breakthrough Ministry was absolutely incredible! You could feel the Holy Spirit touching the hearts of each and every one of us. This Ellipsis Experience goes down in the books for me, never a dull moment! Our very own 1st Lady Rev. Rita did her thing as well, making sure that we continue to breathe often, laugh harder, and enjoy each other in all the activities! 2017 Ellipsis Experience, OH YEA, IT WAS LIT!!!!

As the weekend progressed, I kept a list of the words and phrases that reminded us to do the work. My Ellipsis list included consistent, breathe, becoming, just a little bit, lose control, and fabulous. Personally, it was a joy to see women come in one way and leave stronger, more confident and ready for the world. The teen girls and women from St. John were amazing. Those who shared this experience with me were Lula Rochelle, Lenita Rochelle, Lillie Rivers, Kristy Jefferson, Jakeyah (Shay) Williams, Kathlyn Dulaney, Kaitlyn McClung, Shawanna McNeil, Cara Davis, Kelsey Wilson and Lisa McCraw. It was an honor for me to represent a group of people that are a reflection of class and beauty.

I pray that next year each attendee makes an asserted effort to bring a friend or even a stranger. I hope to see you there. I promise it will be worth the trip. In the words of one of the Ellipsis motivators, Dr. Cecelia Williams-Bryant, "When We Roll, We Roll Together." As the new First Lady of St. John, this years Ellipsis experience was a great opportunity for me to share quality time with my new family.

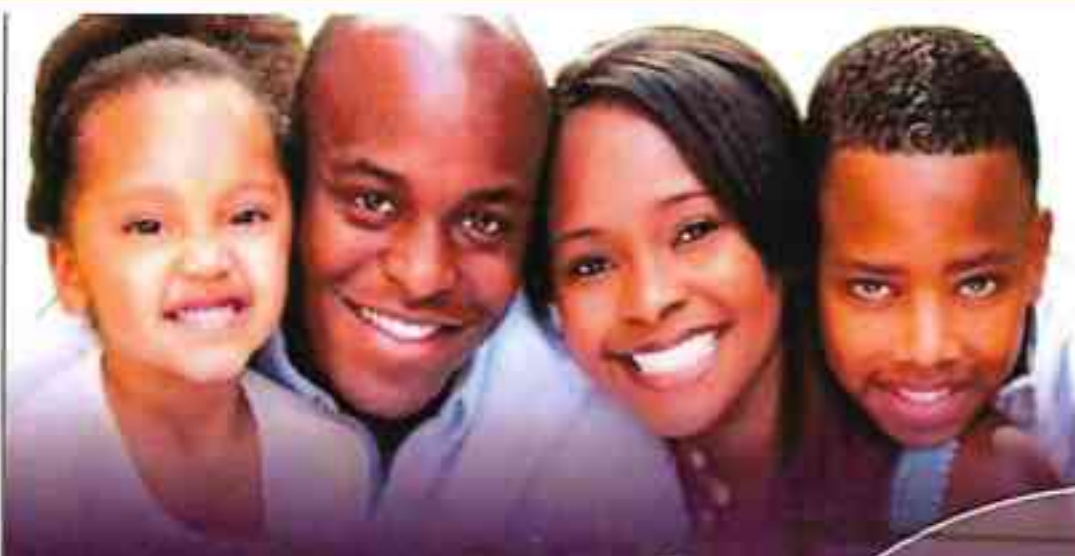


Women's Day
May 21, 2017

Church School 9:00 am

Worship Service 10:00 am

Join the women of St. John for praise and worship.



St. John AME Church Vacation Bible School

**GLOW FOR
LET SHINE**
YOUR LIGHT

June
12th - 15th
6:00 P.M.
Fellowship Meal
Will Be
Served Nightly

*In the same way,
let your light shine
before others,
that they may
see your good deeds
and glorify your Father
in heaven.*

Matthew 5:16

The Reverend Maurice Wright II Gives Invocation at Alabama State House

By Barbara Johnson

(Continued from page 13)

It was a proud moment to be in the gallery as our own minister, the Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor of St. John AME Church, opened the session of the Alabama Legislature with a warm and passionate prayer.

AME PROUD! WE ARE AME!

As the session opened, it was obvious that it was going to be a tempestuous meeting. Debate and filibustering began immediately. Two representatives from the Alabama Black Caucus spoke passionately regarding the plan to change the boundaries of many state Senate Districts. Filibustering continued long after the group left the gallery. The Senate passed the plan to redraw 25 legislative districts later in the week.

The Fifty-Plus Auxiliary meets the first Monday of each month at 9:30 am. Lunch is served along with valuable information, exciting and energizing activities and high spirited conversation. Cultural excursions to interesting and historical sites are included in our agenda. All members and guests "fifty years young" are welcomed to attend. Mrs. Agnes Gilmore is the president.

Academic Year Recognitions

Congratulations NICE GOING!
GREAT! Way to Go!
Yea! FELICITATIONS
CHEERS Take A BEST
BOW! WISHES!

St. John's students will be recognized for their accomplishments during the academic year in the next issue of the AMEN. Parents, please submit information on the forms that are outside of the church office and e-mail the completed form to Nedra.mcdaniel@gmail.com by June 4. This recognition is for pre-school through high school.

Accurate Accounting

To ensure accurate accounting of financial contributions, it is important that you provide complete information on the offering envelopes. Please clearly write your full name and the amount of the contribution on the envelope. The finance team counts the funds and deposits the checks and cash in the bank. Envelopes are then passed to the financial secretary for recording in the membership database. If the writing is not clear on the envelope, the financial secretary does not have the check available for reference.

Thank you for blessing the ministries of St. John with your gifts and offering.

9th Episcopal District

Christian Education Congress

Monday, July 24 through Thursday, July 27, 2017

on the campus of Troy University

For more information, contact Dr. Monica Dillihunt

Here We Grow Again!

Welcome to the St. John family!

Tony Wright

Joyce Little

Brittney Gulley



Soup Kitchen Ministry

By Charlie Bunkle

Blessed to Bless Others

"But this I say, He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9: 6-7.

God's blessings to us are not meant to end with us. His desire is that they filter down to others. This principal applies in all areas of life: finances as well as service to others. God desires that we share resources with others. He commits to provide all we need to live and to share.

In His extravagant promise in 2 Corinthians 9: "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed". This encouraging scripture is a good reminder that sharing blessings with others will never lead to deprivation. We can never out give God.

Please consider using your gift to meet someone else's need. The bi-monthly Soup Kitchen may be a ministry that you wish to demonstrate His grace at work in your life. A monetary donation or your gift will always be appreciated by this ministry. Please mark your envelop "SOUP KITCHEN" to share in this service to those in need.

Do not allow His generous provisions to end with you. Pass them on to others and discover the joy of a never ending cycle of blessings.

YOU CAN'T BEAT GOD GIVING.

Church School Lesson Overview – June 2017

The lesson reviews were written by Willie Sandifer.

June 4, 2017

Lesson Title: Deborah and Barak

Lesson Scripture: Judges 4, 5

Print: Judges 4:1-10

Devotional Songs: #Onward Christian Soldiers, #272, and #243

Key Verse: "‘Certainly I will go with you,’ said Deborah. ‘But because of the course you are taking, the honor will not be yours, for the LORD will deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman.’ So Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh." (Judges 4:9).

This lesson looks at how a Judge, who is a leader of Israel, led her people through a hard time.

Joshua warned the Israelites once more, like Moses had also done in his goodbye address, about what they would go through if they worshiped other gods. Despite this warning, the Israelites did worship other such gods because a generation was reared who did not know the Lord. Disaster after disaster followed. If a generation were not to teach the next generation about God, then bad things follow.

The eighty years between Ehud and Deborah is the longest period of peace recorded in the book of Judges. This lesson goes back about 3,200 years, which is just as that period of peace came to an end.

The people recognized Deborah's abilities, resulting in her becoming a leader in Israel as a Judge and as a prophet. As a prophet, she was a spokesperson for God. Deborah fulfilled her role as a prophet when she delivered to Barak a message from the Lord that he was the one to lead Israel in battle.

June 11, 2017

Lesson Title: Gideon

Lesson Scripture: Judges 6-8

Print: Judges 6:11-18

Devotional Songs: #412, #323, and #243

Key Verse: "When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior" (Judges 6:12).

This lesson focuses on another judge – Gideon. He was of the tribe of Manasseh. Israel had forty years of peace after Sisera and the Canaanites were defeated by Barak. In those

forty years, the memory of oppression faded and a new generation came up and started to worship other gods.

After Gideon puts his army together from four tribes, he wanted to be sure the Lord really would deliver Israel through him and asked for one more sign – fleece on the threshing floor. Gideon wanted the fleece the next morning to have dew on it, yet the surrounding ground to be dry. The sign happened.

Not satisfied because it is natural for dew to dry up quickly from other surfaces, Gideon asked that it be the opposite way around the next morning. He wanted the fleece to be dry and the ground covered with dew. It happened, too.

God made some unusual requests himself. After Gideon recruited 32,000 men to fight against 135,000 Midianites, the Lord said Gideon's army was too big. He had Gideon to shrink the army to 10,000 men and then to a meager 300 men. This made the ratio against Gideon's Army 450 to 1. The book of Judges goes on to give account of Gideon's win that resulted in 40 years of peace.

June 18, 2017

Lesson Title: Jephthah

Lesson Scripture: Judges 11

Print: Judges 11:4-11, 29-31

Devotional Songs: #390; #258; and #243

Key Verses: "Jephthah answered, "Suppose you take me back to fight the Ammonites and the LORD gives them to me—will I really be your head?" (Judges 11:9).

Last week's lesson ended with Israel having forty years of peace after Gideon defeated the Midianites. This is the last peaceful period mentioned in Judges.

In this lesson it is seen that peace ended after Gideon's death, when Abimelech, who was one of Gideon's seventy sons, tried to kill all of his brothers. Abimelech reigned for only three years as a ruler of a city-state and not as a ruler of all of Israel.

At the end of a rebellion, Abimelech captured a city close to where people had taken shelter in a fortified tower. He got too close to the tower and was hit in the head by a millstone and died. Israel was oppressed by the Ammonites on both sides of the Jordan River. The people of Israel repented and needed someone to organize and lead them against the Ammonites. Jephthah was that man.

(Continued on page 21)

Go Green Recycle Can Tabs

THAT LITTLE TAB THAT YOU USE TO OPEN YOUR SODA
MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE AT RONALD MCDONALD
HOUSE CHARITIES®

Ronald McDonald House (RMH) asks the community to help "pick up the tab" by collecting pop tabs off soda cans, pet food, canned vegetables etc. Aluminum cans are valuable, but the Pop Tabs are made of a more pure, higher-grade aluminum. It is cleaner to collect Pop Tabs, and also takes up less space.

The pop-tabs are recycled in order to raise funds for the Ronald McDonald House. Money raised through pop tab collections goes directly into the yearly operating budget and allows RMH to continue providing a "home-away-from-home" to St. Jude families free of charge.

Create a collection container using clean Ziploc bags, Gatorade bottles, coffee cans, or shoe boxes, etc.

Kay and Bobby Adkins will collect tabs! Contact [817-781-1030](tel:817-781-1030) with questions.

Remember, every little bit helps!



Weekly Bible Study

Wednesday, 12 pm and 6 pm

Pastor Wright leads Bible Study each Wednesday at noon and 6 pm (unless otherwise noted on the church calendar).



Church School Book Club

Discussion Date: May 20, 2017
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

You Know Better, Tina McElroy Ansa, 2002

Discussion Date: June 17, 2017
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Boaz Brown, Michelle Stimpson, 2004

Smart-talking LeShondra Smith and her girlfriends all face the same relationship issue - where to find a good man. They yearn to meet a strong, confident man who loves God, just like Boaz in the Bible. The problem is that they do not just want a godly man, they want a godly black man. Enter Stetson Brown, a handsome engineer and faithful man of God who matches LeShondra's wit, style, and values, but happens to be of a different race. But will LeShondra be able to overcome the beliefs that she and everyone around her supports and has grown up with, in order to open herself to the true love of Stetson and God? — Amazon

Church School Lesson Overview

(Continued from page 20)

June 25, 2017

Lesson Title: Samson

Lesson Scripture: Judges 13-16

Print: Judges 13-1-7, 24, 25

Tentative Devotional Songs: #139; #251; and #243

Key Verse: "You will become pregnant and have a son whose head is never to be touched by a razor because the boy is to be a Nazirite, dedicated to God from the womb. He will take the lead in delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines" (Judges 13:5).

Samson's parents did their part in rearing Samson per God's instructions. Samson was then ready to deliver the Israelites from the Philistines. Samson's task was to keep the Philistines off balance by using his great strength. He kept them concerned and confused and did things that caused them to conclude that their gods were naught.

Samson acted more as a free agent and not as a leader of thousands. He did the following without help: Killed a lion with his bare hands, killed one thousand Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey, and Lifted and carried the city gates of Gaza toward Hebron.

St. John Initiates "We Care"

Presented by Dr. Jeanette Jones, Board of Stewards

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity." Psalm 133:1

St. John is a growing church, small enough for us to know each other and care for each other. We are family. And we take care of each other! The Reverend Maurice Wright is a servant pastor and he is here for you and me. He wants you to know; he is willing and wants to be there for you in the good times, bad times, happy times or sad and confusing times. He is your pastor. Likewise, the Stewards are here to assist the pastor and support him; and we are here to help care for the members of the congregation. Caring for the needs of the congregation is one of our many duties as outlined in the AME Book of Discipline. And we are here to fulfill that responsibility; WHY?

Because we Care!

- 1) **Because we care-** The Pastor and Stewards want to reach out to members who have not attended in a while, members who have been hospitalized; have experienced some type of loss in their life through death, divorce, or illness---help us know who they are!
- 2) **Because we care-** we want you to know who we/the Stewards are and how to contact us, so please see the list below with contact numbers. So, know that if there is anything that happens in your life, we can offer assistance—we want you to call on us. If we cannot do anything else, we can join together in prayer for you; which is the most important help we can give.
- 3) **Because we care-** we do not want anyone in our church family to feel alone or lonely. We do not want anyone to feel that they do not have anyone to call for help, to just talk with or listen.
- 4) **Because we care-** we want you to feel that you can call the Pastor or any of the Stewards and we will be there for you.

The Stewards just want members to know that St. John has a new shepherd in the House who follows the Good Shepherd, and he wants to take care of all of his members and do the "Wright" thing.

So please call and let the church know what is going on! Thank you.

The Reverend Maurice Wright, II 256-534-3265 (St. John AME)

Roselyne Akines	256-684-5101	Jeanette Jones	256-714-8170
Willie Bradford	256-631-6376	Clifton Miller	256-337-1001
Guy Ginn	256-374-5466	Mary Rankin	256-527-4873
James O. Heyward	256-881-7999	Eddie Sherrod	256-508-1782
Marcus Hill	321-217-4870	Laurette Teague	256-683-4080
Abbiegail Hugine	803-707-8602	Sam Walton	571-277-9354
Barbara Johnson	256-656-7452	Pamela Whitehead	256-679-7802

Please note the following e-mail addresses for the church.

Pastor Wright - pastorwright@stjohnhuntsville.com

Rev. Rita - executivepastor@stjohnhuntsville.com

June 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
						9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship Communion Sunday AMEN DEADLINE PENTECOST	9:30 a.m. Fifty-Five Meeting 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal Stewardess Social Mtg.	6:00 p.m. Stewardess Social Mtg.	12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	SEHS Church School and Christian Education Convention 5:00-2:00 p.m. Gadsden, Alabama	9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry 10:00 a.m. Northwest Lay Organization Meeting 10:30 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship	Vacation Bible School "Glow for Jesus! Let Your Light Shine" 6:00 p.m., nightly				Music Ministry Fashion Show	9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship		11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study		6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	9:30 a.m. Dance Ministry
25	26	27	28	29	30	
8:00 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School 10:50 a.m. Worship		11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study			

PRAYER for the MONTH - Heavenly Father, Thank you for mothers. Bless each person who is a mother or serves the role of a mother. Give them strength to teach their children how to live a godly life through their faith in You. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Scripture for the Month— Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God every time I remember you. — Philippians 1:2-3

POTPOURRI

About St. John Members...



Ms. Lady Hereford has a new position and job title. She is now the Program Specialist for Johnson Scholarship Foundation in West Palm Beach Florida. Their mission is to serve disadvantaged people by assisting them to obtain education and employment. Ms. Hereford is the daughter of the Reverend (Retired) Robert and Janice Hereford. Like them on Facebook @ johnsonscholarships. **Congratulations Ms. Hereford!**



Mrs. Mary Rankin was featured on a WAFF-TV news segment on National Teacher Appreciation Day, May 9, 2017. She was honored by WAFF-TV reporter Allen Shroud. Shroud said Mrs. Rankin taught him in the second grade and was his favorite teacher. During the interview Mrs. Rankin told of her love for teaching and the students. Shroud shared how Mrs. Rankin's love for all of her students made a significant impact on his life and how the second grade experience was so different than his kindergarten and first grade years. Listen to the interview at <http://www.waff.com/story/35383945/longtime-madison-county-educator-honored-on-national-teacher-appreciation-day>. Mrs. Rankin is the wife of Mr. Booker Rankin and they have four adult children. **Congratulations Mrs. Rankin!**



Mr. Kenneth Parham was honored at the East Atlanta High School Alumni Association's Hall of Fame Brunch in March of this year. A member of the class of 1977, Kenneth was honored for his contributions in the field of Science Technology.

Kenneth earned a BS Degree in Chemical Engineering at Howard University and has Level III Certification in Systems Planning, Research, Development and Engineering. He worked as Safety Engineer with the US Army's Tooele Army Depot in Utah, Lone Star Army Ammunition Plant in Texas, Technical Center for Explosive Safety in Illinois, and Department of Defense Contract Management Command at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama. He was responsible for ensuring hazards were identified and accidents abated through design reviews, production and facility layouts, pre-operational checkouts, inspections, and procedural reviews. In 2002, Kenneth became a System Safety Engineer with the US Army Space and Missile Defense Command. In this position, he supported various program offices ensuring government oversight of various procurement activities, the outcome of which was technical data which corroborated his developing a safety and health data statement for any Army missile system being developed. Kenneth worked on various national and international programs and provided valuable service to the soldiers and country regarding national defense. From his safety and health data statement publication various components were launched and incorporated into what is now the International Space Station.

Kenneth is the husband of Lorraine Edwards Parham and the father of Wallace Parham. **Congratulations Mr. Parham!**

(Continued on page 23)

POTPOURRI

About St. John Members...

(Continued from page 24)

Dr. Jeanette Jones was honored to be named Distinguished Professor at the Alabama A&M University Commencement on May 5, 2017. Dr. Jones earned her Ph.D. in Botany/Medical Mycology in 1976 from The Ohio State University, and is among the first African American women to receive a doctoral degree in her discipline. She is a veteran member of an extremely exclusive and very elite group of African American women in STEM – and in a very real sense, Dr. Jones is AAMU's Hidden Figure. She is recognized nationally as a Science History Maker and her oral history has been placed in the Library of Congress in Washington D. C. She gives presentations to middle school students about STEM careers.



Dr. Jones has served Alabama A&M University (AAMU) as Professor, Director, Principle Investigator of extramurally funded projects, Graduate Coordinator, Health Careers advisor, Faculty Senator and Faculty Senate President, and Trustee and most notably she served as the first female vice president. In 2006, the Alabama A&M University Board of Trustees presented Dr. Jones a resolution for distinguished service. She is a National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO) Kellogg Fellow and received the Distinguished Alumna recognition from her Alma mater, Fort Valley State University. In addition, she is an invited interviewer for the medical programs at UAB and University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa.

Dr. Jones is the founding Director of Biomedical, Behavioral and Environmental Health Research Center through which she pursues and manages interdisciplinary extramural research. As a President of the Faculty Senate and member of the Board of Trustees, Dr. Jones is closely involved in the life of AAMU and quite instrumental in influencing the visionary direction of our institution. Clearly, Dr. Jones has enjoyed a long and distinguished career and it is fitting that she be recognized as a Distinguished Professor. Of the more than 300 faculty at Alabama A&M University, Dr. Jones is currently the only faculty member with the designation of Distinguished Professor. **Congratulations Dr. Jones!**

Mrs. Claudinette Purifoy-Fears was nominated by the Army Aviation & Missile Command (AMCOM), G-4, Military Logistics as one of 26 nominees across six Department of Defense divisions. Her nomination is particularly noteworthy considering there are over 30,000 Department of the Army civilians working aboard Redstone Arsenal (RSA). The 26 nominees represent the "best of the best" across Redstone Arsenal. She received an award for her nomination category in Technical and Technical Management at the Association of the United States Army, Redstone-Huntsville Chapter, 2017 Department of the Army (DA) Civilians of the Year awards banquet on Tuesday, April 4, 2017.

Mrs. Purifoy-Fears serves as Engineering Branch Chief within AMCOM. Mrs. Purifoy-Fears has been directing the Military Construction (MILCON) Program for both Letterkenny Army Depot (LEAD) and Corpus Christi Army Depot (CCAD) since 2010 as a senior programmer and planner. AMCOM averages 3 projects each year in the top 10 of the AMC 1-N list under Mrs. Purifoy-Fears' leadership. In addition, her leadership allowed AMCOM to receive one CCAD

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

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E-mail: office@stjohnhuntsville.com

Website: stjohname-hsv.org

The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright, Bishop

The Reverend Sherita Seawright, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor

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Important Dates to Remember

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| June 9, 2017 | SBHB Church School and Christian Education Convention, Gadsden, Alabama |
| June 12-15, 2017 | Vacation Bible School |
| June 20-21, 2017 | Council of Bishops and General Board, Los Angeles, California |
| July 24-27, 2017 | Christian Education Congress, Troy, Alabama |

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



INDNJC

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



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 21 Issue 6

June 2017

Women's Day 2017 Filled with Praise and Worship

Bridget J. Floyd

Photography by Darwin Washington



Program participants Wilson, Johnson and Dillhunt.

Women's Day was celebrated on Sunday, May 21, 2017 at 10 a.m. The theme was "Sharing the Word, Serving the People". Inspirational worship in song was provided by the Women's Choir and the Praise Team. Women of the church participated in the order of worship. Sister Uly Rivers led the call to worship and Sister Celeste Gilmore set the tone with a beautiful prayer. Sister LaCondra Bryant read scripture from Colossians 3: 12-14 and in providing the occasion, Sister Erica Harbin cited the scriptural description of a virtuous woman from Proverbs. The Reverend Joretha Wright offered the welcome. Sister Kelsey Wilson gave the announcements for the day. Before the sermon by Pastor Maurice Wright II, he recognized those celebrating birthdays and anniversaries during the month of May. He gave a special anniversary recognition to Mr. and Mrs. David Norwood who presented anniversary couples with gifts.



Pastor Wright presents "Woman of the Year" award.

Pastor Wright then announced his plan during his tenure as pastor, to name a "woman of the year" at St. John's annual Women's Day services. He emphasized that the selection was known only by him and as such was "a surprise". He then proceeded to describe the recipient of the inaugural award in terms of her many positive characteristics and actions. He noted that from the time of his arrival she had not only been dutiful in involvement in the church functioning but had been attentive to the pastor and his family. When the name of Sister Nedra L. McDaniel was announced, the congregation responded with a rousing standing ovation. Pastor Wright continued in his comments directly to Sister

McDaniel after she came forward. In response to the accolades, she expressed appreciation in her typical humble and gracious manner, noting that she loves the Lord and her church.

Pastor Wright preached the sermon entitled "It's Time for a Makeover" from the text 2 Corinthians 5:17. He began by citing examples of reality television, focusing one program, "Extreme Makeover". He indicated that the premise of the program was to create "a complete physical change"; however, a physical makeover only changes the outside while the inside remains the same.

He suggested that the congregants contemplate a new program, "*Extreme Spiritual Makeover*", targeting change in those who are attractive on the outside but not on the inside. He suggested that there would be three experts to assist in their

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Women's Day 2017 Filled with Praise and Worship

Bridget J. Floyd

Photography by Darwin Washington

(Continued from page 1)

transformation: *The Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit*. Through the power of prayer there would be the "big reveal" of the "new attitude...made over by the power of God". Pastor Wright stated, "God is in the extreme makeover business" and that *being born again is available to all*. He added that "If we trust, serve and obey Him, He will [make] us over again".



The Preacher

It was noted that the text highlighted the capacity of a person to become a changed person as demonstrated by the experience of Paul on the Road to Damascus.

Pastor Wright indicated that it is not sufficient to just be "around Christ" but one must be "in Christ", that is inward change. He indicated this goes beyond acknowledgement of Christ. Rather "the person places their entire life in the hands of God to order their steps". He emphasized that "everybody needs a spiritual makeover". The Reverend Wright indicated that "sins make us ugly...all have sinned...some known, some unknown...there is no little or big sin...any sin is an infraction against God's law". He continued by stating that "make up and dressed up won't do...just covers up...still there" and that these outer changes do not impress God "because he sees beneath it all. *We need a complete makeover which can only be done by God*".



The final selection

The preacher for the morning went on to cite numerous individuals in the Bible who sinned and/or suffered and were changed by God through repentance and/or healing. Pastor Wright stated, "He takes the bad stuff and gives us the good stuff". He went on to note that despair becomes delight, weakness becomes strength, and failure becomes success. He culminated by indicating that "JESUS PAID IT ALL!!!" He built to a crescendo as he described that very process of "two thousand years ago he paid for our makeover" through suffering and death on the cross.

After the sermon there was another selection from the Women's Choir, again emphasizing praise to God, featuring soloist Sister Kelsey Wilson. All were able to reflect on the refrain "For This I Give You Praise".

The women of St. John had a great Women's Day celebration with a most inspirational worship service.



Rev. Rita and Pastor Wright



The Norwoods acknowledge the Gullette's anniversary

Habitat for Humanity 2017 Spring Build Completion Near

Tami McGhee



St. John partnered with other local churches and organizations to provide funding and volunteers to support the Habitat for Humanity of Madison County's 2017 Spring Build. The 2017 Build is a 5 bedroom home for the Ford Family at 6314 Maywick Drive. The home dedication service is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, June 24, 2017.

Thanks to everyone for your prayers and support throughout the Spring Build.



Father's Day: A Tribute to My Dad

Bobby J. Adkins II



Father and son

Father's Day. A time where father's around the country are serenaded with complements and love, treated to great meals and fun activities, and showered with more individual attention than most any other day of the year. As for me, though greatly appreciated, I am not too consumed by the celebratory actions. Instead, I use the day to think about my father, try to spend time with him, and to reflect on the sacrifices and example that he set for me. I tend to keep it in perspective. Besides, I have learned that a single day is not enough to celebrate a great dad. I know what I am talking about here. This article is not about me as a father. It is about my father, and my father in me.

If James Brown was considered "the hardest working man in show business", then my dad, Bobby Adkins Sr., should be considered "the hardest working man outside of show business". My dad is a "jack of all trades" and a "master of many". He has made a good life for his family in a number of occupations, to include being a farmer, educator, peace officer, electrician, car salesman, gas station owner, printer, property renter, home builder, truck driver, and supply distributor. You name it.... He has done it. No legal trade is off limits. He worked his way through college (Mississippi Valley State University), and grad school (University of Oklahoma). Though he loved making money, he also lived by Proverbs 1:1. He is a living example of intestinal fortitude, grit, determination, kindness, fairness, and can-do attitude. He perfectly balances being a strong disciplinarian with a touch of forbearance and compassion. When Muhammad Ali passed away in 2016, I remember thinking "I'm glad I have dad". Ali was my sports hero. Dad is my life hero. He is likely the last hero of my life. Really, the coolest dude I know. I am lucky I still have him in my life. More than ever, I cherish these days.



The Adkins family after church

On my daily drive to work, my father and I talk on the phone around 7:30 am. We often chat on my way home. It is a good feeling to know he is still engaged. He is constantly sharing wisdom and dropping knowledge. He is always listening to me, assessing the situation, and providing his thoughts. He reflects on life, politics, family, civil affairs, and of course, the weather.

He is always concerned and checks up on my entire family, in-laws included. Wouldn't you know it? My father texts like a teenager and does not mind a "Facetime" chat. He has ole school attitude, but understands new age technology.

Before dawn, he is up and busy, because the "early bird gets the worm". He dispels the notion that the body needs 8 hours of daily sleep to function. Energy and busyness is a constant with him, with the appearance of effort as important as the actions nowadays. His health, I can tell, is starting to slip. He is a few steps slower, but always "on the ball". Yes, I watch and listen. Still my hero.

As a husband and father, I ask God, "Am I like my dad"? "Am I leading properly or setting a good example"? "Am I providing

(continued on page 2)

Father's Day: A Tribute to My Dad

Bobby J. Adkins II

(Continued from page 4)

enough for my family"? "Am I a good father"? "Is kindness one of my virtues"? "Am I loyal"? "Trustworthy"? These are some of the questions I have asked over the years. For the answers, I reflect upon my father. He has been a guiding light for me for 50 years and counting. At 76, he still sets the tone for our family and has been a great father of 7 children, 14 grandkids, great-grandkids, nieces, nephews, and friends. In the post Civil Rights era Mississippi, my dad was a highly respected leader, having served as a public school teacher, County Sheriff (at the time in the early 1980s, he was only the 3rd African-American in the state to hold that position), and active life member of the NAACP. Yes, the Fruits of the Spirit have always been on display. He got us involved in politics as children, often attending local political rallies, knocking on doors, and handing out posters and campaign cards. He preached to us the need to support civil rights efforts, speak from the heart, do your homework, and to always pay attention to what is going on in the community. Even at an advanced age, he is active locally.

For the last 10 years, my dad has been excelling in his latest role, as caretaker of my mother, Maxine, who lives with an advanced case of Parkinson's Disease, as well as early stage Alzheimer's. She spends most of her waking hours in a wheel chair or the recliner. Her memory is failing. A couple of years ago, and begrudgingly due to Dad's own medical concerns, we placed mom in a local rehabilitation and nursing home, trying to gauge if it was the right thing for long term care. After my father's health improved from two surgeries, he set about on a plan to get mom back home. Her absence tore at his soul too much. After six months, he informed his seven kids that "mom (81) is coming home". Initially we tried to persuade him to reconsider. We balked, thinking we knew best. What we underestimated was his love for his wife. He persisted, we relented. We all just had to step up and assist as best we could, considering the distance.

After remodeling the house, mom returned home, and one year later, is doing better than we could have anticipated. Yes, it is difficult day-to-day, but dad's more than equipped to handle it, proving to us every day that he will go the extra mile. Grace and mercy have been extended from God, and also from my father. He is both the recipient, and the giver. For me, it's lesson learned. His motto is "Care until you can't care anymore". This approach may not work for all, perhaps not even be advised by the experts, but it works for dad. Patience, sympathy, and empathy are a must. He will always go the extra 10 miles for those he loves. I have seen him go an extra mile for those he did not know. Once again, dad is setting the example, leading the way, displaying the "fruits of the spirit" (Galatians 5:22), and being the loving husband of 57 years. Really, at this point, he is also a father (and mother) to my mom. Yes, I watch him, watch them, listen in, and ask questions. He always tells me, "Bob, we will be alright". He is confident now, yet lately has shown signs of vulnerability for the very first times. It is new to me, seeing his periods of sadness, but I am still learning from him the art of "aging gracefully".



Special time with dad and mom.

My father has been many things to me over the course of my 50 years. Mentor, advisor, doting dad, coach, protector, and idol are a few that come to mind. He has provided me with tangible examples to use as a father of my own children, as well as guidance to draw upon as I age and continue to mature as a parent. I share the wisdom I have received with my own son (Collin), knowing one day he is likely to face the same challenges as a young man that I faced. Now that he is driving and a 2017 high school grad, Collin recently told me, "I'm going to Holly Springs (MS) to see Big Dad". For a split second I smile, thinking "that is the wisest investment you could make". Perhaps he knows now what I have known all these years. I know my dad would relish the chance to "shoot the breeze" with Collin. Just the two of them.

(Continued on page 6)

Father's Day: A Tribute to My Dad

Bobby J. Adkins II

(Continued from page 5)



Three generations of Adkins

Finally, if I am blessed to live into my 70s/80s as my parents have, I pray for my dad's level of wisdom, ownership, responsibility, and humility. He has a lot on his plate, and seems to thrive in that environment. I do not know another person as patient as he is. His consistency is what I appreciate most. He believes in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and is more spiritual today than at any point in life, that I can remember. He is a model father in my humble and biased opinion. In fact, he is more than a great father. He is my dad!

Happy Fathers Day Dad!

Your oldest son loves you!

Happy
Father's
Day

AME Proud

Mother Emanuel Nine Memorial Displayed at Charleston International Airport



A permanent memorial to honor the victims of the shooting in Mother Emanuel in Charleston, South Carolina is on display at the Charleston Airport. The Charleston County Aviation Authority Board began plans for a memorial in Fall 2015.

The memorial is 400 square feet and contains two five-foot-high stained glass windows showing Mother Emanuel and nine white doves symbolizing the victims. There is also an oil painting donated by local artist Jonathan Green showing nine birds and a photography exhibit chronicling the community response to the Mother Emanuel massacre. In the center of the space is a Bible open to Mark 4:13-20, the scripture used during the Bible study before the shooting. The Reverend Clementa Pinckney's bible and one bible from another of the victims is also in the case.

Photo credits: Charleston Aviation Authority; Article features information from The Christian Recorder at <http://www.thechristianrecorder.com/mother-emmanuel-nine-memorial-unveiled-in-charleston-airport/june-2017>

Weekly Bible Study

Wednesday, 12 pm and 6 pm

Pastor Wright leads Bible Study each Wednesday at noon and 6 pm (unless otherwise noted on the church calendar).



