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



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 23 Issue 1

January 2018

The Reverend Maurice Wright, II Candidate for Connectional Director of the Music and Christian Arts Ministry (MCAM)

By Pamela Whitehead

Ignite Growth! | Inspire Change! | Impact Service!

Press Toward the Mark for the Prize of the High Call

"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14) and as such, St. John's beloved shepherd obediently yields to the call for a higher level of service.



Pastor Wright during Spiritual Musical at St. John.

It is with the great pleasure of God's joy that St. John announces the candidacy of its exceptionally GIFTED and ANOINTED pastor, The Reverend Maurice Wright, II, for the Connectional position of Director of Music and Christian Arts Ministry (MCAM). In addition to being the Senior Pastor at St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Reverend Wright is an outstanding vocalist, musician, director, and composer. He holds a degree in Voice and Conducting from Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia and has worked with choirs and community groups across the country. Additionally, he has traveled internationally spreading the love and light of Jesus Christ through both the Word and music. His God-given artistic gifts

are a natural complement to his very impactful ministry and as the St. John AMEC congregation has often witnessed, music and worship arts are intricately woven throughout every worship experience and set the atmosphere for a uniquely powerful encounter with the Holy Spirit.

The Reverend Wright's involvement with MCAM is extensive. He was a founding member of the Connectional Music Committee and has been an integral part of MCAM since its inception at the Connectional level. Pastor Wright has been instrumental in advancing the ministry through knowledge sharing with both clergy and lay persons, has worked diligently with local congregations in the identification and development of the spiritual gifts of its members, has facilitated ministry and leadership training workshops at the local and district level for churches that desire to establish and/or grow their Music and Christian Arts Department, and has worked faithfully in collaboration with leadership at various levels across a number of Episcopal Districts with the goal of increasing the vitality of worship arts across the Connection. Pastor Wright is the current Associate Director of MCAM and has served with excellence for the past two consecutive Quadrennials.

Above all, obedience to God is paramount to the Reverend Wright and as such, he answered the call to preach at

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The Reverend Maurice Wright, II Candidate for Connectional Director of the Music and Christian Arts Ministry (MCAM)

By Pamela Whitehead

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the tender age of 13. God has blessed the Reverend Wright to grow in spiritual grace through music and the Holy Spirit has been his guide as his passion and commitment has resulted in a very rich musical vitae which began when he demonstrated exceptional gifts at an early age as a young musician and vocalist. His passion for music continued to evolve and expanded to include choral directing for middle and high school choirs as well as Founding Director of the MLK Community Choir in Portland, Oregon. Additionally, his broad range of gifts further developed as he gained experience as Director and Minister of Music working with congregations across the Connection to include Bethel AME Church, Portland, Oregon; United AME Church, Xenia Ohio; Powerhouse Temple Church, Portland Oregon; Philadelphia Community Church, Portland Oregon; Big Bethel AME Church, Atlanta Georgia; and the Martin Luther King Jr. Chapel Choir at Morehouse College Atlanta, Georgia.

Accompanying his extraordinary, soul-stirring homiletic abilities are even more of his musical gifts which include being an accomplished organist, pianist, saxophonist and vocalist. Pastor Wright is both gifted and musically trained with vocal experience that includes being a member of the Morehouse College Glee Club, Atlanta Opera Company, Martin Luther King, Jr Commemorative Choir and the Wendell Whalum Community Choir. His favorite genre, Gospel Music, includes preferred styles that span the full musical spectrum from hymns to call and response worship songs to contemporary gospel and Christian music.

Pastor's lifelong passion for music began when he was just a young boy singing in the Sunshine Band of the Altheimer Memorial Church of God in Christ. He would lead songs and even direct the youth choir.



Pastor Wright at the piano.

Not only was he involved in church music, but he started playing the saxophone as a 5th grader. His musical talent was noticed by the woman who would become his favorite teacher, Mrs. Ethel Peak. She taught choir at the Jason Lee Middle School and was the Minister of Music at Allen African Methodist Episcopal Church in Tacoma Washington. The Reverend Wright recalls, "On Sunday mornings Mrs. Peak would come to pick up her students from Altheimer Church to sing

and play at her church because they were down the street from each other. When Allen AME Church would get out of service, she would drop us back off at my church and church would still be going on". Even in high school, music and arts were paramount in his life. He served as the drum major of the Grover Cleveland High School Band and sang in three high school choirs. As a Junior, he entered the solo competition at the Newport Jazz festival and was the 1st African American Student to win. His rendition of Stormy Weather was highlighted in several newspapers in the Portland area.

In an interview with Pastor Wright, he shares...

"My love for music and arts has allowed me to go many places and meet many people. As I serve God and the church I love so much, I offer myself to serve in this position so we can go to even higher heights. I have been fortunate to witness this department from its inception. Sitting at the feet of Dr. Don Lee White, Dr. Jimmie James, the Reverend Sylvester Lauderhill, Jr, Dr. Willie Williams and the Reverend Anthony Vinson has been more than a privilege and a blessing.

As Associate Director, I have had the pleasure to serve along with the Reverend Anthony Vinson as the Lord gave

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The Reverend Maurice Wright, II Candidate for Connectional Director of the Music and Christian Arts Ministry (MCAM)

By Pamela Whitehead

(Continued from page 2)

him the vision to produce two recordings and do great things. I feel strongly about meaningful worship and offering our best to God. The arts department in our churches is moving forward in every way. I want to help to facilitate the positive direction and provide leadership so we will never be able to say that MCAM is the best kept secret. I envision providing resources for churches that want to launch a drama ministry or a liturgical dance ministry. I want to see the visual arts ministries become an interactive part of worship. Our Zion has been blessed with some of the greatest talent you can imagine. I would like to increase our support to our own artists, as we showcase and lift up their gifts and abilities to the worldwide church."

With great pleasure, the officers and members of St. John AME Church give their full support and pray God's favor upon Pastor Maurice Wright, II as he runs with grace the race that God has set before him as a Candidate for Connectional Director of the Music and Christian Arts Ministry (MCAM).

So, mark your calendar! The MCAM Elections will take place during the Connectional Christian Education Conference scheduled for June 28th - 30th, 2018. We pray God's continued blessings upon Pastor Wright, First Lady, the Reverend Rita Wright, and the entire Wright family as they continue to honor God with their obedience and "...press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus". (Philippians 3:14)

DUTIES OF THE CONNECTIONAL DIRECTOR OF MCAM

The Connectional Director of Music shall coordinate all activities of the MCAM and preside over its meetings. He or she shall serve as liaison between the MCAM and Executive Secretary of Christian Education and serve as Chair of the Executive Board. The Connectional Director shall be an ex-officio member of all sub-committees and shall have general supervision and direction of the work of the Connectional Music and Christian Arts Ministry and the Connectional Music Institute. The Connectional Director shall be recognized as a Connectional Officer of the AME Church and shall be empowered to run the day to day operations of MCAM and CMI.

"Connectional Music and Christian Arts Ministry Bylaws -Amendments | Article IV Officers"
AME Book of Discipline 2012

WHAT IS THE MUSIC AND CHRISTIAN ARTS MINISTRY (MCAM)?

MCAM is a Connectional subcomponent that falls under the Commission on Christian Education and is endorsed and recognized by the General Conference of the AME Church. It is the body that provides structure and consistency in music in all areas of the AME Church from the connectional church to the local church. Additionally, it serves as a music and related arts advisory organization that assists with planning and preparation and submits recommendations for music at General Conference and Connectional Meetings as well as episcopal district meetings, Annual Conferences, districts of the Annual Conferences and local programs or activities when requested.

"Connectional Music and Christian Arts Ministry Bylaws -Amendments"
AME Book of Discipline 2012

Ignite Growth! | Inspire Change! | Impact Service!

The Reverend Maurice Wright, II Inducted into 100 Black Men Greater Huntsville Chapter, Incorporated

By Jeannette Jones



Widely known for his effervescent personality and his desire to serve in the greater community and mentor the youth, the Reverend Maurice Wright, II, pastor of St. John AME Church in Huntsville, was recently inducted into the membership of the 100 Black Men, Greater Huntsville Chapter during their 2017 Annual Holiday Gala. The theme for the Gala was "Developing Future Leaders Today". After only fifteen months in the local area, the Reverend Maurice Wright has been meeting people and working with various community-based organizations. He is thoroughly involved in the Greater Huntsville Community and is recognized as St. John's Servant Pastor.

Induction into the Greater Huntsville Chapter of the 100 Black Men of America was a great accomplishment. Joining him for the ceremony was his wife, the Reverend Joretha Wright, and children, Isaiah, Joy and Leslie. Other men of St. John who are members of 100 Black Men include the Reverend Homer McCall, Hodges Washington, Willie Sandifer, Arthur Walker, Sylvester Daniels, Wilbert Brownlow, Karl Gullatte and Pastor Maurice Wright II.

The Gala was an opportunity for the 100 Black Men to recognize their 2017 Mentor of the Year, pin new members, and pay tribute to fallen members of the organization.

100 Black Men of Greater Huntsville is a 501(c)(3) organization focusing on African American Youth. Their goal is to work with young people through their signature programs of mentoring, education, economic empowerment, health and wellness, and leadership development. Nationally and locally, the organization has positively affected thousands of young people and their families.

Congratulations to the Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor of St. John Huntsville!



Christmas Give-a-way

A Collaborative Event Sponsored by the 9th Episcopal District and St. John AME Church, Huntsville, Alabama

By Barbara Johnson



Rev. Latham and Rev. Wright
enjoying the fellowship.

St. John AME Church, Huntsville, under the leadership of the Reverend Maurice Wright, II, Servant Pastor hosted eleven families on Saturday, December 9, 2017 for the Christmas Give-A-Way. The celebration took place in the Community Room of the Huntsville Board of Realtors' building adjacent to the St. John church from 10:00 am to noon. Other AME Churches in North Alabama and Presiding Elder and Mrs. Hyche also contributed.

The eleven families, which included 14 children from the ages of 6 months to 14 years were welcomed by members of the Women's Missionary Society. A visiting pastor from the Decatur area and 15 of his members joined in the celebration. The children enjoyed the table-top Christmas activities while viewing "A Charlie Brown Christmas."

After all the families arrived, Pastor Wright welcomed everyone and shared a brief Christmas message. The lunch, which was prepared by the St. John Kitchen Ministry, was served. The meal was a spaghetti meal with all the trimmings plus a dessert. Christmas music during the meal was provided by the Christian Education Department.



Donnie Thompson, Clifton Miller, Barbara
Johnson and Pastor Wright.



Kitchen Ministry members Paulette Wil-
kins, Maeola Peoples and Pearlean
Myhand

At the conclusion of the meal, the Reverend Tony Latham, pastor of New Pisgah AME Church, Florence, passed out bags of groceries and gift cards to his members. Then, Pastor Wright and Stewards of St. John enjoyed playing Santa and disseminating the gifts to the families. Each family was presented with a huge bag containing wrapped gifts for each member of the family. The celebration closed with the singing of several Christmas Carols and the benediction by Pastor Wright.



Guests enjoying the fellowship meal.



Stewards Ginn and Miller bring in gifts.

Thanks are expressed to the members of St. John who packed the boxes with brand new toys, other items, and gave money to support the give-a-way. Thanks are also extended to the St. John "Wrappers," who came out on Friday evening and wrapped all the gifts for the children. The meal was delicious and the music was Christ-massy, thanks, St. John Soup Kitchen and Christian Education Department.

The event was a total success because of the help from Ms. Donnie Thompson and the Women's Missionary Society and their work in identifying the families.

Holiday Food Baskets Distributed to the Community

By Paulette Williams



Maeola Peoples and Paulette Williams arrange food.



Paulette Williams, Mary Allen & Maeola Peoples with donations.

For the fourth consecutive year, St. John has provided food boxes at Thanksgiving and Christmas to families in the Huntsville community. This service is funded in part by the church's general budget and largely by the generosity of members who make donations above their regular giving. The need is great and St. John attempts to ensure that all families who have been identified are assisted.

Beginning in November, the committee organizes for this project. Appeals are made to the congregation for financial support as well as referrals of families in need. The thrifty shopping of the committee ensures the dollars are stretched as much as possible to provide the greatest amount of food. Over the first two years, the committee fine-tuned the process so that it executes seamlessly. Boxes are distributed the week before Thanksgiving and the week before Christmas. The quantities are adjusted to match the family size. Senior recipients are also given \$10 gift cards to purchase meat for their Thanksgiving/Christmas meal. This year 170 boxes were distributed. The gratitude of the recipients makes this ministry a blessing to the recipients and the volunteers.

The committee coordinators are Paulette Williams and Maeola Peoples. Other committee members are Bill Williams, Jesse Johnson, Lars Avery, Sam People, Mary Allen, Pearlean Myhand, Stephanie Scott, Monica Dillihunt, Adrienne P-K Washington and Darwin Washington. Thank you St. John for this outreach ministry to the Huntsville community!

St. John AME Church Embarks on its First International Mission Trip to Port of Spain, Trinidad

Led by the Reverend Maurice Wright, II, members of St. John AME Church will travel to the Port of Spain, Trinidad to participate in the Windward Annual Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and to work with local residents and community based organizations. The Annual Conference will be held at Metropolitan AME Church in Port of Spain, where the Reverend Godfrey E. Mitchell serves as the host pastor.

The Huntsville delegation will leave on Monday, March 5, 2018 and return on Monday, March 12, 2018. Servant Pastor Wright will preach at the Ordination Service on Saturday, March 10, 2018 during the Windward Annual Conference and serve as a guest lecturer for the Conference Institute on March 9, 2018 at the invitation of Bishop Anne Henning Byfield, The Presiding Prelate of the 16th District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The theme of the Annual Conference is Ascend and Soar "but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles" Isaiah 40:31.

The St. John members and friends who wish to join Pastor Wright as a part of the St. John delegation to Trinidad will need to contact Steward Jeanette Jones or Trustee Hodges Washington for additional details.

Christmas 2017 Calling All Superheroes

By Lydia Owens

In a world filled with crime and chaos, there stood a small band of Superheroes in search of the "NEW" Hero coming to town. They seem unsure if this "NEW" Hero is here to join forces or to relieve them of their duties.

Welcome and Greetings were extended by Kylie Washington with a prayer and scripture reading from Micah 6:8 and Alijah and Ariyana Webb and Mikayla Binford giving us the true meaning of The Christmas Candle.



Joseph and Mary enter discussing the reasons why they were chosen to be the birth parents to the "NEW" Superhero. Soon thereafter they meet up with the other Superheroes and as night approaches, they inquire about a place to stay as it seemed all of the inns were full.

The shepherds on duty were discussing how "bored" they were when they hear the voice of an angel instructing them to go find the baby Jesus. Frightened by the voice, the shepherds question how "finding a baby" will help them? The shepherds, searching for the baby Jesus, meet up with the superheroes to discuss what relationship the baby Jesus has with this "NEW" Superhero.

As they all gathered together they begin singing "His Name is Wonderful".



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Christmas 2017 Calling All Superheroes

By Lydia Owens

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In the final scene, Mary and Joseph enter again, but this time they were not alone. Mary had given birth to the "Real Superhero": The Super Baby. It is now clear to the other superheroes that Jesus is the "NEW" Superhero in town. What is also clear is that his one and only mission is to save the world from SIN with his Father's Love.

As the all are gathered again, they begin singing "Jesus, oh what a Wonderful Child"



The Dance Ministry ministered in dance to *Hero* by Kirk Franklin. The Christmas program ended with closing remarks by Pastor Wright.

Cast of Heroes

Superman
Wonder Women
Bat Girl
Spidergirl
Hulk
Cat Woman
Mary
Joseph
Shepherds
Voices of Angels

Courtney Jones
Cayden & Chloe Wilson and Joy Wright
Jessica Harbin & Jasmyne Rochelle
Channing Ransom
Wallace Parham & Christian Washington
Zaria York
Derryn Goode
Blake Johnson
Cambridge Wilson and Kelson Hill
Michael Clark and Daniel Haygood

Candlelight Service Celebrated the Coming of Christ!

By Nedra McDaniel

"Sent from heaven, thy rays were given on great and small to shine! O Light Divine!" - Kopylov

St. John members and friends gathered on Christmas Eve to offer praise and worship for the coming Messiah at this traditional candlelight service. The call to worship was taken from the choral postlude of "Heavenly Light" by Alexander Kopylov. The St. John Praise Team led the music ministry for the service with selections that included "Celebrate the King" and "The Name of the Lord is a Strong Tower." The Christmas hymn was "Hark the Herald Angels Sing." The invocation was offered by the Reverend Joretha Wright and scripture was read from Luke 2:8-15.

The meditation was brought by Dr. Jennifer Oliver. Dr. Oliver is currently a student at Fuller Seminary and resides in Pasadena, California. Her ministry while at St. John included director of the liturgical dance ministry and during her time at St. John she accepted the call to preach. Dr. Oliver ministered in dance during the morning worship service and in WORD during the candlelight service.

Dr. Oliver spoke on the topic "Love through Obedience." She gave scripture references of Matthew 2:13-15, 19-20; Matthew 1:22-25; Luke 1:35-38 and John 3:16. She used the scriptures to show how love (Agape' love) and obedience are connected. For this she used Joseph as an example of his love for God and his obedience in his relationship with Mary. She noted that the obedience of Joseph and Mary was key in the prophecies of the Old Testament being fulfilled.

Dr. Oliver shared her personal experience of love for God and obedience to His voice that led her to relocate from Huntsville to California to continue her seminary studies. Despite the hardships of making the move and establishing a household in her new location, she stated that she was always obedient. This obedience resulted in God opening doors for her that she could have never imagined. She left the worshippers with the closing emphasis that God is calling His people to love Him by being obedient and this is possible because Christ has come!

Following the message, Pastor Wright led in the lighting of candles and singing "Jesus the Light of the World." The service concluded with the Benediction.

"Thou our beacon and guide shalt be! Light Divine, we praise Thee!" - Kopylov



Dr. Oliver delivers the meditation.



Brother Pearson leads the praise team.

The Dream of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: A Work in Progress

By Bridget J. Floyd

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the iconic civil rights leader, would have celebrated his 89th birthday on January 15th of this year. Also this year, the national holiday commemorating his birthday coincided with his actual birthday. Dr. King was assassinated on April 4, 1968 in Memphis Tennessee. He was there to advocate for equitable pay for garbage workers. This year will mark the 50th anniversary of his assassination.



Dr. King in 1964

Dr. King earned his undergraduate degree from Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, and his Ph.D. in theology from Boston University. As a young minister in Montgomery, Alabama, he was essentially drafted as leader of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. After Mrs. Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat, an effective and well-organized boycott had the desired economic impact. Dr. King embraced the leadership of the Civil Rights Movement with the now well-known tenants of nonviolent peaceful protest. Dr. King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize as a result.

Video accounts show the commitment and control of protesters who endured verbal and physical aggression, without responding in kind. Many were injured, some lost their lives, including Dr. King. He expanded his efforts to crusade for peace (against the Vietnam War) and economic improvement for poor people of all races.

After fifty years, are things where Dr. King would expect or hope? What is the status of dream fulfillment?