Wills Clinic to Be Held at St. John

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System and Legal Services of Alabama will partner and host a free Wills Clinic on Wednesday, June 28, 2017 at St. John AME Church.

There is no income or age limitation, all are welcome.

Attendees will be able to start and complete simple wills, Power of Attorney and Living Wills at this special clinic. There will also be sessions on estate planning, consumer law and reverse mortgages. For more information or to sign up, contact Sister Donna Gullatte.



Students Complete Successful School Year

St. John extends congratulations to all students for another successful school year. Below are the accomplishments of some of the students.



Collin Adkins graduated from James Clemens High School on May 22, 2017. Collin graduated with a 3.5 GPA, and was honored with the Madison City Schools "Seal of Academic Distinction", having successfully passed three or more AP honors classes, corresponding AP exams, as well as two years of Foreign Language courses. Collin passed AP Physics, AP English Language, and AP Biology, in addition to Spanish I and II. Collin will attend the Bagley School of Engineering at Mississippi State University this fall. Collin is the son of Bobby and Kay Adkins.



Samantha Adkins recently completed the fourth grade at Mill Creek Elementary School in Madison, Alabama. Samantha achieved Honor Roll status, with an A average for the school year. Her favorite classes were science and music. She received an "E" citizenship award. Samantha also completed her 5th year of Girl Scouts, being promoted Junior. **Samantha Adkins is the daughter of Bobby and Kay Adkins.**



Anthony Harbin completed the seventh grade at Meridianville Middle School. He received all A's during the entire 2016-2017 school year. Anthony Harbin earned the highest grade average in his Pre-AP English Language Arts class. He was accepted for the Duke Talent Identification Program (TIP) 7th Grade Talent Search and was invited to take the ACT with college bound high school students. He was recognized for his ACT test score along with other 7th graders in the state of Alabama at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa on May 9, 2017. **Anthony is the son of Glenn and Jessica Harbin.**



Jessica Harbin completed second grade at Lynn Fanning Elementary School. She received all A's during the entire 2016-2017 school year. **Jessica is the daughter of Glenn and Jessica Harbin.**



Maya Ifekauche completed her junior year at Sparkman High School. She was on A honor roll and a member of the National Honor Society. Maya also received an Aspirations in Computing award from the North Alabama chapter of the National Center for Women and Information Technology (NCWIT). She and several young high school women were honored by NCWIT at a banquet at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa for their achievements. Maya is also a member of the Key Club which performs volunteer work in the Madison County community, including volunteering at the House of the Harvest, Manna House and providing Christmas gifts and a party for the special education students at Sparkman. **Maya is the daughter of Ms. Genevieve Fontenot.**

Remembering Sister Laretta Teague



Laretta Teague joined St. John in the mid-90s when she moved from St. Louis to Madison. She was a strong believer in Christ, prayer warrior and always wanted to give her best for the Lord. Laretta was a generous giver and went above and beyond to ensure her tithes were received and was willing to provide financial support for special needs within the church.

Laretta was a charter member, along with her daughter Lauren and son Gerald, of the St. John AME Newsletter staff. They contributed articles and, during the years that the printing was done outside of the church, assisted with the delivery and pickup of the newsletter.

Laretta was a faithful member of the Stewardess Board for many years. She organized the Women's Ministry at St. John. Her concern was for the spiritual growth of the women, and young women, of the church through bible study, service projects and fellowships. She led the Saturday morning meetings and organized women's workshops, retreats and prayer breakfasts. She was a natural leader and led with excellence. She was very meticulous in her personal life and in her leadership of the Women's Ministry.

Laretta was co-chairperson for the St. John tutoring program which offered tutoring both within the church and at a local elementary school. She was an educator by profession and that strong desire to help children achieve to their fullest potential was evident in her desires for the tutoring program.

Laretta served as a Trustee in the past and, at the time of her passing, was a member of the Steward Board. In honor of her service to the Steward Board, the board has made donations to New Beginnings Christian Academy and The Early Works Children's Museum.

Laretta was an encourager. She always had kind words of support for the members of the church. She frequently sent cards and texts to those whom she knew might need to be uplifted. Throughout her illness, she continued to encourage others who were going through similar circumstances.

In everything that Laretta did, she lived Colossians 3:17—And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. (NKV)

Remembering Sister Dollie Mack

Lydia Owens



Dollie Dixon Mack joined St. John in 2014 when she moved to Huntsville to live with her children. Prior to moving, she was a member of Mt. Sinai A.M.E. Church in Centreville, Alabama where she served as a missionary, a stewardess, on

the kitchen ministry, and at times Sunday School secretary, until her health began to fail. She loved reading romance novels and going to church.

Granny, as she was affectionately known by her family, will be remembered for many things, by many people; however to them she will be remembered for her advice, her honesty, her love, smile, her wit and most importantly; her "home cooking".

Here are some fondest memories of "Granny" from her children and grandchildren.

Mama playing Mrs. Santa Claus to all the kids and grand kids. -
Brenda Mack

My fondest memory of Granny will always be she and I singing *Blessed Assurance* together, and making videos. -
Laticia Mack

Blessed Assurance was one of her favorite songs.
Christina Mack

As kids, we spent most of our summers in the south with Granny. When she cooked dinner, she knew I didn't like "hot" food, therefore she would prepare my plate first and let it sit a while before she called us in to eat. That was my granny, always thinking of others and always looking out for us and giving me the "special treatment".
Myron Owens

I called grand ma every week, would ask what she was doing, and she was always "sitting on it!" Except one week, she told me she was there "with Arthur, sitting on it!" Here I'm thinking my grand ma had a boyfriend until asked and she said, "Arthur is not a man, it's ARTHRITIS!"
Karin Hudson

Granny would always tell me I was her chocolate baby. My fondest

(Continued on page 9)

Remembering Sister Dollie Mack

Lydia Owens

(Continued from page 8)

memories of her were always in the kitchen, she loved to cook and feed her grands. She always showered me with a type of love that was raw, unfiltered; but real! Her love will be forever cherished in my heart. —Janel Williams

When I got pregnant with Alani I remember her telling me "you're going to have another one". I told her don't say that granny I am not having any more children. She said "yeah whatever". After I had Alani I got pregnant again with Adelyn and then she says to me "might as well have another one, you are going to have another one". I said granny do not say that; you predicted Alani..... She said "you will have three children"! Sure enough; she was right! - Shanti Mangrum

As a young kid playing baseball, I loved it when Granny would show up at my baseball games. Whenever I would hit a home run, Granny would have the biggest smile on her face.
- Don Anthony (DA) Mack, Jr.

I was Granny's "GLAMOUR" baby... we would always have conversations about hair, nails, why she didn't want any "mers" anymore and how I should remember to reduce, "you have to reduce baby, reduce." I would always walk in and say "heeeeey Granny-mama, let's paint your nails" and her response was always "why?". What I miss most about Granny was how she wanted me to succeed in everything I did from reducing, to staying in school and making sure I GRADUATE. Granny-mama I reduced and I'm a semester away from graduating. So thank you for always telling me I can do ANYTHING!!! - Jalisa Williams

One of my favorite memories of great-granny was when she thought the party we were having for my Aunt Brenda was her party the whole time. I also remember when Alani was a baby; she would try to take my Granny's care. She used to get so upset and all she could really do was laugh! - Marissa Owens

Granny would always tell me I was a good boy because I would help take care of her and give her sweets. I miss her a lot.
- Jared Burns

We loved sitting with granny and hear stories about our moms growing up. She would always tell our moms we were sweet Angels and not to spank us. We love and miss you granny.
-Janise Williams and Jayla Mack

One day Granny and I were sitting in the kitchen at Edna's house, she turned to me and asked; "Is he (Myron) good to you and your kids?" Immediately, I looked at her and said, "YES, Granny he is very good to us." She then said with a smile on her face: "Well, he'd better be"!!!! - Lydia Owens

Rest in Peace Granny! We truly miss You!



Soup Kitchen Ministry

By Charlie Brooks

THE JOY OF GIVING

"When we give to God, we allow God to 'Open up the Floodgates of Heaven.'" (Malachi 3:10)

Some Christians, I'm afraid, see the opposite of the above. They think they'll wind up with less if they give. God wants us to see giving in terms of future blessings for you and your family. As we give, it seems that He showers us with more and more blessings. One unknown author said, there's more to God's blessing than money. Rather than thinking of riches in terms of mountains of money, God's provision for our lives can come in the form of assistance from the body of Christ, i.e. unexpected gift, a note from a church member, a job opportunity and many other unmeasurable gifts.

We are to give back obediently and joyfully. Our treasured gifts aren't defined as earthly gifts, but rather treasured gifts we build up in Heaven. When we give as Christ requires, God will provide us with our daily need. Take God at his Word. Test Him. If we keep moving forward on the adventure of giving, we won't be disappointed.

Consider giving to our Monthly Soup Kitchen. We serve meals each 3rd and 4th Tuesday.

GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER!!!

Online Giving Options

PayPal

Givelify

Accurate Accounting

To ensure accurate accounting of financial contributions, it is important that you provide complete information on the offering envelopes. Please clearly write your full name and the amount of the contribution on the envelope.

Putting Your Business in Order

The Reverend Carmen Avery Walker, D.Min.

Beloved.....Please listen and take note. Life is very short....Too short to not do due diligence in getting one's affairs in order. It is not a subject people want to discuss but the reality is simply this: We MUST. There are no two ways about it and the sooner we begin to get our affairs in order the better it is for family and loved ones. There are a few simple documents that EVERY Person needs to have in place and another set that one should have at their disposal at all times.

Everyone should have the following at their disposal and should be kept together in a safe place:

- An original birth certificate for the members of your household.
- Original Social Security cards for members of your household. If originals are not available, the SSA will give you certified paperwork that verifies the Social Security numbers.
- Passports. These are not only for travel but are respected as documents that verify your identity in case your driver's license is lost or stolen.
- Photocopies of drivers license for all drivers in your household.
- A Voters Registration card if you are of voting age.
- Insurance cards or copies of them in case of emergency.
- Any legal paperwork pertaining to marriage, divorce, annulment, legal guardianship and custody.
- School records and immunization records for your children.
- Bank (including 401K, etc.) and insurance records with beneficiary or Power of Attorney clearly stated on them.

These are documents that also are necessary to have in place:

- **Power of Attorney.** This is a person you designate to handle your affairs WHEN YOU CANNOT SPEAK FOR YOURSELF. You may have one for Healthcare and one for Finances if you want different people to handle your affairs. A Will. Even if you do not have a tremendous amount of assets, you need to have a record of who you want to have whatever it is.
- **DNR/DNI or statement of what your wishes are in the case of medical emergency.** You may choose a Living Will or Five Wishes document to state this..both are available online. Check to see what your state acknowledges. This is a hard one but it is necessary. If you do not want to be resuscitated or intubated, it needs to be recorded. TELL SOMEBODY WHAT YOU DESIRE AND PUT IT IN WRITING. Medical professionals need documentation so they can do their jobs properly.

So why am I telling you this? I am doing this purely out of LOVE. As a Hospice Chaplain and as a Pastor it breaks my heart to have to stand at bedside with a family who is already in distress over the decline of their loved one and ask if these things are in place. It breaks my heart to hear families argue over what "Momma said" she did or did not want when it would have been a much more loving thing to have all the paperwork in place so the last moments could be spent speaking words of love to one who only has a short while to live.

Make some time and get it done. It is not easy but it is certainly worth the effort.



About the Author:

The Reverend Dr. Carmen Avery-Walker is a senior chaplain with Homestead Hospice in Atlanta, Georgia and pastor of Lee Chapel AME Church in Birmingham, Alabama.

Church School Lesson Overview – July 2017

The lesson reviews were written by Willie Sandifer.

July 2, 2017

Lesson Title: Moses and the Burning Bush

Lesson Scripture: Exodus 3:1-12

Print: Exodus 3:1-22

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

Key Verse: "The cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt." (Exodus 3:9-10).

In this lesson, the first of five prophets is examined. The Jews looked at Moses as the greatest of all the prophets. However, God called Moses from a very humble situation. Moses was an outlaw from Egypt. As a Hebrew, he had killed an Egyptian. Pharaoh had tried to kill Moses for having killed the Egyptian and Moses was a wanted man.

The lesson looks at the story from the perspective of the call by itself and Moses' answer to the call. Moses' call seemed impossible and far beyond any man's ability. Moses, however, proved faithful in all the great and small tasks that God called him to do.

Moses is the epitome of a person who did not see the wisdom behind God's plan but was dutiful anyway.

July 9, 2017

Lesson Title: Isaiah in the Temple

Lesson Scripture: Isaiah 6:1-13

Print: Isaiah 6:1-8

Devotional Songs: It's Me, It's Me Oh Lord, #321, and #243

Key Verse: "I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8).

In this lesson Isaiah had a vision of the Lord that was a life-changing experience, as God's holiness changed the way Isaiah saw himself and set a new course for the rest of his life.

Isaiah's reaction was completely different from Moses' in last week's lesson. Isaiah felt shameful for his uncleanness and Moses felt unqualified for the mission. Both men, however, contributed large bible books: Moses's were historical and instructional and Isaiah's were prophetic and poetical.

Isaiah never wavered from his path of commitment in his life or in his ministry. A Jewish tradition says that he was put into a hollow log and the log was sawn in half. Bible scholars believe this incident is referred to in Hebrews 11:37.

July 16, 2017

Lesson Title: Jeremiah's Call and Commission

Lesson Scripture: Jeremiah 1:1-19

Print: Jeremiah 1:4-10

Devotional Songs: #221, #258, and #243

Key Verses: "The Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak" (Jeremiah 1:7).

In this lesson we examine Jeremiah who prophesied at a very dangerous time during the last days of Judah's fall.

God set Jeremiah aside for a special mission before his birth. While still only a boy, Jeremiah was sure that he had nothing to offer God. God told Jeremiah that he would not be alone and that he should not be afraid. If He, God, had ordained something, it would be so.

God told Jeremiah that nations and kingdoms would be torn down and nations and kingdoms would be built up. Jeremiah became a prophet, instrumental in performing God's own work, under God's supervision and with God's very words.

July 23, 2017

Lesson Title: The Call of Ezekiel

Lesson Scripture: Ezekiel 1:1-3:27

Print: Ezekiel 3:1-11

Tentative Devotional Songs: #412, #251, and #243

Key Verse: "Go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people and speak unto them, and tell them, thus saith the Lord God; whether they will hear or whether they will forbear" (Ezekiel 3:11).

Ezekiel was given the call to preach to the people of Israel who had been taken captive to Babylon. Their captivity was fulfillment of an earlier prophecy and seen as proof that what God says is true.

God wanted Ezekiel to eat the scroll and literally let it fill him. The scroll was to fill his bowels, which are a person's

(Continued on page 12)

Go Green Support Local Farmers

Plan summer meals around the vegetables that are in season and that can be purchased from local farmers. Check the newspaper and local television stations for locations of farmer's markets in the area. If you have a garden, share the abundance with others.

Church School Lesson Overview – July

(Continued from page 11)
innermost parts.

God told Ezekiel to preach whether the people listened to him or whether the people did not listen to him. The Word taught by Ezekiel was given to those who were expected to hear and they were judged if they failed to respond in the right way. Like Ezekiel, we today are to take God's words and then communicate them to others, whether they listen or not.

July 30, 2017

Lesson Title: The Call of Amos

Lesson Scripture: Amos 7:1-17

Print: Amos 7:10-17

Tentative Devotional Songs: #77; #251; and #243

Key Verse: "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdsman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit: and the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel" (Amos 7:14-15).

This lesson examines Amos, who was not a likely prospect to receive a call from God to be a prophet, as he was a plain believer.

The first almost seven chapters contain messages of coming judgement upon the nations, ending with declarations against Judah and especially the northern kingdom of Israel. Amos was called to utter these judgements.

In contrast to the hireling that made his living by pleasing a ruler, Amos faithfully fulfilled the mission to which the Lord had called him by pronouncing the Lord's message of judgement on Israel because of their sin. Amaziah died with the untrue system that he supported, however, the Amos' name and message lived on.

See you in Church School!

Church School Book Club

Discussion Date: June 17, 2017
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Booz Brown, Michelle Stimpson, 2004

Discussion Date: July 15, 2017
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Garden Spells, Sarah Addison Allen, 2007

In a garden surrounded by a tall fence, tucked away behind a small, quiet house in an even smaller town, is an apple tree that is rumored to bear a very special sort of fruit. In this luminous debut novel, Sarah Addison Allen tells the story of that enchanted tree, and the extraordinary people who tend the trees.

The Waverleys have always been a curious family, endowed with peculiar gifts that make them outsiders even in their hometown of Bascom, North Carolina. Even their garden has a reputation, famous for its feisty apple tree that bears prophetic fruit, and its edible flowers, imbued with special powers. Generations of Waverleys tended this garden. Their history was in the soil. But so were their futures.

A successful caterer, Claire Waverley prepares dishes made with her mystical plants—from the nasturtiums that aid in keeping secrets and the pansies that make children thoughtful, to the snapdragons intended to discourage the attentions of her amorous neighbor. Meanwhile, her elderly cousin, Evanelle, is known for distributing unexpected gifts whose uses become uncannily dear. They are the last of the Waverleys—except for Claire's rebellious sister, Sydney, who fled Bascom the moment she could, abandoning Claire, as their own mother had years before.

When Sydney suddenly returns home with a young daughter of her own, Claire's quiet life is turned upside down—along with the protective boundary she has so carefully constructed around her heart. Together again in the house they grew up in, Sydney takes stock of all she left behind, as Claire struggles to heal the wounds of the past. And soon the sisters realize they must deal with their common legacy—if they are ever to feel at home in Bascom—or with each other.

Enchanting and heartfelt, this captivating novel is sure to cast a spell with a style all its own....

July 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship <i>Communion Sunday</i> AMEN DEADLINE			12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. <i>Bible Study</i>	6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal		11:00 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting Anniversary Luncheon
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship			12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. <i>Bible Study</i>		6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship		11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. <i>Bible Study</i>		6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship		11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN				
30	31					
8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship						

PRAYER for the MONTH - Heavenly Father, thank you for each new day. For the sunshine and for the rain, we give you praise! Amen.

Scripture for the Month— This is the day the LORD has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it. Psalm 118:24.

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The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright, Bishop

The Reverend Sherita Seawright, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor

Important Dates to Remember

June 25, 2017 Men's Day, 10:00 a.m.

July 24-27, 2017 Christian Education Congress, Troy, Alabama



Please note that there will be one worship service each Sunday through the end of August.

8:45 a.m. Church School
10:00 a.m. Worship

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

Happy
Father's
Day

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



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 21 Issue 7

July 2017

Men's Day Focused on "God's Man"

Bridget J. Floyd

Photography by Darwin Washington

St. John celebrated Men's Day on Sunday, June 25, 2017 at 10 a.m. The theme was "Sharing the Word, Serving the People" (the theme selected for both Women's and Men's Day). The Praise Team and The Male Chorus led the congregation in worship through song. Worship through liturgical dance was offered by members of St. John's Dance Ministry.



The Male Chorus ministers in music.



Praise Team sets the tone for the service.



Ministry in Dance.

The order of worship featured men of the church. Brother Willie Sandifer offered the call to worship. Brother Phillip Pugh gave the invocation and Brothers Collin Adkins and Guy Ginn read the Old and New Testament scriptures, respectively. The occasion was given by Brother Bobby Adkins and announcements and welcome by Brother Jonathan Scott.

There were several special recognitions during the service, including the first annual "Man of the Year" award which Pastor Wright announced would feature two outstanding men of St. John; and the annual recognition of St. John graduates and retirees.

Dr. Jeanette Jones and Sister Sharon Butler along with Pastor Wright, made presentations to the graduates and retirees. {Details of the latter will be featured in the August issue of the AMEN.} A highlight of the day was the baptism of infant Isaiah Barnes. This was preceded by a wonderful musical selection from the "Mack Family Choir", all talented relatives of the special infant.

As indicated, Pastor Wright announced that there would be two men honored with the title "man of the year" for 2017. The pastor described Mr. Lafayette Townsend as the first to arrive on Sunday mornings although the pastor arrives very early himself. His manicuring the grounds and particularly his sense of humor, were highlighted. Although surprised, Brother Townsend accepted the recognition with gratitude and left the congregation laughing with his humorous comments. Brother Bill Williams, vice chair of the Trustee Board, was highlighted for his dedication and hard work in the oversight of the church property and upkeep of the church and also going above and beyond. Also surprised, He expressed

(Continued on page 2)

Men's Day Focused on "God's Man"

Bridget J. Floyd
Photography by Darwin Washington

(Continued from page 1)

appreciation and graciously focused on others and accepted on their behalf as well. The congregation responded with a standing ovation for each awardee.



Bill Williams receives Man of the Year Award.



Lafayette Townsend receives Man of the Year Award.

Pastor Wright preached on the topic "God's Man" from the texts Genesis 12:26 and 2 Timothy 1:7. He began interestingly by asking the women present to contemplate their requirements for a "good man". He aided them in considering the typical items on the wish list, as it were; ultimately reaching the realization that one is not likely to encounter a man (person) with all the desired attributes. While there was an amused response from the congregation, they got the point — there is no perfect man. However, Pastor Wright proceeded to lay out the characteristics of a good man who reaches this quality level through God.



Pastor Wright preaches Men's Day Sermon.

- 1) **God Makes Courageous Men.** This does not mean that there is an absence of fear, but rather one has the capacity to overcome the fear and to face the fear and difficulties of life.
- 2) **God Makes Strong Men.** This means that he can be firm and he finds strength through God.
- 3) **God Makes Loving Men.** God gives man a portion of Himself because "God is Love".
- 4) **God Makes a Sound Thinking Man.** Until God remakes them, men are selfish in their thoughts or impulsive. The goal is "moderation, self-control, balance". Pastor Wright added that a sound thinking man "is a praying man, has a sober mind and lives the example that he wants to be". He indicated that "there is nothing greater than a Good Man who is in God's Hand". Referring to Genesis, he reminded that "God formed man out of dust in His hands".

The inspired preacher closed by citing numerous examples of men in the Bible who were changed as a function of their encounter with God; that is, "became a better man". Examples included Elijah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, David, Adam, Paul, and Jonah. Pastor Wright ended by proclaiming that the men of St. John can experience that transformation for themselves.

The 2017 Men's Day Service gave much food for thought and encouragement. After the invitation to Christian Discipleship, Pastor Wright invited the men to the altar for prayer, which they heeded.

Congratulations to 2017 Men of the Year: Brother Lafayette Townsend and Brother Bill Williams!

Habitat for Humanity 2017 Home Dedicated

Tami McGhee



St. John partnered with Alpha Foundation, CFD Research Company (CFDRC), Huntsville Board of Realtors, Wells Fargo, Provision Center for Proton Therapy, Church of the Nativity, Faith Presbyterian Church, First Christian Church, Aldersgate United Methodist Church, and St. Matthews Episcopal Church to build a 5 bedroom home at 6314 Maywick Drive in Huntsville for the Habitat for Humanity of Madison County's 2017 Spring Build.

Pastor Maurice Wright II, Sister Tami McGhee and Brother Jesse Johnson represented St. John at the Habitat for Humanity Dedication Ceremony for The Ford Family held on Saturday, June 24, 2017. After the opening prayer and welcome, Myra Sanderson, Habitat for Humanity of Madison County Executive Director, recognized the sponsors and house leaders. The Reverend Theodis Acklin, Pastor of Briar Fork Cumberland Presbyterian Church, offered the prayer for the family home. After presentations to the family and closing remarks, Pastor Wright gave the benediction.



Vacation Bible School Was a Blast!

Pamela Whitehead

Photography by Bridget J. Floyd

What a time!!! The St. John family, Grady-Madison family and their invited guests had a total blast at Vacation Bible School at St. John AME Church, 229 Church Street, Huntsville, Alabama. The theme was "Glowing for Jesus" with scripture from Matthew 5:16—"So let your light so shine before men and let them see your good works that they may glorify our father in Heaven." The entire week was indeed a blessed experience from start to finish -the coordination/planning/preparation, Bible lessons, classroom design and props, creativity, crafts, collaboration, team teaching, classes, recreation, music, food... ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING! The food was delicious each night. A big cheer goes to Christian Education Director, Dr. Monica Dillihunt! She totally rocks!!! Also, definitely shout outs to Pastor Maurice Wright II and First Lady, the Reverend Joretha Williams Wright for their awesome leadership!!!



The adult class teacher for the first night, Lillie Rivers, brought the theme to life as she taught the lesson in a costume that included a glowing light. More pictures of this year's exciting Vacation Bible School are on the next page.

Vacation Bible School Was a Blast!

Pamela Whitehead
Photography by Bridget J. Floyd



Honoring Steward Laurretta Teague

B. Johnson

Sister Laurretta Teague was a member of the St. John AME Church Board of Stewards, where she fully performed her duties and responsibilities until her health failed. The Stewards wanted to honor her memory of being a life-long educator by sharing her legacy with two organizations which embraced her passion for the education of young children. The Board of Stewards' project honoring the late, Mrs. Laurretta Teague came to fruition on Wednesday, June 30, 2017.

The Board of Stewards, along with the Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor of St. John AME Church, Mr. Gerald Teague, her husband, and Cameron Teague, her grandson, presented a check for \$300.00 to Mr. Bart Williams, Executive Director of Early Works Children's Museum. The funds will be distributed through the Tuition Assistance Program to provide transportation and/or the admission fees for any class which may need supplemental funding.

A second check for \$540.00 was presented to the Reverend Errol Davis and the Reverend Jennifer Davis, ministers of New Beginnings Christian Church for the New Beginnings Christian Academy. Sister Teague was a significant resource, who worked with Judge (Ret.) M. Lynn Sherrod, in establishing the pre-k program at New Beginnings. The funds will be used to support the curriculum and activities for the summer session.



Pictured from left to right: The Rev. Jennifer Davis, The Rev. Wright and The Rev. Errol Davis, teacher and students from the New Beginnings Christian Academy.

Sister Teague was a life-long educator whose bottom line was always, how will it benefit the children? The Stewards, who labored alongside her, are sure she would be pleased to know that her legacy will live on for the students that attend a field trip to Early Works and for the children at New Beginnings Christian Academy.



Pictured from left to right: Mr. Bart Williams, Executive Director of Early Works, Mr. Gerald Teague, Cameron Teague, the Rev. Wright, Ms. Barbara Johnson

AME Proud



The United States Postal Service will withdraw the Richard Allen Stamp on SEPTEMBER 30. After that date, all unsold Richard Allen Stamps and collectible items at retail outlets will be sent back to the USPS Storage facility in Kansas City, Missouri for disposal. You may purchase stamps at the local post office if they still have them in stock. Stamps may be ordered online at <http://www.usps.com/stamps/richard-allen.htm>.

Weekly Bible Study

Wednesday, 12 pm and 6 pm

Pastor Wright leads Bible Study each Wednesday at noon and 6 pm (unless otherwise noted on the church calendar).



First Lady Hosted Women's Brunch

By Lydia Owens



The wait was finally over, after a scheduling conflict in the month of June, the First Lady's Brunch was held on Saturday, July 1 at the beautiful home of Pastor Maurice and the Reverend Joretha Wright. The guests were greeted and welcomed with a smile by first daughter Lessie Wright. Once everyone was inside, Pastor Wright blessed the food and the feasting began. The Brunch Menu consisted of cooked to order omelets, shrimp and grits (prepared by the First Lady), French Toast, fruit, sausage, bacon, pastries, orange juice, coffee and water.

While everyone was seated and eating, the First Lady asked if the ladies could play a few games with her. The first game played was "My Name Is" (each person had to tell their name and list three things they liked about them self. Next Rev. Rita was given a list of questions (similar to truth or dare) which she had to answer about herself. Some she answered, some she threw away.... All in all, some of the answers she gave and the faces she made were hilarious.



Another game consisted of a list of items for the members and a list of items for the First Lady. The question was: If you were stranded on a deserted island, which three things would you take with you?

First Lady Items

Curly Wig
Bob Wig
Tierra
Cape
Short Gloves
Evening Gloves
Eye Lashes
Lipstick

Member Items

- Bible
- Radio
- Bottled Water
- Makeup
- Reading Book
- Matches
- Money
- A Peppermint

The First Lady chose the curly Wig, cape and eye lashes.

After the games, everyone was asked to tell what they were thankful for and the consensus was that most of the ladies were thankful to Rev. Rita for hosting the brunch and simply being who she is. Mrs. Zelda Goggins won a prize for being the first to arrive on Saturday and Mrs. Mildred Powers won the prize for being the oldest member in attendance.

Great Day, Great Food, Fun and Fellowship

Remembering Lou Verlon Clark

Pat Grier

Servant of God, Well Done

Servant of God, well done! Rest from thy
loved employ;
The battle fought, the victory won, Enter
thy Master's joy.

The pains of death are past, labor and sor-
row cease;
And life's long warfare closed at last, Her
soul is found in peace.

Soldier of Christ, well done! Praise be thy new employ,
And while eternal ages run, Rest in thy Savior's joy.

On June 10, 2017, Sister Lou V. Clark entered into eternal rest- 'Rest in thy Savior's joy'.

Mrs. Clark joined St. John A.M.E. Church with her husband, the late Dr. Willie M. Clark, after they moved to Huntsville in 1957. Mrs. Clark served St. John over the years on various committees, boards and auxiliaries. Mrs. Clark was a member of the Building Committee that was responsible for the planning and building of the current St. John edifice on Church Street. She served as a member of the Stewardess Board for most of her years as a member of St. John. When her vision and health became a concern, she became one of the charter members of the Naomi Council, a group of Stewardesses who are unable to perform the physical requirements of altar duty and communion setup; but who are willing and committed to fulfilling the other Board duties. Mrs. Clark was also a member of the 50+ Auxiliary and served for several years as the church treasurer.

Mrs. Clark was soft spoken, had a gentle smile and a sense of humor. She was respected by those who knew her and all who came in contact with her. She was known at St. John and on the Alabama A&M University (AAMU) campus as a diligent and dedicated worker and someone who always paid attention to detail. She touched the lives of many students through her job in the AAMU Bookstore and Comptroller's Office. Her 31 year career started as a bookstore clerk and she retired as the Bursar.

Mrs. Lou V. Clark was a humble and gentle servant of God and will be truly missed at St. John. Her memory will continue to inspire those who knew her to serve unselfishly and uniringly for God's Kingdom.

Mrs. Clark is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Cassandra and Tommy Thompson, three granddaughters, two great-granddaughters and other extended family.



Soup Kitchen Ministry

Charlie Brown

OPEN

"When you open your hand, they are filled with good things."
-Psalm 104:24

A clenched fist cannot hold more, just as a closed heart misses out on all the beauty emotions can bring. We choose to day to open our hands, our minds and our hearts.

With open hands, we help others. We physically take positive action to make a beneficial difference in the lives of others as we offer service. To those in need, we lend a hand.

When we open our minds to learning and continually sharing, we open to discovery, to finding new ways of being present in the world and recognizing the beauty that comes with sharing with those less fortunate.

As we open our hearts we discover ways to make peace where there is chaos. When we open our hearts to offer kindness and love, in the Spirit of Christ, we open to treating others with Love and Care.

Join us in treating our neighbors as we would like to be treated by serving in The Saint John Soup Kitchen on the 3rd and 4th Tuesday of each month.

"We open our hands, our minds, and our hearts to make a difference in the World".

Online Giving Options

PayPal

GiveLify

Accurate Accounting

To ensure accurate accounting of financial contributions, it is important that you provide complete information on the offering envelopes. Please clearly write your full name and the amount of the contribution on the envelope.

Ninth District 2017 Annual Conference Schedule

Bishop Harry L. Seawright, Presiding Prelate
The Reverend Sherita M. Seawright, Episcopal Supervisor

8TH SESSION OF THE
ALABAMA RIVER REGION ANNUAL CONFERENCE
August 15-19, 2017
Ward Chapel AME Church
The Reverend Agnes Lover, Pastor
130 West 4th Street, Prattville, Alabama 36067

8TH SESSION OF THE
NORTHWEST ALABAMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
August 29–September 2, 2017
Daniel Payne Community Plaza
1500 Daniel Payne Drive, Birmingham, Alabama 35214

8TH SESSION OF THE
SOUTHEAST ALABAMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
September 12-16, 2017
St. John AME Church,
The Reverend Carlton Worthen, Pastor
Lakefront State Park,
104 Lakepoint Drive, Eufaula, Alabama 36027

8TH SESSION OF THE
NORTHEAST ALABAMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
September 26-30, 2017
Gaines Chapel AME Church,
The Reverend Nathaniel Copeland, Pastor
911 Dillingham Street, Phenix City, Alabama 36867

8TH SESSION OF THE
SOUTHWEST ALABAMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
October 10-14, 2017
Gaines Chapel AME Church,
The Reverend Amos Smith, Pastor
122 Carver Avenue, Atmore, Alabama 36502

2017 Planning Meeting
November 2-4, 2017
Daniel Payne Community Plaza
1500 Daniel Payne Drive, Birmingham, Alabama 35214



School Supplies Will Be Collected



St. John will be collecting school supplies now through the first Sunday in August. Collection bins are placed throughout the church. All members are asked to participate.

Church School Book Club

Discussion Date: July 15, 2017
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Garden Spells, Sarah Addison Allen, 2007

August 2017

Discussion Date: August 19, 2017
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

No Weapon Formed, Michelle Stimpson, 2004

In this sequel to Michelle Stimpson's beloved debut novel, Boaz Brown, LaShondra and her Boaz, Stelson, are living the ideal American lifestyle, except for the subtle and not-so-subtle ways society keeps reminding them that they are not the norm. She is African-American, he is Caucasian, and their oldest child is already tackling the question of identity. It is bad enough when outsiders show their ignorance or disdain. But when the issues come from family, LaShondra finds herself wondering if Stelson can truly comprehend the challenges looming on the horizon. When a church picnic leads to a head-on dash between LaShondra's fears and Stelson's optimism, the truth prevails. But that is just the beginning. LaShondra learns that the drama during the family outing was only a set-up for an even more rigorous spiritual battle to save her family. After turning her back to the pressures at work and yielding to Stelson's leadership, LaShondra finds herself interceding for a husband she hardly even recognizes anymore. Is this the beginning of the end for the couple that truly endeavored to honor God's ways, or will this season fortify their marriage for His glory?

Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations: How St. John Measures Up—Part 5

B. Johnson



This is the fifth and final installment in the series on the *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*, by Robert Schnase. In Part One, we reviewed the practice of *Intentional Faith Development*, Part Two, we examined *Extravagant Generosity*. Part Three explored *Passionate Worship* and Part Four investigated *Radical Hospitality*. And for the fifth and final practice, we delve into *Risk-Taking Mission and Service*. This is probably the most challenging for many congregations, because we like things to stay the same. We like tradition, customs and things with which we are most familiar. We do not like change.

Robert Schnase suggests that,

“Risk-taking Mission and Service is one of the fundamental activities of church life that is so critical that failure to practice it in some form results in a deterioration of the church’s vitality and ability to make disciples of Jesus Christ. When churches turn inward, using all resources for their own survival and caring only for their own people, then spiritual vitality wanes. By offering the Radical Hospitality of Christ, church members bring others into contact with the church, and through *Passionate Worship*, God transforms them. People grow in faith and love through *Intentional Faith Development*, and God’s process of forming disciples continues as people practice compassion with their neighbors through *Risk-Taking Mission and Service*.²”

While some positions are paid positions in a church, many of the jobs/tasks of the church are done by willing, dedicated and committed members of the Body of Christ. The Soup Kitchen runs on volunteer service. Church school is taught by persons willing to share their time and talent. The ushers and trustees volunteer their skills to serve where needed. Schnase states that, “Making ourselves useful for the purpose of building the Body of Christ imbues our lives with purpose and connects us to others.”

The word “mission” turns church service outward. Mission reminds congregations that Christ’s compassion, grace and mercy and love extend to the entire world, and these fruits are cultivated not only within the walls of the church or among the people of the Body of Christ who are regularly seen and already known. Mission refers to the positive difference made in the lives of people beyond the inner circle of the church. Mission spreads the faith by exemplifying the compassion, mercy and justice of Christ in the world. For many churches, such work involves OUTREACH in their communities as they establish food pantries

to serve the homeless, advocate for fair housing practices and sponsor scouting programs in underserved areas. Mission also involves the focus on working abroad, supporting clinics and schools. Nearly every congregation supports or offers some level of mission, relying upon the volunteer help and financial generosity of members.



Soup Kitchen volunteers.

Risk-taking steps in to greater uncertainty, a higher possibility of discomfort, resistance, or sacrifice. Risk-Taking Mission and Service take things to a higher level of commitment. It takes members into ministries that they may not have encountered before, but see a need for starting. Here are some examples of what Risk-Taking Mission and Service (RTMS) looks like in churches that practice this principle;

- RTMS involves work that stretches people, causing them to do something for the good of others that they would never have considered doing if it were not for their relationship

(Continued on page 10)

²Schnase, Robert C. (2007). *Five practices of fruitful congregations*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations: How St. John Measures Up—Part 5

B. Johnson

(Continued from page 9)

with Christ and their desire to serve him.

- Churches that practice RTMS not only raise money to support overseas, international, and community work, they also organize teams, solicit and train volunteers, and send people to work directly in hands-on, face-to-face ministries.
- Churches that practice RTMS consciously seek to motivate people to more extraordinary service.
- Churches that practice RTMS also encourage, support and celebrate members who perform service through community agencies, civic organizations, hospitals, clinics, schools, and probation courts. "Prayers, presence, gifts, and service that members do for the purpose of Christ in the community as representatives of the congregation are all forms of RTMS.
- Churches that practice RTMS not only involve adults, but insist that this principle be a regular part of the instruction for the children and youth.
- Churches that practice RTMS look for opportunities to partner with other churches and agencies with the same mission of making disciples for Christ when planning projects. They include members, visitors, and friends, as well as, the unchurched to help them in making a difference in the lives of others.

So, how is St. John doing in Risk-Taking Mission and Service?

- St. John stretched itself when some 20 years ago, we partnered with The Church of the Nativity to build the first Habitat Home for a family in need of housing. Making a difference since then, for many families in the community.
- RTMS when the Soup Kitchen decided to add the fourth Tuesday in each month as another day to provide meals for the hungry. Making a difference for many families.
- St. John's WMS partnered with the Harris Home for Children to provide meals for the children and bed linens when the request was sent out. Making a difference for the children.
- St. John's music department supported and raised funds for the Urban Strings Program of Ohio. Making a difference for students outside our community.
- St. John's support of the New Beginnings Christian Academy Pre-School Program. Making a difference for a sister church and the students that attend the school.
- The Sons of Allen have collected and distributed school supplies to the educators in the church. Making a difference for the teachers.
- The Stewardess Board has collected clinic supplies for schools and baby products for a family in need. Making a difference in the lives of students and a family.
- The Fifty-Plus Auxiliary and the Adult Church School Class have provided Christmas gifts for The Salvation Army Angel Tree. Making a difference for children and adults in the community.

Space and time will not allow for all the examples of how St. John AME is reaching out to serve the community and make a difference in the lives of others, locally, nationally, internationally and through the Connection. However, there is always room for improvement. Let us continue to stretch ourselves and move out of our comfort zones to meet the needs of others and make disciples for Christ.

What's the opposite of Risk-Taking? Safe. Predictable. Comfortable. Certain. Convenient. Fearful. These words do not describe the ministry of Jesus Christ who said, "For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it." (Luke 9:24) The practice of RTMS reminds us that congregations are not ends in themselves; they are resources God uses to change lives and transform the world.

Congregations make disciples of Jesus Christ by graciously inviting people and welcoming people with *Radical Hospitality* so God can reshape their lives through *Passionate Worship* and mature their faith through *Intentional Faith Development*. They discern the call of God to transform the world with the compassion of Christ through *Risk-Taking Mission and Service*. To sustain these core processes so that the Body of Christ thrives in this generation and into the future requires the *Extravagant Generosity* of Jesus' disciples.

"Walking With a Purpose" Fashion Show

Article and Photography by Mariah Gullatte

Presented by St. John AME Music and Christian Arts Ministry



June 16th, St. John hosted its very first Fashion Show, "Walking with a Purpose!" The show featured St. John's very own runway models! Walking with a purpose was an admission free fashion show with a goal of allowing people to be themselves in every way!

In addition to a runway show, people were asked to bring gently used clothes to donate to the Huntsville Downtown Rescue Mission's Agape Shop. At the Agape shop, the homeless or residents of the shelter can come and shop for clothing at no cost! God wants us to not only be happy with ourselves, but to help others along the way.

"Walking with a Purpose" was hosted by Miss Black Rocket City, Lauren Blue. Lauren Blue became Miss Black Rocket City in February 2017. She is a masters degree student studying Business Administration at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. She was delighted to be Mistress of Ceremonies!

The show scenes included a "Hattitude," "Seasoned Saints," "Young and Contemporary," the kids worked it out, "Sunday's Best," and "Greek Love." "Hattitude" highlighted St.



John's snazzy hats from all seasons, for woman or men. The "Seasoned Saints" scene was only for the fabulous 50 and over! "Young and Contemporary" was for the young, flirty, and vibrant. The kids showed out with their fun accessories, animated runway walks and poses. "Sunday's Best" ended the show with a bang! Everyone had the chance to work their fanciest "Sunday Best Outfit" to close out an evening of style and empowerment! During the show, local vendors such as Dubose Shoes & Clothes, Joann's Variety Shop, Princess Closet, and 81 Home, Gift, and Glam set up shop! Overall, the night was truly a success.

What this writer enjoyed the most was seeing people feel good about themselves and BE themselves; who they are and what they stand for. Every model truly embraced their time in the spotlight...God's Light. Be encouraged ... Always put God and yourself first ... Help someone along the way ... Do and wear what makes you happy and may it be in God's Image!

Urban Strings Columbus Youth Orchestra Performed at St. John

Peginald Pearson



The Urban Strings Columbus Youth Orchestra is a Central Ohio-based community youth orchestra of serious, talented, young musicians from various public, private, charter, and suburban schools throughout the metropolitan Columbus area. Urban Strings Columbus performs a multicultural repertoire of great music ranging from classical, jazz, and gospel to R&B and movie themes. On Saturday, June 24, St. John AME was blessed to host the Urban Strings as they celebrated their 10th anniversary with a Southern Tour.

The Master of Ceremonies for the evening was the Reverend Eddie Roberts, Associate Minister of New Salem Baptist Church, Columbus, Ohio. He introduced the conductor and the beginning group, the Quarter Notes. The Urban Strings Quarter Notes have at least six months of experience, whether that is in school, privately, or in another outside ensemble. They performed a "Black Heritage Mini-Pak: (Fanga, Follow the Drinking Gourd, and Git on Board)" and "Two Bach Minuets". Following their performance, each student introduced themselves and the audience learned the average age for this group was 10 years old.

The next performers were the Urban Strings Half Notes. The Half Notes are the intermediate group. They typically have had at least 1 to 1½ years of experience playing their instrument. They performed "Telemann", a beautiful rendition of "How Great is Our God/Holy, Holy, Holy" and ended with a "Classic Spiritual Medley".



Finally, attendees experienced The Urban Strings Premiere. They are the most technically advanced of the three groups with at least two or more years of lessons or performing on their instruments. Their program included "Joshua Fit the Battle", "Expect Your Miracle", "Can't Nobody Do Me Like Jesus", "Say Yes", and "Total Praise". Mr. Spottswood even included the audience for a special rendition of "We Are Family" by Sister Sledge.

Thanks to the generosity of those who attended, St. John was able to give the Urban Strings a \$1,000 love offering. The evening concluded with a spaghetti dinner prepared by Mr. Phillip Pugh and his staff.



What a wonderful time in the Lord. The Urban Strings are under the direction of Mr. Stephen Spottswood and under the guidance of their founder, Ms. Catherine T. Willis.

Extravagant generosity and radical hospitality on display at St. John !

Tips for a Successful School Year: Start the Year on a Positive Note

Bridget J. Floyd



August is the month that most young people will start or return to school. Some report that they miss school and look forward to returning. Some look forward to going to school for the first time or attending a new school. Others indicate that they are anxious about starting or returning to school. Therefore it is important for parents to assess where their child(ren) fall on the spectrum. The key is preparing for this change (change can be stressful) so that children (and parents) have clear expectations and a plan and routine that can increase the comfort

level.

If the child is going to a school for the first time, it is good to have an *orientation to the new school*. Often group orientation occurs for kindergarteners or those transitioning to middle or high school. If needed, the parent can schedule an individual orientation in addition to the group orientation or if the child just happens to be changing to a new school. The tour should include the classroom(s) that the child will frequent, the cafeteria, the offices of the school counselor, nurse, and principal. This would be helpful especially if the child is anxious about the new setting.

Think positive. Having a positive attitude can increase the likelihood of a positive outcome. Ideally the young person has a positive view: Starting school is exciting, is a new/positive phase of their life, etc. Returning to school means seeing friends regularly, learning, completing another grade, moving towards graduation, involvement in extracurricular activities. If this is not the view, parents should emphasize the positive (after listening to and validating the feelings of their children). It is normal to feel anxious or dread a full school day after having flexible days, but parents can help the less than enthusiastic child, find the silver lining of school.

Part of that flexibility is sleep schedule. So, two weeks before school begins, children should be awakened slightly earlier each day, so that they can *gradually transition to the school sleep/wake schedule*. Children need at least eight hours of sleep. The goal should be ten hours of sleep so that the child is well-rested and ready to learn.

A healthy breakfast is important for good learning. Protein is an important part of a good breakfast. If the morning routine is hectic, plan to *do as many things as possible the night before*. This includes selecting clothes, packing a lunch and/or book bag.

School is the child's work. *Class and homework come first.* Listening in class, doing assignments in a diligent and timely manner, studying even if there is no homework, are all important. The best way to learn is through *active learning*. This means learning incrementally and building on what was previously learned is key. Coming home and reviewing what was learned reinforces what was learned and if this is done each day, when test time arrives, there will be no need for 'cramming', rather the student will essentially review as they have been building their knowledge all along (actively learning).

Prepare well for tests. Studying the material is key. The best test performance and learning will occur with active learning. The idea of 'cramming' for tests and then purging the information after the test, defeats the purpose of education (a few students prefer this approach). Additionally, in the higher grades, exams typically require cumulative knowledge gained over the grading period or semester. It is easier to review, build on existing knowledge, previous learning.

Prepare a quiet area and good surface for doing homework. *The routine should involve doing homework*

(Continued on page 14)

Tips for a Successful School Year: Start the Year on a Positive Note

Bridget J. Floyd

(Continued from page 13)



first, and then recreational activities. Ideally the student should start homework after a brief afterschool break. Once homework is completed then video games, television, playing with friends should follow. If extracurricular activities or a part time job require a delay to homework, then the student needs to immediately do the homework/study as soon as possible. Video games should be limited to two hours maximum and having the weekends as the primary time for these recreational activities might be preferred/needed, especially if homework takes a good deal of time.

A few students prefer to/can do homework with music as "white noise", as it were. If this works for the student (grades are good indicators), then there is no problem (as long as it does not disturb another student who needs a quiet work environment). [Rapping, singing, dancing, playing air guitar might suggest that music is not conducive to total focus on the work.]

Checking the homework assignments is the responsibility of the student with guidance / support of the parent, depending on the age of the student. Even high school students should have the support of parents to know that the work was actually completed as assigned. If the assignments are online, both the student and parents should have the access code. Even if the assignments are online, it might be helpful to have a planner to record assignments and keep hard copy assignments in one place to make turning in assignments easier. Parents may make contact with the teacher (at the first open house or before school begins) to set up e-mail communication or phone calls during a planning period, in order to directly communicate regarding assignments, options for tutoring, ways that the parents can augment what the teacher does during the school day. If needed, the teacher and parents can initial the planner / list of assignments, to verify that the student accurately recorded, completed, and submitted the assignments.

Have a bedtime routine. At least one hour (ideally two hours) before bedtime, there should be no video games, exciting television programs or movies. The lights and sound should be lowered in the household in order to avoid overstimulation that might interfere with sleep. The blue light emitted from electronic devices (even LED alarm clocks) can interfere with sleep. For those who need light or sound to go to sleep, it should be on a timer, because the very thing that aids the person in going to sleep, will interfere with sleep quality. For young children, having an hour that includes bath time and bedtime story can have a calming effect after a stressful day at school / "work" and prepare them for the next day.

Praise and incentives are important for reinforcing good behavioral and academic performance in school. In addition to learning, students will do well to follow school rules and show respect for teachers. Teachers send home behavioral charts that are another sign of success "on the job". Although the young student might get a treat from the classroom "treasure chest" or earn rewards at school, incentives should be in place at home as well.

Be aware and sensitive to bullying and/or "drama". Students often are thrilled to reconnect with school friends as the school year begins. Guiding them in negotiating social interactions/peer dynamics is important. They may need help in some challenging situations. Help them to be sensitive to those who may be bullied, deal with bullies themselves, and avoid "drama" and peer pressure which can detract from school enjoyment and the capacity to focus sufficiently on academics.

HAVE A GREAT SCHOOL YEAR!!

Church School Lesson Overview – August 2017

The lesson reviews were written by Kenneth Parham.

August 6, 2017

Lesson Title: Called to Witness

Lesson Scripture: Acts 1, 6, 7

Print: Acts 6:1-8

Devotional Songs: #221, #272, and #243

Key Verse: "Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." (Acts 6:3).

This lesson documents the growing pains of the early church. It becomes apparent that even though the Apostles' primary mission was to spiritually grow the church, the apostles were forced to deal with the social conditions of the community. The apostles were faced with the challenge of ensuring fairness when it came to distributing food. The Hellenists were complaining that the disciples were showing favoritism towards the Hebrew widows and allowing the Hellenists' widows to starve.

The disciples discussed the need for assistance if their true mission were to be accomplished. The disciples asked the community to identify seven men of good standing, wise and full of the Spirit to ensure the widows would be fairly treated. The disciples could then devote their time in prayer and spreading the gospel.

This lesson is relevant in today's time in that, it describes that the leaders were willing to confront the problem of not having enough able bodies to cope with many issues of the church/community. The approach taken by the apostles was to assess the need of the community, identify talents amongst those under their charge and then to match those with talents to an assigned task (along with accountability). This approach, demonstrated in this lesson, should be the framework of any organization wishing to succeed.

August 13, 2017

Lesson Called to Break Down Barriers

Lesson Scripture: Acts 8

Print: Acts 8:26-39

Devotional Songs: #390, #321, and #243

Key Verse: "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35).

In this lesson, the reader is presented a scenario where God's plan of spreading salvation (Acts 1:8) to a foreign na-

tion was manifested with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, His word and unbeknownst two willing men, Phillip and the Ethiopian eunuch, both having just left Jerusalem after worshipping.

The spirit led Phillip to leave Jerusalem and to travel along a wilderness road. On this road Phillip encountered a chariot. The chariot's occupant was an Ethiopian eunuch (an official to the Queen of Ethiopia). The spirit led Phillip to approach the chariot where he found the occupant reading the words of Isaiah. Phillip asked if the eunuch understood what he was reading and the eunuch indicated with difficulty and invited Phillip to assist him in understanding the words. Phillip explained that the words of Isaiah was a foretelling of one (a sheep) who would pay the ultimate price (his life) for the sins of man without uttering a single word. The eunuch wondered who this man was (Isaiah or someone else) and with that invitation, Phillip explained using the scriptures the good news about Jesus. We read that as the chariot traveled along, they passed a body of water and the eunuch wanted to know what it took to be baptized. Phillip responded that if one believes with all of one's heart you may, and with that confession, the eunuch was saved and was baptized. The lesson ends by indicating that immediately after the eunuch came out of the water, Phillip was gone.

The AMEC lesson summary indicates how the eunuch, as a symbolic barrier (having both a geographical and ethnic background different than the Jews), allows God's role in evangelism to be observed and that we take from this lesson an opportunity to examine and assess our own commitments to evangelism. And we are left with the faith that God used the eunuch in spreading the word once he returned to Ethiopia.

August 20, 2017

Lesson Title: Called to Preach

Lesson Scripture: Acts 9:1-31

Print: Acts 9:10-20

Devotional Songs: #77; #258; and #243

Key Verses: "There was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord" (Acts 9:10).

In this lesson, we encounter a spiritual exchange between Ananias and Jesus in a vision. Jesus first called Ananias for service and Ananias answered "Here I am Lord." Jesus then

(Continued on page 16)

Church School Lesson Overview

(Continued from page 15)

instructed Ananias to go to the house of Judas and to seek out Saul where he awaits. There Ananias was to lay hands on Saul in order that Saul may regain his sight. Ananias knowing of Saul asked Jesus if He meant the same Saul who had authority to persecute those spreading the gospel. Jesus answered that it is indeed Saul and that He planned to use Saul to spread the gospel to the gentiles, kings and to the people of Israel. Upon awakening from the vision, an obedient Ananias sought out Saul and indicated that Jesus, who Saul met on the road to Damascus, had sent him to lay hands on Saul so that Saul would regain his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Saul immediately regained his sight and was baptized. Saul came out of the water as Paul and immediately began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God."

The Life Application Study Bible commentary on the lesson's scripture indicates that "... we must not put limits on God. He can do anything and we must be willing to obey God's calling, as demonstrated by Ananias, even if we encounter difficult people or places. God calls us to commitment and not comfort." And, like Paul, as new converts, we can immediately share our personal conversions based on God's love, grace and mercy.

August 27, 2017

Lesson Title: Called to be Inclusive

Lesson Scripture: Acts 10

Print: Acts 10:19-33

Tentative Devotional Songs: #412; #251; and #243

Key Verse: "[Peter] said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts 10:28).

This lesson opens with Peter as he was thinking about a vision that he had seen earlier where God placed all sorts of animals before Peter to eat. Peter's response was that he did not eat anything unclean and God humbled Peter by saying to Peter that anything the Lord makes is clean (verses 10-16). Peter was then visited by the spirit and was informed that there were three men searching for Peter and that he should go and meet them. Obediently, Peter found the men and asked how he could be of assistance. The men informed Peter that they were sent by Cornelius of Caesarea (Roman occupied territory). They indicated that Cornelius, a God-fearing gentile, was visited by an angel and the angel told Cornelius to bring Peter to his home so that he might hear what Peter had to say. Pe-

Women to Attend "Saved in the City Conference"



The women of St. John are invited to attend the "Saved in the City Conference." This conference will provide safe platforms for women to learn, grow, and share through small groups, fellowships and outreach projects with local shelters, nursing homes, community agencies and even overseas missions. The weekend will include powerful worship experiences, group sessions, as well as beauty and health seminars. Child care services will be available.

This year's conference will be held **August 17-19, 2017** at Trinity United Methodist Church, 607 Airport Road SE, Huntsville, Alabama. Attendees can register at www.savedinthecityconference.com. You may also contact the St. John office for more information.

ter arrived at Cornelius' home, where he was received with worshipful reverence. Peter asked Cornelius to treat him as any other man. Peter then indicated that customs between the two nationalities would shun their meeting but Peter indicated that he saw neither profane nor unclean. He then asked his host why he was summoned. Cornelius indicated that he had been visited by an angel and the angel requested that he send for Peter in order that he (Cornelius and his household) may hear what God had commanded Peter to speak.

The Life Application Study Bible commentary indicates that "... the barrier to the spread of the Gospel in the first century was the Jewish-Gentile conflict. Most of the first believers to the Gospel were Jews, and to them it was scandalous even to think of associating with Gentiles. But God told Peter to take the Gospel to a Roman, and Peter obeyed despite his background and personal feelings." Using the vision, noted in verses 10-16, God made it clear that the Good News of Christ is for everyone. We should not allow barriers — language, culture, class status, geography, or education — to keep us from telling others about Christ. The Gospel is all inclusive.

August 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
		Make-up Day for LifeTouch Pictures	12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study			SBHB Harvest Home St. John—Huntsville
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship Communion Sunday AMEN DEADLINE	9:30 a.m. Fifty Plus Meeting		12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal		10:30 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting
				AAMU New Student Move-In Day		
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship		11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study		6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	Church Picnic AAMU Fan Day
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship Pastor's Appreciation		11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study		6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	
27	28	29	30	31		
8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship AAMU Day			8th Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference Daniel Payne Community Plaza Birmingham, Alabama			

PRAYER for the MONTH - Dear God, thank you for your tender mercies. We are grateful for each new day. AMEN

Scripture for the Month— "Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail."

- Lamentations 3:22.

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

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The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright, Bishop

The Reverend Sherita Seawright, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor

Important Dates to Remember

July 24-27, 2017	Christian Education Congress, Troy, Alabama
August 5, 2017	SBHB Harvest Home, St. John- Huntsville
August 19, 2017	Church Picnic
August 20, 2017	Pastor's Appreciation, 10:00 a.m.
August 27, 2017	AAMU Day
August 29—September 2	8th Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference Daniel Payne Legacy Village 1500 Daniel Payne Drive, Birmingham, Alabama



Please note that there will be one worship service each Sunday through the end of August.

8:45 a.m. Church School
10:00 a.m. Worship

INDNJC

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 21 Issue 8

August 2017

Understanding Your Scars *Sermon by the Reverend Maurice Wright II,* *Servant Pastor, St. John AME Church*

B. Johnson

The Fifth Episcopal District of the Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church celebrated its 2017 Annual Conference in Huntsville during the second week of July. The Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor of St. John AME Church, was the guest preacher for the opening service on Tuesday, July 11th. It was an impressive celebration beginning with the procession of the bishops into the ballroom, turned sanctuary. The service proceeded as most usual worship services with the opening hymn, prayer, scripture, songs of praise, a welcome and an offering. Preparation was made for the delivery of the word by the Presiding Prelate, Bishop Teresa Jefferson-Snorton. Bishop Jefferson-Snorton eloquently introduced the Reverend Wright.



The Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor, St. John AME Church with Bishop Teresa Jefferson-Snorton, Presiding Prelate, Fifth Episcopal District of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

The Reverend Wright took to the podium and greeted the body in the traditional AME way, extending greetings from The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright, Presiding Prelate of the 9th Episcopal District, the Reverend Oliver Allen, Presiding Elder, South Birmingham-Huntsville Bessemer District, the officers and members of St. John and First Lady, the Reverend Joretha Wright.

After praying, the Reverend Wright led with scripture from Galatians 6:17, "From now on, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus." The sermon was entitled, "Understanding Your Scars." He laid out for the worshippers a pictorial view of Paul and the challenges he endured as a messenger for Jesus Christ. As usual, the Reverend Wright drew the audience in by sharing experiences regarding scars to which all could relate; the scars, seen and unseen. The scars received after childhood shenanigans. Scars unseen by failed relationships and missed opportunities. He stated that, "our scars tell the story of what we've been through. As Christians we need to thank God for our scars, for our scars show that we've been through something and survived." He went further to explain the scars received by Paul in his journey to preach the word of God. Paul

had a troubled past. He was an enemy of the church. He did not even believe in Christianity until that one faithful incident on the Damascus Road. The Lord asked him, "Why are you persecuting me?" After being with Jesus, Paul became a Christian; wrote more letters, preached to more people and traveled extensively spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ, more than any other apostle. But the people always questioned Paul regarding his past. And just like Paul, "we will never be able to convince everyone about who we are." But Paul persisted in preaching the gospel, even after being beaten, stoned, and persecuted. He earned his scars. They were proof of his faithfulness when he stated, "Because I bear in my body the works of Jesus."

The Reverend Wright left everyone with three points to ponder regarding scars. First of all, scars remind people that they

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Saint John AME Mass Choir Sings for Indian Creek P.B. Church Revival

Charlie Brooks

On Monday, July 17, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. St. John had another reason to sing. They love to sing to God. "Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises." 2 Chronicles 20:14-22 reminds them that He is always worthy of praise, and they want to praise Him more and more.

Under the leadership of the dynamic Music and Christian Arts Director, Mr. Reginald Pearson, St. John's Mass Choir delivered beautiful music at the Indian Creek P.B. Church Annual Revival. The Reverend Timothy M. Rainey is the pastor and the guest revivalist was the Reverend Dr. Timothy J. Woods.

The choir delivered "Want to Praise You" as the opening selection. After scripture and prayer by the church ministry, the Reverend Rainey reminded us that this revival was for those Christians of one hundred years as well as the new Christian. We are all glad to be here to offer Him praise.

The choir then presented, "God's Got a Blessing" and "He Keeps On Blessing Me." The sermonic selection was "Have You Heard". These selections were uplifting for the congregation joining in the praise and worship.

Reverend Woods' sermon was from Ephesians 1:1-7, Topic: "How to Recognize a Healthy Church". He stated that the health concerns of today's people can be avoided, treated and cured. He continued, "Before the church dies due to unfitness, they must get things back in order". We must become rich in Christian goodness. Paul tells us in this letter that we should walk worthy and act as we should. (1) We must seek unity. The Lord wants us on one accord. We should be marked in harmony. (2) Seek the Lord. Patiently put up with each other, work hard at it — again and again. He continued, "Fingers alone don't do much, but together they make a fist." (3) A healthy church is diverse, we must not devalue others. V.7 In conclusion, he stated that a healthy church is moved by unity, diversity, and supportive ministries.

The doors of the church were opened as the choir delivered, "Great God, Great Vision." The Reverend Woods ended with prayer that a "Healthy Church" serve the people and be all God wants it to be. The Benediction was to be delivered upon the closing on Thursday evening.

Understanding Your Scars

B. Johnson

(Continued from page 1)

have been through stuff. "Every time I said yes, to the Lord, I had to go through something. I have the scars to prove it." Scars help to tell the story of what one has been through. The good news is they have come through. Secondly, scars remind one that they survived. Scars remind them that they are still here. James said it best, "I count it all joy." And I survived to tell the story. Better yet, it was Gloria Gaynor who said, "At first I was afraid I was petrified. Kept thinking I could never live without you by my side. And I learned how to get along! I've got all my life to live. I've got all my love to give. And I'll survive. I will survive, hey, hey!" Thirdly, our scars remind us of God's ability to heal us. Our scars remind us of who we belong to. The scars we have are a testimony that we want more out of life.

The Reverend Wright closed with the statement, "If you want more—it's going to cost you something." You cannot enjoy the rose without dealing with the thorns. No cross, no crown. So glad the God I serve is in the healing business. The scars we acquire, He can heal. Isaiah 53:5 reminds believers that, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed." He concluded by saying to not worry about the scars. Be proud of the scars for they are proof that you have survived.

The message, *Understanding Your Scars*, was enthusiastically received by the congregation.

Initial Sermon is a New Beginning for Sister Latimore

Charlie Brooks

"The Preacher sought to find out acceptable Words, and that which was written uprightly, even, Words of Trust."

- Ecclesiastes 12:10 ASV



On Thursday evening, July 20, 2017, Sister Karmen Latimore delivered her initial sermon before the congregation of her beloved church, St. John A.M.E. Church. Sister Latimore was born July 2, 1987 in Atlanta, Georgia. She is the second of three daughters born to Ms. Connie R. Latimore. After high school graduation in 2005, she moved to Huntsville to attend Alabama A & M University where she studied biology with a focus in healthcare and nursing. She is currently enrolled at Drake State Community and Technical College as a nursing student and will receive her Associates of Nursing Degree in the summer of 2019. Sister Latimore is currently employed as a Health Unit Assistant at Huntsville Hospital.

The Wednesday evening service began with music from the dynamic St. John Praise Team. After prayer and scripture, Pastor Wright welcomed those who were there to support and encourage the preacher. He also welcomed visiting minister, the Reverend Deborah Peppers. He continued with words of encouragement for Sister Latimore. He shared that he was still nervous after preaching for twenty years. He said "She needs our prayers that she won't disappoint God." He prayed for her strength and that the Holy Spirit would descend upon her.

After the Praise Team and congregation sang, "None Like You", Sister Latimore began her message. She acknowledged Pastor Wright and ministers and extended thanks to all for their presence. She began by singing "I Need Thee Every Hour" and offering prayer. Her sermon text was from Genesis 22:1-9 and was entitled "Meet Me at the Altar".

She began, "How many of us do as God asks us to do? From the Scripture, Abraham leaves his servant, ashamed to tell him what he is going to do. As Isaac questions why, Abraham presses on. "Where is the lamb offering, his son asks?" Isaac senses something is wrong. We all ask questions when fear overcomes us. Abraham presses on and proclaims, God will provide. And He did. Karmen continued as she stated that we miss our promises because we all have our alternate options. There were many times when she herself has lost her focus and God has kept her through her fear and anger. After an episode here at the church during a meeting, Karmen said she stormed from the meeting and went to the sanctuary to find the altar. Friends came to find her there. Her Heavenly Father was already there waiting for her. Through her doubt, she pursued Him and knelt at the Altar. She emphatically stated that she was so glad she made her way to meet Him there. Church, please, look for Him at the altar. He's waiting for you there.



Pastor Wright opened the doors of the church, and encouraged Karmen to move on. He then presented her with three essentials to accompany her on her journey in ministry: The Bible, The AME Discipline, The AME Hymnal and a small stipend for support. The Reverend Wright pressed upon Karen to never let these leave her side as she begins her journey in the Ministry. He told her that she could always depend on him and more importantly rely on the Lord Jesus Christ.

A Church Conference was convened where it was motioned; seconded and voted that Sister Karman Nicole Latimore be referred to the Quarterly Conference for license to preach.

After the Benediction Sister Latimore was warmly greeted by church family and friends.

Presiding Elder Allen Holds Fourth (Final) Quarterly Conference: Prelude to Retirement in September

Bridget J. Floyd



Pastor Wright and Presiding Elder Allen

Presiding Elder Oliver Allen, Jr. met with the members of St. John's Quarterly Conference on Wednesday, August 2, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. This was his final scheduled Quarterly Conference with St. John prior to his scheduled retirement on September 2, 2017. The Presiding Elder indicated that he might serve in the interim as needed subsequent to that time.

Pastor Wright presented Presiding Elder Allen who in turn gave "greetings" and offered words of encouragement to the ministers and licentiates in attendance. He expressed that it was an honor to serve and that his official retirement date is September 2nd. He anticipates membership at St. John after his official responsibilities end. He indicated that he is looking forward to retirement. He humorously referred to holding the Quarterly Conference on a "holiday"; that is, his seventy-second birthday.

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Presiding Elder Allen began his words of encouragement by first thanking those in the ministry and licentiates "for accepting the call and for supporting St. John. He stated, "We are praying for you" and urged them to "continue to preach and teach...keep telling the story". He went on to say, "I encourage you to stay with the ministry, stay with your pastor...help him to do what the Lord would have him do...share your vision with the Pastor". He followed this by telling the members in attendance that they have a charge to support the ministry and the ministers. He gave accolades to Pastor Wright and noted his close coordination with the Presiding Elder over this Conference Year (as the Presiding Elder has requested of all pastors who report to him). As the business of the quarterly conference was completed, the Presiding Elder began his "closing remarks" by continuing to praise Pastor Wright and thanked him "for a job well done". The members of the Quarterly Conference responded with a standing ovation.