Clearly progress has been made: Educational and occupational opportunities and achievements as well as political involvement and elected positions. While there is economic progress, whites still rank higher than African Americans and other minorities. Although the 44th President of the United States was the son of an African and Caucasian-American (the first African American president), the 45th President has directly and unapologetically criticized and taken action to dismantle or reverse many things considered "progress" by a significant number of Americans. Some of whom protested against these changes/reversals.

Dr. King advocated for justice, equality, nonviolence, peace, and civility even in the face of threats and violence. What might be his thoughts about verbal and electronic bullying; resurgence of groups that promote white supremacy; harassment and assault of women or other vulnerable individuals; promotion of violence; opposition to immigration (especially certain groups); problematic relations with other countries (to include risking nuclear conflict)?

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Happy Birthday, Alabama!.....Well, Almost.

B. Johnson



Alabama will commemorate its 200th birthday in 2019. 200 Alabama Bicentennial is the state-wide organization, spearheading the celebration. The focus will be on more than commemorating 200 years of a government. The people, places and stories will be the central theme of the celebration. The state of Alabama exists as a place of unparalleled natural beauty. It is the home of a diverse and distinct people who share a history with unique perspectives, values and a sense of shared culture and stories. To ensure the inclusion of all Alabamians in the telling of this story, all 67 counties were encouraged to form 200 Alabama Bicentennial committees. Each county organization is responsible for highlighting the best attributes of the county and the people who reside there. 200 Alabama Bicentennial

includes all 67 counties, and stretches from the North Alabama Mountains to the white, sand beaches of the Gulf, as well as from the Capital City to the Rocket City.

Mrs. Sally Warden serves as Executive Director of The Huntsville Madison County 200 Alabama Bicentennial Committee. The African-American Bicentennial Sub-committee was established out of this committee. The focus of this sub-committee is the development of "The Wall of Remembrance." This project will recognize the trauma of the loss of identity during slavery. It will give voice to the nameless lives, historic African American burial grounds and will preserve the names of many forgotten citizens. The purpose of the "Wall" will be to memorialize African Americans buried in unmarked graves and extant cemeteries during the 19th and early 20th centuries in the Georgia Slave Cemetery, Glenwood Cemetery, Huntsville Cemetery and the Colored Cemetery. Mrs. Olye Conley, a noted Huntsville historian, is the lead on this project and has been working diligently to collect the names. The dedication of "The Wall of Remembrance" is scheduled for February 2019. Mrs. Olye Conley will be the guest speaker for the February 5, 2018, meeting of the St. John AME Church 50+ Auxiliary.

You only turn 200 years old once, and honoring the history that changed the world will need some time. The celebration spans a three year journey which actually began in 2017 and will conclude in 2019. The theme for 2017 was "Discovering Our Places," which coincided with Alabama's territorial bicentennial. The theme for this year is "Honoring Our People." This year's focus will be sharing the experiences and stories of all Alabamians. "Sharing Our Stories" will be the theme of 2019 which will mark the conclusion of the 200 Alabama Bicentennial.

The Dream of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: A Work in Progress

By Bridget J. Floyd

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The teachings and actions of Dr. King can serve as inspiration and a model for effecting change in today's world. The key is to recognize that complacency is not an option. Present-day action and response can still come from the "grass roots" (as in the 1950's and 1960's). However, due to more than fifty years of progress and change, there are people in positions of power (African Americans and other racial, ethnic, religious, and economic minorities) who can make a difference - keep working on the "Dream".

The "Dream" continues to be a work in progress.



Dr. King at the 1963 March on Washington



Baby Boomers Moving to the Next Phase: Three Smart Money Moves They Should Make in Their 60s

Bobby Adkins II



Johnny St. John has worked hard over the years, saving as much as the economy (and his paychecks) would allow. Now, he is thinking about slowing things down, leaving the workforce, retiring. Similarly, many seniors, having arrived in their 60s, are feeling good about their future. There are 3 solid financial steps Johnny, and folks like him, can make to maximize an early retirement and the years beyond.

Is 60 the new 40? A Today Show survey found that 70% of sixty-somethings felt younger than their age. Imagine that. However, while baby boomers may be as physically fit as younger associates, they would be wise to act their age when it comes to finances.

Whether just months from retirement or, like a growing number of Americans, planning to remain part of the workforce, the decade of their 60s can mark a personal and professional inflection point. For Johnny, and seniors like him, making the most of their 60s (and beyond) means taking the right steps to ensure a financially secure future.

"This is a period of transition," says Deena Katz, a personal financial planning professor at Texas Tech University and co-chairperson of Evensky & Katz/Foldes Financial Wealth Management. "You will be making important decisions that will affect your next stage of life." Here is what Johnny should do.

1. Strategize Social Security: Johnny has entered into a period when his hard work starts paying off. He can begin taking benefits as early as age 62, and as late as age 70.

- When to wait. The longer he delays drawing Social Security benefits, the greater those monthly benefits will be for the rest of his life. The difference can be substantial. If Johnny is expecting to live a long life and can afford to postpone payments, this could be the way for him to go.

- If he was eligible for a monthly benefit of \$1,300 at his "full retirement age" of around 66 and he started collecting early, at age 62, his benefit would be reduced to \$964 a month. If he waited until age 70 however, his monthly benefit would be \$1,698; that is 76% more than what he would get if he started at 62.



Darin Shebesta, a certified financial planner and wealth advisor at Jackson/Roskelley Wealth Advisors, says "If you believe you're going to be living several decades into retirement, you want to wait as long as possible to collect your Social Security benefits."

- When to claim early. Six out of 10 Americans claim benefits before their full retirement age, according to the Social Security Administration. For those facing an income shortfall or who do not expect to live beyond their early 80s, starting benefits sooner might be the more practical choice.

Consulting a financial advisor who understands his comprehensive financial picture can help Johnny make a good choice. "His decision should be based on his individual situation," Shebesta adds.

2. Review Retirement Expenses

Johnny needs to have a realistic idea of his future financial expenses when planning his retirement lifestyle.

- He should calculate how much he expects to spend on necessities, as well as any added costs. For instance, does he plan to travel or eat out more or less often? "Many people think they will spend less in retirement, when often they end up spending the same amount because they want the same quality of life," Katz says.
- He should include health care expenses in his projected retirement budget. Over their lifetimes, the av-

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Baby Boomers Moving to the Next Phase

Bobby Adkins II

(Continued from page 12)

average 65-year-old couple retiring today can expect to pay more than \$400,000 in health care costs, including payments for Medicare supplements and dental insurance, according to a recent report from Health-View Services, which specializes in health care cost-projection software.

- Put the budget to the test. Estimate the monthly expected income from all sources, then try to spend a



year or two living as if already retired. If Johnny is unable to cover his projected expenses, he may need to delay retirement and find a way to save more.

3. Update Estate Plan

For those having an estate plan, it is not enough if it is not kept current. Life changes, such as a divorce or marriage, require an amendment to certain documents. Here are three things for him to keep in mind:

- Make sure beneficiaries designations are up to date. Many types of property, such as IRAs, 401(k)s and life insurance policies, pass to specifically named beneficiaries. Determining who the assets will be left to is essential.
- Consider setting up trusts. Trusts can serve multiple purposes in estate planning, including setting conditions on how the estate will be distributed after his death.
- Many recent retirees have not established a living will, chosen a health care proxy, or appointed a durable power of attorney. Please do not put it off any longer. All these things must be done in order to ensure that his wishes are carried out with regard to health, belongings and finances, should one be unable to make decisions on their own.

While these tasks require some time and effort, once they are completed those seeking retirement can start thinking about making the most of the years ahead.

Happy Retirement!



Soup Kitchen Ministry

Charlie Bielek

Sharing Joy In 2018

A well-known poet R. Tagore wrote: "I slept and dreamt that life was joy. He continued, "I awoke and saw that life was Service, I acted and behold, Service was Joy."

As we look back over the Christmas Holiday, 2017, the spirit of the season was displaced in Giving. Christmas gifts were expected and there was little disappointment.

Let us begin a new spirit of giving as we begin the New Year. Service to others can be a smile to a stranger or sharing words of gratitude. It might be serving in a homeless shelter, cooking a meal for a sick neighbor, offering a ride to an elder for a doctor's appointment, or offering childcare to a harried friend.

As we enter the New Year open your heart and willingly and lovingly share the joy of the year with others, starting today. May we focus on abundant generosity rather than seeking or getting this year, uplift your Spirit, with unexpected joy and peace—by sharing with others. This is the greatest gift of the New Year!

Remember, you are always invited to serve, with joy, in our Monthly "Soup Kitchen" each 3rd and 4th Tuesday. Our doors will always be open!

"For you shall go out in Joy, and be led back in Peace."

-Isaiah 55:12

St. John AME Music Workshop

February 9-11, 2018

Guest Clinician: Dr. Roland Carter

Workshop

(Register at <http://stjohnbuntonillemusicworkshopceventsibc.com>)

Friday, February 9 - 6:00 pm

Saturday, February 10 - 9:00 am

Worship Celebration

Sunday, February 11 - 10:00 am

Concert, Sunday, February 11th at 5:00 pm

MUSIC & CHRISTIAN ARTS MINISTRY

2018 MCAM ELECTIONS

IGNITE GROWTH! | INSPIRE CHANGE! | IMPACT SERVICE!

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REV. MAURICE WRIGHT, II
SENIOR PASTOR
ST. JOHN AME CHURCH
HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

Rev. Maurice Wright, II

CANDIDATE FOR CONNECTIONAL DIRECTOR

Current Connectional Associate Director MCAM

Choral Directing Experience

- Harriett Tubman Middle School, Portland, Oregon
- Thomas Jefferson High School, Portland, Oregon
- Humboldt Elementary School, Portland, Oregon
- Founding Director MLK Community Choir Portland, Oregon
- Big Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Atlanta, Georgia
- Marking Luther King Chapel Choir, Morehouse College Atlanta, Georgia

Minister of Music / Organist

- Bethel AME Church, Portland, Oregon
- United AME Church, Xenia, Ohio
- Powerhouse Temple Church, Portland, Oregon
- Philadelphia Community Church, Portland, Oregon

Vocal Experience

- Morehouse College Glee Club
- Atlanta Opera Company
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Choir
- Wendell Whalum Community Choir

Presiding Elder District Director

- South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer District (9th Episcopal District)
- Phenix City District (9th Episcopal District)
- Alexandria Thibodaux District (8th Episcopal District)

Annual Conference Director

- Northeast Alabama Annual Conference (9th Episcopal District)
- Central North Louisiana Annual Conference (8th Episcopal District)

Degree in Voice and Conducting from Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia

Member of National Association of Negro Musicians (NANM)

Serves as a lecturer on Worship

Choral workshop facilitator

Founding Member of the Connectional Music Committee



REV. MYRON D. HILL
SENIOR PASTOR
CYPRESS CHAPEL AME
ABBEVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Rev. Myron D. Hill

CANDIDATE FOR CONNECTIONAL ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Current Connectional Parliamentarian MCAM

Special Education Teacher for the Greenwood School District 50 in South Carolina

Current Director of Music: Piedmont Annual Conference & Abbeville Greenwood District

Current President/Director: Greenwood (SC) Area Martin Luther King, Jr. Mass Choir

Musician: Turner Singer, Turner Theological Seminary, Atlanta, Georgia

Minister of Music: Flipper Temple AME Church, Atlanta, Georgia

Founder: Voices of Liberty Choir, Liberty Hill AME Church, Summerton, South Carolina

Founder: Allen W. Parrott Inspirational Choir, Williams Chapel AME Church, Orangeburg, South Carolina

Founder: Shulerville Community Youth Choir

Co-Founder (along with his father): Jamestown Shulerville Community Choir

Organist: Wesley AME Church, Shulerville, South Carolina

Age started playing piano: 6

OUR GOALS

1. INCREASE CONNECTIONAL MEMBERSHIP
2. INCREASE THE VITALITY OF MCAM IN EVERY EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
3. PROVIDE LITURGICAL DANCE, DRAMA AND MUSIC RESOURCES FOR CONGREGATIONS THROUGHOUT THE CONNECTION
4. CONTINUE TO PROMOTE AME ARTISTS



Church School Lesson Overview – February 2018

The lesson reviews were written by Kenneth Parham

February 4, 2018

Lesson Title: Faith Without Works Is Dead

Lesson Scripture: James 2:14-26

Print: James 2:14-26

Devotional Songs: #468, #251, and #243

Key Verse: "So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (James 2:17).

Herein, Apostle James discussed the importance of works to justify one's faith. He set out by asking a simple question, "Can one be saved by faith alone?" As noted in the Sunday School commentary, James made a convincing argument showing how faith without works is incomplete. James cited the examples of how faithful Abraham was in the act of sacrificing his son, Isaac, to show his faithfulness; and of the prostitute, Rahab, who protected the messengers. James could have cited many more examples to demonstrate his point. One that comes to mind is that of David, a shepherd. Even though David professed great faith in God, he thought it necessary to confront the giant, Goliath, when all of the Israel soldiers were afraid.

The reviewer reflects back on his Christian upbringing and remembers many ministers indicating that the only requirement for salvation was to believe in one's heart and confess with one's mouth. If the terms "believe" and "confess" are deemed action words by James then I agree with what James is saying. However, if James means that we must do a lot more than what I have noted, then I depart with James and reference Jesus as my authoritative source in indicating that faith alone can save (Mark 16:15-18). But once saved, faith will be completed by acts of work to be performed.

February 11, 2018

Lesson Title: A Disciplined Faith

Lesson Scripture: James 3:1-12

Print: James 3:1-12

Devotional Songs: #377, #77, and #243

Key Verse: "But no one can tame the tongue – a restless evil, full of deadly poison" (James 3:8).

In this lesson James cautions spiritual teachers to be on guard because there will be those who will indeed measure every word that one speaks and will see if the teacher's lifestyle is in fact in line with the words spoken. And how hard is it to live perfect? James indicated that this is a very difficult task and presents a scenario where it takes strong winds to move a large sail boat but it only takes a small rudder

to steer the vessel. He then implied that the tongue is representative of a rudder and has caused many catastrophes to occur. As the tongue speaks or turns, it causes the head and other parts of the body to turn. It regulates how the body responds to outside stimuli in order to protect its host, the body. It will, as James indicated, expound on great exploits or it is capable to cause death and destruction by the use of malicious words. James noted that all animals (including fish and fowl), created by God, were placed under Adam's control but how is it that no one can control the tongue. James called the tongue a restless evil full of deadly poison. James went on to indicate that the tongue speaks both blessings and curses; that this should not be so and highlighted that this is not in line with God's other creations (verse 11, "Can a spring bring forth brackish and fresh water or can a fig tree produce grapes?").

The Life Application Study Bible commentary utilized in preparing this review gives us hope. The commentary indicated that although we cannot control the tongue, we via discipline granted through the Holy Spirit can learn how to reduce the damage caused by the tongue.

February 18, 2018

Lesson Title: Faithful Disciples

Lesson Scripture: Acts 9:36-43

Print: Acts 9:36-43

Devotional Songs: #415, #272, and #243

Key Verses: "Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, 'Tabitha, get up.' Then she opened her eyes and seeing Peter, she sat up." (Acts 9:40).

This lesson recounts the death and resurrection of Tabitha, a disciple devoted to good acts of charity. The story relays that Tabitha of Joppa was taken ill and died. Upon her death, the attendants washed her body and lay her in a room upstairs in the house. It is noted that the disciples of Lydia had heard that Apostle Peter was in Lydda, a nearby town, sent for Peter and requested that he come without delay. Peter arrived in Lydda as soon as he could. He was taken to the upper room and shown the body of Tabitha as the women wept. Peter put everyone out of the room, prayed and commanded Tabitha to get up. Tabitha opened her eyes and sat up. Peter then presented the living Tabitha to everyone.

As one can see, this story parallels that of the resurrection of Lazarus by Jesus. We noted that the similarities are that

(Continued on page 16)

Church School Lesson Overview

(Continued from page 13)

there was an illness and death, there were faithful and devoted followers of Christ, Jesus was in a nearby town as was Peter, both responded to the call for assistance, both prayed before performing the miracle and both performed the miracle of raising the dead. The only difference between Peter's miracle and Jesus' is that Peter had to pray for assurance through faith whereas Jesus' prayer of affirmation created an opportunity to teach faith.

February 25, 2018

Lesson Title: The Good Fight of Faith

Lesson Scripture: 1 Timothy 6:11-21

Print: 1 Timothy 6:11-21

Devotional Songs: #390, #321, and #243

Key Verses: "Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses." (1 Timothy 6:12).

A summary of comments from the Life Application Study Bible commentary indicates that at verses 11-21, Paul's letter to Timothy is one of spiritual guidance when it concerns wealth. Paul reminded Timothy that if we have food and clothing we should be content but there are those who fall into temptation in the pursuit of accumulating wealth. (verses 6-10). Paul indicated that Timothy, in verses 11-16, stay strong in the faith (fight the good fight – pursue righteousness, goodliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness) and fight the urge to seek wealth. He asked Timothy not to forget the promise that he made to serve Christ.

Verses 17-19 deals with the wealth of members of the Ephesian church. It is noted that Paul advised Timothy to deal with the potential problem by teaching that having riches carries great responsibility. Those who have wealth must be generous and not arrogant that they have a lot to give. Paul indicated to Timothy to remind those with wealth that they must not put their trust in money but in the living God for their security. He also reminded Timothy that even those without wealth can be rich in good works toward others. Upon thinking on this matter, the reviewer is reminded of a saying that seems applicable to all individuals and organizations of substantial wealth - "...to much is given, much is expected."

The commentary addresses verses 20-21 by indicating that while churches may build wealth, the church should not forget its true calling, i.e., knowing God, working together in loving harmony and taking God's good news to the world.



Church School Book Club

January 2018

Discussion Date: January 20, 2018

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Sooner the Better, Macomber 2016

February 2018

Discussion Date: 17 February 2018

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

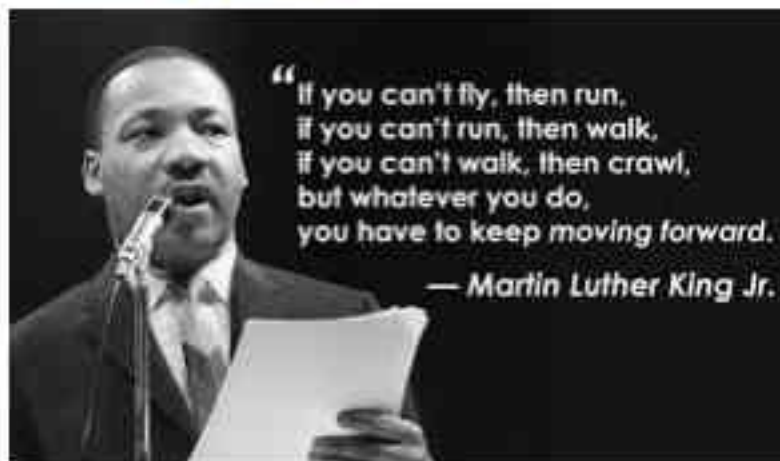
Man on the Run, Weber 2017

New York Times bestselling author Carl Weber delivers a riveting, action-packed drama full of the twists and turns for which he has become known.