Elder Allen addresses preachers

Presiding Elder Allen stated that he will recommend that Pastor Wright return as pastor of St. John, Huntsville. It should be noted that each report during the Quarterly Conference concluded with this very request of the Elder.

Closing remarks continued with Presiding Elder Allen giving special recognition to the Reverend Charles Glover who has assisted the Elder in many ways during his tenure. The Presiding Elder continued his closing remarks by stating that "It's been a good nine years" as presiding elder. He noted that he has enjoyed telling people about Jesus which he deemed the highlight of his time in the ministry and serving in his current role. He informed the members that all are to lead people to Christ: "Everybody is supposed to lead somebody to Christ" (not just the clergy).

Presiding Elder Allen returned to praise for Pastor Wright and highlighted his maturity and capacity to pray and be led by Christ as he ministers to the people and the challenges that pastoring can bring.

His final action before adjournment was to present Pastor Wright with his first check/donation as a member of St. John AME, Huntsville (his anticipated role after retirement as Presiding Elder).

St. John is indeed appreciative of Presiding Elder Allen and Mrs. Allen, and look forward to his new role at St. John and Mrs. Allen's continued involvement in the ministries of St. John.

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Presiding Elder Oliver Allen and Mrs. Allen Celebrated at Harvest Home Meeting

Roselyne Akins



Surrounded by their family and friends, Presiding Elder Oliver Allen and Mrs. Mary Allen were celebrated by the South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer District at the Harvest Home meeting. The retirement reception was held at the Huntsville Board of Realtors immediately following the Harvest Home business and worship service. Members and pastors from across the District came to acknowledge Presiding Elder Allen's exceptional dedication and leadership. St John AME Church in Huntsville was honored to host the celebration. Elder Allen and Mrs. Allen are very special to St John because they are also members. Live music was provided by St John AME Church music ministry. Elder Allen and Mrs. Allen were honored by several individual members and churches, and gifts were given as tokens of appreciation for their service. The president of Alabama A&M University, Dr. Andrew Hugine, and Mrs. Hugine presented Elder Allen and Mrs. Allen with a plaque commemorating their exceptional service and dedication. Final remarks were given by Elder Allen and Mrs. Allen to thank the South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer District for

their expressions of love and support during their nine years of service. Elder Allen and Mrs. Allen's youngest daughter thanked the District on behalf of their entire family.

St. John thanks Elder Allen and Mrs. Allen for nine years of spirit-filled, dedicated service to the South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer District and to the Ninth Episcopal District. They leave the Allens with these words, "The Work is all Divine!"



St. John Missionaries Are on the Move

Charlsie Brooks

The Women's Missionary Society (WMS) of St. John has exploded with visions and missions for this year, under the leadership of WMS President Lorraine Parham and YPD Director Ms. Donnie Thompson. During the month of June, with the support of St. John members, the WMS donated sixty sets of new twin bed sheets for Harris Home for Children. Each child currently living in this foster residence can lie down on new pristine sheets. New pillows and laundry baskets were also donated. Under the leadership of Pastor Maurice Wright, 11 additional funds were raised to keep this as an on-going project.

Many of the thirty-three members of the WMS joined in serving a luncheon meal at the Downtown Rescue Mission. They lifted songs to the residents as they were served. The Missionaries were blessed with many positive remarks about the food service and especially the hymns that they shared.

On the last Sunday of July the WMS sponsored a Sunday Social as an outreach effort to invite new members to join this auxiliary of the church. The program, along with decorations, was beautiful and well received. Eight beautiful ladies asked to be added to the ranks as Missionaries. Thank God for the increase.



The above pictures are from the WMS Social that was held after service on the 5th Sunday.

The YPD Director, Ms. Thompson, and the wonderful youth of St. John have had two outstanding meetings where planning and fellowship were the focus. This group is growing; the WMS is excited that they are activated and ready to begin a new conference year. We Love Our Youth!

The WMS meets the fourth Saturday of each month at 10 a.m., unless otherwise announced.

AME Proud



The United States Postal Service will withdraw the Richard Allen Stamp on SEPTEMBER 30. After that date, all unsold Richard Allen Stamps and collectible items at retail outlets will be sent back to the USPS Storage facility in Kansas City, Missouri for disposal. You may purchase stamps at the local post office if they still have them in stock. Stamps may be ordered online at <http://www.usps.com/stamps/richard-allen.htm>.

Weekly Bible Study

Wednesday, 12 pm and 6 pm

Pastor Wright leads Bible Study each Wednesday at noon and 6 pm (unless otherwise noted on the church calendar).



Bedding Donated for Harris Home

Lorraine Parlum



In the state of Alabama over 5,500 children have been placed in out-of-home facilities, better known as foster care. The children in foster care have been removed from their homes as a result of abuse, neglect, or their parent's inability to keep them safe. Children in this situation are emotionally fragile and in need of a safe, clean, nurturing environment.

St. John's neighbor, Harris Home for Children, provides such an environment. Founded in 1954, this foster care facility currently serves as a safe haven for 15 young people, primarily boys, between the ages of 11 and 15.

When the Women's Missionary Society (WMS) reached out to Harris Home they were advised that boys are particularly rough on bedding and the need for new linen was immediate. During the month of June, in a campaign spearheaded by the WMS, a call went out to the St. John family to assist the Harris Home and THE RESPONSE WAS OVERWHELMING! On July 2, 2017, St. John gifted 60 sets of new bed sheets, pillows and laundry baskets to Harris Home. The gifts were received with gratitude by Mr. Babawale Adepoju of Harris Home during the worship service. Through the efforts of Servant Leader Pastor Maurice Wright II, more than \$900 was also collected and will be used at a later date.

Thank you Pastor Wright and St. John Family for your extravagant generosity and for being a "Good Neighbor."

Online Giving Options

PayPal

GiveLify



Soup Kitchen Ministry

Charlie Brown

SERVING GOD

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? And when saw we thee sick or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me." Matthew 25:34-40

Consider these questions, "Is your energy and time spent only on your family? Are you living to pursue your own interests or success?" These aims can be futile and without lasting value unless the underlying goal is to serve Christ. Jesus' followers should model their lives after His.

When one considers servants who amazingly served God, like King David, or maybe famous evangelists who speak to thousands, how could anything they do compare to these mighty servants. How could anything they do compare with accomplishments like these?

God's call for each person is unique. He will provide the situations, words, and ability so that they can achieve what He wants done. Ask Him if service in the St. John Kitchen Ministry is a way for you to make a difference. Let Him direct you to a caring ministry where you can serve your purpose today.

The Monthly Soup Kitchen Ministry serves on the 3rd and 4th Tuesday of each month. Join Us!

"We are merely tools, and we're glad to be used by Him."

- Unknown

Coming soon....

Get Ready! Get Ready! Get Ready!

"Growing children in Christ is our goal!"

Children's Church Launch Date
September 10, 2017

St. John AME Church

Salutes Graduates and Retirees

Jeanette Jones

Annually, St. John recognizes church family members who have made significant achievements or reached significant milestones in their lives.

2017 High School Graduates



Talese Cox, Collin Adkins, Pastor Wright, and Lessie Wright

Collin Adkins, son of Bobby and Kay Atkins graduated from James Clemens High School, was honored with the Madison City School "Seal of Academic Distinction." A Merit Scholar, Collin completed an internship with Avion Solution. A scholar-athlete, Collin has been accepted at Bagley School of Engineering, Mississippi State University, where he plans to major in Aerospace Engineering with a minor in Mechanical Engineering.

Talese Alexandria Cox, daughter of Victoria Janae McDowell and Talbert Cox, graduated from Columbia International Baccalaureate High School in May. She received a 4-year Merit Scholarship from Alabama A & M University where she plans to pursue a degree in Biochemistry/ Food Technology and Minor in Piano pedagogy.

Lessie Yvette Wright, daughter of Servant Pastor Maurice Wright and the Reverend Joretha Wright, Executive Pastor, graduated from Huntsville High School in May. Lessie plans to continue her education while pursuing her lifelong dream of establishing her own business.

Undergraduate and Graduate Degrees



Roselyn Akines, Janel Williams, Pastor Wright, and Lebey Wilson

Roselyn Akines received the Master of Science degree in Nursing, Family Nurse Practitioner from Chamberlain College of Nursing. She is currently a registered nurse at the Madison County Detention Center. She has one son, Daniel Haygood.

LaCondria Bryant, a native of Birmingham, Alabama, received a Bachelor's Degree in Government Finance and Contracts at UAH in 2007 and a Bachelor's degree in Acquisition Management. She received a Master of Business Administration (MBA) in Acquisitions from Strayer University in Orlando, Florida. She is a Department of Defense Contract Specialist and plans to continue her academic studies for the doctoral degree.

Alesia Ginn, daughter of Guy Ginn, completed dual degrees, a B.S. in Industrial Management and M.S. in Technical Management, from Mercer University in Macon, Georgia, in May.

Don Anthony Mack, Jr. received the Master of Science Degree from Alabama A&M University in May with a major in Food Science/ Microbiology.

Meagan Speight, daughter of Terry and Cora Speight, received her Master of Business Administration from Harvard Business School. She will be working for Empeyan Capital Partners, an event-driven Special Situation Hedge Fund based in New York City.

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St. John AME Church

Salutes Graduates and Retirees

Jeanette Jones

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Sammie Walton earned a Master of Science degree in Logistical Supply Chain Management from Emby Riddle Aeronautical University. He is married to Deidre and they have one son, Timothy.

Janel Williams graduated with her Master of Business Administration from Grand Canyon University April 2017. She is the mother of Jared and Janise Burns.

Kelsey Wilson, daughter of Vonda James and Charles Wilson, is a native of Tuscaloosa, Alabama. She received her BA degree in Psychology from Stillman College and just completed the requirements for her Master's degree from Alabama A&M University in Psychology and Counseling. She plans to pursue a Doctorate of Marriage Family Therapy.

Doctoral Graduate

Wesley Daniel Sims received the B.S. in Physics from Morehouse College; M.S. in Engineering Management from UAB; and in May he received the Ph.D. from Alabama A&M University in Applied Physics, with a Concentration in Optics. Currently Wesley is a Postdoctoral Fellow at Morehouse College. He joined St. John while a graduate student as an affiliated member and served diligently on the Usher Board. Wesley wanted to let everyone know how much he appreciated the members of St. John AME Church.

Congratulations to these graduates! Pray for their success as they move to the next phases of their lives.

2017 Retirees



Pastor Wright and retiree Lorraine Parham

This year's retirees are no strangers to the community and are active members of our church family. These ladies are engaged in a number of organizations and auxiliaries vital to the operation of the church.

Lorraine Parham retired after 32 years of Civilian Service with the Department of Defense. She served as Director of Contracts for the Defense Contract Management Agency in Huntsville, Alabama. She led a team of 70 cohort specialist supporting approximately 500 defense contracts in post award performance of over 8,000 contracts valued in excess of \$53 billion dollars. She has received numerous awards from the Department of Defense. In addition, she has held positions at Lawson State Community College Development office, the State of Alabama, Employment Services and Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Center. Mrs. Parham earned the BS from Miles College and an MBA from Alabama A&M University. She is mar-

ried to Kenneth Parler and they have one son, Wallace.

Nedra McDaniel completed 43 years of continuous employment in Information Technology. Her employers included McDonnell Douglas, Bilston Purina, Morino Associates, Legent Corporation, and CA Technologies. In addition, Nedra has been an adjunct professor of Mathematics and Computer Science at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville and St. Louis University. According to Nedra, she has traveled a million plus miles across the US, Canada, Mexico and Europe under the protection of the Lord, and to God be the glory. She earned the BS degree in Mathematics and Chemistry from Bennett College for Women and MS degree in Computer Science from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. She has one adult son, Eric, who resides in Austin, Texas.

Please congratulate these retirees as they move to the next level of service and hopefully some relaxation in their new revitalized life!!

Christian Education Congress Promotes Theme of "Living the Word"

Heath Nathan, Ninth District Christian Education Director

We are indeed grateful to Bishop Harry L. Seawright, presiding Bishop of the Ninth Episcopal District and the Reverend Sherita M. Seawright for the opportunity to serve and for their unwavering support of Christian Education and particularly CEC 2017. We thank the Presiding Elders, pastors, lay people, sponsors and everyone for your prayers and loyal support of CEC 2017.

CEC 2017, July 24-27, was held on the beautiful campus of Troy University in Troy, Alabama. The theme for the congress was "LIVING THE WORD: BEING READERS, HEARERS, AND DOERS. It was truly a Christian Education experience that was stuffed full of Word, Worship, Workshops, Fellowship, and Fun activities. Every event/activity was focused on the theme and spoke to the Spiritual Formation of those in attendance.



Bishop Kawimbe preaches.



Bishop Seawright plays for Pastor Wright

Worship services were spiritual with the Word being delivered by Bishop John F. White, the Reverend Eddie Scott, Bishop Kawimbe, and Bishop Harry L. Seawright. Music for the worship services was rendered by the spirit filled voices of the Ninth District Youth Choir under the capable, strong leadership of Mrs. Shelia Jackson. The Word (Bible Study) was taught by the Reverend Christopher Reeves and the Reverend Maurice Wright.

There were three theme-focused Plenary Sessions/Workshops as listed below:

Plenary Session 1: "O TASTE AND SEE THAT THE WORD IS GOOD" focused of the fact that the Word is good because

it provides recipes for spiritual nourishment and holy living.

Plenary Session 2: "HAVE YOU HEARD: FAITH COMES BY HEARING" emphasizing the fact that we must seek opportunities outside of morning worship, Bible study, and Church School to hear the spoken Word.

Plenary Session 3: "JUST DO IT" encouraging participants to examine their own obedience to the Word of God and come to the conclusion that it is God's Word and it must be obeyed.

Plenary sessions were facilitated and convened by clergy and lay people from within the Ninth District along with guest presenter, Mrs. Robin Porter Smith. The guest presenter for the clergy was Mrs. Cynthia Gordon-Floyd with a workshop entitled "CHURCH FINANCES, ACCOUNTING, AND BUDGETING."

Congress participants were also afforded the opportunity to take part in a "LEGAL CLINIC" where they could speak to a lawyer concerning wills, powers of attorney, and healthcare directives (living wills). This clinic was arranged by Attorney Ida Hyche.

Other congress activities included debate and "Bible Bowl" competitions, basketball tournament among the Presiding Elder districts, a movie, a dance for all ages with a live DJ and more than enough good food for everyone.

Now that you are back home in your local churches, we sincerely hope that you heard something, saw something, felt something, or did something that you took home with you and that you are sharing it with the church and the community at home as you practice it yourself. Remember it begins with one person and that person is you. Let your life

encourage others to "LIVE THE WORD."



South Birmingham Huntsville
Bessemer debate team

ST. JOHN AME CHURCH



Pastoral Appreciation



Bishop Harry L. Seawright
Presiding Prelate, 9th Episcopal District

HONORING

Pastor Maurice Wright
& FIRST LADY REVEREND JORETHA WRIGHT

Sunday, August 20, 2017

10:00 A.M.



Guest Speaker

Bishop John Richard Bryant

229 CHURCH STREET • HUNTSVILLE, AL 35801

Invitation

St. John
AME Church

August 19, 2017
1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**CHURCH
picnic**

Alabama A&M University's
Winfred Thomas Agricultural Research Station
372 Walker Lane
Hazel Green, AL 35750
256-372-4244

FOOD! FUN! FELLOWSHIP!

METHODIST

ST JOHN AME CHURCH

9th Annual "Men's Ministry Retreat"

*Revive
Restore
Renew*

WORKSHOPS:

- Health & Wellness
- Wills & Estate Planning
- Addiction Solutions
- Personal Finance
- Political Forum

GUEST SPEAKERS

- Spiritual Growth
- Healthy Habits
- Better Fathers and Husbands

"Lean on God and Go Forward" Proverbs 3:5-6

Save the Date: 25-27 August 2017
\$150 for 3 day / 2 night RETREAT \$75 flat fee to attend

Lake Guntersville State Park Lodge, 1155 Lodge Drive, Guntersville, AL 35976
See Bro. Adkins; Bro. Ginn; and Bro. Blackmon for sign ups and payments

Spiritual Enrichment

Food

Fun

Praise & Worship

Pastor Maurice Wright II
Serving Pastor / Teacher



ST. JOHN AME

HUNTSVILLE

"Sharing The Word. Serving The People."

You're Invited



229 Church Street, NW - Huntsville, AL 35801



On the campus of Alabama A&M University

AAMU DAY

Join Us For Morning Worship Service

Hosted By The St. John AME Church Family

Join Us!

SUNDAY, AUGUST 27, 2017

10:00 A.M.

Join Us!



ERNEST KNIGHT RECEPTION CENTER

Reverend Maurice Wright, II – Servant Pastor

www.stjohname-hsv.org

Immunizations: Recommended for all Ages

Bridget J. Floyd



August is National Immunization Awareness Month. The purpose during this time is to raise awareness about vaccines and strategies to increase immunization rates. Often immunizations are associated with children but they are also important in preventing/protecting people of all ages from serious diseases. For example, it is recommended that children and adults receive an annual flu shot. The very young and the older populations are often at most risk if not vaccinated for certain diseases.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has provided the major reasons for obtaining immunizations. These are highlighted below. Further information can be obtained at <http://www.cdc.gov/about-vaccines/reasons>.

- 1. Vaccine-preventable diseases have not gone away.** Viruses and bacteria that cause illness and death are still in existence and can negatively impact people who are not vaccinated. Diseases are more easily transmitted with the ease and rate of global travel at this time.
- 2. Vaccines will help keep you healthy.** The CDC recommends vaccinations from birth through adulthood to provide a lifetime of protection. Many people do not heed the recommendation which puts them at risk for disease and suffering.
- 3. Vaccines are as important to your overall health as diet and exercise.** Similar to eating properly, exercising and regular screenings for diseases such as colon and breast cancer, vaccines can be important in maintaining health.

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The St. John AME Church Family Joins the Alabama A&M University Family TO WELCOME NEW AND RETURNING STUDENTS FOR “ MOVE IN DAY ON THE HILL”

Jeanette Jones



Servant Pastor Maurice Wright II and the Reverend Joretha Wright, along with other members of St. John, arrived early on “The Hill”, on the mornings of August 10 and 11th to welcome the members of the entering class of 2017-2021 and returning students to Alabama A&M University. The church provided refreshments, snacks, encouragement, smiles and friendly advice to the students, their families and friends who traveled from as far away as California and Alaska to attend historic Alabama A&M University, where many of the alumni and supporters and President Andrew Hugine enthusiastically chants, “Start here and go anywhere”!! Move-in day was exciting and tearful for many who are leaving home for the first time, as they start their educational journey. Pastor Wright and “Rev. Rita,” in addition to providing friendly smiles and warm embraces, also provided information about St. John AME Church, its various ministries, and how we welcome them to join us for our Sunday morning services and bible study. Pastor Wright and “Rev. Rita” were both just as excited as the students and plans are underway to expand the church outreach activities in the community.



Students visit St. John table.



Students visit St. John table.



Dr. Wims, Pastor Wright, Dr. Jones, Rev. Rita and Kebe Wilson



Dr. Wims, Pastor Wright, Dr. Hugine, Mr. Hugine, Rev. Rita, Kebe Wilson



Dr. Wims and Pastor Wright.

Ninth District 2017 Annual Conference Schedule

Bishop Harry L. Seawright, Presiding Prelate
The Reverend Sherita M. Seawright, Episcopal Supervisor

**8TH SESSION OF THE
ALABAMA RIVER REGION ANNUAL CONFERENCE**
August 15-19, 2017
Ward Chapel AME Church
The Reverend Agnes Lover, Pastor
130 West 4th Street, Prattville, Alabama 36067

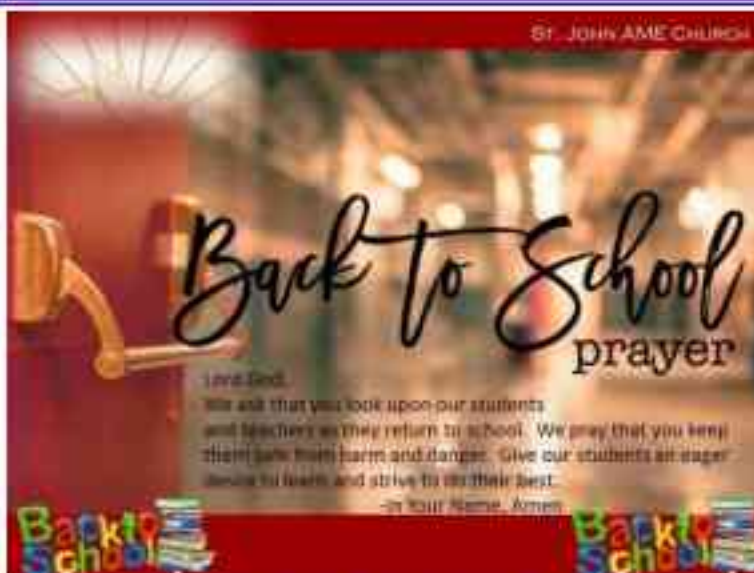
**8TH SESSION OF THE
NORTHWEST ALABAMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE**
August 29–September 2, 2017
Daniel Payne Community Plaza
1500 Daniel Payne Drive, Birmingham, Alabama 35214

**8TH SESSION OF THE
SOUTHEAST ALABAMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE**
September 12-16, 2017
St. John AME Church
The Reverend Carlton Worthen, Pastor
Lakefront State Park,
104 Lakepoint Drive, Eufaula, Alabama 36027

**8TH SESSION OF THE
NORTHEAST ALABAMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE**
September 26-30, 2017
Gaines Chapel AME Church
The Reverend Nathaniel Copeland, Pastor
911 Dillingham Street, Phenix City, Alabama 36867

**8TH SESSION OF THE
SOUTHWEST ALABAMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE**
October 10-14, 2017
Gaines Chapel AME Church
The Reverend Amos Smith, Pastor
122 Carver Avenue, Atmore, Alabama 36502

2017 Planning Meeting
November 2-4, 2017
Daniel Payne Community Plaza
1500 Daniel Payne Drive, Birmingham, Alabama 35214



Church School Book Club

August 2017 **Discussion Date: August 19, 2017**
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

No Weapon Formed, Michelle Stimpson, 2004

September 2017 **Discussion Date: September 16, 2017**
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Truly, Madly, Guilty, Liane Moriarty, 2016

"This is a story that begins with a barbeque". So begins *Truly Madly Guilty*. Erika and Clementine have been friends since school. Erika had a difficult childhood and Clementine's home and family became something of a refuge for her. Now, years later, both are married. Clementine is a cellist, married to Sam, with two young daughters. Erika and her husband Oliver are childless and fanatically tidy and orderly. They invite Clementine and her husband Sam over for afternoon tea, but it evolves into a BBQ at their neighbor's house. And at that BBQ, something will happen. An event which will be extremely traumatic for everyone who is there.

That's the premise for this book. From the start we know that something significant has happened. We know that Erika has problems remembering it, that Clementine does not want to think about it, that their husbands are struggling with their feelings.

— Amazon

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Retirement Planning Basics – Lessons learned from the Gunny

Bobby Adkins, Jr.

I have been working for over 30 years, starting with my career in the United States Marine Corps, and continuing another 12 years post USMC retirement. Though I have been a conscious saver, I look at my retirement portfolio and realize that I could have done much more. I think about the nights out on the town, the new clothes, new car, partying at the club, and excess spending that was part of my weekly life. If I had known then what I know now, I would certainly do things a bit differently. I am pretty sure I am not the only one who thinks that way. Oh well, we live and we learn. Of course, it is also hard to tell an 18-year-old to look into the future and start planning financially.



After about two years into my Marine Corps career, I recall an old Marine Corps Master Sergeant sitting me down for annual counseling and asking me "son how much are you saving?" I simply shrugged my shoulders with a smirk and said "a LCPL doesn't make enough to save". He stared at me, and said "Listen to me. It's never too early to start saving, and it's never too late to start saving". He continued by saying, "I can't tell you what to do with your money, but I can share my own experiences with you". He then went about telling me how he started saving money, and increased his savings amount every time he got a pay raise. Over the course of a then 24-year career, he had saved a couple hundred thousand dollars. Now that got my attention. Corinthians 16:2 offers this advice for sticking to a savings plan: "On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come."

After my performance counseling, which had turned into an investment strategy session, I went up to the S-1 (administration office) and asked to start a simple \$25 per paycheck allotment to my home bank in Holly Springs, Mississippi. I called my mother to get my account information (I didn't remember the account number and turned in the paperwork to S-1. With that, I set up my first direct deposit. It was not a lot, but it was an honest start. This reminds me of Proverbs 13:11, which reads, "Dishonest money dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow".

Though my early paychecks (after tax) were around \$300 per check every two weeks, housing and food was being covered by the USMC. Therefore, the MSGT knew I could at least save \$50 or \$60 bucks per month. Well, looking back, I'm glad I took his advice, but I still groan when I think about what I missed out on by not investing aggressively enough during my 20s.



While we are all trying to enjoy this summer, get the kids back in school, it is important to take a step back and think about what little steps you are taking at your current age to better align your long term goals for retirement. In that spirit, and using information from the financial services organization Personal Capital <https://www.personalcapital.com/blog/market-news/market-recap-2/>, here are a few things that you should have set up or in place to address retirement savings based on your age:

20s:

Start contributing to your 401k. The sooner you start contributing to your 401k the more you'll get to benefit from the power of tax free or deferred compounding. Many companies will have investment matching and if you are not contributing, you are missing out on free money. If you don't have access to a company or employer sponsored 401(k), seek access to a savings portfolio at your local bank or credit union. Many banks now offer investment portfolio services. As they attempt to keep more money in their accounts, they are now providing financial services.

30s:

If you own a home, try to pay down non-mortgage debt and rid yourself of debt and interest payments that cannot be used for tax relief. This is the time to start paying down credit card debt and student loans so you will enter your forties with better positioning to start building your nest egg. Proverbs 22:7 cautions: "The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower becomes the lender's slave." Make sure you have a sufficient emergency fund balance (usually three - six months of expenses). Consider insurance if you have started a family as well as setting up wills and estate planning documents.



(Continued on page 19)

Church School Lesson Overview – September 2017

The lesson reviews were written by Willie Sandifer.

September 3, 2017

Lesson Title: The Rainbow

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 8:20-9:17

Print: Genesis 8:20-22 - 9:8-17

Devotional Songs: #Revive us Again, #272, and #243

Key Verse: "I establish my covenant with you. Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth." (Genesis 9:11).

In this lesson the focus is the rainbow. The Standard Lesson Commentary describes the rainbow as a sign from God that signifies an important promise and a fact of history.

The bible's record of the great flood gives detailed specifics from the start of the flood, the amount of time the rain fell, the amount of time the earth was covered with water, and the time it took the water to retreat. It all adds up to just over a year.

Imagine the joy Noah and his family felt as they were leaving the ark and setting foot onto solid ground. Worship was the first thing that Noah did to thank God for His divine care in bringing him and his family safely through the whole experience.

September 10, 2017

Lesson Title: Circumcision

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 17

Print: Genesis 17:1-14

Devotional Songs: #Where He Leads Me, #321, and #243

Key Verse: "I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers" (Genesis 17:2).

In this lesson God gave Abraham and his descendants a lasting mark to show that they were His. Unlike other marks, the mark of circumcision was more personal than visible.

The sign of God's covenant with Abraham was the circumcision of each male. This symbol was so important that it was treated as if it were the covenant itself: *this is my covenant*. For generations circumcision would be the mark of God's people.

Later when Jesus started the new covenant, circumcision did not play a part physically. Figuratively it would become a symbol of putting off the sins of the flesh. The circumci-

sion in the new covenant is not done with hands. Spiritually it connects with baptism.

Circumcision in the Old Testament was compulsory and necessary to stay part of the covenant people. It is the other way around in the New Testament as physical circumcision is stalwartly opined against as it is connected to the old law that is no longer in force.

September 17, 2017

Lesson Title: Sabbath Observance

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 31:12-18; Isaiah 56:1-8

Print: Exodus 31:12-18

Devotional Songs: #381, #258, and #243

Key Verses: "You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the LORD, who makes you holy. Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you." (Exodus 31:13b; 14a).

In this lesson we see God's cure for burnout as being over-worked combined with lack of rest is a dangerous recipe.

The undesirable effects of burnout on the job spill over into home life and into social life. When that happens several things occur: Relationships get less than deserving full focus, it becomes hard to prioritize, and busyness overtakes true accomplishment. People can become vulnerable to illness in the long run.

This lesson is a directive to the Israelites about the Sabbath. However, this text is not the first mention on this subject. The first mention of Sabbath as a noun was when God fed manna to the Israelites as they traveled to Mount Sinai. On the sixth day of the week the people gathered two days' worth so that they could rest on the seventh day, which is called the Sabbath.

September 24, 2017

Lesson Title: Spirit-Filled Heart

Lesson Scripture: Ezekiel 36, -37; Titus 3:1-11

Print: Ezekiel 36:22-32

Tentative Devotional Songs: #Woke up this Morning, #251, and #243

Key Verse: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26).

(Continued on page 19)

Retirement Planning Basics

(Continued from page 17)

40s:

This is the decade to beef up your savings and really start defining your long-term goals. Balancing retirement, college and personal or family goals. Are you on track to pay for college goals, have you revisited insurance coverage? Are your 401k contributions maxed out? Also, many parents are choosing to have children later into their 30s or even early 40s, so savings can be challenged. Make saving a priority in spite of the family situations. Give God what is owed to Him via the tithe, but also pay yourself via your savings. Ten percent would be ideal, but if you are having trouble stretching the paycheck, start with a lower number like 3% or 4%. Increase it gradually.

50s:

You are now eligible to make larger contributions towards retirement accounts. Take advantage of the catch-up provisions. If you have children, start to set priorities and expectations on how you plan to help them after college and through adulthood. Reassess how close and when you want to retire. Are the wills and estate planning documents up to date?

60s:

You should have a better idea of what retirement could look like for you and what it really means for you to be "retired". Do you want to keep working as long as you can? Would you like to slow down? What are your Social Security benefits and when is the optimal age to start taking them? At 65, make sure you visit and understand Medicare, whether you intend to use it or not. Optimize your investment accounts so you are as tax efficient as possible.



70s and beyond:

Grandchildren could be a big part of starting to think about legacy and family planning. Any philanthropic goals or organization that you care about? Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) will be a factor whether you are still working or not.

Summary:

Investment strategies are not a one size fits all plan. However, savings should be a priority for everyone, especially those persons just starting out on a career, or who are in the midst of a steady state of employment. I have learned to pay myself each paycheck, no matter the situation. Investing is a habit. A good habit.

Church School Lesson Overview

(Continued from page 18)

Ezekiel prophesied as a captive from Babylon. In 597 BC he had been taken along with the king of Judah and around 10,000 others. Ezekiel's ministry started five years of captivity in 592 BC.

Along with Jeremiah, Ezekiel prophesied the end of the nation of Judah with Jerusalem being destroyed and the temple defiled. Although preaching in this message in Jerusalem and being in danger of being executed for treason, Jeremiah persisted and went on to write a letter to the exiles in Babylon. In the letter he told them to prepare for a long captivity.

Ezekiel preached the same message from Babylon. He encouraged fellow Israelites to not believe the rumors of an early return back to Jerusalem from exile. The first thirty chapters of his book predicts the dire consequences resulting from sin on Judah and the nations around them.

Immunizations

(Continued from page 13)

4. **Vaccination can mean the difference between life and death.** Approximately 50,000 adults die each year from vaccine-preventable diseases in the U.S.
5. **Vaccines are safe and effective.** Vaccines are among the safest medical products available. The potential risks associated with the diseases prevented by the vaccines are much greater than the potential risks from the vaccines themselves.
6. **Vaccines will not give/cause the disease they are designed to prevent.** One cannot "catch" the disease from the vaccine. Vaccines contain either "killed" virus that cannot cause the disease or weakened viruses designed to not cause the disease.
7. **Young and healthy people can get very sick, too.** Infants and the elderly are at greater risk for infections and complications but anyone can be impacted.
8. **Vaccine-preventable diseases are expensive.** In addition to directly impacting individuals' health, there are direct and indirect costs that exceed \$10 billion per year.
9. **When a person becomes ill, their children, grandchildren and parents are at risk, too.** When a person gets vaccinated to protect themselves, they are protecting family members as well.
10. **Your family and coworkers need you.** Millions of adults get sick each year from vaccine-preventable diseases. They miss work and are unable to care for children and/or aging parents.



Summer Vacation Fun Pictures

Some St. John members have shared pictures from their summer travels.



Mildred, Bernard Sr., Bernard Jr. and Lorraine Powers vacationed in Hawaii.



Stephanie Scott, Cheba Johnson, Shanda Scott, and Jonathan Scott enjoyed a seven day Western Caribbean Cruise.



Renee' Booker and her sisters took a road trip from Arizona to Washington, DC.

Koinonia Ministry Enjoys Game Night with the Wrights

Sharon Lott

The Koinonia Ministry "Game Night: Luau Edition" on Friday July 21, 2017 at the Wright's Family Home was a wonderful and blessed experience. There was plenty of food, games and fellowship for everyone who attended.

The group played a lot of games, but there was one that was the family's favorite of all. The Pastor and First Lady introduced the Koinonias to a game called Pit. This game has to have at least seven (7) players at a time and each player is dealt 9 cards. There are 8 different commodities on the cards which are traded amongst the players. The object of the game is the first person to have all 9 cards with the same commodity wins. Pit was so much fun and it was hysterical to see the Pastor and First Lady's reaction during the game.