It was the night before his wedding, fifteen years ago, that the nightmare began for Jay Crawford--locked up for a crime he never committed. Now, he has escaped prison and wants nothing more than to clear his name and protect his family. To get justice, he will need the help of the three best friends who have always had his back--Wil, Kyle and Allan. But a man on the run requires absolute trust...and Jay may just be setting himself up for the ultimate betrayal. - Amazon



**Church School
meets each Sunday
at 8:45 a.m.**



**"If you can't fly, then run,
if you can't run, then walk,
if you can't walk, then crawl,
but whatever you do,
you have to keep moving forward.**

— Martin Luther King Jr.

February 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Black History Month				1	2	3
4 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship Communion Sunday AMEN DEADLINE	5 9:30 a.m. Fifty-Plus Auxiliary	6	7 12:00 p.m. Bible Study 6:00 p.m. Quarterly Conference	8 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	9 Music Workshop	10 Music Workshop 10:30 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting
11 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship Music Workshop Concert 5:00 p.m.	12 REFRESH Bible Study For Women 7:00 p.m.	13 SHROVE TUESDAY	14 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES	15	16 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	17
18 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship YOUTH SUNDAY	19 REFRESH Bible Study For Women 7:00 p.m.	20 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	21 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	22	23 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	24 10:00 a.m. WMS Meeting
25 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	26	27 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	28 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study			

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

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E-mail: office@stjohnhuntsville.com

Website: www.stjohnhuntsville.com

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

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| February 2, 2018 | Couples Ministry Launch, 6:00 p.m. (Registration deadline January 21st) |
| February 7, 2018 | Second Quarterly Conference, 6:00 p.m. |
| February 9-10, 2018 | Music Workshop with Dr. Roland Carter, Clinician |
| February 11, 2018 | AME Church Founders Day
Music Workshop Concert, 5:00 pm |
| February 14, 2018 | Ash Wednesday Services, Noon and 6:00 pm |
| March 5-12, 2018 | Mission Trip to Port of Spain, Trinidad |

*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 23 Issue 2

February 2018

Founders Day Observed with Special Worship Service

Bridget J. Floyd



Pastor Wright and Dr. Pierce

This year St. John AME celebrated "the life and legacy" of Founder, Bishop Richard Allen on Sunday, February 11th at the 10 am worship service. The guest preacher for the event was the Reverend Dr. Garland F. Pierce, Executive Director of Christian Education for the AME Church. Dr. Pierce received the B.A. degree in Religion from Furman University (S.C.) and the Master of Divinity from Vanderbilt University School of Divinity (TN). He earned the Ph.D. from Claremont University (CA).

The St. John Praise Team, Gospel Choir, and the Liturgical Dance Ministry augmented the special service. The Reverend Charles Glover gave the invocation and the Reverend Gloria Madison read the scripture from Psalm 27:1-14. The "Founder's Day Litany" written by Bishop John H. Adams was led by Master Michael Clark. Prior to the introduction of Dr. Pierce, Pastor Maurice Wright, II highlighted the St. John member selected for recognition on this Second Sunday in February - Mrs. Charlsie Brooks. (Dr. Lee Williams, II was featured on the First Sunday.)

Pastor Wright then introduced a "sermonic moment" from Dr. Roland Carter, teacher, composer-arranger, conductor. Dr. Carter conducted a weekend music workshop which culminated in a concert Sunday evening as part of the Founder's Day celebration.

Dr. Carter blessed congregants with his piano arrangement of the spiritual "Steal Away". The inspirational, virtuosic performance garnered rapt attention as well as a standing ovation.

The tone was set for the sermon, "It's Who You Are!" The text was Matthew 5:13-16. Dr. Pierce began by highlighting key parts of the text "...You are the salt of the earth...you are the light of the world" along with the importance of a strong identity. He noted that "identity is important" throughout the sermon. On a personal basis it can give people the strength to extricate themselves from an abusive relationship, avoid inappropriate verbiage and behaviors, entrapment in financial debt/spending. He also emphasized the significant history of the AME Church and African Americans. He stated, "We are AME's! We are AME Strong! This Identity Matters!" Again, referring to the text, Dr. Pierce emphasized the affirmation in the present tense (not future or past tense) "You are the salt of the earth...light of the world". He encouraged the congregants to let their lights shine. He closed by citing the Ultimate Identity, God ("I am"); Jesus ("The Resurrection and the Life").

Dr. Pierce extended the invitation to discipleship and the call for prayer as the congregants sang "This Little Light of Mine". The commemoration of Founder's Day was off to a great start with affirmation, encouragement, and history. The culmination to come in concert that evening.

African American History Month

Say it LOUD, I'm BLACK and I'm PROUD

By Lydia A. Owens

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession,
that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

1 Peter 2:9 (NIV)

Black History Month, also known as **African American History Month** in America, is an annual observance in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and in the Netherlands (as of 2016) where it is known as **Black Achievement Month**. It began as a way for remembering important people and events in the history of the African diaspora. It is celebrated annually in the United States and Canada in February, as well as in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands in October. The precursor to Black History Month was created in 1926 in the United States, when historian Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History announced the second week of February to be "Negro History Week". From the event's initial phase, primary emphasis was placed on encouraging the coordinated teaching of the history of American blacks in the nation's public schools. The first Negro History Week was met with a lukewarm response, gaining the cooperation of the Departments of Education of the states of North Carolina, Delaware, and West Virginia as well as the city school administrations of Baltimore and Washington, D.C. Despite this far from universal acceptance, the event was regarded by Woodson as "one of the most fortunate steps ever taken by the Association", and plans for a repeat of the event on an annual basis continued. At the time of Negro History Week's launch, Woodson contended that the teaching of black history was essential to ensure the physical and intellectual survival of the race within broader society:

"If a race has no history, it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world,
and it stands in danger of being exterminated."

Black History Month often sparks an annual debate about the continued usefulness and fairness of a designated month dedicated to the history of one race. Criticisms include questions over whether it is appropriate to confine the celebration of Black history to one month, as opposed to integration of Black history into the mainstream education the rest of the year. From generation to generation, African Americans have always expressed themselves through arts, including theatre and dance. Today, the fine arts commonly include additional forms, such as film, photography, video production/editing, design, sequential art, conceptual art, and printmaking. They, as a people, have a lot for which to be proud and this article seeks to inform readers of the many accomplishments in the area of Fine Arts since the 18th Century:

1760 First known African American published author: Jupiter Hammon (poem "An Evening Thought: Salvation by Christ with Penitential Cries")

1773 First known African American woman to publish a book: Phillis Wheatley (*Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*)

1853 First novel published by an African American: *Clotel; or, The President's Daughter*, by William Wells Brown.

1858 First published play by an African American: *The Escape; or, A Leap for Freedom* by William Wells Brown

1890 First African American to record a bestselling phonograph record: George Washington Johnson, "The Laughing Song" and "The Whistling Coon."

1892 First African American to sing at Carnegie Hall: Matilda Sissieretta Joyner Jones

1903 First Broadway musical written by African Americans, and the first to star African Americans: *In Dahomey*

1931 First African American composer to have symphony performed by leading orchestra: William Grant Still, *Symphony No. 1*, by Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra

1935 First known interracial jazz group: Benny Goodman Trio (Benny Goodman, Teddy Wilson, Gene Krupa)

1936 First African American to conduct a major U.S. orchestra: William Grant Still (Los Angeles Philharmonic)

(Continued on page 1)

African American History Month

Say it LOUD, I'm BLACK and I'm PROUD

By Lydia A. Owens

(Continued from page 2)

1939 First African American to star in her own television program: Ethel Waters, *The Ethel Waters Show*, on NBC

1940 First African American to win an Academy Award: Hattie McDaniel (Best Supporting Actress, *Gone with the Wind*, 1939)

1943 First African American artists to have a #1 hit on the *Billboard* charts: Mills Brothers ("Paper Doll"), topped "Best Sellers in Stores" chart on November 6

1944 First African American to receive a contract with a major American opera company: Camilla Williams

1945 First African American member of the New York City Opera: Todd Duncan

1947

First African American artist to receive sole credit for a #1 hit on the *Billboard* charts: Count Basie ("Open the Door, Richard"), topped "Best Sellers in Stores" chart on February 22

1948

James Baskett was the first African American man to win an Honorary Academy Award. Walt Disney's *Song of the South* (1946 First African American man to receive an Academy Award: James Baskett (Honorary Academy Award for his portrayal of "Uncle Remus" in *Song of the South*) First African American composer to have an opera performed by a major U.S. company: William Grant Still (*Troubled Island*, New York City Opera)

First known African American star of a regularly scheduled network television series: Bob Howard, *The Bob Howard Show*

First African American to star in network television sitcom: Amanda Randolph, *The Laytons*

1949 First African American owned and operated radio station: WERD, established October 3, 1949 in Atlanta, Georgia by Jesse B. Blayton, Sr.

1950

First African American to win a Tony Award: Juanita Hall (Best Featured Actress in a Musical, *South Pacific*)

First African American solo singer to have a #1 hit on the *Billboard* charts: Nat King Cole ("Mona Lisa"), topped "Best Sellers in Stores" chart on July 15

1954 First African American woman to be nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actress: Dorothy Dandridge (*Carmen Jones*, 1954).

1955

First African American member of the Metropolitan Opera: Marian Anderson

First African American male dancer in a major ballet company: Arthur Mitchell (New York City Ballet); also first African American principal dancer of a major ballet company (NYCB), 1956.

First African American singer to appear in a telecast opera: Leontyne Price in NBC's production of *Tosca*

1956 First African American star of a nationwide network TV show: Nat King Cole of the *Nat King Cole Show*, NBC

1957 First African American to win the Best Actor Award at the Cannes Film Festival: John Kitzmiller (*Dolina Miru*)

1958 First African American to reach number 1 on *Billboard* Hot 100: Tommy Edwards ("It's All in the Game"), September 29

1959

First African American Grammy Award winners, in the award's inaugural year: Ella Fitzgerald and Count Basie (two awards each)

First African American television journalist: Louis Lomax

(Continued on page 4)

African American History Month

Say it LOUD, I'm BLACK and I'm PROUD

By Lydia A. Owens

(Continued from page 3)

First African American group to reach #1 on the *Billboard* Hot 100: The Platters ("Smoke Gets in Your Eyes"), January 19

1961 First African American tenor to sing leading roles for the Metropolitan Opera: George Shirley

1963

First African American to appear as a series regular on a primetime dramatic television series: Cicely Tyson, "East Side/West Side" (CBS).

First African American to be nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award: Diahann Carroll, for Outstanding Single Performance by an Actress in a Lead Role, for episode "A Horse Has a Big Head, Let Him Worry" of *Naked City*

1964

Sidney Poitier was the first African American man to win a competitive Academy Award for Best Actor (1964)

First movie with African American interracial marriage: *One Potato, Two Potato*, actors Bernie Hamilton and Barbara Barrie, written by Orville H. Hampton, Raphael Hayes, directed by Larry Peerce

First African American man to win the Academy Award for Best Actor (not honorary): Sidney Poitier (*Lilies of the Field*, 1963)

1965

First African American nationally syndicated cartoonist: Morrie Turner (*Wee Pals*)

First African American star of a network television drama: Bill Cosby, *I Spy* (co-star with Robert Culp)

First African American cast member of a daytime soap opera: Micki Grant who played Peggy Nolan Harris on *Another World* until

1966 First African American male to be nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award and first African American to win a Primetime Emmy Award: Bill Cosby, *I Spy*

1967

First African American interracial kiss on network television: entertainers Nancy Sinatra (Caucasian) and Sammy Davis, Jr. (African American) on Sinatra's variety special *Movin' With Nancy*, airing December 11 on NBC

1968 First African American interracial kiss on a network television drama: *Uhura*, played by Nichelle Nichols (African American), and Captain Kirk, played by William Shatner (white Canadian): *Star Trek*: "Plato's Stepchildren"

First fine-arts museum devoted to African American work: Studio Museum in Harlem

First African American actress to star in her own television series where she did not play a domestic worker: Diahann Carroll in *Julia*

1969

First African American director of a major Hollywood motion picture: Gordon Parks (*The Learning Tree*)

First African American founder of a classical training school and company of ballet: Arthur Mitchell, Dance Theatre of Harlem

First African American woman to appear on the Grand Ole Opry: Linda Martell

1970 First African American woman to win a Primetime Emmy Award: Gail Fisher, for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Drama Series, for *Mannix*

1971

First African American to win an Academy Award in a non-acting category, winning Academy Award for Best Original Song: Isaac Hayes

First African American to win a Golden Globe Award: Gail Fisher for *Mannix*

1972

First African American interracial male kiss on network television: Sammy Davis, Jr. (African American) and Carroll O'Connor (Caucasian) in *All in the Family*

First African American woman Broadway director: Vinnette Justine Carroll (*Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope*)

(Continued on page 5)

African American History Month

Say it LOUD, I'm BLACK and I'm PROUD

By Lydia A. Owens

(Continued from page 4)

1973

First African American artistic director of a professional regional theater: Harold Scott (Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park)

First African American Bond villain: Yaphet Kotto, playing Mr. Big/Dr. Kananga, *Live and Let Die*.

First African American Bond Girl in a James Bond movie: Gloria Hendry (playing Rosie Carver), *Live and Let Die*.

1975 First African American interracial couple in a TV-series cast: *The Jeffersons*, actors Franklin Cover and Roxie Roker as Tom & Helen Willis;

1979 First African American to win a Daytime Emmy Award for lead actor in a soap opera: Al Freeman, Jr. (Ed Hall in *One Life to Live*)

1982

First African American to receive the Pulitzer Prize for Drama: Charles Fuller for *A Soldier's Play*

First African American woman to become a principal dancer of a major American ballet company: Debra Austin at Pennsylvania Ballet

1987 First African American woman, and first woman, inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame: Aretha Franklin

1990 First African American woman to become a principal dancer at Houston Ballet: Lauren Anderson (Houston Ballet)

1991 First African American nominated for the Academy Award for Best Director: John Singleton for *Boyz n the Hood*

1993

First African American to win the Nobel Prize for Literature: Toni Morrison

First African American woman named Poet Laureate of the United States: Rita Dove; also the youngest person named to that position

1994 First African American woman director of a major-studio movie: Damell Martin (Columbia Pictures' *I Like It Like That*)

1995 First African American inductee to the Radio Hall of Fame: Hal Jackson

2001 First African American woman to win the ASCAP Pop Music Songwriter of the Year award: Beyoncé Knowles

2002 First African American woman to win the Academy Award for Best Actress: Halle Berry

2004 First African American to win Broadway Theater's Tony Award for Best Lead Actress in a Play: Phylicia Rashād

2009

First African American to win the Pulitzer Prize for History: Annette Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family*

First African American to win an Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay (*Precious*): Geoffrey S. Fletcher

2013 First African American U.S. Senator from the former Confederacy since Reconstruction: Tim Scott

2014 First African American woman nominated for Best Director by the Golden Globe Awards: Ava DuVernay for *Selma*

2016

First African American president of a major broadcast TV network: Channing Dungey

First African American Librarian of Congress: Dr. Carla Hayden

Say it LOUD, I'm BLACK and I'm PROUD

9th District "Empowerment Celebration Salute to Dream Keepers"

By Jeanette Jones

The Ninth Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church held a special "Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Empowerment Celebration" Saturday January 13 through Monday January 15, 2018.

The celebration included several empowerment seminars, a special dramatic presentation, "Trashing the King" and a special service honoring the Dream Keepers—individuals throughout the 9th District, who have made a significant difference in the lives of many individuals in the state. The Reverend Doctor Homer Littlefield McCall was one of the Dream Keepers so honored.



The Reverend Dr. Homer L. McCall receives Dream Keepers Award.

The program provided an array of seminars and workshops designed to empower youth with knowledge about finances, managing money, developing financial plans and career choices. Other workshops targeted clergy and church leaders that focused on maintaining the church's financial stability during volatile times, financial literacy, and funding the ministry through effective community partnerships and giving.

Following the seminars and workshops, an outstanding dramatic presentation of a creative stage production, "Trashing the King", was conducted in the Daniel Payne Community Plaza, Saturday, January 13, 2018. This play reflected on a family and their responses to the events surrounding the shooting death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in Memphis, Tennessee.

The actors received a standing ovation by those in attendance.

Following the play, a very special presentation honoring the Dream Keepers, recognized individuals throughout the district who have kept Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream alive. Reverend Doctor Homer Littlefield McCall, retired pastor of St. John AME Church, Huntsville, was one of the individuals receiving the "Dream

Keepers Award". Accompanying Dr. McCall for this special award presentation were his children, Homer McCall, II, Sonya McCall Shepherd and Gale McCall Teague, grandchildren, and church family. St. John members came out in record numbers in honor of the Reverend McCall.



Dr. McCall (center) with family, Bishop Sea Wright and the St. John family.

Congratulations to the Reverend Dr. Homer Littlefield McCall on yet another special achievement!!

Mother Mildred Alice Dunn Hereford Remembered as "The Preacher's Wife"

Barbara Johnson



Many St. John members never had the occasion to meet Mother Mildred Alice Dunn Hereford, but we all "sit in the shade of the tree" which was planted by Mother Hereford and the Reverend Samuel Shelby Hereford 45 years ago. It was the vision of the Reverend Hereford to build a new St. John and Mother Hereford, being the preacher's wife, labored and sacrificed alongside him to see this edifice St. John members worship in today.

Although, the Reverend Hereford did not get a chance to worship in the new sanctuary, Mrs. Hereford came as often as she could.

Mother Hereford is remembered as being a small, petit lady, but quite stylish; Most always wearing a hat to service. She was a quiet lady, really soft spoken. When she spoke, you almost had to lean in to hear her thoughts. She was a humble servant, never asking anything of the congregation other than to support the ministry.

Her character and personality proved her to be very kind, gentle, and respectful in her interactions with others. Even when she came into the sanctuary and found someone sitting in her seat, she would not say anything, she would just stand there until they got the message and either moved over or changed seats.

Mother Hereford is most epitomized in the words of "The Preacher's Wife," a poem by T. R. Buzzard. The lines of the poem sum up who she was and how she lived out her life's purpose.

The Preacher's Wife

In the shadow of the parsonage stands a figure oft obscure.
Just behind the faithful pastor is his wife, devout and pure.
She is with him every moment helping make his work progress,
And you can't discount her portion in the measure of success.
Oft behind the scene of action, often never seen or heard,
Yet she stands forever ready just to give a helping word.
It is not in active service that her worth is really shown,
But in the bearing heavy burdens that to others are unknown.
With encouragement and vision she must urge God's servant on,
When the shadows are the darkest and his courage's almost gone.
With her home forever open and her work quite never done,
She is ever his lieutenant in the battles fought and won.

- T. R. Buzzard

Mother Mildred Alice Dunn Hereford was the wife of the Reverend Samuel Shelby Hereford, Sr. and the mother of the Reverend Robert Bernard Hereford (Janice), Mrs. Barbara Hereford Turner (J. B.), Mrs. Brenda Hereford Powell (Vernon) and Mrs. Sharon Hereford Fiorentino (Michael) and the late Mr. Samuel Hereford, Jr.

Jessica Harbin Named Youth of the Month

Beginning in January 2018, St. John began a focus on youth and young adults on the third Sunday of the month. The young adult choir, "Voices in Praise" sang for this service and the youth participated in the order of service.

Each month, a "Youth of the Month" will be highlighted during this third Sunday service. The first recipient of this award was Miss Jessica Harbin.



Jessica Harbin with her parents, Glenn and Erica Harbin and her brother, Anthony Harbin

Jessica Harbin is an active 3rd grader who enjoys singing, dancing, art projects and roller skating. She is involved in many extracurricular activities via church, school and community. She attends St. John A.M.E church where she is an active member of the Children's Choir and a regular attendant of church school. Jessica frequently participates in special programs at the church to celebrate occasions such as Christmas, Easter and the Black History month.

Jessica attends Lynn Fanning Elementary School in Meridianville, Alabama. At Lynn Fanning, Jessica has participated in the Fantasy Playhouse Children's Theater after school program for several years. Additionally, her art has been selected by art teachers at the school on two different occasions to be featured at the Huntsville Museum of Art. In 2015, as a kindergartner, Jessica's art was selected and displayed at the museum for the Youth Art Month (YAM). This past fall, November 2017, her art was displayed in the Children's Art Gallery. This year at school, Jessica began the Academic and Creative Enrichment (ACE) program for gifted students. Also, she was selected as a student ambassador whereas she frequently participates in the morning announcements for the school.

In addition to her activities at church and school, Jessica has been enrolled in dance classes since age 3. She is currently enrolled at Ann's Studio of Dance (Hazel Green studio). This is her 4th year as a student at Ann's. It is obvious that Jessica loves art, music and dancing but that is not all. She plays soccer in the fall months, basketball in the winter and softball in the spring. She is super excited for this basketball season as her team has the potential to compete for a 4th championship in a row. Each year that she has played basketball at the Meridianville Recreation Center she has ended the season as a champion!

Jessica is the daughter of Glenn and Erica Harbin and the sister of Anthony Harbin.

Congratulations Jessica!

St. John AME Church Huntsville announces

new website launch

www.stjohnhuntsville.com

I Still Do Couples Ministry Launch

Clifton Miller



Rev. Rita and Pastor Wright

Love is in the air! On Friday night, February 2, 2018 at 6pm, the Saint John AME Church Married Couples Ministry held its launch dinner at Kona Grill, Bridge Street Town Centre. What great fun, food and fellowship were enjoyed by all! There were 10 couples in attendance to include Pastor Maurice Wright, II and the Reverend Joretha Wright, our Ministry Leaders.

The St. John Married Couples Ministry seeks to meet the concerns of both partners while strengthening, stabilizing and enabling couples to go the distance to fulfill God's purpose for their lives.

Brother Glenn and Regena Pippin were given a prize for having the most years of marriage, 46, and Sylvester and Angela Daniels, received the prize for getting there first.

Thanks to the Married Couples Ministry coordinators, Brother and Sister Norwood and Brother and Sister Miller. Everything was planned, coordinated and executed in an outstanding and Godly manner. Keep your ears to the ground and eyes wide open for the next married couples event. By your attendance, your marriage will be blessed.



Couples enjoy fellowship during the couples ministry launch at Kona Grill.

St. John AME Church Embarks on its First International Mission Trip to Port of Spain, Trinidad

Led by the Reverend Maurice Wright, II, members of St. John AME Church will travel to the Port of Spain, Trinidad to participate in the Windward Annual Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and to work with local residents and community based organizations. The Annual Conference will be held at Metropolitan AME Church in Port of Spain, where the Reverend Godfrey E. Mitchell serves as the host pastor.

The Huntsville delegation will leave on Monday, March 5, 2018 and return on Monday, March 12, 2018. Servant Pastor Wright will preach at the Ordination Service on Saturday, March 10, 2018 during the Windward Annual Conference and serve as a guest lecturer for the Conference Institute on March 9, 2018 at the invitation of Bishop Anne Henning Byfield, The Presiding Prelate of the 16th District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The theme of the Annual Conference is Ascend and Soar "but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles" Isaiah 40:31.

The St. John members and friends who wish to join Pastor Wright as a part of the St. John delegation to Trinidad will need to contact Steward Jeanette Jones or Trustee Hodges Washington for additional details.



The Heart, Fascinating Facts....

Rosemary Wells

How often do you think about your heart? Not how much you love your spouse, your kids or your dog, but about the inner workings of one of your body's most precious organs. In all likelihood, you probably don't think about your heart often enough, yet this vital "pump" is literally and steadily transporting essential blood to your organs as you read this! Give your ticker some thought by reading through these fascinating heartfelt facts....

The heart begins to beat in the womb. That is why the doctor usually asks mom and dad if they want to listen to their baby's heart beat at the 4th week after conception mark.

On average, the human heart beats approximately 100,000 times per day! Think about that, over a lifetime that is an estimated 2.5 billion heart beats!

A healthy human heart will pump roughly 1 million barrels of blood over an average lifespan. That is enough blood to fill 3 super truck tankers.

Regina Avaraham, author of *The Circulatory System*, praised the heart for how hard it works to pump blood throughout the body. Avaraham explained that if a person squeezes a tennis ball as tightly as they can in their fist, they are mimicking the effort it takes for one beat of the heart to pump blood.

The heart produces a "thump thump" sound through a stethoscope or in the ears when the blood pressure rises. That "thump thump" is literally the noise made by the four (4) valves of the heart (mitral valve, tricuspid valve, aortic valve and the pulmonary valve) as they open and close.

While the heart of an average healthy male typically beats around 70-beats-per-minute. A woman's heart beat is a bit faster-at roughly 78-beats-per-minute. That's eight (8) more beats per minute ladies!

According to research from WebMD, the average healthy male heart weighs in at roughly 10 ounces. And while the woman's heart beats faster (eight more beats per minute) it weighs two ounces less at approximately eight ounces in total. The heart circulates blood to the lungs and back in just six seconds. But that is not all...Blood circulates from the brain and back in just eight seconds, and from the heart all the way to the toes and back in roughly sixteen seconds. Wow!

In children, the heart is roughly the same size as a clenched fist. For comparison, adult hearts are roughly the size of two hands clasped together. The average size of a heart valve is a U.S. half dollar.

The heart is responsible for providing adequate blood supply to 75-trillion cells throughout the entire body. The only area that does not require blood supply is the cornea (in the eyes).



Imagine commuting 60,000 miles to and from work each day. This is roughly the length of the blood vessels responsible for providing precious blood to the body's organs and tissues. Any damage to this route of valves (or the heart itself) puts blood -pumping-power and demand at risk, causing the heart to work even harder.

Matters of the heart greatly differ when it comes to how the genders experience a heart attack. Men experience very obvious heart attack symptoms such as chest and shoulder pain, nausea and indigestion. Women's heart

(Continued on page 11)

The Heart, Fascinating Facts....

Rosemary Wells



(Continued from page 10)

attacks are generally a lot less obvious. A woman having a heart attack will often suffer symptoms such as unusual fatigue, sleep disturbance, sweating, shortness of breath, as well as, neck and jaw pain. The most prevalent time of year for heart attacks is Christmas Day. Boxing Day (December 26th) and New Year's Day come in at a close second for heart attack high points.

Edgar Allen Poe was on to something when he wrote the Tell-Tale Heart about a murderer who dismembers a body piece by piece and hides it under the floorboards. The narrator and murderer ultimately loses his mind because he hears the victim's heart still beating under the floorboards. In reality, the heart can continue to beat when removed from the body due to an electrical impulse (the heart has its own separate electric impulse) and an adequate supply of oxygen.



A sedentary lifestyle can be hazardous to one's health and is considered the "new" smoking trend. Sitting all day long at the job and coming home to Netflix may increase the risk for heart disease. The key to good heart health is...exercise! Not only is daily physical fitness vastly important to keeping the heart healthy-walking, running, and kicking a soccer ball are FREE!

Along with exercise, many foods can help keep the heart at its best. Some help lower your blood pressure, others keep cholesterol in line. Add some of these items to the grocery shopping cart to promote a healthy heart.

- Salmon (wild caught) is a top choice because it is rich in omega-3 fatty oils (omega-3's have an anti-clotting effect so they keep your blood flowing). It also helps to lower triglycerides (a type of fat that can lead to heart disease). Aim for at least two servings of oily fish each week, says the American Heart Association. A serving is 3.5 ounces. That is a little bigger than a computer mouse. Other options may include tuna, trout, sardines and mackerel.
- Nuts can play a big part in a healthy heart. Nibbling on 5 ounces of walnuts each week may cut the risk of heart disease in half. Walnuts have lots of "good" fats. When these monounsaturated fats are used in place of saturated fats (such as butter), "bad" LDL cholesterol is cut and they raise "good" HDL cholesterol. Other nuts to include are almonds, cashews, pistachios, flaxseeds and chia seeds.
- Oats have a type of fiber (called beta-glucan) that helps to lower the LDL cholesterol.
- Olive, canola and safflower oils are great choices when eliminating saturated fats (fats found in meat, whole milk and butter) from the diet. Fats from animal products and trans fats ("partially hydrogenated oils") raise "bad" cholesterol and can make fat build up inside arteries.
- Dark chocolate made from the cacao plant is rich in flavanols, which helps to lower blood pressure and prevent blood clots. It also acts as an antioxidant which can keep "bad" LDL cholesterol from sticking to artery walls. Choose dark chocolate (at least 70% cocoa) to get more flavanols and less sugar. Sugar raises the risk of heart disease.



According to research from the Cleveland Clinic, happiness makes hearts happy, quite literally. Being happy and feeling happy creates emotional vitality that translates to lower the risk for heart disease.

For more information go to www.heart.org

Sister Lillie Rivers Speaker for Acklin C.M.E. Church Women's Day Pat Grier

Sister Lillie Rivers was the guest speaker for the afternoon Women's Day program at Acklin C.M.E. Church on January 28th. Sister Rivers is an exhorter at St. John. The theme for their Women's Day was: "Christian Women Empowered by the Holy Spirit to do God's Will".

Sister Rivers' message was entitled "You Got the Power" and was based on the key scripture for the day, Acts 1:8. Sister Rivers implored everyone present (especially the women) to be mindful of three things when seeking the power of the Holy Spirit.

She said: (1) know the source of the power that you seek — power comes from the Lord; (2) know who or what has the potential to drain your power — stay away from negative people and negative situations; and (3) know when you have the power — acknowledge that you have the power and use it for the Glory of God.

Sister Rivers' message of empowerment was well received by all those in attendance. To God be the Glory!



Soup Kitchen Ministry Charlie Binkley

SPIRIT OF JOY

"Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs...give thanks to him and praise his name". —Psalm 100:1-2,4 (NIV)

This story gives an account of an 88 year old woman who visited a local soup kitchen each evening for her supper. She seemed to be the life of the party at her table, encouraging everyone around her. Apparently hard of hearing, she talked loudly, which allowed many people to hear "Bless you!" that she said to those who stopped by to greet her. "Boy was she loud," the writer said.

Prior to the meal, many of the people who entered the dining area looked downcast and seemed ashamed to be there. However, the Spirit of God, working through this positive and joyful woman, seemed to change the atmosphere of the whole room. In no time, the laughter and relaxed fellowship at her table had spread to all the other tables.

Serving the Lord with gladness is contagious and brings joy to the heart. It helps people to understand that no matter their circumstances, they can be agents of God's blessings.

Please consider serving in the bi-monthly "Soup Kitchen" each 3rd and 4th Tuesday in the church fellowship hall. You may just wish to come serve as a greeter who brings joy and smiles to those who come; so you wish to come pray for those wishing prayer, or just to come down after service for cleanup. There is work for you. And we thank you in advance.

"Lord, you are the Helper and Hope of all persons, help us to be positive and joyful witnesses for you wherever we are". Amen!



Couples Ministry I Still Do

This ministry seeks to meet the concerns of both partners while strengthening and stabilizing marriages, enabling couples to go to the distance to fulfill God's purpose for their lives.

MUSIC & CHRISTIAN ARTS MINISTRY

2018 MCAM ELECTIONS

IGNITE GROWTH! | INSPIRE CHANGE! | IMPACT SERVICE!

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REV. MAURICE WRIGHT, II
SENIOR PASTOR
ST. JOHN AME CHURCH
HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

Rev. Maurice Wright, II

CANDIDATE FOR CONNECTIONAL DIRECTOR

Current Connectional Associate Director MCAM

Choral Directing Experience

- Harriett Tubman Middle School, Portland, Oregon
- Thomas Jefferson High School, Portland, Oregon
- Humboldt Elementary School, Portland, Oregon
- Founding Director MLK Community Choir Portland, Oregon
- Big Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Atlanta, Georgia
- Marking Luther King Chapel Choir, Morehouse College Atlanta, Georgia

Minister of Music / Organist

- Bethel AME Church, Portland, Oregon
- United AME Church, Xenia, Ohio
- Powerhouse Temple Church, Portland, Oregon
- Philadelphia Community Church, Portland, Oregon

Vocal Experience

- Morehouse College Glee Club
- Atlanta Opera Company
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Choir
- Wendell Whalum Community Choir

Presiding Elder District Director

- South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer District (9th Episcopal District)
- Phenix City District (9th Episcopal District)
- Alexandria Thibodaux District (8th Episcopal District)

Annual Conference Director

- Northeast Alabama Annual Conference (9th Episcopal District)
- Central North Louisiana Annual Conference (8th Episcopal District)

Degree in Voice and Conducting from Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia

Member of National Association of Negro Musicians (NANM)

Serves as a lecturer on Worship

Choral workshop facilitator

Founding Member of the Connectional Music Committee



REV. MYRON D. HILL
SENIOR PASTOR
CYPRESS CHAPEL AME
ABBEVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Rev. Myron D. Hill

CANDIDATE FOR CONNECTIONAL ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Current Connectional Parliamentarian MCAM

Special Education Teacher for the Greenwood School District 50 in South Carolina

Current Director of Music: Piedmont Annual Conference & Abbeville Greenwood District

Current President/Director: Greenwood (SC) Area Martin Luther King, Jr. Mass Choir

Musician: Turner Singer, Turner Theological Seminary, Atlanta, Georgia

Minister of Music: Flipper Temple AME Church, Atlanta, Georgia

Founder: Voices of Liberty Choir, Liberty Hill AME Church, Summerton, South Carolina

Founder: Allen W. Parrott Inspirational Choir, Williams Chapel AME Church, Orangeburg, South Carolina

Founder: Shulerville Community Youth Choir

Co-Founder (along with his father): Jamestown Shulerville Community Choir

Organist: Wesley AME Church, Shulerville, South Carolina

Age started playing piano: 6

OUR GOALS

1. INCREASE CONNECTIONAL MEMBERSHIP
2. INCREASE THE VITALITY OF MCAM IN EVERY EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
3. PROVIDE LITURGICAL DANCE, DRAMA AND MUSIC RESOURCES FOR CONGREGATIONS THROUGHOUT THE CONNECTION
4. CONTINUE TO PROMOTE AME ARTISTS



NINTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Standing United, Moving Forward, Stronger Together (Numbers 27:1-7)



The Reverend

JARENA LEE

“Herstory” AWARDS BRUNCH

AWARD HONOREES

Bishop Teresa Jefferson Snorton

Presiding Elder Sondra Coleman

Senator Vivian Figures

Dr. Jeanette Jones

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Mrs. Allie Reddick



Keynote Speaker

The Reverend SHERITA MOON
SEAWRIGHT

Ninth Episcopal District Supervisor

Tickets \$40

Buy online **EVENTBRITE.COM**

Search: "Jarena Lee Awards Brunch"

March 3rd

9:30 AM CST

DANIEL PAYNE

COMMUNITY PLAZA

Birmingham, AL

Rev. Deborah Peppers, WIM President | Rev. Dr. Letitia Watford (PE), Event Coordinator

Church School Lesson Overview – March 2018

The lesson reviews were written by Willie Sandifer,

March 4, 2018

Lesson Title: The Lord Will Provide

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 22

Print: Genesis 22:1-3, 6-14

Devotional Songs: #407, #251, and #243

Key Verse: "Abraham answered, 'God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.' And the two of them went on together" (Genesis 22:8).

Abraham's faith was nowhere near a perfect faith, although he is acknowledged in many Scriptures as a man of faith. Leaving his home in Ur showed much faith in chapter 12 of Genesis. However, he told Sarah, his wife, to say she was his sister, so as to stay alive, before the chapter's end.

Abraham later impregnated Sarah's maidservant, Hagar, instead of seeking God's will. His choice became the source of a lot of tension within his household. He failed again to trust God by giving her to a pagan king.

Even through all of this, God stayed faithful to both Abraham and Sarah. He saved them from a few powerful kings, watched over the condition involving Lot, Hagar, and Hagar's son Ishmael. God even gave Abraham and Sarah the son of promise for whom they had been awaiting.

Still however, by chapter twenty-two of Genesis we remain wondering if God would become impatient, as Abraham was a person of spiritual highs and spiritual lows. His faith, although inconsistent, was strong. We are left wondering if he is still the man who first left Ur for the unknown or if years of going from place to place had worn down his faith.

March 11, 2018

Lesson Title: There Is No God Like You

Lesson Scripture: 2 Chronicles 6:12-21

Print: 2 Chronicles 6:12-21

Devotional Songs: #381, #77, and #243

Key Verse: "You have kept your promise to your servant David my father; with your mouth you have promised and with your hand you have fulfilled it - as it is today." (2 Chronicles 6:15).

Building a temple for God was a shovel ready project that David had prepared and one of the main tasks that Solomon completed as king of Israel. Although David desired to really complete this project, God did not allow him to do as he desired. Telling him in the eighth verse of the twenty-

second chapter of 2 Chronicles that he had shed too much blood on earth and that David was not to build a house in his Name.

In this week's lesson we see part of the dedication ceremony that Solomon presided over for the completed temple. Solomon turned around and blessed the whole assembly as the ceremony started, called attention to God's keeping his promise that he had made to David that his son would reign and would build a house for him. Solomon comprehended that the finished temple was not a personal thing for him, as it was God fulfilling His divine promise. Solomon was just used by God, the master builder.

March 18, 2018

Lesson Title: The People Gave Thanks to God

Lesson Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:1-11

Print: 2 Chronicles 7:1-9

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

Key Verses: "When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the Lord above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave thanks to the Lord, saying, 'He is good; his love endures forever'" (2 Chronicles 7:3).

In this week's lesson we see that giving thanks played an important role in the dedication of the temple. The nation of Israel had a two week long celebration, not merely a day like the way we celebrate today in the United States and the way they celebrate today in Canada.

The same backdrop to last week's lesson on Solomon's prayer of dedication is not repeated again but applies to this week's lesson. His prayer, which is immediately before this week's lesson text, was so powerful that its wording is reflected in a psalm:

'Arise, Lord, and come to your resting place, you and the ark of your might. May your priests be clothed with your righteousness; may your faithful people sing for joy.'" For the sake of your servant David, do not reject your anointed one. - Psalm 132:8-10

March 25, 2018

Lesson Title: Keep My Statutes And Ordinances

Lesson Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:12-22

Print: 2 Chronicles 7:12-22

Devotional Songs: #377, #321, and #243

Key Verses: "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn

(continued on page 16)

Observing the Lenten Season

The LENTEN SEASON covers the forty-six day period between Ash Wednesday and the eve of Easter. Lent itself excludes the six Sundays and is, therefore, only forty days. 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 Lenten Season began on February 14. St. John members are encouraged to participate in the Daniel Fast during Lent this year.