Kelsey Wilson shared her thoughts on the evening. "What an amazing time it was to be surrounded by such youthful and like-minded spirits. I always find myself being drawn to those who love fellowshiping and inspiring others to walk closer with Christ. St. John AME makes me feel at home but the Koinonia Ministry had a way of making me feel even closer to my generational culture. I look forward to other events which allow us to fellowship. As well as determine how we may cultivate and help those grow beyond the scopes of their experiences."

Also, the Koinonia Ministry discussed new and exciting events for this upcoming year. What a fellowship and what a joy divine!

The Koinonia Ministry is a 9th District ministry designed to meet the needs of young adults (ages 18-45). The purpose is to provide support for this age group, promote active engagement in the church and to encourage others in this age group to become members of the church and this ministry.

September 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
8th Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference Daniel Payne Community Plaza Birmingham, Alabama						
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship Communion Sunday AMEN DEADLINE	Labor Day		12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal		10:30 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship Music Workshop Concert 5:00 p.m.			12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study		6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship		11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study		6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	10:00 a.m. VUMS Meeting
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship		11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study			

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The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright, Bishop

The Reverend Sherita Seawright, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor

Important Dates to Remember

August 19, 2017	Church Picnic
August 20, 2017	Pastor's Appreciation, 10:00 a.m.
August 27, 2017	AAMU Day
August 29—September 2	8th Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference Daniel Payne Legacy Village 1500 Daniel Payne Drive, Birmingham, Alabama
September 8-10, 2017	Music Workshop with Dr. Roland Carter

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*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*

INDNJC

ST. JOHN A.M.E.N NEWSLETTER



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 22 Issue 9

September 2017



ST. JOHN AME HUNTSVILLE

"Sharing The Word, Serving The People."



Rejoice
With Great Pleasure

THE ST. JOHN AME
CHURCH FAMILY PROUDLY
WELCOMES BACK

Pastor Maurice Wright. II

& FIRST LADY REVEREND JORETHA WRIGHT & FAMILY

GOD HAS BLESSED US ALL "REAL, REAL, REAL GOOD"!



We Love You!

Pastor Maurice Wright & Family

2017 Delegate's Report of the 8th Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference

at Daniel Payne Plaza in Birmingham, Alabama
Tuesday, August 30th – Saturday, September 2nd

Mary Rankin



Members stand with Pastor Wright as he makes his report to Bishop Seawright.



Delegate Mary Rankin makes a appeal on behalf of the church for the return of Pastor Wright.

As a delegate for the 8th Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference in Birmingham, Alabama, this writer was humbled to be trusted to represent the St. John AME - Huntsville church family. So I surrendered my fears to God, having faith that He would provide exactly what was needed to serve Him in this capacity.

The first official duty as delegate began as I stood to affirm my presence to answer the Roll Call along with reciting a bible verse. During the Roll Call, Bishop Seawright duly noted the transfers of Pastor Maurice Wright and the Reverend Joretha Wright from the Northeast Alabama Annual Conference to the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference. Soon thereafter, the following action items took place: Conference Boundaries were set, Presiding Elders Summary Reports were read, and the Conference Finance Committee Report was read.

God's word during the 9:00 a.m. devotion service on Wednesday focused on peace of mind and faith to anticipate the great things that God will do for us at this Annual Conference. God's word was true as the 10:00 a.m. Worship Session opened with St. John's presiding elder, the Reverend Oliver Allen's heartfelt greetings, thanking

everyone for all that was done for him and his family during his tenure in the South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer District and the entire 9th Episcopal District. Presiding Elder Allen opened up the "floodgates" with his beautiful voice as he sang, "The Lord Will Make a Way Somehow", bringing all the passion, all the love and gratitude that this song represents, to our hearts and souls as we openly praised God for His grace and mercy in our lives. This song was a sermon all by itself! However, Presiding Elder Allen took us to 1 Kings 17:1-10, introducing his sermon title as, "A Man on a Mission". We were asked to focus on this important phrase, "and he went" which sparked a fire in me as a "woman who went"! From his message, we were reminded that if we are obedient to God's word, if we go where God leads us, He will never leave us alone.

St. John's presence on Wednesday was in full bloom the entire day. The Wednesday evening Educational Worship Service was led by Pastor Maurice Wright, the speaker for the evening was introduced by Dr. Jeanette Jones and the speaker of the evening was Dr. Andrew Hugine Jr. Now, you cannot get more St. John Huntsville than that!!!! Dr. Hugine's powerful mes-

(Continued on page 3)

2017 Delegate's Report of the 8th Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference

Mary Rankin

(Continued from page 2)



Dr. Jones introduces Dr. Hagine.



Bishop Seawright and Dr. Hagine

sage entitled "Transforming Education in the Present Age", challenged all to lead by having high expectations for all of our children and young adults so that they will become academically successful using these principles...

E xpectations
D iversity
U nity
C ommitment
A ction plans
T eachers
I ndividual responsibility
O pportunity
N ever give up

Thursday, August 31 was filled with great anticipation and enthusiasm as it was the day on which Pastor Maurice Wright II would read his Pastoral Report. The 8:00 a.m. Devotion and Bible Study challenged conference attendees to be a "team" of church members, who encourages and empowers others to be connected as "doers" in our church...showing evidence that the Holy Spirit in us, is working through us, to help others to be connected to God through their church family. Immediately following the morning Devotion and Bible Study, Bishop Seawright moved swiftly through the following proceedings: Conference Institute, Business Session, and Reading of the Minutes.

Pastor Maurice Wright clearly explained to Bishop Seawright, and the Conference attendees, St. John's mission and ministries that reflect the members' love of church and community to "Share the Word and Serve the People". Included with Pastor Wright's report for each attendee to receive, was a beautifully designed in-color report booklet of St. John - Huntsville's programs and ministries, including a CD of Pastor Wright's dynamic and anointed soul-saving sermons, entitled, "Understanding Your Scars".

Additionally, as the delegate for this conference year, I felt God's continued blessings for St. John, as I delivered my allotted two-minute plea and "original song" to Bishop Seawright, asking him to send Pastor Wright "right" back to Huntsville, Alabama. I appreciated the smiles and applause from the audience as I completed the plea and was so very thankful that God had blessed us again "Real, Real, Real good"!

The Thursday afternoon Hour of Power Women in Ministry Service began soon after the last Pastor's Report was completed.

(Continued on page 4)

2017 Delegate's Report of the 8th Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference

Mary Rankin

(Continued from page 3)

The Reverend Anna Mosby, pastor of St. Jude AME Church in Germantown, Maryland, brought a word from the Lord entitled, "Follow the Plan" (Romans 8:26-28). Her sermon invited us to always trust God and follow His plan, because His strategic planning will put us in a place that we can only dream about. Our charge as believers is to trust God and follow His plan.

Thursday evening, the Sons of Allen Service honored men in the Northwest Annual Conference who have made a difference in their church family and/or community. The following distinguished men of St. John AME - Huntsville were honored:

Men of St. John AME-Huntsville: Sons of Allen Unit Award
Mr. Bill Williams: Man of the Year Award
Colonel (Ret.) James Heyward: Man of the Year Award
Dr. Andrew Hugine, Jr: Making a Difference in Education Award

The sermon for this power-packed evening service was entitled, "Encountering God". The Reverend Robert Hodges, Sr. from Allen AME Church in Baltimore, Maryland stated that if we live right, do right, and expect something from the worship service, we can have an encounter with God. However, if we do not bring "nothing" into the service, we can't expect to get "anything" from the service. He ended his sermon by saying, "Only What You do for Christ will Last" which is ironically, the name of the beautiful song that the spirit-filled Conference Choir blessed us with during the Sons of Allen Service.

The Ordination Sermon entitled "Graveyard Revival" (Ezekiel 37:1-14), preached by the Reverend Dr. William Campbell, pastor of Union Bethel AME Church and proud pastor of praise dancers, the Alepho - Anointed Vessels, teaches us that the "valley of dry bones" will put you in the midst of an impossible situation that will make you wonder why you were given this anointed appointment. Trust God as He puts the "heart" back into your "dry bones", and preach anyway! After the invitation to Christian Discipleship was extended, Bishop Seawright led the ordination of ministers which included the Reverend Jor-etha Wright ("Rev. Rita").

The last three services on the agenda were: Memorial Service, Conference Church School and the Lay Organization Worship Service featuring the (WOD) Women of Distinction Praise Ministry and a Lay Video Presentation.

On Saturday morning, the Conference was dedicated to the Young People's & Children Division (YPD) whose task was to perform in the 12 Tribes of Israel Pageant. The youth and children did an outstanding job with their recitations, praise dancing, props such as flags, signs, colorful scarfs and dress wear. St. John AME YPDers, showed up and showed out, as they represented the "Tribe of Dan". Congratulations to St. John participants Michael Clark, Anthony Harbin, Daniel Haygood, Martine Hill, Anthony Mack, Jayla Mack, Eddie Whitehead and Kimberly Whitehead for a job well done. St. John member Kelsey Wilson led one of the YPD Choir's selections.



Bishop Seawright presides during the Conference.

The Closing Worship and Commissioning Service was highlighted with a strong and stirring Proclamation of the Word delivered by Dr. Silvester Beaman on "DeUglification of the Battle," reflecting on scripture from Mathew 17:1-9; 1 Kings 20. Dr. Beaman, a native of Niagara Falls, New York is a graduate of Wilberforce University and Boston University. Upon graduating from seminary he was given the University's Outstanding Preacher and Bible Reader award, which was manifested in the message he delivered.

(Continued on page 5)

2017 Delegate's Report of the 8th Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference

Mary Rankin

(Continued from page 4)

Following the worship service, the bishop gave \$5,000 to each Presiding Elder to distribute to pastors in their district who had the most need or at their discretion. It is the District's way of giving back to the community. Retired pastors also received a check: the Reverend. McCall and the Reverend Fitchard and Mrs. Mildred Hereford, widow of former Pastor Hereford, received a check.

THEN, we waited patiently for Bishop Seawright to read the pastoral appointments. Excited St. John members praised God as the Reverend Maurice Wright II was assigned to St. John—Huntsville. We look forward to another year of the amazing "T-WE" experience (Team Wright Experience). Although Presiding Elder Allen retired during this Annual Conference, he was temporarily assigned to continue as presiding elder of the South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer District.

Pastor Wright Welcomed and Conference Certificates Acknowledged During First Service of the Conference Year



Steward Marcus Hill presents Pastor Wright.



Pastor Wright with Sons of Allen award recipients Mr. Bill Williams and Col. (retired) James O. Heyward



Pastor Wright presents Conference Trustee Certificate to Dr. Jeanette Jones.



Pastor Wright presents Conference Trustee Certificate to Col. (retired) James Heyward.

The Northwest Alabama Conference Women's Missionary Society 2017 Convention Held in Birmingham

Charlsie Brooks



St. John WMS prepared to attend the "Night in White" service. Pathways, Inc.

Tuesday, August 29, 2017, members of the Betty E. Derrick Missionary Society from St. John AME Church, Huntsville, travelled to Daniel Payne Legacy Village, Birmingham, to attend the Northwest Alabama WMS Annual Convention.

The early morning program was led by the Reverend Sherita Moon Seawright, Episcopal Supervisor, Sister Susie Bonner, Episcopal WMS President and Sister Patricia Smith, Northwest Alabama Conference WMS President. After morning breakfast and devotions, the business session began. The two conference workshops were very informative and enlightening. They were "WMS Life Membership" (three (3) new members received their Life Collars) and "Constitution & Bylaws." Both workshops were very well presented. The WMS compassionate care outreach project was to donate cleaning/laundry supplies to



Ms. Michelle Mabue received donations to Pathways, Inc.

The dynamic guest speaker for the infamous "Annual Night in White" was Dr. Patricia (PAM) M. DeVeaux, spouse of Bishop (Retired) William P. DeVeaux. The subject of her message was "When Jesus Takes Over the Case." She referenced scripture from Luke 18:35-42. She emphasized that, like the blind beggar, all who need intervention should go to Jesus because He will take care of the problem. She noted that the blind man had to leave behind hatred and persist in his petition, just as missionaries should. She concluded with a call to turn the case over to Jesus by going to Him boldly.

One attendee from St. John, Mrs. Mary Powers, shared that she enjoyed the convention because the sessions started on time, there was a non-contested election, business was conducted in a timely manner and there was a long break between the business sessions and the evening session.

Those attending the convention from St. John were Lorraine Parham, local WMS president, Janice Hereford, Pearlean Myhand, Rosemary Wells, Eleanor Burnett, Ernestine Barnes-Ivey, Angeline Brownlow, Annie Hall, Charlsie Brooks, Claudinette Purifoy-Fears, Mary Allen, Monica Dillihunt, Eva Smith, Donnie Thompson, and Mary Powers.



Weekly Bible Study

Wednesday, 12 pm and 6 pm

Pastor Wright leads Bible Study each Wednesday at noon and 6 pm (unless otherwise noted on the church calendar).



Bishop John Richard Bryant Preached for Pastoral Appreciation Celebration

Bridget J. Floyd



Rev. Rita and Pastor Wright

At 10 a.m. on Sunday, August 20th, the members of St. John honored Servant Pastor Maurice Wright, II and the Reverend Joretha Wright and family. The theme for Pastor Wright's first Appreciation Celebration at St. John was "Servant Leader: Soaring with Faith and Strength to New Heights". The Right Reverend John Richard Bryant (Ret.) AMEC was guest preacher for this special day. Pastor Wright referred to Bishop Bryant as his father/mentor in the ministry. Pastor Wright was also blessed to have his father, the Reverend Maurice Wright I, present for the special occasion.

The Reverend Dr. Daniel K. Wims served as worship leader for the service. The Mass Choir and musicians under the direction of Mr. Reginald Pearson provided inspirational and uplifting worship through music. The invocation was led by Steward Clifton Miller. Old and New Testament scriptures were

read by Steward Barbara Johnson and young Mr. Daniel Haygood. The Reverend Gloria Madison led the congregation in a summary of the Decalogue. Dr. Thalia Love offered a children's message for those aged twelve and younger. Pastor Wright recognized members' birthdays for the month of August and with the aid of the Reverend Joretha Wright and Mr. and Mrs. David Norwood, made presentations to those who were celebrating wedding anniversaries.



Mass Choir ministers in song.



Barbara Johnson reads scripture.



Daniel Haygood reads scripture.

Stewards James O. Heyward and Jeanette Jones gave the occasion and litany, respectively. Colonel (Ret.) Heyward gave an apropos tribute/description of Pastor Wright that highlighted his many attributes that have been a blessing to St. John and the reasons that he is in fact appreciated by St. John. Dr. Jones led the congregation in reading the "Pastor's Appreciation Litany" that she composed, based on Isaiah 40:30 42:1-9.

Pastor Wright introduced Bishop Bryant who brought an inspirational message that was not only pertinent to the occasion and the pastor, but to the congregation at large. In his introduction, Pastor Wright credited Bishop Bryant with inviting/inspiring him to become a part of the African Methodist Episcopal Church – "...this church I love so much". Pastor Wright indicated that the 14th anniversary of his ordination as an Itinerant Elder in the AME Church would occur during the upcoming week. He went on to say that he has consulted with Bishop Bryant regarding every major decision in the ministry. He paid homage to his mentor, stating that Pastor Wright was "standing here today in the AME Church and Huntsville because of Bishop Bryant". He indicated that Bishop Bryant is one of the key figures in African Methodism, comparing him to the Founder and a couple of early leaders in the AME Church. He stated that Bishop Bryant is "one of the world's greatest preachers...a humble man". The congregation stood to receive The Right Reverend John Richard Bryant.

Bishop Bryant spoke on the title "You Got to Finish It" from the text Genesis 24:51-56.

(Continued on page 8)



Bishop John Bryant

Bishop John Richard Bryant Preached for Pastoral Appreciation Celebration

Bridget J. Floyd

(Continued from page 7)



He began by noting that everyone aspires to success rather than failure. However, not everyone knows how to be successful. He proceeded to give guidance as to how to obtain success. He recommended that one have models of success. He noted that even if a person does not make the best choices in all instances, if their mentors or heroes are positive, they are likely to have positive outcomes themselves. He cautioned that success is not always associated with a high position or status; in fact, one should "never despise humble beginnings...never consider any task below you". He cited the person in the text, Elizer, who was a servant that rose to the level of being the logical recipient of Abraham's wealth before he had an heir late in life. However, there was no bitterness or jealousy when this changed. In fact he took on the assignment from Abraham to find a proper wife for Abraham's son, Isaac. The preacher noted that Elizer stayed on task and was not deterred in his mission, even when given the opportunity. He finished it!

Bishop Bryant and the Reverend Maurice Wright I.

Bishop Bryant indicated that in order to be successful, one should not be jealous of anyone else's position or success; that is, "What's for me is for me". He noted that in order to be truly successful, a person needs to align his/her life with God's will. When that is done, "no demon on Earth can harm you". To do this, one must have a prayer life—be in communication with God. He reiterated the example of the servant in the text and encouraged congregants to "Finish it!" He cited numerous examples of tasks—educational, career aspirations, and others—highlighting what must be done to "Finish it".



The Wright family receives gifts from the church

The preacher then specified to Pastor Wright that he, in fact, must "Finish it". He noted the numerous tasks that the Reverend Wright has begun as pastor of St. John and in being a minister "...lives to change, souls to save, children to influence..." The Bishop highlighted a phrase that was utilized earlier in the service: "The best is yet to come".

Bishop Bryant cited the life and actions of Jesus Christ as an example of completing the task. Not even going to the Cross would / could cause Him to leave His mission unfinished—even as He commented to His Father: "It is finished". This outstanding preacher very poignantly encouraged those present to carefully and seriously reflect on accepting salvation and becoming a member of St. John. Several came forward.

After the sermon, special presentations were made by the ministerial staff, led by the Reverend Madison; Mrs. Claire Philadelphia and the Pastor's Aid Board; and Steward Guy Ginn and the Steward Board. Pastor Wright, the Reverend Joretha Wright, and their three youngest children were presented with tokens of appreciation.

Pastor Wright's father was invited to bring greetings/remarks and he greeted St. John and expressed pride in his son, noting that Pastor Wright "has always had the 'it factor'". He indicated that he gave his son to God and that God surrounded Pastor



The Wright family at dinner



Elders and Mrs. Allen with Bishop Bryant

Wright with 'great men', turning to Bishop Bryant. Pastor Wright then responded by graciously expressing his appreciation and noting his commitment to St. John.

At the conclusion of the moving worship service, a luncheon was held at the Earnest Knight Center on the Campus of Alabama A & M University.

St. John AME Church Turns Into A "Church Without Walls On The Hill" At Alabama A&M University

Jeanette Jones

It was a great day on "the Hill" and a very exciting day, as we watched the young men and women from Alabama A&M University, faculty, staff, administrators; and the St. John AME church family and friends, walk into the Ernest L. Knight Reception Center until it reached a near capacity of 610.

The St. John AME church family, under the pastoral leadership of Maurice Wright II and the Reverend Joretha Wright turned the Ernest L. Knight Center at Alabama A&M University into a House of Worship minus the church steeple. It was a great day! The music provided by the St. John praise team ushered in the spirit of worship maintained throughout the service. Under the direction of Ms. Shayla Wilson, the youth praise dancers, representing all age levels, continued to garner the attention of the congregation and moved the spirit in the room to another hallelujah praise level. The music ministry, led by Reginald Pearson, kept the spiritual atmosphere at a high level of praise as the choir ministered to our hearts.



AAMU Students and St. John members in worship



The Reverend Dr. Daniel K. Wims welcomed the AAMU students, visitors and friends on behalf of AAMU President Andrew Hugine, Jr. and shared the historic relationship between St. John AME Church and Alabama A&M University. He stated that St. John is bringing the church to the campus, "the Hill"; the place where the primary organizer of St. John, the Reverend Dr. William Hooper Council, was also the founder of Alabama A&M University. In essence, Pastor Wright and the Reverend Joretha Wright are expanding their ministerial leadership in the Greater Huntsville Community to win souls and minister to the youth.



Ministry in dance



Ministry in music



Pastor Wright

The Reverend Wright proclaimed the Word of God in a message that commanded the attention of all in attendance. His message, "In It To Win It," captivated the audience. He highlighted four important points for the students as they engage in goal setting for the academic year: always consider the outset, the outlook, the outreach and the outcome. After a very powerful and spirit filled message, one student gave her life to Christ and seven others joined as affiliated members. The Stewards welcomed the new members and offered words of prayer and encouragement to them.

Following the service, the pastor and members of the St. John family joined the students, faculty, and administrators as they dined in the campus cafeteria.

Annual Picnic was a "Carnival Extravaganza"

Charlsie Brooks



Committee members prepare to serve the meal at picnic.

Who knew there would be "candy apples", "hot buttered popcorn", "cotton candy", "animal crackers in their cute circus boxes", "peanuts flowing from adoring jars wrapped in gross grain ribbons", placed on beautiful cut burlap tables runners? No one knew. Only the elite group of coordinators, Jakeyah LaShay Williams, along with LaCondria Bryant and "children at heart" committee members knew that their coordinated efforts would have St. John members, even now, shouting accolades and praises.

The Carnival Extravaganza was held on Saturday, August 19, 2017, at the fabulous Alabama A & M University farm. The room was beautifully decorated and ready for all at 1:00p.m. A beautiful sunshiny day allowed the children to enjoy the huge moon bounce, basketball inflatable and high strike games that were enjoyed in a safe outside environment. It was so much fun they did not want to come in to eat.



Games offered inside included Uno, Spades, and Phase 10. St. John's signature game Family Feud, led by Mr. Sandifer and Mrs. A. Brownlow, was a usual smashing hit. Teams played fearlessly with many winning prizes awarded. The Bid Whist and Phase 10 games competitors almost cheered the roof off the building. Oh, yes, there was Bingo that those more quiet participants enjoyed.

Dinner was served at 4:00 p.m. Plates were heavily laden with "chicken on a stick", "chicken/beef tacos and nachos"; fried fish, hot dogs in (a variety of choices). A delicious themed cake was served for dessert.

After dinner, the evening ended with gift ticket drawing, comments from Pastor Wright and Rev. Rita, and the dismissal.

The committee is to be commended for an exceptional and fun evening. It appeared to have been immensely enjoyed by all.

Annual Picnic was a "Carnival Extravaganza"

Charlsie Brooks





Soup Kitchen Ministry

Charlie Brooks

What Do You Need Today?

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." Matthew 7:7 (NIV)

Have you heard your children say: "Why don't we have anything to eat"? Parents think, because you ate it all when we bought groceries just the other day. Or, they think, "Why doesn't food last one week, like normal, sane, regular-eating people". Parents are sometimes thinking, jokingly, we can offer them one meal a day and then lock them out of the house and let them forage for the rest. And they think, "What will the neighbors think"? They come to grips that they are growing giants, trying to nurture young growing bodies. Parents really think: "Did they eat a whole loaf of bread, and a whole jar of peanut butter in a day or two?"

We can be thankful that with Jesus, provisions never run out. He never says, "Oh, I am so sorry...we are all out of grace today." Or, "You really should have stocked up on mercy yesterday because I've got nothing for you." He does not tell us there is no more love, check back tomorrow.

His stores of grace and mercy and love are unending. They are new every day. Bountiful. Overflowing. We can run to Him every hour of every day, and He will meet us with open arms and say, "I have every single thing that you will ever need."

But, what about the beginning of our story: About the hungry children? Please help us feed the needy by providing funds and time to stock our monthly "SOUP KITCHEN". We serve only on the 3rd and 4th Tuesday of each month, but that helps many through the month who are without.

Thank you to those who regularly share and we ask that you please pray that we can continue to help those in need.

"What do you need today?
Ask Jesus to supply that need.
He has all that you need and more."

Deaconess Corner

Submitted by Deaconess Ernestine Barnes-Ivery

The Spirit and Prayer of a Torch Bearer

Today Dear Lord I'm 80 and there is much I haven't done,
I hope Dear Lord You'll let me live until I'm eighty-one.

So many places I want to go, so very much to see...
Would You please Dear Lord let me stay awhile
until I'm eighty-three.

The world is changing very fast,
there is so much in store.
I'd like it very much to live way past 84!

And see what happens to the world when approaching
Heaven's Gate,
I know dear Lord it's much to ask
but could that be past 88?

I know by then I won't be fast and may not shine or whine,
But it would be very pleasant
To be around till 99!

I will have seen so many things,
I would like to ask one more,
Maybe for a world wide flight
Or whatever you have in store.

And so Dear Lord
I'd like to stay, way past 102,
Before I make my final journey,
my journey home to You!

**Let us not
become weary
in doing good,
for at the proper time
we will reap a harvest
if we do not give up.**
Galatians 6:9

Online Giving Options

PayPal

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Church School Lesson Overview – October 2017

The lesson reviews were written by Willie Sandifer.

October 1, 2017

Lesson Title: God's Covenant with Abram

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 15:1-21

Print: Genesis 15:1-6, 17-21

Devotional Songs: #255, #272, and #243

Key Verse: "In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river to Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." (Genesis 15:18).

This unit focuses on the covenants themselves and in this lesson God's covenant with Abram. The lesson looks at the specific agreements, or promises God made with His people, beginning with His covenant with Abram, a covenant relating to posterity and land. The lesson looks at Abram's acceptance by faith of the seemingly impossible.

October 8, 2017

Lesson Title: God's Covenant with Israel

Lesson Scripture: Exodus 19:1-25

Print: Exodus 19:16-25

Devotional Songs: #345, #258, and #243

Key Verse: "Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount" (Exodus 19:17).

In this lesson, the focus is the solemnness and fearfulness of the time preceding the giving of the commandments. To impress on the people that they were sinners and that sin always separates God and people, God told Moses a couple of times to make sure that no one, not even the priests, was to come up the mountain. Staying away from the mountain was a matter of life and death, for the presence God sanctified the mountain.

God was teaching the nation of Israel about what a covenant with Him would look like. Israel was to be in relationship with God and yet separated from Him. It was apparent that Israel was to keep its distance and it would be disrespectful to rush into the presence of a holy God.

October 15, 2017

Lesson Title: Obeying God's Law

Lesson Scripture: Exodus 20:1-26

Print: Exodus 20:18-26

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

Key Verses: "In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." (Exodus 20:24).

The 19th and 20th chapters of Exodus mark the beginning of the covenant of the law, which continued until the inauguration of the church in Acts 2. While we operate under a different covenant – the new – we still find principles for living today in the Mosaic Law.

Exodus 20 records the Ten Commandments, which describe how relationships between God and people would look. This left the people of Israel with such fear that they requested that Moses become their spokesman to God. Moses assured them they need not fear God, for He was only seeking to test them and to keep them from sinning. God would go on to lay out some specific regulations that would allow a sinful people to worship a holy God.

October 22, 2017

Lesson Title: God's Covenant with David

Lesson Scripture: II Samuel 7:1-16; Psalm 89:1-52

Print: II Samuel 7:1-6, 8-10, 12-16

Tentative Devotional Songs: #412; #97; and #243

Key Verse: "Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever" (II Samuel 7:16)

According to the commentary, the believers in the premillennial system of theology believe Christ will come back to the earth to establish his kingdom at the start of the "one-thousand-year" millennium. The Davidic covenant, in this week's lesson, is part basis for this position. God promised to set up David's throne forever. Only Christ can fulfill this promise. He will reign forever, starting with the millennium.

The commentary sees the Old Testament as a history of God calling Israel into a special relationship or a covenant with Him. It began with Abraham when God promised a seed and a land. It was unremitting on Mount Sinai when God called Israel to obedience to His law. The next great revelatory item came over four hundred years after Sinai. God covenanted with King David, promising to set up and preserve his descendants on Israel's throne. The promise to David was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

October 29, 2017

Lesson Title: God's Covenant with the Returned Exiles

Lesson Scripture: Nehemiah 9:32-38; 10:28-29

Print: Nehemiah 9:1-10:39

Tentative Devotional Songs: #381; #77; and #243

Key Verse: "Thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for

(Continued on page 14)



Summer Vacation Fun Pictures

Some St. John members have shared pictures from their summer travels.



Alicia and Angelina Brownlow at Orange Beach



Shay McCoy on the beach at Gulf Shores



Abbie and Andrew Hugine at the Great Wall in Beijing, China



Jasmyne and Breeanna at the Beach, Emerald Isle, NC



Lenita Rochelle, Lillie Rivers, Aunt Martha, Katina West and Lubi Rochelle at the Beach, Emerald Isle, NC



Karen Minor at the MLK Monument in Washington, D.C.

Church School Lesson Overview – October 2017

(Continued from page 13)

thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly" (Nehemiah 9:33)

The book of Nehemiah opens revealing that Nehemiah was the cupbearer to Artaxerxes, who was a Persian king. Nehemiah learned the walls of Jerusalem were still in ruins even though the Jews had been back in Judah for many years. Nehemiah sat down and cried, mourned certain days, fasted, and prayed.

After returning to Jerusalem with permission, Nehemiah led efforts to rebuild the walls of the city. With both human determination and divine help, the project was finished in less than two months.

The events in this week's lesson took place over a thousand years after the people had promised to obey God at Mount Sinai. A new generation had come back from captivity and were in the land God promised to Israel's ancestors. Even so, they were not free and were in subjection to the Persian kings. The commentary says it was time to turn to God in honest and humble confession.

Are you effectively planning for retirement?

Bobby Adkins

The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining. ~ John F. Kennedy

When do you plan to retire seems like it would be an easy question to answer with a quick age-related response, or something along the lines of "never" or "as soon as I can." Now, really focus on those words, and think again....When do you plan to retire?

There are eight essential decision areas that will help focus your retirement preparations. The decision areas are: (1) Social Security; (2) Work; (3) Insurance; (4) Retirement Plans; (5) Saving and Investing; (6) Housing; (7) Debt; and (8) Fraud. Each of these factors should be fully examined, to ensure that your personal retirement assessment is complete. Now, you may have other variables to consider, but these eight, according to Smart About Money News cover a majority of the scenarios you may face in your golden years. <https://www.smartaboutmoney.org/Courses/My-Retirement-Plan>



When you think about retirement, you are contemplating what your future might hold. To do this, you have to start with an overall objective – your ideal retirement. But the eight key areas listed above will need to be addressed to help you achieve that desired retirement. Once you know how close you are and what else you need to make logical decisions about, then you can focus on planning for that future. Break your planning and assessment down into these three categories:

- **Size up your situation:** Size up your current circumstances, preparations and confidence in being able to achieve your desired retirement.
- **Analyze your decisions:** Analyze eight key decision areas that help or hinder your progress in achieving your chosen retirement lifestyle.
- **Make a Plan:** Make plans to prepare for your financial needs during retirement.

How Do You Feel About Retirement? How will you feel when you retire? No one can tell you how to feel about your retirement because it's unique to every person. You may be looking forward to retirement, or it might frighten you to think about the finances, what to do with your time, or even how people will react to you as a retiree. Like any transition in life, retiring can bring about various emotions. Not surprisingly, many retirees move through a variety of reactions about being retired. After all, retirement is a major life transition.

What are Your Motivations for Retirement? You have been motivated to get good grades, you have educated yourself to get a good job, and you work hard to earn money and live the life you want. But even these seemingly positive motivations for your actions can have downsides. For example, getting good grades can mean that you do not get enough rest from all the studying. Educating yourself for a good job may not pan out if your chosen career is not satisfying. Finally, working hard for a particular lifestyle means you can miss some of the simple pleasures in life. Do any of these motivations sound familiar?

- I am tired of working or unhappy with the work I do.
- My company is forcing me into retirement.
- Health concerns (for me or others) make it difficult for me to continue working.
- I want to enjoy my life with my hobbies, travel and family.

What is motivating you to retire? So, what motivates you to retire? Are you prepared for it? What are some of the downsides if you do retire? Write down your motivations for retiring and think about how your life will look in the future. Can you think of any negatives? Write those down too – you will need a plan to address them. Your Values Count! When you make retirement plans your financial needs and values will influence your decisions for the retirement you envision. Consider these statements for example, containing value and financial sentiments.

Your Retirement Aspirations: Whether you think retirement is just around the corner or a long way off in the future, thinking

(Continued on page 16)

Are you effectively planning for retirement?

Bobby Adkins

(Continued from page 13)

about what you want to do with your retirement will give you guidance for your next steps.

When Will Your Retirement Happen?



- I see something in the far distance (20 – 34 years old): Perfect! This is the best time to start planning your retirement. The earlier you can start saving for your retirement, the more benefit you will reap from earnings on your savings.
- I am within sight of retirement (35 – 49 years old): OK, take a good look at your retirement savings. If possible, you have saved somewhere up to three times your salary. Keep contributing to employer-sponsored retirement savings plans and continue (or increase) savings on your own as well (e.g., in a taxable account or tax-deferred IRA).
- I am closing in on retirement (50 or older, but not to full retirement age yet): If you have been saving all along, you might have up to five times your salary. Do not fret if not; you still have time to save and increase your earnings. Additionally, at age 50 or older, you can increase the amount you contribute to qualified accounts [401(k), 403(b) and IRA contributions] to help catch up.
- I am already there (65 or older): Now it is time to make decisions about continued employment, your financial readiness for retirement, and managing your income in the years to come. If you have been planning all along, then you might be ready to retire.