The Daniel Fast (or Daniel Eating Plan) is based on verses from the bible in Daniel 1:12 and Daniel 10:2-3. Persons participating in the fast will eat the food that Daniel ate during his fast. The basic foods are vegetables, fruit, legumes, whole grains and nuts. Do not eat meat, dairy, sugar, leavened bread and processed foods. Water is the beverage for the Daniel Fast.

Resources on the Daniel Fast are available at the church and on the Internet.

"In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, all three whole weeks were fulfilled." Daniel 10:2-3



Church School Book Club

February 2018

Discussion Date: 17 February 2018

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Man on the Run, Weber 2017

March 2108

Discussion Date: 17 March 2018

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Girl with a Pearl Earring, Chevalier, 2001.

Tracy Chevalier transports readers to a bygone time and place in this richly-imagined portrait of the young woman who inspired one of Vermeer's most celebrated paintings.

History and fiction merge seamlessly in this luminous novel about artistic vision and sensual awakening. *Girl with a Pearl Earring* tells the story of sixteen-year-old Griet, whose life is transformed by her brief encounter with genius even as she herself is immortalized in canvas and oil.

Church School Lesson Overview

(Continued from page 15)

from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14).

In this lesson there is a strong warning from God to Solomon that not keeping the ordinances and statutes would result in what the author of the commentary would call "a reverse makeover to that structure." The contrast between before and after would be amazingly bewildering. What was true then is still true in our time: If the people were not dedicated to being God's people, a structure dedicated to Him means nothing.

Solomon's accomplishments were impressive. He had finished the temple of the Lord and his royal palace. He was successful in carrying out all that he had in mind to do in both places. The people were joyful and glad for what God had done for David, for Solomon, and for them.

Maybe the warning came because Solomon was tempted to rest on what he had accomplished at that point being satisfied with his performance record. However, God wanted much more from Solomon and from the people of Israel than just merely erecting a building. He wanted obedience and not even the mighty temple that Solomon just finished could be a substitute for obedience.

March 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 WM Brunch Daniel Payne Community Place
4 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship Communion Sunday AMEN DEADLINE	5 9:30 a.m. Fifty-Plus Auxiliary	6	7 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	8 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	9	10 10:30 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting
11 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship Daylight Saving Time Begins	12 REFRESH Bible Study For Women 7:00 p.m.	13	14 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	15	16 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	17
18 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship YOUTH SUNDAY	19 REFRESH Bible Study For Women 7:00 p.m.	20 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	21 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	22	23 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	24 SBHB District Conference St. John, Huntsville
25 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship CHURCH ANNIVERSARY PALM Sunday Gospel Choir Explosion 5:00 p.m.	26	27 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	28 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	29 Maundy Thursday	30 GOOD FRIDAY	31

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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

February 24, 2018	9th District YPD Leadership Training Institute
February 25, 2018	Founder's Day at Greater St. Paul, Scottsboro, Pastor Wright will be the preacher
March 5-12, 2018	Mission Trip to Port of Spain, Trinidad
March 11, 2018	Daylight Saving Time Begins—Spring forward One Hour
March 24, 2018	SBHB District Conference, St. John, Huntsville
March 25, 2018	Palm Sunday Church Anniversary
March 25, 2018	Gospel Choir Explosion, 5:00 p.m.
April 1, 2018	Resurrection Sunday Combined Sunrise Service—St. John and Church Street CPCA, 6:00 a.m. Morning Worship, 10:00 a.m.

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

INDNJC

ST. JOHN A.M.E.N NEWSLETTER



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 23 Issue 3

March 2018



RESURRECTION

By Mrs. Hattie Nathan, Ninth District Christian Education Director

According to the gospels of Matthew (28:1-10), Mark (16:1-8), and Luke (24:1-11) it was early in the morning when the women came to anoint the body of Jesus. On their way, they wondered who would roll away the stone so they could enter the tomb. Well when they arrived at the gravesite, much to their surprise, the stone had already been rolled away and there was no body. The matter of fact is that the resurrection had already taken place. Jesus was resurrected which means He had gotten up from the dead.

The sting of death had miraculously disappeared and the grave had lost its victory.

God did not allow death or the grave to have any victory. So God rolled away the stone and raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Each year now, the Christian church celebrates the resurrection of Christ on Resurrection Sunday. However, as we celebrate, we must remember that death is still trying to sting and the grave is still trying to claim the victory.

Yes, we do have grave experiences in our lives. Jesus said in John 16:33, "In the world you will have great tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." This tells us that the stones have been rolled away. Get up and live. Today's world has so many graves and so many people are allowing themselves to remain in these graves because they cannot see their way out. They think there is no way out. Let us just look at a few of the graves that are holding people today.

People are dying in the grave of Drugs and Alcohol. Do not allow this vice to keep you in its grave. The stone that may hinder you has already been rolled away. The entrance to the grave is open. If you need a fix, Jesus has the perfect one. It is called grace and mercy and He gives it new every day. If you want a real high, allow the Holy Spirit to come alive in your life.

It seems that the world is stuck in the grave of Gun Violence. Every time God gives a new day, gunfire seems to get louder because there is more of it with each passing day. Get up out of the grave of Gun Violence! There is a better way to settle differences. God says in His Word to acknowledge Him in all your ways and He will direct your paths.

The graves of Abuse are many and varied. Some by name are child abuse, elderly abuse, physical abuse, verbal abuse, mental abuse, sexual abuse, and so many more. The abuse graves are open. Anyone can be resurrected from those graves remembering that we are all our brother's and sister's keepers.

There are graves of Financial Instability and Economic Deprivation. Anyone can be resurrected from these graves as they look to Jesus who promises to supply all of our needs according to His riches in glory. Re-

(Continued on page 3)

St. John Launches Children's Church Ministry!

B. Johnson

Children's Church Mission: Empowering Kids to SHARE the WORD and SERVE the PEOPLE.



After eight long months of meeting and planning and meeting and revising the plan, the Children's Church Ministry, "Kingdom Kids", was launched on Sunday, February 18, 2018. The fellowship hall was transformed into a child-size sanctuary, complete with rows of chairs, a podium and a large visual display screen. Twenty-five, six to twelve-year-olds attended the first service of Kingdom Kid's Children's Church Ministry. At first, they were a little reluctant to participate, thinking that they still had to remain quiet and poised during the service. It did not take them long to realize that this was going to be an interactive service, geared specifically for them.

The "Kingdom Kids" began their service by singing "This is the Day," which was not the traditional way. They actually had to stand, move and use shakers along with the music that was being projected on the large screen. The scripture was led by Jessica Harbin and the prayer was led by Kelson Hill. Those who celebrated birthday's in January and February were recognized with a "Reggae Birthday" song which called for more movement. Two visitors were acknowledged with greetings by all, followed by the singing of "What a Mighty God we Serve," the Kingdom Kids way. The offering was collected and counted by Samantha Adkins, a "Kingdom Kids"

attendee, with the help of a church Steward. Mrs. Rankin, the "Kingdom Kids" Ministry Director, led the children in the "Kingdom Kids" morning chant, which was a repeated rhythmic beat in unison using their hands as instruments. Those who made presentations were greeted with another chant:

Leader: "Kingdom Kids", how did you like that presentation?"

Response: "Outstanding"! (Along with three very loud hand claps)

The Interactive Devotion Leader was the Reverend Gloria Madison, whose message was entitled, "*We Trust God and Depend on Him; The Day the Sun Stood Still,*" based on the story of Joshua. Mrs. Kay Adkins, a "Kingdom Kids" volunteer, prepared the children for the story by asking questions regarding "trust". As the children replied to the questions, the Reverend Rita Wright passed out gold coins to reinforce and motivate the children for their contributions. Four children were assigned costumes to help deliver the story: a King, a Soldier, Joshua and the Sun. The actors, acted out their roles as the Reverend Madison recounted the story. The children in the audience had a participatory response as the story was being told. At the conclusion of the story, everyone had an opportunity to participate by answering questions regarding what they learned from the

(Continued on page 3)



Mrs. Rankin leads the kids in the chant.



Mrs. Adkins asks questions on trust.

St. John Launches Children's Church Ministry!

B. Johnson

story. The lesson was summarized by Mrs. Kay Adkins. Announcements and reminders were made before the benediction was given by Breyanna Croan. Everyone was thanked for their attendance and involvement. Each child received a "Kingdom Kids" cinch sack/back pack to carry their things in, and to serve as a reminder to come back next month.

When the last child left the fellowship hall, we realized that God had abundantly blessed our first Children's Church service. It was apparent that St. John's Children enjoyed themselves and would be the ones to spread the word and invite others to the service, by telling them that St. John's Children's Ministry was FUN, FUN, FUN! After Children's Church ended, Pastor Wright reported with a huge smile on his face, that the children told him, that they had a great time in Children's Church!!

St. John AME "Kingdom Kids" Children's Church Ministry will be held on the 3rd Sunday of each month for children ages 6-12 years old. Teens ages 13-16 years old will meet on the 2nd Sunday of each month beginning in March. Parents are encouraged to register their child or children prior to the date of service.

This ministry is still seeking adult and youth volunteers. If interested in volunteering, please send an email to the contact emails listed below. All volunteers must complete two hours of training and undergo a background check through *Protect our Ministry*.

Contact information for Children's Church, Kingdom Kids Ministry:

The Reverend Joretha Wright, Executive Minister, executivepastor@stjohnhuntsville.com

Mrs. Mary Rankin, Director, kingdomkids@stjohnhuntsville.com

Ms. Barbara Johnson, Assistant Director, bajs4212@stjohnhuntsville.com

"We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord." Psalm 78:4

RESURRECTION

By Mrs. Hattie Nathan, Ninth District Christian Education Director

(Continued from page 1)

member God has everything and He gives of His riches freely and generously. Jesus says ask in faith and you shall receive.

The graves of Envy and Jealousy are in pursuit to claim the lives of people in the world and in the church. The stones in front of these graves are rolled away. Be resurrected by trusting God for His word and by operating in the gift(s) that God has given you. Know that these gifts do not conflict, but they do complement each other.

Yes, the graves are many. If you find yourself in a grave, just know that your grave is not sealed. The stone has been rolled away and you can be resurrected. The price for all of our iniquities has already been paid. Jesus Christ paid that price with His precious blood. He suffered; He bled; and He died. Our blessed Savior was then put in a borrowed tomb. His grave was sealed with a large stone. Guards were stationed at the entrance. In spite of all of these precautions, death lost its sting and the grave lost its victory. On the third day morning, Jesus Christ got up; He was resurrected with all power in heaven and on earth in His hand.

Now, as we all celebrate Resurrection Sunday, remember that just as God raised Jesus Christ from the grave, Jesus Christ will raise us from our graves.

HAPPY RESURRECTION SUNDAY!

Workshop Culminates with "An Evening of Spirituals"

By Charlsie Brooks and Bridget J. Floyd



Dr. Carter leads workshop.

Preparation and more preparation! Hesitantly, members of the Saint John AMEC Huntsville, Alabama Mass Choir along with singers from First Missionary Baptist Church, Fellowship Presbyterian Church and Lakeside United Methodist Church, gathered for an evening of profound, intense rehearsals. Their hesitance was because they were to become students of the esteemed, renowned director, composer, arranger, pianist, scholar, researcher, teacher, Dr. Roland Carter.

This esteemed gentleman is currently involved in the greater Chattanooga community where he resides and works with the Allied Arts of Greater Chattanooga Symphony and Opera Association. His focus is with a very special promotion of the great musical traditions of the African-American heritage. Dr. Carter's involvement centers on the African American Museum,

and the Chattanooga Choral Society for the Preservation of African American Song.

Dr. Carter has served as the Ruth S. Holmberg UTC Foundation Professor of Music at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. He also served as Head of the Cadek Department of Music and Conservatory for six years (1989-1995). Prior to returning to his hometown to accept this assignment, he served as Chair of the Department of Music at Hampton (Institute) University and director of its internationally acclaimed choirs for nearly a quarter century.

In addition to teaching and performing, Carter has an outstanding record in arts advocacy and service. Dr. Carter serves on many boards and associations. He is also a life member of the American Choral Directors Association, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, and the Music Teachers National Association. Additionally, Dr. Carter is a publisher specializing in music by African American composers and traditions.

The choral preparations began on Friday evening, February 9, 2018, with Dr. Carter explaining how easy it would be for participants to sing the music he had chosen to teach for the Sunday Concert. He put away fears as he explained patiently where each voice was written, on which line for those who did not read music. He assured everyone with his patience that he was indeed a master Teacher. He explained the black history story behind each of the songs the choir sang with his magical warm-up melodies. Many even contained verses from the bible. One of the favorite stories was about the quartet "Wings Over Jordan" where he told how important they were to blacks and how every home played their music on Sunday morning. He had the group in laughter when he stated as they sang, "King Jesus is a Listening", "No he is not, for he can't see the expressions on your faces or hear your call." The choir then sang with meaning.



The Huntsville Chorale



The Workshop Chorale

Workshop Culminates with "An Evening of Spirituals"

By Charlsie Brooks and Bridget J. Floyd

(Continued from page 4)

After hours of guided rehearsals, it was time for the Sunday Concert Performance. The workshop choir lifted their voices and sang with great pride and joy. The choir was jubilant. The crowded audience gave the program participants applause after applause which must have made them feel that their work was not in vain for they had the best—the awesome creator—and writer of the beautiful music of African American forefathers, Dr. Roland M. Carter. They sang!

On Sunday, February 11, 2018, "An Evening of Spirituals" began with the welcome, opening prayer and remarks by Pastor Maurice Wright, II. Mr. Robert Drake, the Master of Ceremonies, then introduced The Huntsville Spiritual Chorale, co-founded and co-directed by Mr. William and Mrs. Brenda Davis. The group has performed locally in Huntsville, Alabama as well as other venues in this and other States. They also have embraced the mission of keeping alive the tradition and history of the spirituals (similar to Dr. Carter). They acknowledged the recent addition to the group of several students from Alabama A & M University. The three spirituals performed by the Huntsville Spiritual Chorale were: "Ev'rytime I Feel the Spirit", arranged by William L. Dawson (Soloist Frank Jones); "I Heard de Preaching of de Elders", arranged by Roland M. Carter; and "Rock-A My Soul", arranged by Uzee Brown, Jr. (Soloists Demetrius Davis and Kyla Pitcher). The tone was then set.

Dr. Carter then presented the Workshop Chorale (which included Pastor Wright). The special treat was that all selections were arranged or transcribed by Dr. Carter. The Workshop Chorale opened with "Same Train" (Soloist Arthurine Shackelford). This was followed by "Two Spirituals in Tribute to Wings Over Jordan" (transcribed by Roland M. Carter) 1. "Yes, Lord!" (Soloist, Lula Rochelle) and 2. "Leaning on the Lord" (Soloists, Phillip Pugh and Jabari Walton). The next was also transcribed by Dr. Carter, "King Jesus Is A Listening"; with the culminating rendering of "Ride On, Jesus".

After acknowledgements, the closing song by the performers, with the audience welcomed to join, was "Total Praise". The benediction was offered by the Reverend Dr. Garland F. Pierce, Executive Director of Christian Education of the AME Church.

Throughout the program, the audience was engulfed by the melodious voices and harmony, as well as the rich history and emotion associated with thinking of the original rendering of these spirituals and their purpose in communicating, sometimes life-altering and life-saving messages. It is a tribute to Dr. Carter and others who would strive to educate and expose spirituals to those who have come along since the spirituals were routinely sung in worship services of the African American church. To paraphrase and capture the sentiment of Dr. Carter in his opening comments for the evening, the newer and currently popular forms of music do not have to be sacrificed in order for spirituals to be kept alive as it were; but rather they can co-exist in the rich and multifaceted African American musical tradition.

Special thanks are extended to all participants: Mr. Robert Drake, Master of Ceremony; The Huntsville Spiritual Chorale under the direction of Mr. William and Mrs. Brenda Davis; Mr. Reginald Pearson, St. John AME Director of Music and Christian Arts Ministry; and the Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor, St. John AME Church, Huntsville.



"Nevertheless She Persisted"

By Tami McGhee



Women's History Month is a month set aside each year to honor women's contributions in American history. It is celebrated in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, during the month of March.

The National Women's History Project (NWHPP), a not-for-profit American organization, was founded in 1980 in Santa Rosa, California, by Molly Murphy MacGregor, Mary Ruthsdotter, Maria Cuevas, Paula Hammett and Bettie Morgan to "promote multicultural women's history awareness." The organization successfully lobbied for national recognition, and in February of that same year, President Jimmy Carter issued the first Presidential Proclamation declaring the week of March 8, 1980 as National Women's History Week. Subsequent presidents continued to proclaim a National Women's History Week in March until 1987 when Congress, after being petitioned by the National Women's History Project, passed Public Law

100-9, designating March as "Women's History Month." Between 1988 and 1994, Congress passed additional resolutions requesting and authorizing the President to proclaim March of each year as Women's History Month, and since 1995 a special Presidential Proclamation is issued every year which honors the extraordinary achievements of American women.

Each year the National Women's History Project selects and publishes a theme for National History Month. This year's theme is "Nevertheless She Persisted: Honoring Women Who Fight All Forms of Discrimination Against Women." The phrase

NEVERTHELESS SHE PERSISTED: Honoring Women Who Fight All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

"Nevertheless She Persisted" was born in February of 2017 when Senator Elizabeth Warren, D-MA, refused to be silenced during Jeff Sessions' confirmation hearing for Attorney General when she was reading an opposition letter written in 1986 by past NWHPP honoree Coretta Scott King. Referring to the incident, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-KY, later said "Senator Warren was giving a lengthy speech. She had appeared to violate the rule. She was warned. She was given an explanation. Nevertheless she persisted." Right away feminists began to use the phrase to refer to any strong women who refuse to be silenced.

This year fifteen outstanding women will be honored for their persistence in fighting all forms of discrimination against women and girls. The 2018 National Women's History Month Honorees are:

- Pauli Murray (1910-1985) - Poet, author, lawyer and Episcopalian priest who built communities of understanding and tolerance.
- Geraldine Ferraro (1935-2011) - First woman VP candidate from a major party who championed women's rights.
- Elizabeth Peratrovich (1911-1958) - Civil rights leader whose advocacy anti-discrimination led to the Alaska territory's first anti-discrimination act in 1945.
- Angelica Salas - Key strategist and leader in the national movement for immigrant rights and policy reform.
- Cristina Jiménez - A leader in the youth-led immigrant rights movement and instrumental in creating the DACA program.
- Susan Burton - A leader in the Criminal Justice Reform Movement helping to break the cycle of incarceration.
- Saru Jayarman - A national labor leader and researcher who works with employers and consumers for better wages and working conditions.
- Arlene B. Mayerson - Leading attorney in disability rights law who has played a key role in drafting and negotiating the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Jill Moss Greenberg - Trailblazer in addressing the intersection of women's rights and various factors such as socioeconomic status and race impact on women.
- Margaret Dunkle - Played a key role implementing Title IX with her groundbreaking report documenting the discrimination of women athletes.
- Marty Langelan - A leader in global efforts to end harassment and gender violence by teaching women about self-defense through the "Direct-Action Toolkit."

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"Nevertheless She Persisted"

By Tami McGhee

(Continued from page 6)

- Linda Spoonster Schwarz - A military veteran who has dedicated her life to advocating for equal care and benefits for women veterans.
- Pat Maginnis - She argued that women had the right to safe and legal abortions and she championed every woman's right to choose.
- Roma Guy - She has worked on the issues of girl's and women's health, reproductive justice, HIV/AIDS services, and universal health care.
- Loretta J. Ross - Nationally-recognized expert on women's issues, hate groups, racism and intolerance, human rights, and violence against women.



Celebrating Women's History Month also means remembering the legacies of the women in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church who "nevertheless persisted." One such woman was Jarena Lee, the first woman to be allowed to preach the Gospel publicly in the AME Church.

Jarena Lee, was born to a free Black family in 1783. As Lee began to age, she developed a strong love for God and listening to the Gospel. She soon felt she had a calling on her life to spread the word of God, and to inspire others. She was initially hesitant to pursue ministry, because of the male-dominated nature of the church. However, she decided to confide in Bishop Richard Allen and revealed to him her call to preach. Bishop Allen told Lee that he could not grant her permission to preach, because he was required to uphold the AME Church's ban against female ministers.

Later, during a worship service at Bethel Church, a guest preacher began struggling with his message and abruptly stopped preaching. As he stared into the congregation at a loss for words, Lee sprang to her feet and began preaching, picking up where the minister had left off. After Lee's sermon, she was afraid that Bishop Allen would punish her for preaching without permission. On the contrary, Bishop Allen was so impressed by Lee that he officially gave her authorization to preach the Gospel, asserting that God had called Lee to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Because she was a woman, she was never ordained in the AME Church.

Despite Richard Allen's blessing, Lee faced hostility because she was black and a woman, but "nevertheless she persisted." Jarena Lee began preaching in 1820 throughout New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York and also traveled to Ohio and Canada. She was an extremely strong woman, who traveled through dangerous slaveholding towns to preach the gospel, and who stood up to the church leaders of her day, asserting her right to preach. Jarena Lee became a pioneer for all women seeking to preach. During the 2016 General Conference of the AME Church she was posthumously ordained.

The Ninth District AME Women in Ministry celebrated the pioneering spirit of the Reverend Jarena Lee on March 3 with A Jarena Lee "Herstory" Awards Brunch at the Daniel Payne Community Plaza in Birmingham, Alabama. Dr. Jeanette Jones, a member of St. John AME Church, was one of several honorees who have distinguished themselves in various areas of religion, science, politics, and social and community activism.

Article Sources:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_History_Month

<http://www.nwhp.org>

<http://www.blackpast.org/aah/lee-jarena-1783>

Members Dress in African Attire for Black History Month



The 50+ Auxiliary Celebrates Rich History of Past St. John A.M.E. Members

"To forget one's ancestors is to be a brook without a source, a tree without a root."

B. Johnson



Mrs. Conley presenting to 50-Plus

Mrs. Olye Ballard Conley, noted Huntsville historian, educator and acclaimed genealogist was the guest speaker for the February Meeting of the 50+ Auxiliary. She kept the fifty or so attendees enthralled from beginning to end as she narrated with authority, the history of past A.M.E. ministers, members and people of the community. Mrs. Conley stated that the African Methodist Episcopal Church has an impressive history of over 150 years of service and existence in the state of Alabama and we should be proud of that accomplishment. She encouraged the members to tell the story of their legacy to the young people so the traditions would continue. Mrs. Conley stated, "There is nothing more powerful than a nation, whose people are steeped in its history. Our history actually cannot be told without the backdrop of the church. Our traditions and culture seem to emulate the church; the way we move, dress, communicate, and our spirituality can all be traced back to the early church and the traditions that were brought here

from Africa."

As Alabama continues to commemorate the 200th year celebration of statehood, the theme during this third year is, "Honoring Our People." This year's focus will be sharing the experiences and stories of all Alabamians. The focus of Mrs. Conley's presentation was to reveal some of the St. John members who have made outstanding contributions to the community. The second focus was to discuss the purpose of the "Wall of Remembrance." The "Wall" will be just one aspect of the 200th Bicentennial Celebration. The "Wall" will memorialize African Americans buried in un-



marked graves and extant cemeteries during the 19th and early 20th centuries in Madison County. Much of her research has been done from past records regarding the Georgia Slave Cemetery which is located under the parking deck of the Huntsville Hospital and Glenwood Cemetery. The Georgia Slave Cemetery was established on two acres of land in 1818 by the city of Huntsville as a burying ground for slaves. During the 1950's Huntsville Hospital built a parking garage over the graveyard. It is uncertain whether the remains were removed prior to construction or left there; no records were kept.

Glenwood Cemetery was established in 1870 on 10 acres of land. The cemetery is considered dead in that burial plots can no longer be purchased. However, there are many vacant spaces and depressions which would indicate the possibility of unmarked graves.

Mrs. Conley and others have worked tirelessly to uncover the names of the many persons that have been buried in these unmarked graves in Madison County. A list of 1000 names, so far has been compiled using old records and information found in the library archives. The Huntsville community will be called upon to offer up more names. Many families may know of someone in their family who might be in an unmarked grave. At some point soon, the



public will be invited to submit names of their loved ones. Public submissions will require at least three articles of evidence to verify their proposal. The "Wall of Remembrance" will give an identity and a name to those who remained nameless for so long.

As Mrs. Conley was expounding on the many facts and people she had uncovered during her research of persons who had actually lived, worked and worshiped in Huntsville, she took members on a virtual tour from Goree Island, off the coast of Dakar, Senegal and the "Door of No Return" to present-day life in the 21st Century.

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The 50+ Auxiliary Celebrates Rich History of Past St. John A.M.E. Members

"To forget one's ancestors is to be a brook without a source, a tree without a root."

B. Johnson



Mrs. Conley and Ms. B. Johnson



Mrs. Conley presenting to 50-Plus

(Continued from page 9)

She brought to life former pastors of St. John A.M.E. Church, such as the Reverend F.W. Puryear whose name was mentioned in the March 1883 Huntsville Gazette and the Reverend Patton, whose name appeared in the same publication in 1894 and in 1897, the Reverend E. W. Williams was cited in the Huntsville Weekly. She shared stories about some of the former Trustees of St. John, such as Mr. Charles R. Donegan and how he was related to a past member, Mrs. Gertrude Winston. She told how the Donegan family actually owned a store and a cotton gin in Madison County. Then there was the Wither family (James and Charity) and how they were related to Mrs. Hodie McCraw (Mr. Homer McCraw's wife). She said how both James and Charity Withers are buried in Glenwood Cemetery. Mrs. Conley also shared information regarding Landonia Coleman Ray (1987-1970). Mrs. Ray lived where the Huntsville Hilton was located. She was the cook for the Kiwanis Club. She owned a store on Madison Street and was a member of St. John A.M.E. Church.

Another interesting fact, Mrs. Conley shared was that at one point churches would come together for special occasions. One such event happened when St. John A.M.E. partnered with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church for a Sunday School affair and the speaker was none other than Booker T. Washington himself. The program happened at St. John A.M.E.

Even after hearing about all these outstanding people the most amazing story was still to be revealed. All A.M.E.'s know of Bishop Richard Allen and his wife Sarah Allen. But not much has ever been known about the children. Well, Mrs. Conley in her diligent pursuit of history shared the story of Peter Allen, one of the sons of Bishop Richard Allen.

Peter Allen actually lived and walked the streets of Huntsville, Alabama. Peter Allen was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1805. He was a free black man. In 1835 Peter Allen left Philadelphia, a city whose entire population of approximately 15,000 was free, to come and live in Huntsville, Alabama, where only one percent of the state's black population enjoyed freedom. The reasons for his emigration are unclear; however, it was an extraordinary move considering the threat of seizure and sale into slavery for any free black from the north venturing into the Deep South. He met and married an enslaved woman, Mary (ca. 1807-1885), shortly after his arrival in Huntsville.

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The 50+ Auxiliary Celebrates Rich History of Past St. John A.M.E. Members

"To forget one's ancestors is to be a brook without a source, a tree without a root."

B. Johnson

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Beginning in late October 1835, appeals were published in several Alabama newspapers, including the Huntsville Southern Advocate, urging Alabamians to come to the aid of their "brothers in Texas." Although he was a free black who had recently arrived in the city, Peter Allen a flutist, was welcomed in to the company as a musician. The company made it to Texas by January 12, 1836. They were soon dispatched to Goliad and to fight the Mexicans and Santa Anna. They fought valiantly, but surrendered on March 20, 1836, and were imprisoned at Goliad.

The night before the massacre, Captain Jack Shackelford, commander of the Red Rovers, recalled that the musicians, including Peter Allen, who played the fife, had played the song "Home Sweet Home" for the troops and brought many a strong soldier to tears. The next morning, Palm Sunday, March 27, 1836, the men were awakened and prepared for execution. However, the Mexican general told Peter Allen, if he played that song again, "Home Sweet Home" and brought the men to tears, he would be spared. Peter Allen refused and stated, "No, I'll not play, but I'll just go along with the rest of the boys." And so, he was executed with the others.³

Peter's widow, Mary, lived the remainder of her life in Huntsville, Alabama, and died on June 23, 1885. She is said to be buried in Glenwood Cemetery with her second husband, Mr. John Cook.⁴

This is a true story of a Huntsvillian and an African Methodist Episcopal personality. There is sufficient, documented, evidence to authenticate the fact that both Peter and Mary lived in Huntsville and he did serve in the Texas Revolution.

Again it bears out the statement from Dr. Lonnie G. Bunch III, Director of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC, "There is nothing more powerful for than a people, than a nation, steeped in its history."

Mrs. Conley left suggestions for all the novice historians to consider pursuing. Here are the top four:

- St. John A.M.E. Church should work to acquire recognition on the National Register of Historical places in Alabama.
- St. John A.M.E. Church should work to establish a historical marker for this location on Church Street.
- St. John A.M.E. youth should be encouraged to write a play, skit, children's book or documentary on the life of Peter and Mary Allen.
- St. John A.M.E. Church should begin collecting the oral histories of the members of the church and retrieving some of their artifacts for historical evidence.

Mrs. Conley closed her presentation with a poem, "Nobody Knows My Name" (page 16) to emphasize the purpose of knowing our history, so that those persons who lived, worked and worshiped at St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church and in Huntsville-Madison County would no longer remain nameless.

³Handbook of Texas Online, Stephen E. Taylor, "Allen, Peter," accessed March 9, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/article/falle>

⁴"Cook, Mary, Died." Huntsville Gazette, Huntsville, AL. Saturday, June 17, 1885, page 3, Vol. VI, issue 32

The Women's Missionary Society Serves Lunch at Homeless Shelter

By Claudinette Parham-Fears

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.
When I was a stranger, you welcomed me" ... Matthew 25:35

The Women's Missionary Society (WMS) of St. John A.M.E. Church ventured to the Downtown Rescue Mission on a rain-filled Saturday to perform community outreach on February 10, 2018. While it was gloomy outside, they were greatly warmly welcomed inside by staff and residents. The WMS assisted with serving meals to residents and visitors who are serviced by the Downtown Rescue Mission and they assisted with preparing vegetables for future meals. The mission of the Downtown Rescue Mission is to serve homeless people throughout northern Alabama and southern Tennessee by providing Christ-filled care to those in desperate need.

It is amazing that their intent was to be of service and a blessing to the Downtown Rescue Mission and the persons they serve; however, they walked away thankful for the experience and with an added blessing. The WMS is committed to serving the Downtown Rescue Mission. Persons interested in being a part of this great ministry or volunteering with this outreach should contact a Missionary. The WMS meets the 4th Saturday of each month at 10am, unless noted otherwise.

Thanks to the administrators of the Downtown Rescue Mission for allowing them the opportunity to serve, the WMS members that assisted, and to Misters Parham and Fears who also served.



Donna Gulatee and Stephanie Scott prepare vegetables.



Monica Dillhunt, Anthony Fears and Claire Philadelphia serve meals.



Claudinette Fears and Lorraine Parham are ready to serve.



Monica Dillhunt serves meal to resident with a smile.

Finance Corner

By Bobby Adkins

Is it time to get out of the Stock Market?

I have been an investor for 30 years now and am in awe of the recent drop in the stock market. The 2017 rise to unprecedented levels has been followed by an early 2018 market sell off that has investors skittish and wondering if placing their savings under a pillow is the best approach moving forward. As expressed by Mark DeCambre, MarketWatch's markets editor, "There is suddenly stock-market carnage on Wall Street, shattering what has been a protracted period of low volatility and a mostly uninterrupted climb toward the moon for stocks."

What is surprising about this recent market correction, is that there was no clear-cut catalyst for the declines, which have come as a long-running rally fueled by improving corporate earnings and strengthening U.S. and global economic growth accelerated in January. Employment data indicates near historic lows for unemployment, with the current White House enjoying the benefits of the Obama Era resuscitation of the economy after the collapse of 2008. Furthermore, the Stock Market has benefitted greatly from "cheap money" as lending rates have remained under 5% for the past decade. This good will, generated from the economic improvements of the past decade, did little to foreshadow the recent turmoil on Wall Street. That being said, what goes on with Wall Street, oftentimes isn't indicative of what is happening on Main Street. Main Street is doing pretty well. Let's remember that. So, as the U.S. stock market encounters its first genuine bout of turbulence in years, here's what some experts recommend:



Do not be scared

Kristina Hooper, chief global market strategist at Invesco: "Don't be scared, and don't be impulsive. Be disciplined no matter what the market environment, and keep saving and investing according to your long-term plan," Hooper says, noting that rising inflation, yields and volatility have combined for an unsettling recipe on Wall Street.

Jeff Carbone, managing partner for Cornerstone Wealth: "We are reminding clients to keep this in perspective and look to be proactive not reactive to the markets at this time. It is a big emotional test of risk tolerance; we all want the upside but remember there is downside risk and goals, risk tolerance and time frames must always lead one's investment decisions."

Trouble ahead, trouble behind

Bob Doll, senior portfolio manager and chief equity strategist at Nuveen Asset Management: "A sharp rise in bond yields triggered the start of a corrective phase for stocks. We think yields are likely to continue rising, which could put additional pressure on equity markets." Rising Treasury yields, with the 10-year Treasury yield note hitting 2.88% on Monday, translate into higher borrowing costs for companies and can erode appetite for assets like stocks as dimming yields make government paper relatively attractive. Yields subsequently retreated as the stock-market carnage triggered a flight to safety that favored haven assets like Treasury Notes.

Scott Miner, global chief investment officer at Guggenheim Partners, says there is upside left in this market. "The collapse in equity prices can be explained in a word, rates." Fears of interest rate hikes has spooked institutional investors, creating significant volatility in the markets. Also, as the markets have been at record highs, and into the mid-20K range, low single digit percentage drops simply equate much larger point drops than we have ever seen before. All things considered, the recent drops in the stock market equate to the approximate 10% market correction that was inevitable. Historically, 10% drops have constituted market corrections off of historical highs. Now is not the time to panic.

Miner also states "the back-up in bond yields has been significant, concerns have been building about bond market supply, and wage data in Friday's job report suggest potential inflationary concerns. The setback today is not over but we are approaching a bottom. I still hold the opinion that the favorable economic fundamentals that are in place, where we are in the business cycle, the breadth of the market, and levels of current valuations are supportive of equities. Buying here will proba-

(Continued on page 14)

Daniel Haygood Named Youth of the Month for February



Daniel Haygood is a 15-year-old sophomore at Huntsville High school. His favorite subjects in school are Science and History. Daniel is very athletic and he enjoys basketball and track and field.

At St. John, he is an active member of the YPD and the usher board. This past summer, Daniel participated

Pastor Wright presents award to Daniel Haygood.

in the STEM program at Alabama A&M University where he received a certificate of completion. He also participates in various community projects to include Habitat for Humanity and Health Rocks.

Daniel's future plan is to major in biology to become an ophthalmologist. Daniel Haygood is the son of Roselyne Akines. Congratulations Daniel Haygood!

Finance Corner

By Bobby Akines

(Continued from page 13)

bly make investors happy campers later in the year, but the tug of war between stocks and bonds is just getting under way. This may be the big investment story for 2018.

Now, the most important thing to remember about investing is that there has never been a ten year window, i.e. 1945-1955, 1991-2001, where the market has not increased. Recent drops aside, buying opportunities abound, as well as the chance for dollar cost averaging to pay off in the long run. For every drop in the market, the savvy investor sees a buy opportunity, understanding the long play. Paying attention to the swings in the market are crucial, but reacting irrationally can be disruptive to long term plans. If you are years away from retirement, history indicates that the recent market correction is just market reverting back to the norm. Happy investing and enjoy the benefits of two of my favorite words, Compounded Interest.



Soup Kitchen Ministry

Charlie Brook

WE SERVE WITH HUMILITY

"Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too." Philippians 2:3-4

There are no "Big Shots" in Christ's Kingdom. Everyone is on the same level at the cross and saved by the same grace and blood of Jesus. As we humbly admit our sinful, helpless condition and call on the Lord to save us, He forgives our sin and irrevocably adopts us into His family. And just as we humble ourselves to receive Christ's salvation by faith, we must also serve Him with humility of mind.

Being a servant of Christ requires that one submits to His leadership regarding what they are to do, how they are to carry out His will, and where He would have them serve. There is no room for self-seeking or self-promotion; the only concern should be obedience, with the aim that God gets the glory.

A humble spirit does not look out for its own interests but instead thinks of others. This is the attitude Christ had. He willingly left heaven to take on human form in order to go to the cross—that was a selfless act of obedience to the Father so humankind could be saved.

Are you willing to serve the Lord in obscurity? What if no expressions of gratitude or praise come your way? Do you cheerfully take on lowly tasks? If you answer YES, we invite you to serve in humility in the bi-monthly "Soup Kitchen" on the 3rd and 4th Tuesday of each month. See you then!!!

"Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God."

1 Peter 5:6



Visit the new website at www.stjohnnhuntsville.com

Ash Wednesday Service Sets the Tone for the Lenten Season

By Bridget J. Floyd

St. John gathered on Wednesday, February 7, 2018 to for Ash Wednesday services held at noon and 6:00 p. m. The meditation was offered by the Reverend Gloria Madison at the noon service and the Reverend Miriam Garrett at the six o'clock service. Pastor Maurice Wright, II led the service. The program was the same for each. This writer attended the later service.



The Reverend Gloria Madison delivered the noon meditation.



The Reverend Miriam Garrett delivered the evening meditation.

The responsive scripture was Psalm 51:1-17 was the basis for the service. The hymn "Lord I Want to be a Christian" was sung followed by a Lenten prayer setting the tone for "a repentant community" and an invitation to "observe a Holy Lent by prayer and fasting, by works of love and by reading and meditating on the Word of God...now before God ... and confess our sins".

This was followed by The General Confession and a second hymn "Have Thine Own Way, Lord". Pastor Wright then provided an opportunity for testimonials of God's goodness and thankfulness. There were many that were heartfelt and touching. This allowed for congregants to not only meditate on their own blessings and faithfulness to God but to share and appreciate the blessings and experiences of others. [Great is Thy Faithfulness!!! Thanks be to God!!!]