What is Your Life Expectancy? What is the optimal age to retire? Well, it depends on your preparedness and how long you can expect to live. Reductions in deaths from major diseases (like heart disease, cancer or stroke) have positively influenced life expectancies in the U.S. Currently, the life expectancy for an infant born in 2014 is almost 79 years. And, once you hit major age milestones (65 or more years), your life expectancy can increase. Understanding your life expectancy is important because you will want to have enough resources to cover your life span after retirement. Your sources of income may become limited when you retire. To factor your life expectancy, go to the following website to calculate <https://www.ssa.gov/OACT/population/longevity.html>

If you take into consideration the lesson above, you will effectively position yourself to maximize your retirement wellness and mitigate those unknowns that constitute life and longevity. Over the next several months, this feature will break down the eight essentials.

Church School Book Club

September 2017

Discussion Date: September 16, 2017

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Truly, Madly, Guilty, Liane Moriarty, 2016

October 2017

Discussion Date: October 21, 2017

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Kindred, Octavia Butler, 2004

Dana, a modern black woman, is celebrating her twenty-sixth birthday with her new husband when she is snatched abruptly from her home in California and transported to the antebellum South. Rufus, the white son of a plantation owner, is drowning, and Dana has been summoned to save him. Dana is drawn back repeatedly through time to the slave quarters, and each time the stay grows longer, more arduous, and more dangerous until it is uncertain whether or not Dana's life will end, long before it has a chance to begin. —Amazon.

October 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship Bishop Healing-Byfield Communion Sunday Gospel Choir Rehearsal	2 8:30 a.m. Fifty-Plus Auxiliary 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	7
8 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	9	10	11 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	12	13	14 10:30 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting
15 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	16	17 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	18 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	19	20 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	21
22 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	23	24 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	25 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	26	27 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	28 10:00 a.m. VMS Meeting
29 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	31	31				

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The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright, Bishop

The Reverend Sherita Seawright, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor

Important Dates to Remember

SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

CHURCH CONFERENCE, 6:00 P.M.

OCTOBER 1, 2017

**BISHOP ANNE HENNING BYFIELD, GUEST PREACHER,
10:00 A.M. WORSHIP**



**8TH SESSION OF THE
NORTHEAST ALABAMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

September 26-30, 2017

Gaines Chapel AME Church

**The Reverend Nathaniel Copeland, Pastor
911 Dillingham Street, Phenix City, Alabama 36867**

**8TH SESSION OF THE
SOUTHWEST ALABAMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

October 10-14, 2017

Gaines Chapel AME Church

**The Reverend Amos Smith, Pastor
122 Carver Avenue, Atmore, Alabama 36502**

2017 Planning Meeting

November 2-4, 2017

**Daniel Payne Community Plaza
1500 Daniel Payne Drive, Birmingham, Alabama 35214**

*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*

INDNJC

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



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 22 Issue 10

October 2017

Bishop Anne Henning Byfield Welcomed by St. John

Bridget J. Floyd



Pastor Wright, Bishop Henning Byfield and Rev. Rita



Mrs. Mary Allen, Bishop Henning Byfield and
Presiding Elder Oliver Allen, Jr.

On Sunday, October 1st, St. John was privileged to welcome Bishop Anne Henning Byfield, 135th elected and consecrated Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC). Bishop Henning Byfield is the presiding prelate of the 16th Episcopal District. In his introduction of the preacher for the day, Pastor Wright noted the inspirational role she has played in his ministerial life as well as her notable achievements. In summary, he indicated that she has served in the ministry for 40 years, having pastored three congregations and prior to becoming bishop, she was Presiding Elder in the 4th Episcopal District of the AMEC. Bishop Henning Byfield is a published author of three (3) books, numerous articles, and pamphlets. He noted that "she tells it like it is!" She delighted listeners as she read/recited poetry from two of her books before beginning her sermon. The positive themes of self-esteem and confidence were evident in the words and the presentation. Bishop Henning Byfield's proud membership in Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority was recognized by Pastor Wright, two local chapters of the sorority and St. John sorority members. This was led by Dr. Thalia Love and Mrs. Adrienne Pope-Kelley Washington.

The 10 a.m. worship service began with the processional by clergy and the Mass Choir. The Reverend Charles Glover led the congregation in the Call to Worship, followed by the invocation by the Reverend Gloria Madison and scripture reading by the Reverend Joretha Wright (Psalm 37:1-4). Next came the sacrament of infant baptism, the significance of which was not lost on those present.

Bishop Henning Byfield spoke on the topic "It's Time to Reclaim Yourself" with text from James 1:5-8. She began by giving the example of a physician noting that a medical pronouncement

could be deemed as either "good" or "bad" stress depending on the perspective of the individual. She encouraged focus on the positive perspective in order to reclaim oneself. She noted that stressors exist, and gave a litany of wrongs and injustices such as hypocrisy in society, the church, and government. Included in this was the specific examples of recent natural disasters and the differential response of government and even among those island nations/American citizens, there is a lesser response experienced by those in her district compared to other areas that are not receiving sufficient assistance in these trying times. In the wake of distress and inequities the listeners were reminded of James' caution, "Do not be double minded".

(Continued on page 2)

Bishop Anne Henning Byfield Welcomed by St. John

Bridget J. Floyd

(Continued from page 1)



Bishop Anne Henning Byfield delivers a powerful message.

that they doubt God. She noted that it is in these negative circumstances that "we must reclaim ourselves...change your mind". She reminded, "As a person thinketh" that is who s/he is or becomes. Therefore do not focus on negative feedback or criticism from others. It is imperative to not let the negativity of others impact one's thinking, self-worth, or who they become/are. It was at this point that Bishop Henning Byfield shared her memory of a stern chastisement from her mother when she was age five. She drank from a water fountain because it was at a level that she could reach, rather than doing so because it was labelled "colored". Her mother adamantly discouraged this act. Similarly, Bishop Henning Byfield encouraged the congregants to "change your spirit" and to be mindful that "I am not what they call me or even what I call myself". She reminded them of the scriptural recording of the transformation of Paul; that is, from 'killing to bringing people to Christ'. She stated, "You have to decide whose side you are on".

Continuing to note the positive outcome that can/should come from negative situations, Bishop Henning Byfield stated, God can take our lack of skills (or challenging situations) and cause an unexpected/perfect outcome. She gave examples of people receiving negative feedback that they could/would not succeed but in fact earned advanced/terminal degrees, became successful in music/the arts or in sports. Again, the choice is to take either the negative or positive perspective, understanding that the choice can/will make the difference in the outcome.



Bishop Henning Byfield and the members of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. who were present for the service.

She noted the importance of understanding that "God has made promises for you... Jesus got up from the dead". She noted that this means one might need to suffer, "live through the pain" but "if He did it before He'll do it again". Giving the example of the miracle of the resurrection and Jesus defeating the devil, Bishop Henning Byfield noted that "He will get us through" strife and bad times.

The preacher noted that sometimes the difficulties and loss may cause a person to be so negatively impacted

Bishop Henning Byfield noted her doctoral dissertation examining the effect of "short-notice appointments on pastors". This obviously can be stressful to the adults as well as the children in such situations. She shared her experience of adjusting to a move required of her father, noting the pattern of moving every three to four years as a pastor's child. She shared the experience of encountering a determined bully when she started a new school. She noted that following the instructions of her parents resulted in her not having a positive outcome in that first encounter. However, after her mother noted that there is a difference in starting a fight versus defending

(Continued on page 2)

Bishop Anne Henning Byfield

(Continued from page 2)

oneself; that is, establishing that this bully would not have an easy/passive target going forward. With the encounter on the second day, she thought she was alone, but assertively stood her ground and the girl ran away. She subsequently found that she had "hidden" support in that her brother had been hiding in the background, but when she assertively stood her ground, he stepped out (unknowingly to her at the time) so that the bully saw that she had support.

As she concluded, Bishop Henning Byfield proclaimed to the congregants that "You've got somebody who's not hiding... God! You've got some help! Reclaim Yourself!" As she extended the invitation to discipleship, Bishop Henning Byfield extended the "first call" to salvation – "Reclaim Your Salvation!" There was one addition to the St. John church family. Additionally the call for prayer was answered. Bishop Henning Byfield prayed for those who came to the altar for prayer.

There was a beautiful, inspirational spirit present. The blessing of balance between challenge and encouragement was well received by St. John and guests.

After the sermon, Bishop Henning Byfield installed the officers of the Women's Missionary Society.

Bishop Henning Byfield was the chief celebrant for the sacrament of Holy Communion at the request of Pastor Wright. The Pastor, along with Presiding Elder Allen and the St. John ministerial staff, served the congregants. We are thankful for the lovely service, message, and sacraments of the AME Church.

Weekly Bible Study

Wednesday, 12 pm and 6 pm

Pastor Wright leads Bible Study each Wednesday at noon and 6 pm (unless otherwise noted on the church calendar).



Deaconess Corner

Submitted by Deaconess Ernestine Barnes Mery



*The Lord is my Shepherd,
THAT'S RELATIONSHIP!*

*I shall not want
THAT'S SUPPLY!*

*He makes me to lie down in green pastures
THAT'S REST!*

*He leads me beside the still waters
THAT'S REFRESHMENT!*

*He restores my soul
THAT'S HEALING!*

*He leads me in the paths of righteousness
THAT'S GUIDANCE!*

*For His Name's sake
THAT'S PURPOSE!*

*And though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
THAT'S TESTING!*

*I will fear no evil
THAT'S PROTECTION!*

*For You, Lord, are with me
THAT'S FAITHFULNESS!*

*Your rod and Your staff - they comfort me
THAT'S DISCIPLINE & GENTLENESS!*

*You prepare a table before me - in the presence of my enemies
THAT'S HOPE!*

*You anoint my head with oil
THAT'S CONSECRATION!*

*My cup runs over
THAT'S ABUNDANCE!*

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life
THAT'S BLESSING!*

*And I will dwell in the house of the Lord
THAT'S SECURITY!*

*Forever
THAT'S ETERNITY!*

Feeding of the 5000.....The Evolution of the Soup Kitchen

B. Johnson



Soup Kitchen volunteers Stephanie Scott, Templena Stanley, Mary Allen, Pearlean Myhand, Paulette Williams, Johnathan Scott, Karen Minor, and Kay Adkins.

On any given third or fourth Tuesday, the line begins forming at 11:00 a.m. at the door of the Soup Kitchen at St. John AME Church, Huntsville, Alabama even though the Soup Kitchen does not open until exactly 11:30 a.m.. The line consists of senior citizens, middle-aged parents with children, some young adults, and during the summer months, children of varying ages. Since hunger has no respect for ethnicity, the line is very diverse. Some make their way in vehicles, but the majority, walk to the church. Despite their seen or unseen disabilities, they come for one reason only: to obtain a hot meal on the third Tuesday and a bagged lunch on the fourth Tuesday.

According to a news report by Courtney Crown (2017), "In

Madison County, the North Alabama Coalition for the Homeless (NACH) reported a 13% increase in the total number of homeless people in the county. In 2016, the total number reported was 289, but the numbers for 2017 show 379 people living either unsheltered, in emergency shelters or transitional housing." In the state of Alabama, a family of four receives a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) /Food Stamp, allotment of \$309.00 for a full month (United States Dept. of Agriculture, 2017.) Parents receiving this allotment depend on the school system to provide two meals (breakfast and lunch) for their school-aged children. The younger children are provided for, but what about the adult(s) or older children in the family? How do they get their meals now since most families are on fixed income? For those falling into this demographic, food should not become a low priority issue to housing, utilities and medicine, but unfortunately it does.

In 2007 one of St. John's church members, Mrs. Charlsie Brooks, was visiting her sister's (Mrs. Cassandra Pitts) church, St. Paul AME Church in Macon, GA. She observed the operations of their soup kitchen. The church actually picked up the people and brought them to the church for lunch. Afterwards, her thoughts were, "if they can do this for people in their community, why could this program not be replicated to meet the needs of the people in Huntsville?" Mrs. Brooks approached the Reverend Dr. Homer L. McCall with the proposal to begin a soup kitchen at St. John. The Soup Kitchen would be part of the Food Service Committee, the committee which oversees all food preparation for the church. The St. John Soup Kitchen opened in 2009.

With Dr. McCall's blessings, the proposal was shared with the Stewardess Board. The Stewardess Board accepted the challenge. The major concern was security. Second to security concerns were health department regulations. The Health Department was contacted and the concern was resolved. As long as good health procedures were followed, the meals would be considered a donation and considered a free gift. Being a new concept; however, low participation and apprehension ensued. As time passed, the attendance and support grew.

(Continued on page 5)

Feeding of the 5000.....The Evolution of the Soup Kitchen

B. Johnson



Soup Kitchen Volunteers—Winter 2017

(Continued from page 4)

The mission of the Soup Kitchen remains the same: "Our ministry uses the vehicle of food to feed the kingdom by providing excellence in quality and service to all we serve." We strive to live Hebrew 13:2, "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels." The intent was not only to share a meal, but to share the love of Jesus and develop a relationship with the people being served.

The Soup Kitchen works because of dedicated and committed volunteers. Some of the first supporters and workers were Mrs. Charlsie Brooks, Mrs. Eleanor Burnett, Mrs. Maeola Peoples, Mrs. Pearlean Myhand and Mrs. Charlotte Brisker. As the Soup Kitchen grew, more people volunteered. The Stewardesses volunteered. The YPDers helped when they were on

school breaks. Some members came during their lunch hour to assist. Since there was not a budget, members were gracious in donating food as well as kitchen equipment. Mrs. Bessie Smith, Mrs. Lorene Jones and the late Mrs. Susie Hammonds and the late Mrs. Benita Jackson all served as chairpersons for the Food Service Committee.

Later on the Food Service Committee and the Soup Kitchen combined under the supervision of Mrs. Pearlean Myhand and co-chair Maeola Peoples. Mrs. Stephanie Scott serves presently as the Soup Kitchen Ministry supervisor. The issue of security has since been resolved. Mr. Bill Williams, Mr. Jesse Johnson, Mr. Lars Avery and other St. John Trustees currently provide security for the Soup Kitchen.

Originally, the Soup Kitchen was only open on the third Tuesday. The Reverend Dr. Patrick D. Clayborn saw the need to offer the Soup Kitchen twice a month and so the 4th Tuesday was added. The Soup Kitchen was also given a budget. The budget has been increased under the tenure of the Reverend Maurice Wright, II. However, the budget is still not sufficient to support the many needs of the Soup Kitchen. So, many times the members of the soup kitchen fill the gap with their own personal funds.

The meals are prepared with care and concern for the people that come. The kitchen ministry strives to provide good quality, nutritious and attractively packaged meals. Holidays are special in that the people are invited to partake of a hot Thanksgiving and Christmas sit down meal with all the trimmings.

The Soup Kitchen has become popular with the community. St. John just happens to be located adjacent to a local television station. The station sponsors a community event known as "Pay It Forward" where good deeds in the community are recognized with a cash payment of \$319.00. St. John's Soup Kitchen was the recipient of the "Pay It Forward" Award in March of 2014.

The Soup Kitchen not only serves individual persons and families in the Huntsville Community, but also serves other groups. For the last few years, the Soup Kitchen has partnered with The Harris Home for Children to provide meals for the children who reside there. The clients of First Stop, Inc., a program which encounters homeless people where they are and empowers

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Feeding of the 5000.....The Evolution of the Soup Kitchen

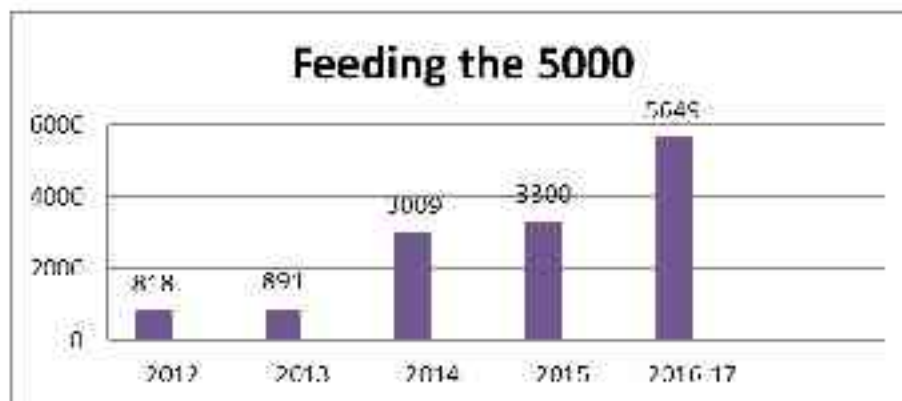
B. Johnson

(Continued from page 5)

them to find independent, sustainable living also receive meals from the Soup Kitchen. First Stop, Inc. representative, Mr. Talley, stated that, "The meals from the Soup Kitchen allow us one day a month to concentrate on the other needs of our clients. The clients really love the meals and look forward to receiving them." He also said the meals enable them to save on the cost and time of preparing meals. He remarked that the meals were some of the "best in town."

St. John's Soup Kitchen also partnered with the Caregivers, Prayer and Respite Ministry (CPR Ministry). The CPR ministry provides support for the sick and shut in members and their caregivers. Holiday meals are packed and delivered to the members and their caregivers. This allows the CPR Ministry members to connect with those members who because of their health have not been able to come to church. The CPR members enjoy reaching out to those members as much as the members enjoy the visits.

As of August 2017, St. John AME's Soup Kitchen celebrated its **5,000th** meal for the conference year! How did St. John get to this mile stone? It started with meals being distributed once a month on the third Tuesday of each month. Then the program progressively moved to twice a month. The chart below shows the progression of providing more meals to satisfy the growing need in the community. The Soup Kitchen progressed from serving **818** meals in 2012 to serving **5,649** in 2016-17. All the honor and praise goes to God, the ultimate provider.



This writer had an opportunity to speak with several of the recipients while visiting the Soup Kitchen on Tuesday, August 22nd. Here is what they had to say.

Christina C., a regular, stated that she enjoys the meals and that they are a welcome relief, seeing she has very little money. And it also means she does not have to cook.

Susan R., who has been coming for several years, said that the ladies are very helpful. The meals are a blessing. Her friend, Leonard, (b.k.a. Cowboy) said if it were not for God, he would not be here. The meals are a God-send.

Barbara T. commented that she has been coming for several years and was very grateful when another day was added.

Reflections from the Soup Kitchen Ministry members were just as positive.

Mrs. Stephanie Scott, Soup Kitchen Supervisor, stated that she just wanted to help her community and to give back, seeing as she has been so richly blessed. Her only wish is that funding could increase so that more people could be served and an additional day could be added.

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Feeding of the 5000.....The Evolution of the Soup Kitchen

B. Johnson

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Mrs. Paulette Williams, volunteer, stated that she volunteers because it is what she feels she is supposed to do. She reflected on Matthew 25:35, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat..." She stated that this is what we are called to do.

Mrs. Mary Allen, volunteer, stated "This is about as close as you could get to fulfilling the mission God asked of us. Serving someone food fulfills a basic human need. And we do it because of Christ, not because of us. As we feed the physical needs of the people, it is my hope that one day very soon, we will be able to open the altar of the church to pray with them and fill their spiritual needs as well."

Mr. Bill Williams, security volunteer, stated "The people seem to be genuinely grateful for the meals. They depend on our reliability and dependability to be here...and because they know we are going to be here, they keep coming back."

Besides the Reverend Maurice Wright, Servant Pastor of St. John AME Church, Retired Presiding Elder Oliver Allen is one of the Soup Kitchen's staunchest supporters. He has raved about the meals and especially the desserts at every Quarterly Conference. Both servant leaders are thankful to the volunteers for meeting the needs of God's people.



Picture of YPDers volunteering at the Soup Kitchen in 2013

The needs of the people in the community will continue to grow as the economy becomes more unstable. People in need will continue to reach out for support. St. John's Soup Kitchen will be here to stand in the gap. However, it is going to take more people willing to volunteer on the third and fourth Tuesday of each month. More people, means more food, which means more money required to supply the need. The Soup Kitchen Staff is soliciting donations on a monthly bases via the Sunday offerings. The Soup Kitchen is listed on the offering envelope. Please consider making a monthly donation.

In Matthew 14:18, Jesus took a little boy's lunch of two fish and five loaves of bread and fed 5000. It was considered a miracle. So, what is the lesson learned from the Soup Kitchen? He is still in the business of creating miracles. What began as a little project, just a thought, has grown beyond what was believed could be possible. God took the little provisions that we started out with and provided the Soup Kitchen with more than enough to fulfill His mission for His people in need.

To volunteer contact Sister Stephanie Scott at stepscott@comcast.net

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TRUNK OR TREAT

OCTOBER 31ST
6-8 P.M.

FAMILY - FOOD - FUN

All are welcome!
Free Community Event



229 Church Street - Huntsville, AL 35801

ST. JOHN AME CHURCH

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children's
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Kids*

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To Become A Kingdom Kids Team Member

Email Sister Mary Rankin
brankin02@bellsouth.net

Kingdom
Kids

CITY-WIDE REVIVAL
OF FIRST MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
2017

OCTOBER 23RD - 26TH
SERVICE TIMES - 7:00 PM NIGHTLY

MODERATOR: ELDER DR. BERNARD YATES
GENERAL PRISONER OF THE
NATIONAL PRISONERS BAPTIST CONVENTION, USA

FRONT LOCATION:
FIRST MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
229 CHURCH STREET, HUNTSVILLE, AL 35801
TEL: 256-531-2311 FAX: 256-531-2312
REFLECTOR DR. MICHAEL W. WALKER, JR.
PRESIDENT, CIRM

"FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS..."

Breast Cancer Awareness

By Rosemary Wells



5 BLACK WOMEN
die needlessly
per day from
**BREAST
CANCER**
in the U.S.

According to the American Cancer Society breast cancer is the most common cancer in American women, except for skin cancer. Currently, the average risk of a woman in the United States to develop breast cancer some time in her life is about 12%. This means there is a 1 in 8 chance she will develop breast cancer. This also means there is a 7 in 8 chance she will never have the disease.

Cancer is a broad term for a class of diseases characterized by abnormal cells that grow and invade healthy cells in the body. Breast cancer starts in the cells of the breast as a group of cancer cells that can invade surrounding tissues or spread (metastasize) to other areas of the body.

"What's my risk of breast cancer?" is a question many women ask their doctors. Women with certain risk factors are more likely than others to develop breast cancer. A risk factor is something that may increase the chance of getting a disease. **Genetic risk factors** that cannot be changed include the following:

- **Age**-the strongest risk factor, most women who get breast cancer are older than 50.
- **Race**-In the United States, white women have the highest breast cancer rates. **African American women** are more likely to die from breast cancer than white women. One reason is that cancer is often found in African American women at a later, more advanced stage when it may be harder to treat.
- **Family history**-having a mother, sister, or daughter who has had breast cancer increases a woman's risk.
- **Personal health history**-women who have had cancer in one breast are more likely to get cancer in the other breast.
- **Early menstruation**-having your first period before the age of 12.
- **Late menopause**-after the age of 55.
- **Never having children**-or having children after the age of 30 increase your risk for breast cancer.

Environmental risk factors that can be changed or avoided include:

- **Sedentary lifestyle**-lack of physical activity
- **Poor diet**
- **Obesity**-being over weight
- **Drinking alcohol**
- **Radiation to the chest**
- **Combined hormone replacement therapy (HRT)**

Caffeine, deodorant, microwaves, cell phones, being in contact with someone who has breast cancer or wearing an underwire bra are not risk factors and do not cause breast cancer.

All people, whether male or female are born with some breast cells and tissue. Even though males do not develop milk producing breasts, **a man's breast cells and tissue can still develop breast cancer**. Even so, male breast cancer is very rare. Less than one percent of all breast cancer cases develop in men, and only one in a thousand men will ever be diagnosed with breast cancer. Breast cancer in men is usually detected as a hard lump underneath the nipple and areola (the dark-colored skin on the breast that surrounds the nipple). Men carry a higher mortality rate than women do, 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 seeking treatment.

Thanks to screening breast cancer often is found before a woman has any physical symptoms. Yet a woman should know how her breasts normally look and feel so that she can report any unusual changes to her doctor.

Tests commonly used to screen for breast cancer is a **mammogram** which is a low-dose of x-ray of the breast to look for changes that are not normal. Some women have not gotten regular mammograms in the past because of cost and lack of insurance. But insurance companies are now required to cover mammograms every 1 to 2 years for women over 40 at no cost to the patient because of the Affordable Care Act. Depending on factors such as family history and your general health your doctor may

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Breast Cancer Awareness

By Rosemary Wells

(Continued from page 9)

recommend a mammogram before age 40 or more often. The other screening tool is a **Clinical Breast Exam** (CBE) performed by your physician. The doctor looks at and feels the breast and under the arms for lumps or anything else that seems unusual.



It is also recommended that every woman perform a **Self-Breast Exam** (SBE) regularly on the same day every month. By doing a regular SBE women become familiar with the way their breasts normally look and feel.

Knowing what is normal for you may help you notice a change in your breasts and you can report the abnormality early to your physician.

Call your doctor if you feel a lump in or near your breast or under your arm pit, a change in the size or shape of your breast, nipple discharge (fluid that is not breast milk), changes in your nipple such as inverted nipple, any changes in your skin (redness, itching, scaling, dimpling or puckering).

Keep in mind that most breast changes are not cancer. A lump felt could be a benign cyst, which is a fluid-filled lump that is not cancer. Early breast cancer usually does not cause pain. Still, if you notice a change in your breast or pain do not hesitate to call your doctor and schedule a visit. Do not wait until your next checkup.

REMEMBER... "EARLY DETECTION is the BEST PROTECTION!"



For more information on breast cancer awareness go to
www.womenshealth.gov or
www.nationalbreastcancer.org



Soup Kitchen Ministry

Charlie Brown

MISSION TRIP

"I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Who shall I send, and who will go for us?'"

Then said I, 'Here I am, send me.' Isaiah 6:8

If you know Jesus, your entire life is a long-term Mission Trip...and every single week is a short term mission opportunity. That means you are on a short-term mission trip here in your town, every day, everywhere you go.

Can you imagine how radically different our lives would be if we were to apply the same mind-set about foreign missions trips that we are on every day? Can you imagine how our cities would change? How our communities would change?

Imagine that every day, just as if you were in some exotic foreign land, living with an expectation of God's power as Missionaries like Paul, the Apostle, David Livingston, Charlotte Moon, and Eric Liddell and others who changed lives 'over there'. Imagine that your life was filled with that same courageous engagement with 'non-believers' and that God was going to use you as a part of His plan to rescue, serve and lead out of darkness the unsaved who live near you?

Living mission-centered life is maintaining a concern for those not yet rescued and caring for as in our local community. Here is the place where your believer's heart can begin to grow. Be a part of our Mission, feeding the hungry and being the Church on a mission, where every deed and Word is being done to reconcile people to Him.

Instead of thinking of "missions" in terms of involving foreign lands and exotic places, try joining this 'local mission' of leading people to know Jesus as we serve food every 3rd and 4th Tuesday in the Saint John A.M.E. Church Soup Kitchen beginning at 11:30 a.m. See you there.

"Help us to be a church on a mission to seek and save the lost as Jesus Leads us to do."

...for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; and I was a stranger, and ye took me in.

Matthew 12:1 (ASV)

Church School Lesson Overview – November 2017

The lesson reviews were written by Kenneth Parham.

November 5, 2017

Lesson Title: Faithful God, Unfaithful People

Lesson Scripture: Numbers 25; 1 Samuel 2:27-36

Print: Numbers 25:10-13; 1 Samuel 2:30-36

Devotional Songs: #24, #77, and #243

Key Verse: "I will raise up a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind." 1 Samuel 2:35

In this lesson, we encounter two occurrences where God was enacting some type of judgement on the priests who had been chosen to act as intercessors between God and the children of Israel. One exchange shows God dealing with a faithful priest and the other God is dealing with an unfaithful priest.

In the first exchange (Numbers 25), God is pleased with Phinehas' action as he spared an Israelite and the Midianite woman. God's intent was for His people to be obedient and to serve Him only (for God is a jealous god). God had been displeased with the Israelites because they had inhabited a foreign land (Promised Land) but had also intermingled with the custom of idolatry by the Midianites. God had commanded Moses to kill all Israelites who had aligned with the foreign gods and customs, but before the order was carried out, a zealous and loyal priest (grandson of Aaron), took actions into his own hands to atone for the people of Israel.

In the second exchange (1 Samuel 2), God made known to the priest Eli that his service and the service of his lineage was no longer needed. It is noted that Eli's sin was that of complacency. God relayed how Eli stood by as Eli's sons (also priests) had desecrated the meat offering and were openly sleeping with women near the worship tent. God indicated to Eli that the time of judgement had come to Eli's family with the death of his sons on the same day. God also indicated that He would cut off the branch of Levi (Eli's descendants) and appoint a faithful replacement that He had been grooming, a faithful priest (Samuel) beyond reproach.

It is noted that in both occasions, God remained faithful to the priests and children of Israel, it is noted that in both cases due to man's sinful nature, man failed to remain faithful to God.

November 12, 2017

Lesson Title: Promise of a New Covenant

Lesson Scripture: Jeremiah 31

Print: Jeremiah 31:27-34

Devotional Songs: #255, #321, and #243

Key Verse: I will put my law within them, and I will write on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Jeremiah 31:33

Throughout this chapter, the Lord speaks to Jeremiah on rebuilding of the relationship between God and the children of Israel; and how He will make Israel a great people again. It should be noted that since the deliverance of Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land, God giving Moses written laws for the Israelites to follow and with people having free will; God allowed for the growth (both good and bad) of his people throughout the promised lands. God provided rewards and punishments where needed to get the attention of His people so that they might stay true to Him. However, it appeared that the Israelites intermingled so much with the foreign people of other lands that they as a people forgot the face of their Father and the covenant established between God and Moses.

God relayed to Jeremiah that a time is coming where God will restore the children of Israel to greatness. He indicates that he will establish a new covenant with the children of Israel. The new covenant will not hold the descendants accountable for the sins of their forefathers. Instead of having written laws that man can interpret and follow based on human nature, God will put the law in man's heart. And those that follow the law written in their hearts will truly be God's people and He will be their God.

November 19, 2017

Lesson Title: Mediator of the New Covenant

Lesson Scripture: Hebrews 12:14-15, 18-29; Psalm 66

Print: Hebrews 12:14-15, 18-29

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

Key Verse: Since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe; for indeed our God is a consuming fire. Hebrews 12:28-29

Upon consulting several commentaries for this lesson, they

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Church School Lesson Overview

(Continued from page 11)

all agree that one must be at peace and in a state of holiness in order to truly enter into worship with God. They also agree that we must refrain from entering with a bitter spirit. It was noted that life crisis such as disappointments and resentments lead to unfulfilled lives, bitter spirits, may overshadow our deepest Christian relationships.

And as we gather to worship God in awe and with reverence, we are reminded that so as the children of Israel needed a mediator under the old covenant, we too need a mediator under the new covenant. Unlike the days of the Law where Moses was needed to stand in for the Israelites based on the depiction of God living on Mount Sinai spewing fire and thunder and consuming any uncleaned man or animal who dared to approach His holy ground; we, under the new covenant, encounter a gentler God, one who has transformed into a God of love. Being under the new covenant of grace, Jesus stands in as our mediator. The depiction under the new covenant has God residing in the new city called Jerusalem located on Mount Zion. Residing in the new city is also noted as Jesus, a host of angels in a festal gathering and the spirits of the righteous.

November 26, 2017

Lesson Title: Remembering the Covenant

Lesson Scripture: 1 Corinthians 11; Jude 1

Print: 1 Corinthians 11:23-34

Tentative Devotional Songs: #412, #258, and #243

Key Verse: "This is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 1 Corinthians 11:25

In this lesson Paul writes to the Christians of Corinth to admonish them concerning the Lord's last supper. He wanted to let the people know that the Lord's Supper is a very sacred meal and that one should examine one's own heart to ensure that one is not opening oneself to God's eternal judgement.

It appeared that the Christians of Corinth met regularly to partake of the Lord's Supper. Based on what is written in the scripture, the Christians of Corinth made distinction amongst each other at this gathering and also made it a habit of not waiting on everyone to arrive before consuming the meals. Paul indicated that this led to some, over eating and over drinking while others were left not having anything to eat or

drink. However, the most important fact was that the significance of the Lord's Supper had been forgotten and was replaced with a tradition (not even close but a Thanksgiving gathering without the Thanks).

Paul again reminded the Christians of Corinth that Jesus asked the disciples to take and eat the bread (His flesh) and drink of the cup (His blood) as often as one can in remembrance of the sacrifice that Jesus was to undertake in order to provide a new covenant between God and man.

Church School Book Club



October 2017

Discussion Date: October 21, 2017

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Kindred, Octavia Butler, 2004

November 2017

Discussion Date: November 18, 2017

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Leota's Garden, Francine Rivers, 2013

Leota's garden was once a place of beauty, where flowers bloomed and hope thrived. It was her refuge from the deep wounds inflicted by a devastating war, her sanctuary where she knelt before a loving God and prayed for the children who could not understand her silent sacrifices.

Now, eighty-four-year-old Leota Reinhardt is alone, her beloved garden in ruins. All her efforts to reconcile with her adult children have been fruitless, and she voices her despair to a loving Father, her only friend.

Then God brings a wind of change through unlikely means: one, a college student who thinks he has all the answers; the other, the granddaughter Leota never hoped to know. But can the devastation wrought by keeping painful family secrets be repaired before she runs out of time? — Amazon.