Pastor Maurice Wright

After the singing of "Praise Him", the meditation was given. For the evening service the Reverend Garrett highlighted the Lenten Season and the scripture (Psalm 51). The Season involves fasting and giving up luxuries as a way of recognizing/recalling the experiences of Christ as He was in the wilderness. The Reverend Garrett cited the fourth chapter of Matthew which "explains how Jesus was tempted as He fasted in the wilderness". She also delved into the featured scripture for the evening (Psalm 51) in which David asked God to forgive his transgressions and create in him a new heart. That is, he was "asking for God to FIX HIM". The Reverend Garrett urged that during the forty days of Lent, those present TAKE IT TO THE LORD - HE WILL FIX IT.



The imposition of the ashes.

Pastor Wright reviewed the Daniel Fast and the reference from the tenth chapter of Daniel in which the scriptural description could be found. He also gave instructions for accessing the weekly Lenten meditation at 7 a.m. on Monday's

The imposition of the ashes (from palm leaves of the 2017 Palm Sunday) set the tone for moving into this reverent season.

Nobody Knows My Name

In this room, where I sit, my father died.
He was a Black man.
He was proud of his color, his name, his family, his work, and his people.
He was a man. Had no money, no home to call his home.
And lacking these things,
We were never late for church and always had supper on time.
When there was nothing left but crumbs, we were fed.
In this room my father died,
and nobody knows his name.

...author unknown

(Recited by Mrs. Conley at Fifty-Plus presentation—pages 9-11)



Wanted!

Writers/reporters for the St. John AME Newsletter.

Must have excellent writing skills.

If interested, contact

B. Johnson at

Bajs4212@hiwaay.net



SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Holy Week—2018

St. John will celebrate Church Anniversary

Sunday March 25, 2018

10:00 a.m.

Rev. T. Eric Nathan—Guest Preacher

Grant Chapel AME Church—Birmingham, AL

Gospel Choir Explosion Featuring Crystal Aikin

Lee High School Auditorium

5:00 p.m.



Celebrate The Savior—He Is Risen

Maundy Thursday

Communion & Footwashing

Thursday, March 29, 2018

6:00 p.m.

The Community Good Friday Service

St. John AME Church

12:00 Noon

Good Friday Worship @ Eagles' Nest Ministries

7:00 p.m.

Pastor Wright preaching

The Easter Egg Hunt/Extravaganza

Saturday, March 31, 2018

Combined Son-Rise Service

Resurrection Morning

Special Guest—Church Street CPCA Church

6:00 a.m.

Christian Education Easter Program

9:00 a.m.

Easter Sunday 10:00 a.m. Morning Worship

Guest Preacher

The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright

Presiding Prelate

9th Episcopal District AME Church

St. John AME MUSIC & CHRISTIAN ARTS MINISTRY PRESENTS



ST. JOHN AME
"Bringing The Word, Teaching The People"
Rev. Maurice Wright, II
Servant Pastor

GOSPEL CHOIR Explosion

5:00PM

Sunday March 25th

FEATURING

ST. JOHN AME CHURCH MASS CHOIR
HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH MASS CHOIR
UNION CHAPEL M.B. CHURCH UNITY CHOIR
ST. MARK BAPTIST CHURCH CHOIR
ALL NATIONS WORSHIP ASSEMBLY CHOIR
UNION HILL P.B. CHURCH MASS CHOIR
ST. BARTLEY P.B. CHURCH MASS CHOIR
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#bringthechoirback

Church School Open House

By Thalia Love

On February 11, 2018, the St. John Christian Education department in conjunction with the Church School department hosted an Open House in celebration of the African Methodist Episcopal church anniversary. The Open House began with devotion in the sanctuary. After devotion, each class presented a summary of the lesson.

The lesson for discussion was entitled "A Disciplined Faith". The key verse for the lesson was James 3:18 which states *But no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.* Mrs. Erica Harbin presented the Beginners' lesson



The Reverend Madison and Sister Lillie Rivers

and encouraged parents to bring their young children to start early learning about what God wants them to do. The Primary class presented the acronym THINK to explain the lesson. When we speak, we should ask ourselves, Is it True? Is it Helpful? Is it Inspiring? Is it Necessary? Is it Kind? These questions will help us to THINK before we speak. Mrs. Claudinette Purifoy-Fears presented the lesson for the Intermediate class. Ms. Kamen Latimore and Mr. William Bell presented for the Senior class. Dr. Thalia Love presented the Alternative Adult lesson with a tube of toothpaste to demonstrate that once we squeeze words out of our mouths, we are not able to put them back in. The Adult Class, led by Mrs. Lillie Rivers, presented a skit on the dangers of the tongue. The lesson reviews were followed by breakfast in the Fellowship Hall.

The Church School department invites all members to come and study with them in Church School.

MUSIC & CHRISTIAN ARTS MINISTRY

2018 MCAM ELECTIONS

IGNITE GROWTH! | INSPIRE CHANGE! | IMPACT SERVICE!

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REV. MAURICE WRIGHT, II
SENIOR PASTOR
ST. JOHN AME CHURCH
HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

Rev. Maurice Wright, II

CANDIDATE FOR CONNECTIONAL DIRECTOR

Current Connectional Associate Director MCAM

Choral Directing Experience

- Harriett Tubman Middle School, Portland, Oregon
- Thomas Jefferson High School, Portland, Oregon
- Humboldt Elementary School, Portland, Oregon
- Founding Director MLK Community Choir Portland, Oregon
- Big Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Atlanta, Georgia
- Marking Luther King Chapel Choir, Morehouse College Atlanta, Georgia

Minister of Music / Organist

- Bethel AME Church, Portland, Oregon
- United AME Church, Xenia, Ohio
- Powerhouse Temple Church, Portland, Oregon
- Philadelphia Community Church, Portland, Oregon

Vocal Experience

- Morehouse College Glee Club
- Atlanta Opera Company
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Choir
- Wendell Whalum Community Choir

Presiding Elder District Director

- South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer District (9th Episcopal District)
- Phenix City District (9th Episcopal District)
- Alexandria Thibodaux District (8th Episcopal District)

Annual Conference Director

- Northeast Alabama Annual Conference (9th Episcopal District)
- Central North Louisiana Annual Conference (8th Episcopal District)

Degree in Voice and Conducting from Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia

Member of National Association of Negro Musicians (NANM)

Serves as a lecturer on Worship

Choral workshop facilitator

Founding Member of the Connectional Music Committee



REV. MYRON D. HILL
SENIOR PASTOR
CYPRESS CHAPEL AME
ABBEVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Rev. Myron D. Hill

CANDIDATE FOR CONNECTIONAL ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Current Connectional Parliamentarian MCAM

Special Education Teacher for the Greenwood School District 50 in South Carolina

Current Director of Music: Piedmont Annual Conference & Abbeville Greenwood District

Current President/Director: Greenwood (SC) Area Martin Luther King, Jr. Mass Choir

Musician: Turner Singer, Turner Theological Seminary, Atlanta, Georgia

Minister of Music: Flipper Temple AME Church, Atlanta, Georgia

Founder: Voices of Liberty Choir, Liberty Hill AME Church, Summerton, South Carolina

Founder: Allen W. Parrott Inspirational Choir, Williams Chapel AME Church, Orangeburg, South Carolina

Founder: Shulerville Community Youth Choir

Co-Founder (along with his father): Jamestown Shulerville Community Choir

Organist: Wesley AME Church, Shulerville, South Carolina

Age started playing piano: 6

OUR GOALS

1. INCREASE CONNECTIONAL MEMBERSHIP
2. INCREASE THE VITALITY OF MCAM IN EVERY EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
3. PROVIDE LITURGICAL DANCE, DRAMA AND MUSIC RESOURCES FOR CONGREGATIONS THROUGHOUT THE CONNECTION
4. CONTINUE TO PROMOTE AME ARTISTS



Church School Lesson Overview – April 2018

The lesson reviews were written by Willie Sandifer,

April 1, 2018

Lesson Title: He Has Risen

Lesson Scripture: Luke 24:1-35

Print: Luke 24:1-12, 30-35

Devotional Songs: #Christ the Lord is Risen Today [], #97 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "It is true. The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon" (Luke 24:34).

The 24th chapter of Luke centers on the witness of the women. We can assume that the women knew where the tomb was located, as they saw Joseph of Arimathea put Jesus' body in the tomb. However, we cannot say the same for the eleven apostles, but from the text as few as two of them knew specifically where the tomb was located.

The angels' final question about looking for the living among the dead was a good one; but the women did not understand it. The women had not seen the resurrected Jesus yet and do not have an expectation to see Him alive. The hint to the mystery of Jesus' missing body was shrouded in the question that the angels ask.

When the angels state that "he has risen", they state an important fact. The angels then ask the women to remember Jesus' words while He was with them in Galilee still. The commentary states that these verses make up the start of a poetic sandwich that uses the word remember.

The angels prompted the women about the words of Jesus that should not have been forgotten to begin with. The commentary speculates that they forgot Jesus' most critical words because they did not wish to believe them.

April 8, 2018

Lesson Title: The Risen Lord Appears

Lesson Scripture: John 21:1-14

Print: John 21:1-14

Devotional Songs: #412, [], #251 [], and #243 []

Key Verses: "Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast.' None of the disciples dared to ask him, 'Who are you?' They knew it was the Lord." (John 21:12).

In this week's lesson we are reminded that nothing is too big or too small for God. The Apostle John's account of Jesus's death and resurrection is a strong reminder that God is transforming our world back to the way He always intended it to be by overcoming the sin and death that pollutes

our lives. In this account Jesus, who was from the dead, meets His disciples by the Sea of Galilee. He surprised the disciples with breakfast and undergirds His promise to always provide for their needs.

This lesson text is the beginning of a long narrative outlining one of Jesus' appearances after His resurrection that was recorded by John only. The lesson text begins with John having already gone over the events from the resurrection day. Finding Jesus's tomb empty of His body, Mary Magdalene, told Peter and John that Jesus's body had been taken. To see for themselves they ran to the tomb. Jesus, confirming He was surely raised from the dead, appeared to Mary.

Jesus appeared later that same day to His disciples while they were in a locked room and appeared to them later that week again. He addressed Thomas that time, as Thomas was absent before. Thomas' doubting indicated that he needed personal tangible evidence Jesus was really alive.

Jesus' appearance to Thomas is the zenith of John's Gospel based on Jesus' statement that "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed". John then tells us about the many other miracles that Jesus did. These miracles make up the meat of John's Gospel as readers of it can put their faith in the risen Jesus whom they have not seen with their eyes.

The commentary notes that this would be a good place for this Gospel to end. However, there is some unfinished business with both the apostles generally and Peter particularly.

April 15, 2018

Lesson Title: Follow Me

Lesson Scripture: John 21:15-25

Print: John 21:15-25

Devotional Songs: #525, [], #258 [], and #243 []

Key Verses: "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these? 'Yes, Lord' he said, 'you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Feed my lambs.'" (John 21:15).

Following his denial of Jesus, Peter wept bitterly at having denied Him. Jesus, however, offered Peter a chance to make a comeback. Peter had a chance to leave sorrow and shame behind and entered a place of renewal in service to the Master. Jesus' words to Peter and His challenge of service both have something to teach us even today.

This lesson looks at the last eleven verses of the Gospel of

(continued on page 20)

Church School Lesson Overview

(Continued from page 19)

John. The background to this lesson is the fourteen verses that made up the text of last week's lesson.

The main theme of this lesson is the image of a shepherd watching over sheep. John draws from this common occupation as the image closely resembles the experience of biblical people. Sheep and Shepherd are used to picture, in the Old Testament, the relationship between God and His people, especially in the 23rd Psalm. The relationship between God's people, Israel, and their king is describable as sheep without a shepherd. The term bad shepherds was used to describe the wicked leaders of the people.

Jesus showed the range of His grace by a repeated exchange with Peter. Jesus gave Peter the chance to openly declare three times what he denied three times during the trials of Jesus. However, Jesus was not yet finished with Peter.

April 22, 2018

Lesson Title: The Lord God Almighty

Lesson Scripture: Revelation 4

Print: Revelation 4:1-6, 8-11

Devotional Songs: #424, []; #77 []; and #243 []

Key Verses: "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." (Revelation 4:11)

This lesson uses a metaphor to show Heaven in terms of a royal throne. The king of Heaven and earth is seated on the throne. Those given access into the throne room derive a certain honor based on their closeness to the one seated on the throne. John does his best to describe what he sees even though the scene is overwhelming for him.

The commentary describes the book of Revelation as a story told by a narrator, a narrative. The fact that it is a narrative does not make it a made up story. A lot of factual history is written as a narrative. John told what he saw in the visions given to him by Christ while he was exiled on the isle of Patmos. A story, with many connected scenes, is the best way to read Revelation.

As this week's lesson starts, John has stated already that "on the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit." John then experienced the vision of "someone like a son of man" just prior to receiving Jesus' messages to the seven churches in the second, third and fourth chapters of Revelation.

Church School Lesson Overview

April 29, 2018

Lesson Title: Blessing, Glory, Honor Forever

Lesson Scripture: Revelation 5:6-14

Print: Revelation 5:6-14

Devotional Songs: #450, []; #272 []; and #243 []

Key Verses: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise." (Revelation 5:12).

In this lesson we see that God is sovereign and declares, "My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please" in Isaiah 46:10. God has the power to carry out His will in all things and His plans are not to be frustrated. Humans are given free will and are allowed by God to make and carry out their own plans for life, although God reserves a final say on the consequences. This is in contrast to the fickle and unpredictable actions of the goddesses of fate. God's will coordinates with human wills for the results that God wants. These results are consistent with the unchanging nature of God.

The scroll had writing on both sides. That was not the way scrolls were written in John's day. The scroll was probably made of animal skins that had been treated and it was easier to write on the flesh side than on the fur side. The impression that the scroll was overflowing with essential information was given by writing on both sides.

We also consider the eventual results that God ensured will happen. In the fourth and fifth chapters of Revelation, John saw the Lord seated on his throne. A scroll sealed with seven seals was in God's hand. The opening of the scroll would show future events that "must take place after this"

The scroll, instead of one seal, had seven. God Himself affixed these wax seals and only someone who has proper authority could break them. A search ensued through Heaven in attempt to find someone worthy to open this scroll. At first no one was found of suitable authority. John was disappointed and this disappointment moved him to tears. John wanted to know what was written on the scroll and he realized this was why he was given access to heaven, the scroll would show what would happen on earth.

The fourth chapter of Revelation is the start of John's vision of the throne room. Its majestic features and residents are described. This includes the worship lead by living creatures and the elders bowed in worship. A song praising the worthiness of the Lord God to be worshiped ends the chapter. The song is based on the one who creates and keeps all things. It is based on God.

April 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 RESURRECTION DAY 5:00 a.m. Sunrise Service 8:45 a.m. Easter Program 10:00 a.m. Worship AMEN DEADLINE	2 9:30 a.m. Fifty-Plus Auxiliary 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	3 6:00 p.m. Stewardess Board Meeting	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 Kid's Kingdom (ages 1-2-16)	9 REFRESH Bible Study For Women 7:00 p.m.	10	11 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	12	13 AME Commemorial Day of Prayer Pastor Wright's Birthday	14 10:30 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting
Ninth District Mid-Year Convocation Birmingham, Alabama						
15 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship YOUTH SUNDAY Kid's Kingdom ages 6-12	16 REFRESH Bible Study For Women 7:00 p.m.	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 Earth Day	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 VMG Meeting
29 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	30					

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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

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| March 24, 2018 | SBHB District Conference, St. John, Huntsville |
| March 25, 2018 | Palm Sunday, Church Anniversary, The Reverend T. Eric Nathan, Guest Preacher, 10:00 a.m. |
| March 25, 2018 | Gospel Choir Explosion, Lee High School, 5:00 p.m. |
| March 29, 2018 | Maundy Thursday, 6:00 p.m. |
| March 30, 2018 | Good Friday
The Community Good Friday Service at St. John, 12:00 Noon |
| March 31, 2018 | Easter Egg Hunt and Extravaganza |
| April 1, 2018 | Resurrection Sunday
Combined Sunrise Service—St. John and Church Street CPCA, 6:00 a.m.
Christian Education Easter Program, 9:00 a.m.
Morning Worship, 10:00 a.m., Bishop Harry L. Seawright, Preacher |
| April 12-14, 2018 | Ninth District Mid-Year Convocation, Daniel Payne Community Plaza, Birmingham, AL |
| April 13, 2018 | AME Connectional Day of Prayer |

*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 23 Issue 4

April 2018

Bishop Harry L. Seawright Preached On Resurrection Sunday at St. John

By Bobby Adkins, II



Bishop Seawright preaches.

What a Fellowship! What a Joy Divine! Leaning on the Everlasting Lord. Praise God From Whom ALL BLESSINGS FLOW!

St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church observed the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ with a wonderful, spirit-filled, and blessed celebration on Easter Sunday, April 1. A weekend of services, that started with Maundy Thursday, followed by multiple Good Friday services and Sunrise Service, culminated with a packed congregation celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Easter Service was led by Pastor Maurice Wright II, with Songs of Zion provided by the choir. The congregational hymn was "Praise God the Almighty". The Reverend Gloria Madison led the church in prayer. The Reverend Merriam Garrett read the

scripture, which was taken from the Gospel of Luke 24:1-7.

Following a selection from the choir, Pastor Wright challenged the congregation by asking "Does anyone here know that He Reigns?"



The Reverend Sherita Moon Seawright addresses congregation.



Pastor Wright presents Bishop Seawright.

Sister Celeste Gilmore acknowledged the gift of Easter Lilies on the altar, and those loved ones in whose honor they were presented.

Pastor Wright enthusiastically introduced the leadership of the 9th Episcopal District of the AME Church, starting first with the Supervisor, the Reverend Sherita Moon Seawright. She offered a loving "Good morning", followed

by "Ya'll having Church. I like this kind of carrying on".

Upon introducing the guest preacher, Pastor Wright told the congregation that "I love him! Every time I walk in here I love him more." (He was referring to the fact that Bishop Seawright appointed Pastor Wright to St. John.) The 133rd elected and consecrated Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, The Right Reverend Harry L. Sea-

(Continued on page 2)

Bishop Harry L. Seawright Preached On Resurrection Sunday at St. John

By Bobby Adkins, II



Brother Pearson directs mass choir.



Ministry in dance during Easter Service.

(Continued from page 1)

wright, was warmly received by the congregation. The choir sang a rousing rendition of "He's Alive" which the Bishop acknowledged as "one of his favorites at 9th District meetings".



Ministers serve communion to deaconesses and stewardesses.

After the Bishop concluded a powerful sermon, Pastor Wright extended the invitation to Christian Discipleship and afterwards the church prepared for communion.

It was a joyous Resurrection Day celebration and the St. John AME Church family was blessed to be part of this service.

To God be the glory!

Bishop Seawright stated that he is always happy to come to St. John AME Church in Huntsville, stating "St John, you all have a lot going on! There is nothing like being in an alive church on Easter Sunday." Bishop Seawright's sermon was entitled "Good News from the Cemetery." He focused on the cemetery as a "dreaded place to visit" but offered that there is Hope coming from the cemetery, in the form of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.



A view of the congregation during worship.

He Has Risen!

Bro. Bobby Adkins



The Reverend Shaw, Pastor Wright, and Dr. Walker

Worship You", followed by the congregational hymn, "He Lives". The Reverend Dr. Mitchell Walker Sr., pastor of Church St. CPCA Church, gave a wonderful invocation, capturing the spirit of the moment flooding into the aisle and throughout the church.