November 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
				Ninth District Plenary Meeting Daniel Payne Community Plaza Birmingham, Alabama		
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship Communion Sunday AMEN DEADLINE DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS	9:30 a.m. Fifty-Plus Auxiliary		12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	6:00 p.m. AMBA Staff Meeting	 VETERANS DAY
				Connecticut Lay Organization Executive Board Mtg. Sheraton Hotel Birmingham, Alabama		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship			12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study		6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship		11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	Happy Thanksgiving		10:00 a.m. VUMS Meeting
26	27	28	29	30		
8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship		11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study			

St. John AME Church
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Huntsville, Alabama 35801
(256) 534-3265

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The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright, Bishop

The Reverend Sherita Seawright, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr., Presiding Elder

The Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor

Important Dates to Remember

October 23-26, 2017 GHIMF Fall Revival, First Missionary Baptist Church, 7 p.m.

October 25, 2017 First Quarterly Conference, 6:00 p.m.

October 31, 2017 Trunk or Treat, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

November 2-4, 2017 Ninth District Plenary Meeting, Daniel Payne Community Plaza, Birmingham, Alabama

November 5, 2017 Daylight Savings Time ends— Fall back one hour

November 9-11, 2017 Connectional Lay Organization Executive Board Meeting, Birmingham, Alabama

December 8-9, 2017 Church Training

Stewardess—Friday, December 8, 2017, 5:00 p.m.

All Church Leaders—Saturday, December 9, 2017

*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 22 Issue 11

November 2017

A Thanksgiving Message

Hattie Nathan

St. John A.M.E. Church, Ft. Mitchell, Alabama

9th District Christian Education Director

THANK YOU GOD

We are entering the season that we call Thanksgiving. We do thank God every day for His goodness, His grace, and His mercy, as well as all of the many blessings He sends our way. While you enjoy food and family, thank God together and name His blessings one by one.



THANK YOU GOD:

For the time You have given us to live, to love, and to laugh; for the trials and tribulations of everyday life that test our faith and make us stronger; for tough skin that breeds endurance; for tender skin that cultivates the fruit of the spirit; for your touch God that makes us whole and for the human touch that makes the difference in the lives of your people; for knowing the truth that sets us free; and for time bring in the hands of the giver of time.

For the heavy load Your Son carried as He bore the sins of all mankind on the cross at Calvary; for our new home called heaven with no more sickness, death or pain; for hindrances that shelter us from harm and danger; for hearts that sometimes grieve but still have joy; for hindsight which sometimes brings us to the understanding of the matter; and for healing from all manner of sickness and disease.

For the awesome God that You are as seen in Your creatures and Your creations; for the autonomy of Your authority as You take charge of everything and everybody; for the answers to our prayers even our selfish prayers; for anger that ends before the sun goes down; for aspirations to become who You would have us to be; and for another chance after every other chance.

For the nail prints in Your Son's hands and feet which we have not seen yet we believe; for nothing greater than Your love and our new life in Christ; for natural resources which were made by You for us; for never-ending protection and provisions; for right now while we still have time to give our best; for our numbered days be they long or short; for both spiritual and physical nourishment; for newborns to replenish Your earth; and for neighbors who are helpful and in need of help.

For You God, the King of kings; for the privilege to kneel before You and know that You will hear us when we pray; for the knowledge of Your perfect will and Your wonderful way; for kindred spirits to connect with our sisters and brothers in Christ; for Jesus who stands at our door and knocks; for knowing we are kinsmen because You are our Father; and for knocking on a door that we know will open.

For sending Jesus who came to serve, not to be served; for our God who never sleeps or slumbers; for salvation given to us as a result of the shed blood of Jesus Christ; for our Savior, the Son of God who is the same yesterday, today and forever; for the

(Continued on page 2)

A Thanksgiving Message

Hattie Nathan

St. John AME Church, Ft. Mitchell, Alabama
9th District Christian Education Director

(Continued from page 1)

Holy Scriptures which reveal the will of God; for the security of being covered in the blood of Jesus; for sensitivity to the needs of others; for shelter from the stormy blasts; for the shield of faith; for the sheer joy of calling on the Name of Jesus; and for the sacred opportunity to confess our sins and be made clean again.

For the free gift of eternal life; for the gifts that God has given to us for us to glorify Him; for the privilege to stand in the gap; for the opportunity to give; for the gathering of the two or three in the name of Jesus; for the glorious display of God's power in the universe; for the government which is really upon His shoulders; for the good news of the Gospel; for the unmerited favor of grace; for the grace that has no victory; for God, our maker and our creator; and for God, the great I AM.

For the image in which God made us; for our identity in Christ; for the illustration of God's power and order in his creation; for knowing that God inhabits the praises of His people; for our God-given inheritance; for the forgiveness of our iniquities; and for the innumerable stars that sprinkle the night sky.



For the variety of good graces given to us by God; for the mountains and the valleys of life which reveal our true strength; for the vastness of God's creation which inspires us to explore; for our natural ventilator (lungs) which enables us to breathe; for the village to help raise the children; for vision that by the grace of God comes to fruition; and for vocations that call us to work and for vacations that allow us to rest and relax.

For the inner most part of us where the spirit of God dwells; for the Word of God which is good for instruction; for the desire to be an instrument of peace; for our intangible souls; for integrity; for divine intervention; for the invaluable riches of the gospel; and for God's investment in His children.

For nothing but the blood of Jesus that can wash my sins away; for God's never-ending and abiding love; for neighbors who are true friends; for the noises of both the creatures and the creation; for the wonders of nature; for natural beauty; for the next generations which are to come; for not giving up or giving in; for new comers to help build God's kingdom; for the blessed privilege to call upon the Name of Jesus which is above every other name.

WE ARE SO THANKFUL:

For our awesome God; for our God of bountiful blessings; for our God who cares so dearly; for God who will draw all men unto Himself; for our everlasting God; for our faithful God; for the graciousness of God; for our Holy God; For God who is infinite; for our jealous God; for the kingship of God; for God's unconditional love; for the mighty God, our maker; for God who is not slack in His promises; for our God who is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent; for our God who has all power in His hands; for God who answers our prayers and our questions; for our rich God; for God who is super natural; for our God of understanding; for God who vindicates us; for God the Wonderful Counselor; our God of natural X-ray vision; our God whose yoke is easy; and our God who is at the zenith of His creation.



Children and Youth Enjoyed Trunk or Treat Food and Fun

By Jakayeh Williams

Popcorn, candy, and cakes OH MY!!!! The laughter of kids, the wittiness of their costumes and the smiles on their faces made this year's trunk or treat so awesome! The night started off with 12 kids all lined up waiting to play musical chairs. The competition was so humorous and entertaining! In the end, the winner was Uma of Descendants (Derryn Goode)! After so much action from the musical chairs, the babies were lined up to start the adventure of the night, Trunk or Treat! Several trunks were decorated to perfection for the holiday but one in particular stood out amongst the rest, the Falcon's Lair! The Falcon's Lair was fully dressed in Atlanta Falcons gear and was a crowd favorite among the kids and adults! The kids filled their bags up to maximum capacity from each car and their smiles made everything alright!

While the night was young, the festivities continued with a ringtoss game on the inside! Super Nurse Karmen lined the kids up trying to help them win a prize in the game. The babies had a lot of coordination because they won every single time! The aroma of buttery popcorn began to fill the fellowship hall as they transitioned into the last stage of the night. Mr. Sandifer set up and began to play one of the best Halloween movies of all time, Hotel Transylvania 2!

Isaiah Wright blessed the food in a very special way. Ms. Connie, the Reindeer, and Chef Pugh began to serve some hot, ooey gooey pepperoni and cheese pizzas, delicious chocolate chip and oatmeal raisin cookies, and Mama Dee passed out the Kool-Aid Jammers to all the happy boys and girls. Bellies were full and the kids enjoyed eating and watching movies for the rest of the evening.

This year's Trunk or Treat was a major success! Thanks to all those who supported the event, even those who stepped in to lend a helping hand, it was much appreciated.



In His Own Words....A Reflection on the Vietnam War as told by the Reverend Robert Bernard Hereford, Sr. (Retired)

B. Johnson



As we prepared to celebrate another Veteran's Day, we could not help but remember all the veterans who served honorably for their country. Everyone had been looking anxiously to watch the new Ken Burns documentary on the Vietnam War, an undeclared, as well as, unpopular war. The veil of truth was finally pulled back for the country to see what actually occurred.

Since there was no declaration of the war, exact dates are sketchy. However, it is now widely accepted that the Vietnam War started on November 1, 1955 and lasted until April 30, 1975, which was roughly 20 years. From 1940 to 1973, The Draft, or Selective Service System was the system used to fill positions in the military service. All young men were required to sign up when they turned 18 years of age. There were some who actually volunteered in the war as well. The last man was drafted on June 30, 1973. That

was the official end to the Selective Service System-the Draft and the beginning of the all-volunteer army.

The United States suffered heavy casualties on any given day during the 20 year conflict. Twenty-five percent (648,500) of the total forces in country were draftees. Draftees accounted for 30.4% (17,725) of combat deaths in Vietnam. Eighty-eight percent of the men who actually served in Vietnam were Caucasian; 10.6 % (275,000) were black; 1% belonged to other races. Even though they were not even counted at the time, 170,000 Hispanics served in Vietnam; 3,070 (5.2%) died there. Eighty-six percent of the men who died in Vietnam were Caucasian; 12.5% (7,241) were black; 1.1% belonged to other races. Fourteen percent (1,530) of non-combat deaths were among blacks. Thirty-four percent of blacks who enlisted volunteered for combat arms. Overall, blacks suffered 12.5% of the deaths in Vietnam at a time when the percentage of blacks of military age was 13.5% of the total population. Over the course of the war, over 78,000 soldiers would lose their lives and be immortalized on the Vietnam Memorial Wall. For those who returned, their lives would never be the same; they would be forever changed.



Of the many stories and memories, here is just one soldier's reflection in his own words.

On my 18th birthday I registered for Selective Service as did all other 18 year old young men. Shortly thereafter, my mother contacted me and told me that I had received the letter, stating that I had been drafted. I didn't want to go. I tried everything possible to avoid going. I attempted to enroll in college, but didn't have the money for tuition or my high school records. It was rumored that if you ate soap, it would raise your blood pressure to a point where you would fail the physical examine. Yes, I tried that too, to no avail. I received the notice, "You have passed the physical. Congratulations. You have been inducted into the U.S. Army." I knew I had to report. I knew there was a possibility of being killed in 1969. I knew personally of a close friend who had been killed. But I reported for duty anyway.

My first duty station was Ft. Benning, GA. for six (6) months of Basic Training and then to Ft. McClellan for 6 additional months of in-the-field training. We trained out in the deepest, thickest Kudzu imaginable to assimilate the jungles of Vietnam. At the close of two additional weeks of training my MOS (Military Occupation Specialty) was 11-BRAVO Infantry.

(Continued on page 3)

In His Own Words....A Reflection on the Vietnam War as told by the Reverend Robert Bernard Hereford, Sr. (Retired)

B. Johnson

(Continued from page 4)

At the end of another training 1,000 of us stood in formation to hear our assigned destination. Eighty-five percent of us were going straight to "Nam." Your name and assignment were called over a loud speaker. "Robert Bernard Hereford, Republic of Vietnam." This assignment came with a 30 day leave, of which I extended by two days. I was not AWOL, but I had missed my assigned group when I got to California. So, I was re-assigned to another group ... going directly to Vietnam.

After flying for 36 hours from California, I arrived in Vietnam. It was strange how I had left California on a Saturday and arrived in "Nam" on a Saturday. Another week of training took place. We were sent out in the field with live ammo where we had been told the Viet Cong were stationed. My MOS had changed from 11-BRAVO Infantry to 11-Delta. All of us were new guys and stuck out like sore thumbs. We were scared. A tour of duty was for one year, 365 days. Each day was unbearably long. You were facing death from the time you got up till you went to sleep; that is if you could sleep at all.

The other Black guys and I knew what was going on in the states with the Civil Rights Movement, but we were struggling within our own unit for our civil rights. Racism was just a part of everyday life, even in "Nam." After hearing of Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination in 1968, many brothers refused to go to the field to fight. They would stay in the rear. And the enemy was using this information to divide the units. Ninety percent of those who refused to fight received dishonorable discharges for refusal of a direct order. Many attempted to obtain Conscientious Objector Status, but were denied. There was even a divide between the Brothers; Inner city Brothers from the North felt superior to Brothers from Alabama, Mississippi and Georgia. It really didn't matter to me. I was determined to come out alive and with an Honorable Discharge.



SPC4 Robert Hereford recovering
from a broken leg.

December 5, 1969, my unit was on a seek and destroy mission. The tank I was on hit a booby trap. The last thing I remember was going down in the tank to retrieve my gas mask. When I woke up, I was in the 93rd Evac Hospital in South Vietnam. A white soldier from Yazoo, Mississippi had saved me. As soon as I could walk, I was sent straight back to the unit with medication. At this point in the war they were so desperate for people to fight, as soon as you were able, you were sent back into action. I sought out the white soldier to thank him for saving my life. He told me, he did what he thought was the right thing to do. He also said he would have done the same for a dog. Yes, he was from Yazoo, Mississippi. And racism was alive and well in the jungles of Vietnam.

December 17, 1969, I was wounded again; A broken leg, shattered in multiple places. This time the tank hit a mine, everyone was medevacked out. The injuries I received got me out of the field and in the rear.

I grew up as a "PK," a preacher's kid. Even though I had left the church when I was a teenager, the teachings and the spirituality never left me. I knew that it was God who spared me even after being wounded twice. I should have been dead, but thanks be to God, He had other plans for my life. I knew that as I faced the enemy, God was there with me. I often reflect on a statement the Reverend Dr. Homer L. McCall shared with me when I accepted the call to ministry. He said, "Because of my experiences, I would never be without a sermon." He was right.

When the battalion reassembled, I was awarded the Purple Heart with an Oak Leaf Cluster. I received a certificate, not the actual medal. The Purple Heart is a United States military decoration awarded in the name of the President to those wounded or killed while serving. The Purple Heart with an Oak Leaf Cluster indicates that there was a subsequent award. I did not receive the actual Purple Heart Medal until I returned state side.

(Continued on page 6)

In His Own Words....A Reflection on the Vietnam War as told by the Reverend Robert Bernard Hereford, Sr. (Retired)

B. Johnson

(Continued from page 5)



Rev. Hereford's Purple Heart



**Huntsville Madison County Veterans
Memorial Brick paver in honor of
SPC4 Hereford.**



**Purple Heart wall at the Madison
County Court Hall.**

As a Purple Heart recipient, I was recognized by the Military Order of the Purple Heart, on Veterans Day. The ceremony took place on the steps of the Madison County Court House. Inside the court house on the first floor is a wall dedicated to Madison County Heroes. Having my name on that wall is one of my proudest memories.

The war was real. It will always be remembered like no other war. I don't believe there will ever be another war where so many lives will be sacrificed for no apparent justifiable reason. I tried not to get into the politics of what was going on. I was there to do a job, to defend and protect my country. So, I did what I needed to do to fulfill my military duty, stay alive and return home. My story is no different than the countless other stories of other returning war veterans. For those who were actually there and saw, they're the ones who would truly understand. The only difference is that I have been given an opportunity to tell it in my own words.

To the members of St. John AME Church who served their country with dignity, honor and valor, during the Vietnam War and did not receive the welcome home celebration you deserved, we say with gladness, **WELCOME HOME! THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!**

Reference:

Statistics courtesy of VFW Magazine and the Public Information Office.
HQ CP Forward -1st Recon
April 12, 1997



Ms. Kelsey Wilson Delivers Initial Sermon

Charlie Brooks



Ms. Kelsey Wilson

On the Wednesday evening of October 18, 2017, a daring and beautiful child of God made a decision and commitment that set her aside from the norm. Ms. Kelsey Wilson delivered her initial sermon and became a spokeswoman for Christ our Savior.

Kelsey is a 24-year-old African-American female from Tuscaloosa, Alabama. She graduated from Central High School and holds a Bachelors of Arts Degree in Psychology from Stillman College. Kelsey came to Alabama A&M University in the fall of 2015 to obtain a Masters' Degree in Counseling Psychology. She will earn her Masters' Degree in December of 2017. She aspires to obtain a Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Science, preferable from The Ohio State University.

Kelsey discovered at a very early age that she had been blessed with a talent for singing. When her dad became absent from her life at age six, her ability to sing became her refuge and a source of comfort. Because of her talent, she was given the nickname "Songbird" and began performing in different venues, including several presidential events at Stillman College.

The service began with inspirational music from the Praise Team. The Reverend Joretha Wright offered prayer, asking that Kelsey would be strong as she is called forth to do God's will. The scripture was from 1 Samuel 3:1-10. This was followed by congregational music.

The Reverend Maurice Wright II reminded persons present that they had come to share what the Lord had given Kelsey. This was a special night for all in attendance. Praying hands were lifted towards Kelsey as she came forward to deliver this special first sermon.

Kelsey began by singing "There are Some Things I May Not Know." She then welcomed her Father God, and asked Him to be receptive of her words. She thanked Pastor Wright and Presiding Elder Allen. She expressed that she hoped her sermon would be transforming to all present. Her scripture text was from John 3:1-17 and her message was entitled "Kingdom Dreams." She stated that Nicodemus spoke with Jesus and that God speaks to many in dreams. Kelsey shared her God-given dreams: (1) Her first Dream. She had somehow contacted ticks in her hair, and her friend was helping rid her of them. Kelsey felt she was cursed. She immediately prayed that the blood of Jesus would rid her of them. She crossed away to the other side. No red came from her, but there was The Blood.

She continued, Nicodemus had to be born again. (2) Her second Dream. Kelsey was never frightened in her dreams and in this one, the physical condition was water. The water changed the snake into a new creature. If you fill your water bottle with His Words, He will help you fulfill your works. In each dream there were dramatic changes. The Holy Spirit gives birth to the physical, and you are born again.

Kelsey believes the Holy Spirit is working through her and her dreams. She believes that, brothers and sisters who listen to the Word can be changed. People love the darkness and are afraid to come to the light. She posed the question, "What in your dreams takes you into the light where you can see God?" She encouraged listeners to bring others and to help them to cross to the other side, doing what He leads them to do. She concluded, "Let His dreams fulfill you. Let Him, by faith lead you, St. John, and Sweet Dreams"!

(Continued on page 8)

Ms. Kelsey Wilson Delivers Initial Sermon

Charlie Brooks



Pastor Wright presents books to Ms. Wilson.



Presiding Elder Allen addresses Ms. Wilson.

(Continued from page 7)

Pastor Wright then commented. He said that what Kelsey had accomplished was not easy, and he opened the doors of the church. He then asked her to come forward. He presented her with (1) The Hymnal, containing Songs of Zion. (2) Doctrine of Discipline, the Laws, Methods and Discipline of the AME Church and (3) The Bible, which is a Lamp unto her feet. She was given a monetary donation to sow in her ministry.

Presiding Elder Allen made encouraging remarks after which, Pastor Wright called the church into Conference where it was voted to accept her name to be referred to the Quarterly Conference for license to preach.

2017-2018 Conference Year Offices Elected and Confirmed

Steward Board

Roselyne Akines
Willie Bradford
Rufus Gilmore
Guy Ginn
Erica Harbin
James Heyward
Marcus Hill
Abbiegail Hugine
Barbara Johnson
Jeanette Jones
Clifton Miller
Eddie Sherrod
Sam Walton
Pamela Whitehead
Mashanda White

Trustee Board

Lars Avery
Thalia Love-Brown
Claudinet Purifoy-Fears
Bridget Floyd
Celeste Gilmore
Karl Gullatte
Lula Rochelle
Jesse Johnson
Carl Lewis
Randy Love
Curtis Mayes
Glenn Pippen
Darwin Washington
Hodges Washington
Bill Williams

St. John Welcomes New Presiding Elder



Pastor Maurice Wright, the Reverend Joretha Wright and the St. John family welcome Presiding Elder Albert Hyche and Attorney Ida Tyree-Hyche as leaders of the South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer District. We pray God's blessings for you as you return to your home district to continue your dynamic leadership in the Ninth Episcopal District of the AME Church.



Soup Kitchen Ministry

Charlie Brunk

A PRAYER FOR NOVEMBER

I thank Thee, Lord, for daily bread;
For sheltering roof above my head;
For friends and loved ones, far and near,
For memories which I hold dear;
For seasons as they come and go,
For warmth of summer, winter snow,
The flaming maples in the fall;
Spring's verdant freshness over all;
Splendor of dawn and sunset's glow,
And all of beauty here below;
The song of birds; refreshing showers;
Beauty of music and flowers
And all the pleasure they afford—
For all of these, I thank Thee, Lord...

--Mabel W. McClelland

Saints, please pray for the many who come to our church for food and comfort.

Remember them as we near the Holiday Season!

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."
Galatians 6:2 NKJV



Finance Corner

By Bobby Adkins

Don't be in a Hurry to Draw Your Social Security

When seniors are thinking about retirement, or have recently retired, they may ask themselves, "What is the best time to start drawing Social Security?" Jane Bryant Quinn, writer for the monthly *AARP Bulletin* says "Don't Rush Social Security." If seniors can afford to wait until 70 years old, Ms. Bryant Quinn believes they will be better off.



Seniors pondering retirement income, and not currently drawing Social Security, should be encouraged to wait as long as possible before taking Social Security retirement benefits. By waiting, they can receive or draw the maximum payout. A retiree's monthly Social Security benefit (check) will be 76% higher than if they started drawing at the minimum qualifying age of 62. If they are married and proceed to pass away first, waiting will also provide the surviving spouse with a larger survivor's benefit.

Many people need the money, so they start their benefits at 62. So, what about those with substantial investment portfolios or a pension from a previous employer? Even if they can afford to wait, would they come out ahead if they claimed at 62 and invested those benefits for growth?

Bill Reichenstein, a professor of finance at Baylor University in Waco, TX, and co-creator of one of the most powerful Social Security calculators, was asked this question recently for an AARP magazine article. He adjusted for various taxes (for example, the probable tax on a higher-income investor's Social Security income) and assumed a 2 percent annual cost-of-living increase in benefits. After running several cases at the national average life expectancy for people who are 62, he found that they all produced the same answer: Financially, it's better to wait.

Savvy Social Security Planning

FOR BOOMERS

For example, say recently retired senior files for benefits at 62 (accepting a much smaller check for starting early) and then invests the drawn benefit into a nest egg consisting of half stocks and half bonds. If they allow that invested social security benefit (cumulative monthly investments) to mature until age 70 before drawing, how long will their invested Social Security money last, after tax? The answer is until age 81.

Here is another way to explain it:

1. They start drawing social security at 62, immediately investing it.
2. They decide not to tap into other forms of savings to replace the Social Security income.
3. They desire to hold current income down so they can build their investments up.
4. They start drawing on that nest egg at 70 years old, taking out the invested monthly benefit at 70, which they waited to collect.

Make sense? Well, again, here is the answer. The invested social security they used, using historical return averages, will last only until age 81. Why is that number important? 81 years old just about matches the national life expectancy. Also, if you are already into your 60's, chances are you will out-live the average.



Looking at the details, when they start drawing early, even after the invested benefits are gone at 81, they are left with the minimum value benefit, i.e. the amount received starting at age 62. Again, if they can wait until 70, the larger benefit will be available the rest of your life. Now, some individuals, due to income constraints, haven't the opportunity to wait. However, for those retirees who happen to be in the top half of the income range (retirees collecting over \$50K per year) you will likely live longer, particularly those with access to reasonable health care.

(Continued on page 11)

Finance Corner

By Bobby Adkins

(Continued from page 10)

Retirees might think they can beat the system by investing more of their Social Security benefit in stocks and less in bonds. Maybe stocks will soar, creating a nest egg that lasts until you're 88 or older. However, there is also a greater risk of earning even less than Social Security would pay.

They might consider starting at 62 and investing the benefits if they, or their spouse, are sure they will never need the money. That way, their heirs will inherit the account if they die early. That makes sense. Also, if they are in very poor health, they might also start drawing at 62, assuming they or their spouse will never need a larger survivor's benefit. This is logical as well. Life concerns or issues likely challenge investment or receipt strategies. Therefore, they should investigate as many scenarios as possible, to include the solvency of the Social Security Fund.

**your VOTE
is your VOICE**

U. S. Senate Special General Election

December 12, 2017.

The last day to register to vote in this special election is November 27th.

Website <http://sos.alabama.gov/alabama-votes> has information on online registration, registration verification, absentee ballot applications, precincts, poll locations and hours, and information on candidates and other items that will be on the ballot.

For a sample ballot, go to <http://sos.alabama.gov/alabama-votes/voter/2017-sample-ballots>.

Deaconess Corner

Submitted by Deaconess Ernestine Barnes Ivry

*Seek the Lord and His Strength,
Seek His face continually.*

Psalms 105:4

The next time you feel like GOD can't use you, remember....

Noah was a drunk
Abraham was too old
Isaac was a day dreamer
Jacob was a liar
Leah was ugly
Joseph was abused
Moses had a stuttering problem
Gideon was afraid
Samson had long hair and was a womanizer
Rahab was a prostitute
Jeremiah and Timothy were too young
David had an affair and was a murderer
Elijah was suicidal
Isaiah preached naked
Jonah ran from God

Naomi was a widow
Job went bankrupt
John the Baptist ate bugs
Peter denied Christ (3 times)
The Disciples fell asleep while praying
Martha worried about everything
The Samaritan woman was divorced, more than once...
Zaccheus was too small
Paul was too religious
Timothy had an ulcer...AND
Lazarus was dead!

Now! No more excuses! God can use you to your full potential.

You are not the message, you are just the messenger.

Church School Lesson Overview – December 2017

The lesson reviews were written by Willie Sandifer

December 3, 2017

Lesson Title: Faith in Jesus

Lesson Scripture: Acts 3

Print: Acts 3:11-21

Devotional Songs: #112 [], #It Came Upon a Midnight Clear [], and #111 []

Key Verse: "By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see" (Acts 3:16).

Those who followed Jesus still endured conflict with the Sanhedrin Council. It was made up of the high priest and seventy that were appointed by him. The Sanhedrin oversaw the affairs of the temple of Jerusalem. They served roles of legislature and judiciary. The people and the council feared each other.

The temple was the epicenter of the Sanhedrin's power. The temple, a thirty-five acre complex made up of courtyards and half-enclosed places where people could meet. Jesus had taught there and those who followed continued to teach and pray there after His ascension.

Just prior to where today's lesson text starts, Peter and John had come to the Jerusalem temple. They encountered a disabled man who was begging. Instead of giving him money, Peter declared that he walk in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

December 10, 2017

Lesson Title: Faith to Discern

Lesson Scripture: Acts 13:1-2

Print: Acts 13:1-12

Devotional Songs: #111 [], #108 [], and #Angels We Have Heard on High []

Key Verse: "When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord" (Acts 13:12).

Saul, who later became Paul, was traveling with Barnabas because of the need to reassure the Christians in Jerusalem that he was now a believer in Jesus. Barnabas was known in the Jerusalem church by way of his generosity.

Barnabas invited Paul to come to Antioch as a teacher in the church that had spread there. This week's lesson text starts in Antioch, a major Syrian city. It had a multiethnic

group of people and was among the biggest cities of the Roman Empire.

Both Jews and non-Jews became believers as the gospel spread. This group lived in fellowship and provided aid to fellow believers in faraway Jerusalem. The Antioch church was the first to send missionaries to other places to share the gospel.

December 17, 2017

Lesson Title: Faith to Persevere

Lesson Scripture: Acts 14, Colossians 2:6-7

Print: Acts 14:8-11, 19-23

Devotional Songs: #0 Come all Ye Faithful, []; #0 Little Town [], and #Hark the Herald Angels Sing []

Key Verses: "[Paul and Barnabas] preached the gospel in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:21-22).

Lystra, the setting for this lesson was a small somewhat isolated town that was shielded from the outside world.

A man with a disability that he had had his entire life came to attention. As with others in his shape, there was not much more he could do save beg for money to live. He was a reminder of the man Peter and John came across at the temple gate, who was also lame from birth. These men, who were not named, were living in serious need and had not come across anything able to change their condition.

The disabled man heard Paul's preaching about Jesus. His response was the start of his faith. According to the text Paul looked at him closely and perceived that the man had the faith to be healed, as the man was convinced Jesus could change his life as no other could.

Paul ordered the man to do what he had never done before and stand. The man stood and did more. If Jesus' power could do this miracle, it certainly could bring God's blessings on the people living in Lystra.

December 24, 2017

Lesson Title: Faithful Seekers of the King

Lesson Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12

Print: Matthew 2:1-12

Tentative Devotional Songs: #120 []; #It Came Upon a Mid-

(Continued on page 1A)

Church School Lesson Overview

(Continued from page 12)

night Clear ☐; and #122 ☐

Key Verse: "On coming to the house, [the Magi] saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh" (Matthew 2:11).

We seek to give gifts that are appreciated when we give gifts. This week's lesson looks at noteworthy historic gift givers. From them we can get some insightful tips on giving, especially when it comes to giving to God.

The first Roman puppet Judean king, Herod the Great, ruled from 37-4? BC. Herod professed Judaism but his background of Arabic and Idumean descent, wasteful lifestyle, and loyalty to Rome caused many to question his belief.

Herod is possibly most known for his huge building projects that included a renovation and expansion of the Jerusalem temple complex. He was very paranoid and kept a large group of bodyguards that acted as a secret police. By way of this force Herod got rid of enemies both real and thought to be real. This way he squashed dissent. This lesson takes place in this paranoid setting.

One day towards the latter part of Herod's reign, Magi show up in Jerusalem. They were a caste of holy men, who were experts in astrology, medicine, history, and politics. The Magi were looking for "the one who has been born king of the Jews" and came looking for him in Jerusalem, which was the epicenter of Jewish faith and way of life. Of a mystery is how "his star" had directed their mission.

December 31, 2017

Lesson Title: Faith to Unite

Lesson Scripture: Ephesians 4

Print: Ephesians 4:1-16

Tentative Devotional Songs: #412 ☐; #258 ☐; and #243 ☐

Key Verse: "As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1-3).

In this lesson Paul used logic when it came to the mission of the church. It would be senseless for God's people to separate and work against each other. Especially when we realize that Jesus is working in each of us to achieve his purposes. Nothing can stand, not a house, not a kingdom, and not a

church, if its people do not work together.

The Ephesian Christians enjoyed strong leadership. However, they had a difficult time living faithfully in a world driven by materialism, pride, and untrue ideas of God and His will. Paul warned the leaders of the Ephesian church that leaders who serve their own interests would make factions, by splitting the body for their own factions.



Church School Book Club

November 2017

Discussion Date: November 18, 2017
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Leota's Garden, Francine Rivers, 2013

December 2017

Discussion Date: December 16, 2017
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Perfect Present, Alers, Hodges and Yayas, 2017

A CHRISTMAS LAYOVER Rochelle Alers

When Navy SEAL Captain Noah Crawford and elementary school teacher Sierra Nelson meet on a plane headed east from San Diego, they're glad to pass the time in friendly conversation. But when a freak storm grounds them, Sierra offers Noah a place to spend the night—with her extended family, all of whom assume they're a couple. And as the holiday spirit infuses every moment they spend together, they both begin to wonder if a relationship is a special gift they didn't expect -Amazon

THE CHRISTMAS LESSON Cheris Hodges

Kayla Matthews isn't looking forward to heading home this Christmas. Divorced and struggling, nothing has turned out the way she expected—including her childhood friend, DeShawn Carter. Now the high school principal, he's also the kind of man she's always dreamed about. Before the holidays are over, Kayla has a chance to reclaim everything she once thought she wanted—or prove to DeShawn that they have a second chance worth celebrating - Amazon

CHRISTMAS WITH YOU Pamela Yaye

Celebrity stylist Maya Malone can't find anything joyous about the season, not since her ex-fiancé left her on Christmas Eve. But one look at sports agent Marc Cunningham is almost enough to change her mind. Their instant attraction feels like the best sort of present, except for one very large obstacle—Maya's NFL star big brother, Marc's new client. It will take more than holiday spirit to convince everyone involved that Marc and Maya's connection will make the angels sing - Amazon



SAVE THE DATE

MAY 30-JUNE 1, 2018

The Commission on Economic Development
and the Department of Retirement Services of the
African Methodist Episcopal Church



HELD AT BEESON
SCHOOL OF DIVINITY



INTERNATIONAL STEWARDSHIP & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT

Bishop Harry L. Seawright
9th Episcopal District
Chair, Commission on Economic Development

Bishop Wilfred J. Messiah
17th Episcopal District
Co-Chair, Commission on Economic Development

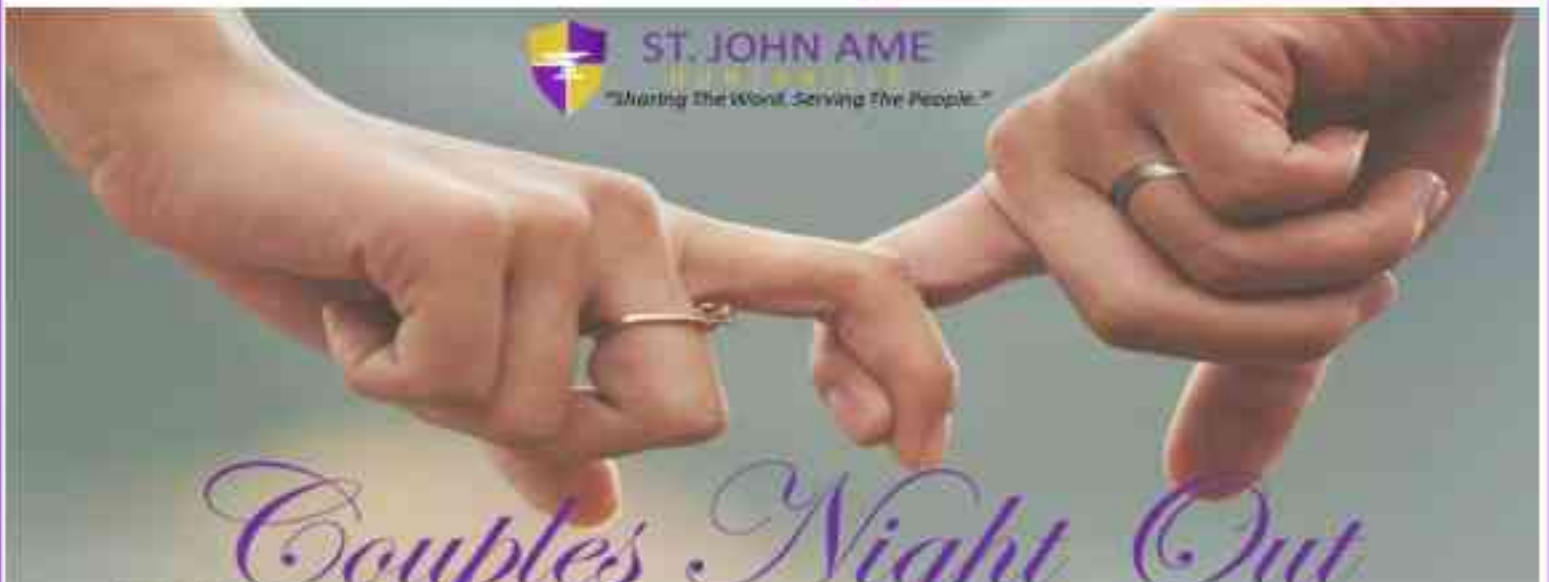
Bishop Samuel L. Green
7th Episcopal District
Chair, Commission on Retirement and Pension Services

Dr. Jerome V. Harris, Executive Director
Department of Retirement Services



ST. JOHN AME

"Sharing The Word, Serving The People."



Couples Night Out

WHAT: COMEDY AND FOOD
WHEN: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2017 – 6:00 P.M.
WHERE: TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
607 AIRPORT ROAD – HUNTSVILLE, AL 35802
PRICE: \$35/PERSON

CONTACT:

DAVID AND KATRISA NORWOOD

PHONE: 912-977-0282 OR EMAIL: dst411994@yahoo.com



Still Do...

MONEY IS DUE NO LATER THAN NOVEMBER 19, 2017 TO RESERVE SEATING.



Save the Date

150th Anniversary of the 9th Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church

The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright, Presiding Prelate

The Reverend Sherita Moon Seawright, Episcopal WMS Supervisor

Reverend Dr. Farrell J. Duncombe

Mrs. Bernella Knight Rose

General Co-Chairpersons

Theme: "150 Years: Celebrating God's Blessings"

Scriptural reference: "His faithfulness continues to all generations." Psalm 100: 5.

Theme Song: "Great is Thy Faithfulness"

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION DATES:

November 2, 2017 – November 2, 2018

KICKOFF CELEBRATION: Mid Year Convocation April 2018

Save
the
Date

Save
the
Date

INITIAL PRESENTATION was made by Bishop Seawright and General Co-Chairpersons during 9th District Planning Meeting on November 1, 2017, and the following points were discussed:

- The 9th Episcopal District was established in **1868**. Celebration will continue until **2018**.
- **GOAL:** To celebrate the numerous generations that have been a part of the District's 150 years.
- Celebration will continue until Planning Meeting on November 2, 2018 – a one-year celebration.
- **EVERY WILLING WORKER** is invited and encouraged to be a part of the celebration.
- **OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE. WORKING COMMITTEE:**
 - o History
 - o Worship
 - o Music
 - o Public Relations
 - o Fundraising
 - o Hospitality
 - o Souvenir Journal
 - o Food
 - o Audiovisual
 - o Transportation
- **OUR GUESTS:** Bishop Seawright wants to invite former Bishops who served in Alabama, Bishops who are from Alabama, and former Bishops' family members.
- **WORK THE THEME:** Asking that the Anniversary theme be carried throughout 9th District component meetings, etc. for the next year.
- **PROCEEDS OF EVENT TO HELP PARTICIPATING CHURCHES!**
- **MORE DETAILS FORTHCOMING:**
 - o Instructions for submission of Local Church History
 - o Ads for Souvenir Journal
 - o Closing celebration gala: A Dressy Affair!
 - o History Committee
 - o Anniversary emblem (to be affixed to programs, bulletins etc. throughout the year)
 - o **KEEPSAKES:** T-shirts, polos, oxford shirts, key chains. Will go on sale at Mid-Year Convocation
- **FOR MORE INFO,** please contact your pastor, Presiding Elder, or chairpersons.
 - o Dr. Farrell J. Duncombe – duncombe1@aol.com
 - o Mrs. Bernella Knight Rose – bernellarose@comcast.net
 - o District website: <https://www.ninthamepchurch.org/>
 - o District e-mail blast/*The Ninth Hour* Newsletter



December 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 World AIDS Day	2 9th District WMS Annual Meeting
3 First Sunday of Advent 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship Communion Sunday AMEN DEADLINE	4 9:30 a.m. Fifty-Plus Auxiliary	5	6 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	7 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	8	9 9th District Community Christmas Celebration
10 Second Sunday of Advent 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	11	12 Special Election 	13 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	14	15 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	16
17 Third Sunday of Advent 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	18	19 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	20 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	21	22 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	23 10:00 a.m. WMS Meeting
24 Fourth Sunday of Advent 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship Christmas Eve Service 6:00 p.m.			26 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	27 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	28	29
31 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship 10:00 p.m. Watch Night Service						

POTPOURRI

About St. John Members

Dr. Arthur Walker Honored in Building Naming Ceremony



The Arthur L. Walker, Jr. family stand in front of the Motlow State Community College Smyrna classroom building that was dedicated in Dr. Walker's honor on Oct. 20.

Motlow State Community College, Lynchburg, Tennessee, honored its fourth president, Dr. Arthur L. Walker, Jr. by affixing his name to the original classroom building on the Motlow Smyrna Campus. Dr. Walker is the fourth of six Motlow presidents to have a building dedicated in his honor. By naming the Arthur L. Walker, Jr. Building, Motlow College honors Dr. Walker for his steadfast leadership, influence, and dedication to the institution. Dr. Walker epitomizes the ideals of the Motlow teaching and learning community, which are respect, inclusion, responsibility, service, and philanthropy. Having a building named for an individual is the highest honor a college can bestow upon an individual.

In introducing the program, Cannon said, "The season of honor has come into the life of Art Walker. On this, the 20th day of October, in the year of our Lord 2017, we celebrate the life, service, contributions, and leadership of a friend, a peer, a president, and most of all a servant-leader as we dedicate the original Motlow College Smyrna campus classroom building in his honor. During this ceremony, you will hear repeatedly the words honest, integrity, fair, compassion, leader, and gentleman. Regardless of the speaker, these words describe Dr. Art Walker because these words are consistent with his life, regardless of his station or status in life." As forecast, each speaker validated what Cannon had predicted.

Having retired from a very successful military career that spanned 26 years, Dr. Walker joined the Motlow College family in 1988 and retired in 2006. Dr. Walker progressively moved through the academic ranks from instructor to Fayetteville Center Director to

Vice President for Academic Affairs to President. He assumed the presidency in 2003. He moved Motlow College forward in areas of student access, capital projects, and fundraising. Motlow expanded course scheduling and online classes, entered into partnership with Tennessee Tech University to create the 2+2 Elementary Education Program, facilitated the implementation of the general education core, and significantly increased enrollment in the high school Dual Enrollment Program.

On February 21, 2005, Dr. Walker hosted the groundbreaking ceremony for the first free-standing building for Motlow College Smyrna Teaching Site located on Mason-Tucker Drive, now Motlow College Boulevard. On June 22, 2006, Dr. Walker hosted the official open house and ribbon cutting ceremony opening the new building/campus.

On June 30, 2006, Dr. Walker retired as the fourth president of Motlow State Community College. He continues today as a Motlow College Foundation trustee. Dr. Walker is married to Mrs. Rosa Walker and they have one adult daughter, Angela.

Congratulations Dr. Walker!

St. John AME Church
229 Church Street
Huntsville, Alabama 35801
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The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright, Bishop

The Reverend Sherita Seawright, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Albert L. H. Hyche, Presiding Elder

The Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor

Important Dates to Remember

Church Training (Dates to be determined)

Presenters:

Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry

The Reverend Dr. Timothy Tyler – Shorter Community AME Church – Denver, Colorado

The Reverend Ritney Castine – 8th Episcopal District

December 12, 2017 Alabama U. S. Senate Special Election—VOTE!

December 24, 2017 Christmas Eve Service, 6:00 p.m.

December 31, 2017 Watch Night Service, 10:00 p.m.

January 4, 2018 Church Growth and Development Conference Worship,
Jacksonville, Florida, Bishop Harry Seawright, 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 22 Issue 12

December 2017

Holiday Greetings



It is with boundless joy that we extend greetings on behalf of our entire family. Reverend Rita and I are thankful for our church family and extend Christmas Blessings from our family to yours.

During this Advent Season may you reflect on your relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. While Advent is certainly a time of celebration and anticipation of Christ's birth, it is more than that. It is only in the shadow of Advent that the miracle of Christmas can be fully understood and appreciated. For this reason alone, we should be filled with joy and consolation.

At the heart of Christmas is the wonderful news that God sent His Only Son to earth to give Himself on the cross to save us from our sins. We can't repay a gift like that. But we can receive it. The spirit of Christmas is receiving because at the heart of Christmas is God's grace, which only can be received.

As we go about planning our celebrations, remember that Jesus is the reason for the season. Celebrate Christ by spending time with family and your church family. May the gifts of Advent and Christmas — hope, peace, joy and love become your true blessing of our Savior Jesus Christ.

In retrospect, we are appreciative of the generosity of St. John's members that's been shown to our family throughout 2017. We eagerly anticipate the many rich blessings that God has in store for St. John for 2018. "Changing The Atmosphere" has been adopted as our theme. It is our desire that our worship experience will become one with an atmosphere of extravagant worship.

Again, may each of you be blessed during this joyous season and may you boldly acknowledge with gratitude, our Heavenly Father's incomparable gift to us.

Blessings to you and yours,

Pastor Maurice Wright, II

Bishop Harry L. Seawright's 2017 Advent Message



We've come to that time of the year when people talk about the Christmas season. That's great, and I'm glad to share in this time. However, before we celebrate Christmas, perhaps we should remember Advent.



Bishop and Supervisor Seawright

Advent is found in the calendar dates beginning 4 weeks before Christmas and ending on Christmas Eve. The Advent Season is the beginning of our Christian liturgical year. Advent is a time of waiting, preparing, anticipating the birth or arrival of Jesus, the Christ child.

Honestly, most of us spend Advent in other ways. We prepare Christmas lists (checking them twice), menus, travel and entertainment plans. I find nothing wrong with this secular emphasis on Christmas, but what if Christians observed Advent with a spiritual focus.

The perfect circular wreath, made only of evergreen, symbolizes God's eternity. Focusing on the Advent colors leads to spiritual renewal. The first purple candle is "The Candle of Hope"; we are reminded of the prophecy (hope) of the coming Savior. The second purple candle is "The Candle of Preparation"; during Advent, we are to get ready to welcome Jesus. The pink candle stands for "The Candle of Joy"; Jesus brings joy! The third purple candle is "The Candle of Love"; because God loves us, God sent Jesus to save us from sin. The (usually) large white candle "The Christ Candle", reminds us that Jesus, God's spotless lamb is the light of the world.

During the next few weeks, as you shop, dine, travel and entertain, remember the real reason for Advent. Spend time reading God's word, praying and listening to God, worshipping regularly, and experiencing God's peace. I believe if we spiritually prepare for Christ, Christmas will take on a stronger meaning. We'll experience real hope, genuine preparation, unspeakable joy, and unfailing love. Then, on Christmas morning when we sing "Joy to the World", God's light will overtake us and lead us to a new kind of Christmas celebration.

Rev. Sherita, Shari, Matthew, Cameron, and I pray that you will enjoy Advent 2017. Let's make time to prepare for the Christ Child.

Presiding Elder Oliver Allen Retires From Active Ministry in the AME Church

By Bridget J. Floyd



The Reverend Oliver Allen has retired from active ministry in the AME Church. His appointment at the time of his retirement was the Presiding Elder of the South Birmingham-Huntsville-Bessemer District of the Northwest Alabama Conference of the Ninth District (AL) of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Presiding Elder Allen and Mrs. Mary Allen have served dutifully, and graciously agreed to share their experiences with the St. John AMEN.

Presiding Elder Allen answered the call to ministry in 1989 and preached his first sermon in March of 1989. He was ordained after a two year period. Prior to completing seminary training and ordination, he served as a "supply pastor" at Bay Minette AME Church and Trinity Chapel AME Church. He preached at Bay Minette AME Church for six months. The first church to which he was assigned as pastor was Mt. Olive AME Church in Creola, Alabama. He was there for four years. He reported that in 1994 he was assigned 'across the bay' (Mobile Bay) to Montrose AME Church, in Montrose, Alabama, again for four years. He noted that his initial duty was to funeralize a member there, who turned out to be the mother of his now son-in-law. He noted that being from the Mobile area, he had the opportunity to preach/pastor in an area with family and friends.

Presiding Elder and Mrs. Oliver Allen, Jr. According to Presiding Elder Allen, 1994 was pivotal in another way. This was when he stopped his "paying job" at Scott Paper Company to become a full time minister/pastor. This step of faith for him, as well as his family, resulted in leaving behind what would be considered a very well-paying position, to take a reduction to half of his previous salary. He and Mrs. Allen noted that this was at a time when their second and third-born daughters were about to complete college and enter college, respectively. They described the blessings that allowed them to meet their goal of providing higher education for their daughters so that they and their daughters would be debt-free. Their description of how they were able to achieve this goal emphasized God's divine assistance, among which was scholarship funding and meeting their youngest daughter's long-time stated goal of attending Auburn University. A theme throughout the conversation was the faithfulness of God as Presiding Elder Allen made decisions and met the challenges of following God's call.

After graduating high school, Presiding Elder Allen joined the military. He noted that there were many issues that he encountered in the military that also prepared him for the ministry. He served in many places, including Louisiana, Mississippi, California, and Korea. He indicated that there was inequality in terms of living and eating arrangements, as well as treatment when the soldiers went into the community, even in an official capacity. There were times when African Americans in the military felt like they must be vigilant in terms of the established/known enemy, but things were not always 'friendly' (perhaps even safe) with the person who was next to them/ "on their side".

Presiding Elder Allen noted that he felt that God "guided me away from pitfalls" even before he answered the call to the ministry. He described how he was hired at Scott Paper Company in 1967, at which time he was the first, and for a long while, the only African American. He noted that "God prevented lay-offs" and facilitated successful outcomes on extensive tests and succeeding in classes and training that allowed him to reach the highest level in his department. He noted that he progressed to become a Class A Mechanic which resulted in increased salary. A person with this classification was required to be on the premises to meet safety requirements for the plant to be in operation. This meant that he often had extended hours.

He noted that he also felt "pre-ordained" to meet and marry Mrs. Allen. Although they are both from the Mobile area, they did not meet while there. They met in Tuskegee where his sister made the introduction. Presiding Elder Allen expressed "how strong she was through my challenges". He indicated that their daughters have commented on Mrs. Allen's strength as

(Continued on page 4)

Presiding Elder Oliver Allen Retires From Active Ministry in the AME Church

By Bridget J. Floyd

(Continued from page 3)

well. He indicated that his family as a whole has made sacrifices. However, God would help Presiding Elder and Mrs. Allen (and family) through the challenges, by his report.

Presiding Elder Allen stated that he has dealt with "not being the most liked person in this journey", citing examples of his time in the military, being the first black at his company, and experiences in the ministry. He immediately stated the key factor in dealing with those obstacles, "when you are blessed and highly favored". He expressed that he had been "bothered by missing some aspects of my schooling", but he feels that God says, "I was there...look where you are now". He emphatically stated, "I know it's favor—divine intervention!"

The presiding elder recalled when he was in Dothan, Alabama, pastoring Parks Chapel AME Church, and he thought that the \$1.5 million asking price was insurmountable for purchasing a new church. However, with God's favor/intervention, his congregation was able to obtain the property, as well as the contents of the new church building, for less than the asking price.



Presiding Elder Allen preaching at S. John

The 'favor' included a higher offer being declined, while their lower offer was accepted. Presiding Elder Allen stated, "That showed me that nothing is too hard for God".

Presiding Elder Allen noted several people played a significant role in his ministry. The Reverend G. L. Washington was his "father in the ministry" and Dr. Anderson Todd, Jr. was a major supporter and was instrumental in his assignments in the ministry. Presiding Elder Allen indicated that Dr. H. O. Swanson gave him opportunities in the ministry. He noted that this was the person who took the presiding elder to the church where he supplied before being ordained, and urged him to go to a smaller church, (Mt. Olive) for his first pastorate. He noted Bishop James Davis selected Presiding Elder Allen for Treasurer of the Ninth Episcopal District in 2008. The following year, he was promoted to the position of presiding elder of the South Birmingham-Huntsville-Bessemer District. The Elder noted that mathematics was his "strong suit" and this served him well in his role in the ministry as well as his other employment.

When asked about her experience as the wife of a minister and presiding elder, Mrs. Allen indicated that one of her adjustments was learning about the structure of the AME Church as she had grown up in the Baptist Church. Mrs. Allen credited Mrs. Swanson in helping her learn about the AME Church and expectations of the spouse of the pastor. In comparing the adjustments "then and now", she stated that currently spouses are "more involved", and many of them "are actually ministers themselves". She noted that what served her well in the adjustment was that "I was secure in who I was, I felt comfortable being me." As such, she did not feel uncomfortable with the expectations or the guidance which she received.

While she was also from Mobile, Mrs. Allen lived in Tuskegee and worked in Opelika. (It was during this time that she and the presiding elder were introduced by his sister.) She retired in 1999 as a teacher of English and social studies. She noted that Presiding Elder Allen then moved to Dothan to pastor Parks Chapel AME Church. Mrs. Allen moved to Dothan the following year, allowing their daughter to complete her last year in high school. The pastorate in Dothan was eleven years, unlike previous pastorates which were four years duration. They moved to Huntsville when Presiding Elder Allen was promoted from pastor of Parks Chapel to Presiding Elder of the South Birmingham-Huntsville-Bessemer District of the Northwest Alabama Conference.

(Continued on page 5)

Presiding Elder Oliver Allen Retires From Active Ministry in the AME Church

By Bridget J. Floyd

(Continued from page 4)

Mrs. Allen indicated that she feels it has been "a peaceful experience...I've enjoyed the journey". Similar to her husband, she noted, "I could see the move of God. He always had everything prepared. It just seems everywhere we would go, God went before us". She spoke of the challenge they faced when Presiding Elder Allen resigned from Scott Paper Company. She referred to Psalm 23, in terms of the preparations of the Shepherd. Presiding Elder Allen added that "You don't have to be good but you have to be *faithful...I work hard to be faithful*". Mrs. Allen stated that Presiding Elder Allen has been "a pastor's pastor". She indicated that he has the patience that is required to guide adults and professionals (the role of a presiding elder). Mrs. Allen provided further guidance and wisdom for spouses of ministers/pastors: "Humility—no one can teach that. You need humility. Put God before yourself ... you have to be selfless".



Presiding Elder Allen joins St. John

advice to spouses of ministers, Mrs. Allen indicated that "First, be faithful in the ministry, be supportive but be yourself. Ask God to help you...find your ministry where your gift can be identified. If you're where you're supposed to be, it will work".

Presiding Elder Allen has served under Bishops Reid, Thomas, Grady, Kirkland, Davis, and Seawright. He served as Ninth District Treasurer, and was appointed presiding elder by Bishop Davis. He noted that Bishop Davis emphasized excellence, quality, and that "adversity is the path to success".

Post retirement, Presiding Elder Allen stated his intent to formally join St. John and in consultation with Pastor Maurice Wright II, become active in several ministries. He has a particular passion for Church School. [He has in fact joined St. John and has become a member of the Building Committee.] Mrs. Allen, has been involved in the Food Ministry/Soup Kitchen, the Missionary Society, and Fifty Plus Auxiliary. She has been able to work with these ministries while supporting her husband in his role as presiding elder. He noted that St. John has been his "greatest experience of church". They agreed that Dr. and Mrs. Homer L. McCall played a big part in serving as pastor and aiding their transition to St. John ... helped to make it an easy transition." They noted that several persons in St. John introduced them to Huntsville and made them welcome.



Presiding Elder Allen as interim pastor of St. John

The couple was very active in bowling when in the Mobile area. Presiding Elder Allen was even on the Board of Directors of the Greater Mobile Bowling Association. He indicated that he might resume that favorite pastime now that there will be more leisure time available.

They are proud and thankful for their family, daughters Adrienne Tibbs (LaDon); Tiffany Duncan (Courtney); and Patrice Allen. Grandchildren include William LaDon Tibbs II, Brianna Tibbs; Kylan Duncan, Kiersten Duncan; and last but not least "granddoggie Parker", Patrice's "baby".

St. John would like to extend congratulations and appreciation to Presiding Elder and Mrs. Allen.

Presiding Elder Oliver Allen Retires From Active Ministry in the AME Church

By Bridget J. Floyd



AIDS Awareness

Bridget J. Floyd



December 1st is marked as "World AIDS Day" each year. This began in 1988 and was the first global health day. The purpose is to unite the people of the world in an effort to learn about and fight HIV/AIDS. Additionally, they can support individuals who are living with HIV as well as memorialize those who have died. This condition has a worldwide impact and over the years has become understood to impact all genders and ages—birth to geriatric.

In the 1980's a diagnosis of HIV/AIDS was seen as a terminal condition. This has changed to the phrase "living with" HIV/AIDS. There is effective treatment and preventive methods. Efforts to decrease stigma, increase talking about the subject and getting screened/tested, have all contributed to prevention and management of the condition.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) African Americans are disproportionately affected by HIV. In 2016 African Americans represented 12 % of the population but accounted for 44% (17,528) of HIV diagnoses. African Americans have the highest rate of HIV diagnoses compared to other races and ethnicities. Additionally, the population rates (per 100,000 people) of people who received HIV diagnoses were highest in the South (16.8%).

In terms of living with HIV, the CDC data suggest that at the end of 2015, 1,122,900 adults and adolescents were living with HIV. Of those, 162,500 (15%) had not received a diagnosis. It is important to note that young people were the most likely to be unaware of being infected. Among individuals aged 13-24 who were living with HIV (at the end of 2015), 44% did not know.

www.cdc.gov/hiv/cdc/HIV/AIDS

Content source: Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention, National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Soup Kitchen Ministry

Charlie Biele

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

YOU ARE THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

You enter the home of poverty, causing children to open their eyes wide, in pleased wonder.

You cause the miser's hand to relax, and thus paint a bright spot on his soul.

You cause the aged to renew their youth and to laugh in the old, glad way.

You keep romance alive in the heart of childhood, and brighten sleep with dreamswoven of magic.

You cause eager feet to climb dark stairways with filled baskets, leaving behind hearts amazed at the goodness of the world.

You cause the prodigal to pause a moment on his wild, wasteful way, and send to anxious love some little token that releases glad tears—which wash away the hard lines of sorrow.

You enter dark prison cells, reminding scarred manhood of what might have been, and pointing forward to good days yet to be.

You come softly into the still, white home of pain, and lips that are too weak to speak just tremble in silent, eloquent gratitude.

In a thousand ways you cause the weary world to look up into the face of God, and for a little moment forget the things that are small and wretched.

YOU, DEAR FRIEND ARE THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT!

Paraphrased E. C. Baird

"...When did we ever see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and give you a drink? And when did we ever see you sick or in prison and come to me? Then the king will say, 'I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me.'" Matthew 25:37 MSG

HAPPY HOLIDAY WISHES TO THE VOLUNTEERS WHO SERVE IN OUR SOUP KITCHEN MINISTRY.

THANK YOU.

SAVE THE DATE

MAY 30-JUNE 1, 2018

The Commission on Economic Development
and the Department of Retirement Services of the
African Methodist Episcopal Church



HELD AT BEESON
SCHOOL OF DIVINITY



INTERNATIONAL STEWARDSHIP & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT

Bishop Harry L. Seawright
9th Episcopal District
Chair, Commission on Economic Development

Bishop Wilfred J. Messiah
17th Episcopal District
Co-Chair, Commission on Economic Development

Bishop Samuel L. Green
7th Episcopal District
Chair, Commission on Retirement and Pension Services

Dr. Jerome V. Harris, Executive Director
Department of Retirement Services

Presiding Elder Hyche Visits St. John



Presiding Elder Albert Hyche and his wife, Attorney Ida Tyree-Hyche, visited with St. John on Sunday, December 3rd. This was their first time at St. John since the recent appointment of Presiding Elder Hyche to the South Birmingham-Huntsville-Bessemer District.

The Reverend Maurice Wright, II, pastor of St. John, introduced Presiding Elder Hyche who was well received by the congregation and brought greetings. He indicated that he was looking forward to working with Pastor Wright and St. John. He suggested that St. John has been blessed and reminded, "to whom much is given, much is required." He introduced his wife who warmly greeted the congregation and noted that she, also, looked forward to working with St. John. They asked for prayers as they and St. John move forward together. Presiding Elder Hyche noted that he had heard Pastor Wright sing and looked forward to hearing him preach. His response, and that of the congregation, indicated the positive experience of hearing Pastor Wright sing and preach on this day.

Advent Is a Season of Preparation

Advent is the first season in the liturgical calendar in the Christian Church. The purpose of Advent is to prepare hearts and minds for the birth of the Savior Jesus Christ. The season includes the four Sundays before Christmas.

One tradition of Advent is lighting the candles of the Advent wreath. The wreath of live greenery symbolizes the everlasting life found in Christ. 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 lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

Families of St. John have been selected to lead the Advent devotional and lighting of the candle(s) each week. Bernard and Mildred Powers led the lighting on the first Sunday of Advent. The Adkins family, Bobby, Kay and Samantha, led the lighting on the second Sunday of Advent.



CPR Ministry Activities Highlighted Caregivers Month

The Caregivers Prayer and Respite (CPR) Ministry of St. John scheduled activities for each week of National Family Caregivers Month in November.

The first Sunday of the month the ministry provided an informative display of useful material for caregivers.

The second Sunday of the month they partnered with the Health Ministry to provide health screening for members. Pictured below are some of the members who used this service to check their health after service.



The CPR ministry chose one Tuesday of the month to work along with the Kitchen Ministry to deliver meals to sick and shut-in members and their caregivers. They also sent cards of encouragement to caregivers. The final activity of the month was to sit with those who require continuous monitoring so that the caregivers could attend church.

Christmas Drama and Christmas Eve Worship



Schedule of Services for Christmas Eve Sunday, December 24, 2017

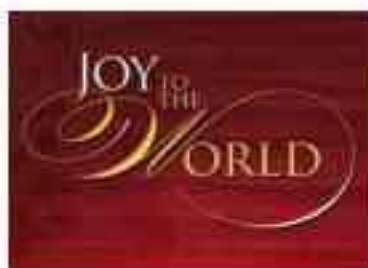
Annual Christmas Drama
8:45 a.m.

Morning Worship
10:00 a.m.

Christmas Eve Worship
6:00 p.m.

Deaconess Corner

Deaconess Ernestine Barnes Ivory



This is the time of year when we celebrate the old,
but ever new miracle of Christmas

It is our time to wish you a
Happy Holiday Season!

GLORIA

In Excelsis Deo

- Luke 1:32-33 -

*Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains;
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains.*

*Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!*

*Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heav'nly song?*

*Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!*

*Come to Bethlehem and see
Him Whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.*

*Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!*

*See Him in a manger laid,
Whom the choirs of angels praise;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,
While our hearts in love we raise.*

Spring Trip to Atlanta



The Ellipsis Experience Women's and Girls Conference. REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

All interested Women and Youth ages 15 -18.

Please go the Ellipsis website to register. Payment plans are available through the sites registration page.

REFRESH

WOMEN'S MINISTRY



Rev. Rita Wright
First Lady

Rejuvenate your **MIND, HEART**
and **SOUL**.

**ALL WOMEN
AGES 17 AND UP**

WHEN

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Dance & Chorus
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Bible Night in
Sister Sunset

SIGN-UP

Full Bible Study
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(205) 334-3263



Mark Your Calendars!
Wednesday, January 3, 2018
6:00 p.m. for Intercessory Prayer



Church School Book Club

December 2017

Discussion Date: December 16, 2017

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Perfect Present, Alers, Hodges and Yayas, 2017

January 2018

Discussion Date: January 20, 2018

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Sooner the Better, Macomber 2016

She's stuck with Jack...

Lorraine Dancy has just discovered that everything she believes about her father is a lie—starting with the fact that Thomas supposedly died years ago. Now she has learned that not only is he not dead, he is living in a small town south of the border. In the process of tracking him down, she manages to get framed for theft and pursued by the real thief, the police and a local crime boss. Her father's friend Jack Keller agrees to help her escape, although Lorraine is reluctant to depend on a man like him.

And he's stuck with her!

Jack is every bit the renegade Lorraine thinks he is—an ex-mercenary and former Deliverance Company operative. He is also the one person who can guide her to safety. But there are stormy waters ahead, including an attraction neither of them wants to feel. An attraction that is as risky as it is intense—for both of them. The sooner he can get Lorraine home, the better!

- Amazon



Church School Lesson Overview – January 2018

The lesson reviews were written by Willie Sandifer

January 7, 2018

Lesson Title: A Sincere Faith

Lesson Scripture: Daniel 1

Print: Daniel 1:8-21

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

Key Verse: "But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the royal rations of food" (Daniel 1:8).

In this lesson, we look at the value of completely committing to God's will. Specifically Daniel, who was young man who had a strong faith and commitment to God. His faith was strongly tested by being among those captured and by being forced to live in Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar wanted Daniel and the other captives to give their loyalty to him and his gods and turn their back on their identity as children of God.

January 14, 2018

Lesson Title: A Bold Faith

Lesson Scripture: Daniel 3

Print: Daniel 3:19-23, 26-28

Devotional Songs: #412, #375, and #243

Key Verse: "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him. They disobeyed the king's command and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God" (Daniel 3:28).

In this lesson, having made a golden image, Nebuchadnezzar ordered all the officers to bow down before the image and worship.

Let us take note that peer pressure we may come across in this day and age is small when compared with the peer pressure that Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego faced. Doing God's will to please Him was at the top of the list of Daniel and his friends. They did not take part in compromising actions in order to be accepted by others. Although their lives were on the line, respectfully, they did not comply with the king's edicts.

January 21, 2018

Lesson Title: A Prayer for an Obedient Faith

Lesson Scripture: Daniel 9:1-19

Print: Daniel 9:4-8, 15-19

Devotional Songs: #377, #272, and #243

Key Verses: "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, listen and act and do not delay! For your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people bear your name!" (Daniel 9:19).

In this lesson, Daniel prays for Israel and himself, as he is aware that Israel's exile is close to an end. As Daniel prayed, God revealed a larger picture of His plans that include salvation and eternity.

Daniel remained faithful in his commitment to God. Even though he endured harassment and persecution because of his commitment. Throughout his captivity, Daniel prayed each day and fasted at times for the benefit of his people and himself. God continued to bless Daniel in all areas of his life. Not only was he highly advanced as a civil servant, he was enabled by God to use his gifts of prophecies and visions to encourage his people.

January 28, 2018

Lesson Title: A Strong Faith

Lesson Scripture: Daniel 10, 11

Print: Daniel 10:10-19

Devotional Songs: #525, #321, and #243

Key Verses: "He said, 'Do not fear, greatly beloved, you are safe. Be strong and courageous!' When he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, 'Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me'." (Daniel 10:19).

In this lesson we are introduced to Daniel's last vision that takes place in the third year of Cyrus, who was king of Persia at the time. This is close to three years after the vision that was observed in the lesson for last week. Although some of the captives returned home, Daniel stayed in Babylon. He understood this final vision, unlike the vision in chapter 8. Daniel saw and understood some scary future events that involved the spiritual battle of those who belonged to the enemy and God's servants to include wars, conflicts, and further afflictions upon Israel.



Church School meets
each Sunday
at 8:45 a.m.

All are welcome!

January 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 	2	3 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	4	5	6 Love Feas 18:00 a.m. All Staff & Ministry Leaders Meeting 9:00 a.m.
7 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship Communion Sunday AMEN DEADLINE	8 8:30 a.m. Fifty-Plus Auxiliary REFRESH Bible Study For Women 7:00 p.m.	9	10 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	11 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	12	13 10:30 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting
14 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	15  MLK Day REFRESH Bible Study For Women 7:00 p.m.	16 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	17 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	18	19 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	20
21 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship 2:00 p.m. Women's Ministry Lunch	22 Off Board 6:00 p.m.	23 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	24 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	25	26 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	27 10:00 a.m. WMS Meeting
28 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	29	30	31 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study			

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The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright, Bishop

The Reverend Sherita Seawright, Episcopal Supervisor

The Reverend Albert Hyche, Presiding Elder

The Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor

Important Dates to Remember

Church Training (Dates to be determined)

Presenters:

Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry

The Reverend Dr. Timothy Tyler – Shorter Community AME Church – Denver, Colorado

The Reverend Ritney Castine – 8th Episcopal District

December 24, 2017 Christmas Program, 8:45 a.m.

December 24, 2017 Christmas Eve Service, 6:00 p.m.

December 31, 2017 Watch Night Service, 10:00 p.m.

January 4, 2018 Church Growth and Development Conference Worship,
Jacksonville, Florida, Bishop Harry Seawright, 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*

INDNJC