At the urging of Pastor Wright, St. John's Sister Jamelia Bradford had the great pleasure of introducing the guest preacher, the Reverend Greg Shaw Jr, the Associate Pastor of Emanuel Missionary Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee, who happens to be her father. Sister Bradford offered a peek inside the Shaw household when she and her siblings were growing up. With great adoration and respect, Sister Bradford credited her father with setting a wonderful example for his children, while being a loving husband, and an example to all as a dedicated and devoted Man of God.

After the combined choirs of St John and Church Street provided a moving selection, "You are Worthy of my Praise", the Reverend Shaw stepped to the podium and extended a "Good Morning", reminding the congregation on several occasions that "It is...Sunday Morning" and stating that "I haven't been preaching for long, but I have known the Lord for most of his life".



The Reverend Shaw delivers the message.

The Reverend Shaw delivered a stirring sermon entitled "Jesus Kept His Promise" with a sub-topic of "In Whom Do You Believe", which parallels the beliefs of the AME Church contained within the "Apostles Creed". The sermon scripture was taken from Mark 10:30-34. The Reverend Shaw spoke of the triune God, "The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit". He spoke of Jesus as the "Beloved Son, in whom I (God) Believe".

He asked the congregation, "Why did the Son come?" Jesus was the only choice, as God is much too powerful and if He came down, we would all have to die. Also, the Holy Spirit could not come, as the Holy Spirit had its own purpose, to be left with believers as a Helper after Jesus ascends back into heaven. As John 3:16 states, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, so that whomever believed in Him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

The Reverend Shaw evoked spontaneous praise when he referenced Jesus through the lyrics of the song "He's All Over Me". Speaking of his church's combined choirs singing this song, he motioned that Jesus is "On my Right, He's on my Left, He's in the Front, He's in the Back...He's over Me, He's under Me, and He's living down inside....He's all over Me!"

Yes, the Holy Spirit was all over the Reverend Shaw, and all over the combined congregations on a blessed Resurrection Morning. Hallelujah!



The combined choirs sing during the service.

Easter Program Presented by Christian Education Department

By Lydia Ashe Owens

The St. John A.M.E. Christian Education Department presented its annual Easter Program after Sunrise Service on Easter Sunday. The welcome was given by Shelby Wash-



ington, prayer by Samantha Adkins, and the scripture was read by Michael Clark.



Recitations were given by Alijah and Ariyana Webb and Azya Turney. Isaiah Wright recited a poem entitled "Love Overcame."

Several young people participated in the skit "You Can't Have Easter Without." The first act of the skit focused on ALL of the things people think they "need" for Easter. The cast creatively consisted of those "things" and each made their case for why people could not have Easter without them. Zaria York and Joy Wright began with a short conversation about what Easter meant to them and ended by explaining to the rest of the cast that "they may WANT all of those things, however they did not necessarily NEED all of them. In conclusion—*You Can't Have Easter Without..... JESUS!*"

The Cast Actors

Girl 1	Zaria York
Girl 2	Joy Wright
Easter Bunny	Christian Washington
Decoration	Derryn Goode
Candy 1	Kylie Washington
Candy 2	Chloe Wilson
Candy 3	Cayden Wilson
Peep	Jasmyne Rochelle
Basket	Mikayla Binford
Egg	Robin Sanderson



Kaitlyn McClung ministered through spoken word entitled *Imagine a King*.

From there the program transitioned into a second skit which was entitled *Have You Reached a Verdict?*

This skit was centered on the trial of Jesus the Christ. The trial was called to order by the judge as the bailiff led the defendant (Jesus) into the courtroom. As Jesus looked on in silence, the judge read the following charges: Sorcery, Witchcraft, Blasphemy, Being in the company of the devil, Claiming to be the Son of God.

Once the charges were read, the defendant listened as the prosecutor called the witnesses one by one to testify about the events that led to this trial. Throughout the entire trial, Jesus remained silent. He did not utter one sound. Finally, as the last witness, Judas finished testifying, the "jury" was polled and the rest is history.....

(Continued on page 5)

Easter Program Presented by Christian Education Department

By Lydia Ashe Owens

(Continued from page 4)

Have You Reached a Verdict?

The Cast Actors

Judge Thalia Love

Prosecutor Cambridge Wilson

Witnesses

Jacob (Pig Farmer) ... Dayshun Turney

Boaz (Potter) Courtney Jones

Lazarus (Weaver) Shelby Washington

Judas Kelson Hill

Jesus Blake Johnson

Bailiff Channing Ransom

Guard Christian Washington

Members of the Jury ... Congregation



Thank you Christian Education Department for investing in the St. John youth and young adults.

Easter Egg Hunt Enjoyed by Youth of the Church

After Easter Program rehearsal on the Saturday before Easter, the children enjoyed an Easter Egg Hunt, food and games.



St. John Commemorates Palm Sunday and 133rd Church Anniversary

Nedra McDaniel and Bridget J. Floyd



Pastor Wright blesses the palms.

On Sunday, March 25th, at the 10 a.m. worship service, St. John recognized two significant historical and religiously significant events: Palm Sunday and the 133rd Anniversary of the founding of St. John AME Church. The Reverend Dr. T. Eric Nathan, pastor of Grant Chapel AME Church splendidly preached a sermon interweaving the two significant events in the history of the Christian Church and in St. John's history. The spirit-filled service was enhanced by the music ministry including the Praise Team, Mass Choir, and musicians, as well as the Liturgical Dance Ministry.

The St. John Praise Team offered inspirational songs as people gathered for the special worship service. After the Processional, Pastor Maurice Wright, II led the blessing and



Dr. Floyd serves as worship leader.



Dr. Williams leads the litany.

distribution of the palms. Little Miss Jessica Harbin led the Call to Worship, followed by prayer with Sister Lillie Rivers, and liturgical dance by the Dance Ministry. Brother Jesse Johnson read scripture from Matthew 16: 16 – 19. Sister Barbara Johnson gave the occasion which highlighted the history of St. John Church, augmented by a video presentation coordinated with the

Media Ministry, and narrated by Brother Ronald McIntosh.

Dr. Lee Williams, II authored and led the Anniversary Litany. Brother and Sister Anthony and Claudinette Purifoy – Fears welcomed guests, gave announcements and led offertory giving. Pastor Wright introduced the preacher for the occasion, highlighting his recent accomplishment of completing his doctoral studies and the close familial connection between the Nathan and Wright families.

Dr. Nathan began by singing "I Know the Lord Will Make a Way". He acknowledged the role of St. John and several persons who played a role in his development spiritual and otherwise as he matriculated at Alabama A and M University. Then this ministerial 'son of St. John' brought an inspirational message blending Palm Sunday



The choir waves palms as they sing.

and St. John's 133rd Church Anniversary. His text was from Romans 8, with the title "From Suffering to Glory". He indicated that "Holy Week was a trivector for Jesus". That is, "Jesus went from hosanna, to crucify Him, to suffering on the cross". He urged listeners to consider the suffering during this Holy Week, to consider the suffering, and walk Holy Week in a new way – consider the suffering of the journey. He used the likened the triumphant entry of Jesus to a "parade with one float." He referenced the gory cinematic representation of "The Passion of Christ" and some responses that this film was too gory and could not be tolerated by some/many. However the preacher encouraged reflection on the "real" suffering of Christ and gave a verbal description of what was endured by this man (who knew that his future held in terms of suffering and death). He noted that suffering is a real part of life. He also emphasized that the glory follows, and will surpass



Rev. Nathan delivers the anniversary message.

(Continued on page 7)

St. John Commemorates Palm Sunday and 133rd Church Anniversary

Nedra McDaniel and Bridget J. Floyd

(Continued from page 6)

the suffering.

The Reverend Nathan indicated that sometimes suffering is written over your face and in your countenance. He cautioned against comparing suffering with the glory and noted "the balance of the account is in your favor if you are suffering for the glory of Christ. There are things we must go through because 'no cross, no crown'". He invoked the writings of Paul, in noting that suffering is only for a moment – "your light affliction... it is working for you". He indicated that one must look for that which is unseen [eternal] not the seen [temporary]. He stated "Shift happens" and encouraged those present to "shift from your suffering to belief in God and Glory". If one shifts focus from personal suffering to the suffering of Jesus and that this suffering will result in a benefit and hope [salvation] that has been opened to those who make that "shift". He emphasized that knowing that something is waiting in glory enables one to cope with the suffering.

The preacher compared the suffering of Jesus during Holy Week and the development of St. John AME Church. He offered for consideration, that the process of starting this church was certainly not without challenges/suffering. He compared St. John in its beginning time compared to those things that have occurred over the many decades of its existence and the progress that has brought St. John to this moment in time. He intimated that more is to come... "eyes have not seen..." He urged, "Press toward the prize and the glory".

Dr. Nathan gave the testimony deliverance from a financial debt that had to be reconciled before he could defend his dissertation. At the time that he learned of the debt situation he became aware of a UNCF scholarship that he had received – an amount greater than the debt itself. He witnessed that "when your hand can't handle it, God is working it out".

He queried, "When the parade is over, what side are you on? When you suffer this week, will you be faithful?" He reiterated, "If I suffer, I'll gain eternal life. After suffering comes the glory!" He encouraged, "Be faithful"!

Pastor Wright transitioned the worshippers from the sermon to the invitation to discipleship with the singing of sang "When I see Jesus, Amen".

St. John was blessed with a spiritually uplifting worship service, blending the church anniversary with the marking of the triumphant start of a week for Jesus that culminated in glory after suffering. The spiritual theme/cord ran throughout the service -- from the praise team and processional ("We've Come This Far by Faith") to the choral songs of praise and adoration by choir and congregation and for liturgical dance, as well as messages through word and songs by the clergy. The program participants were gracious in their willingness to be a part of the program and their contributions are greatly appreciated by the co-chairs, Dr. Lee Williams, II and Dr. Bridget J. Floyd. Special appreciation is noted to Pastor Wright and to Dr. Nathan who preached for this special service, a few days after defending his dissertation.

May God continue to bless St. John as it moves forward with thankfulness for its rich history, and faithfulness to serve the community by spreading the good news. Reflection on the transition from suffering to glory during Holy Week, can be used at any time that one needs to be inspired to shift focus from the temporary to the eternal.



Dr. Nathan and Pastor Wright



Pastor Wright, Mrs. Smith and Col. Smith

St. John MCAM Presented Gospel Choir Explosion

By Charlie Brooks



All choirs joined together for the finale - "Total Praise"



The Wrights prepare for radio interview.

"...Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise." (James 5:13) The Reverend Maurice and the Reverend Joretha Wright exclaimed during their pre-Gospel Explosion interview with WJAB newscaster, Erica Fox Washington, that gospel festivals of years ago gave Christians an opportunity to come together in audacious praise and celebration. This custom has faded and they were excited that the upcoming Gospel Choir Explosion, produced by St. John AME Music and Christian Arts Ministry (MCAM), would bring choirs from local churches to the stage. The Explosion was to be held Sunday afternoon March 25, 2018, 5:00 p.m. at Lee High School Auditorium.

*"Black music unanimously recreates the Universe each time that thought is transformed into sound."*¹

The special guest artist and mistress of ceremony was the first winner of BET's "Sunday Best," Crystal Aikin. She is also the sister of Pastor Wright. Crystal ignited the auditorium's packed audience with Praise and Worship accompanied by the New Beginnings Praise Team. Crystal's magnetic persona illuminated those present- she was in her element of Praise Music and the Stage.



Guest artist Crystal Aikin presents choirs.

*"The function of the music is to raise both performer and audience far above the routine emotion; even the elderly throw away their sticks and dance."*²

Pastor Wright and First Lady officially introduced the renowned artist for the evening. Crystal then sang with the amazing recording group "In One Accord." The next choir group was the host choir, St. John AMEC, directed by Mr. Reggie Pearson. Music was followed again from "In One Accord" and filling the stage afterwards was the All Nations Worship Assembly Choir. They brought the house down.

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¹ Frances Beby African Music, "A People's Art." 1969

² John Lovell, "Blank Song," 1972

St. John MCAM Presented Gospel Choir Explosion

By Charlie Brooks

(Continued from page 8)

During the intermission Pastor Wright and Reverend Rita thanked all for their presence and expressed delight in the sense of happiness and togetherness the occasion had manifested. They recognized dignitaries, special visitors and guests. He again thanked songstress Crystal for sharing her gifts of music. Pastor Wright announced that the purpose of this effort was to also give back to the community and promote community programs. Monetary awards were made to the following organizations: The Harris Home for Children, The Ivy Center Foundation, Big Brother Big Sister of North Alabama, Alabama A&M University, Floyd E. "Tut" Fann Home, Mae Jemison High School Baseball Program and the 9th Episcopal District Job Training Program.

"Music serves life in all its manifestations. The unborn, the living and the physically dead are served by music."³



The choral performances continued with the same elasticity as the preceding choirs. Beautiful selections were presented by Union Chapel M. B. Church Choir, St. Mark Baptist Church Choir, St. Bartley P.B. Church Choir, Fellowship of Faith Choir, and the New Hope Community Choir.

Special accolades were expressed for the mighty musical professionals who directed and accompanied the various choirs. Special recognition was given to St. John members who gave financial support for the concert. The applause that followed was thundering and resounding.

At this time all the choirs gathered on the momentous stage for the invitation to Christian Discipleship and the singing, as a thousand voices, of the beautiful rendition of "Total Praise". The Gospel Explosion ended with a thundering Benediction by Pastor Maurice Wright.

³ Alfred Paster: "The Roots of Soul". 1982.

Reverent Service Commemorated the Last Supper

By Pamela Whitehead



Officers and ministers wash the feet of members.

St. John AMEC observed Maundy Thursday on March 29th at 6:00PM with a very reverent service of remembrance that included several musical selections by the Praise Team who fervently sang both hymns and praise songs. Maundy Thursday is the Christian holy day falling on the Thursday before Easter. It commemorates the Maundy and Last Supper of Jesus Christ with the Apostles as described in the canonical gospels.

Pastor Wright led the Call to Worship and members of the clergy staff assisted with the service through the offering of prayer and the reading of scripture. The meditation was given by Pastor Wright with the text taken from John 13:3-8.



The meal commemorating

The focus was humility, even though Jesus knew that God, The Father, had given Him authority over everything, He still chose to walk His earthly journey with obedience and humility. Jesus knew that not only was He from God, but that He would also return to God. In the text, Jesus proceeded to wash the feet of His disciples as an act of humility. Likewise, in remembrance, Pastor Wright washed the feet of the clergy staff and those in attendance.

The foot washing was followed by a solemn partaking of a meal commemorating the Last Supper. The meal included:

- Lamb – Symbolic of Christ, The Passover Lamb
- Bitter Green Herbs – Symbolic of the Suffering of Christ
- Applesauce and Raisins – Symbolic of the mortar which the Hebrew slaves used during their servitude.

- Unleavened Bread – Symbolic of the Broken Body of Christ
- Choice of Grape Juice or Wine – Symbolic of the Blood that Jesus Shed

We should be ever mindful that Jesus went to Calvary for one reason... TO SAVE US. Thank God for Jesus!

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." John 13:34-35



Pastor Wright Preaches at Eagles' Nest Ministries Church Good Friday Evening Service

In addition to preaching the seventh WORD at the noonday Good Friday Service, Pastor Wright preached the first WORD at the Friday evening service at Eagles' Nest Ministries Church where Bishop Daniel J. Richardson is host pastor.

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing. Luke 23:34

Thank you, St. John, for your support of this service.

St. John Hosted Church Street CPCA Good Friday Service

By Nedra McDaniel



Dr. Mitchell Walker addresses worshippers.

The Church Street Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America Annual Good Friday service was hosted by St. John AME Church this year. Church Street is in the midst of building a new church at their old location, across the street from St. John. Dr. Mitchell M. Walker is the Pastor-Teacher and Dr. Henry Bradford, Jr. is the Pastor Emeritus. Musicians and ushers from Church Street served during the service. The Daughters of Zion Dance Ministry from Valley Fellowship Church in Huntsville, Alabama ministered in dance to the song "Old Church Choir." Mother Brenda Lewis of Church Street gave the welcome, call to worship and offered the prayer of invocation. The congregational hymn was "The Old Rugged Cross." Special music was rendered during the service by the Reverend Dr. Janette C. Kotey and The Voices of Calvary. They sang a medley of "At the Cross," "No Greater Love," and "It Was Not the Nails That Held Him to the Cross." Seven preachers from diverse churches in the Huntsville community

brought messages (five to seven minutes in length) on their assigned "saying from the cross."



Dr. Kotey and The Voices of Calvary



The Daughters of Zion Dance Ministry

The Reverend Paul J. Allen of First Christian Church spoke on the passage from Luke 23:34. In this passage Jesus prayed for forgiveness for those who were crucifying Him. The preacher said that Jesus was full of compassion rather than anger. Likewise, he said, believers should live out the mercy received from God and remind themselves to speak out against evil and confront it in a spirit of compassion and mercy. He concluded with the admonition to "forgive others because God has forgiven us."

The Reverend Mixon McCricklard, Associate Rector Church of the Nativity-Episcopal spoke on the passage from Luke 23:43. He stated that Jesus' words in response to the thief who hung beside Him were of kindness and mercy. Jesus offered him a place in paradise. He noted that the central factor of paradise is not just beauty and health, it is about restoration. The preacher noted that these words were not only for the thief on the cross, but "We are invited into paradise (restoration) with Jesus."

Elder James Mooney, Pastor, Saint Bartley Primitive Baptist Church brought a message from John 26-27. He began by talking about family distinction throughout the Bible, starting with Adam and Eve. He noted that one of the strangest relationships was between Jesus and His family. He said that in the third saying on the cross Jesus clarified the relationship of family. Elder Mooney gave three points on this relationship: 1. While the relationship with the Heavenly Father is priority, relationship with family is important. 2. Theologically, Jesus did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill. 3. Practically, when one has suffered great loss, God will place people in their lives to walk with them through the burdens of life.

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St. John Hosted Church Street CPCA Good Friday Service

By Nedra McDaniel

(Continued from page 11)

The Reverend Jennifer Davis, Co-Pastor, New Beginnings Christian Church delivered a word from Matthew 27:46. She called this saying a "Why moment?" She noted that many have had some agonizing and soul-searching times when the question is asked "Why?". Many of these times God does not give an answer. She said that in this case, persons should quote God's word and trust Him. She said one may ask "How could Jesus be separated from God?" She concluded with the answer "Because He was forsaken, we do not have to be forsaken."

The Reverend Rita Wiggins, Pastor, Madison Worship Center – Madison, Alabama, was assigned the 6th saying with text John 19:28. Addressing the question of how Jesus, who was fully God and fully man, could be thirsty she said He did so to fulfill the scripture. She noted that this was the first word about His personal suffering. Again, she posed the question, how could He who spoke life into existence and said He was Living Water be thirsty? Again, she came back to this statement being to fulfill scripture. As it relates to believers, the Reverend Wiggins said "He thirst so that we would never have to be thirsty for truth. On Sunday He became a gushing spring of Living Water."

The Reverend Dr. David B. Freeman, Senior Pastor, Weatherly Heights Baptist Church delivered a message from John 19:30. He began by explaining how the Greek for "It Is Finished" is one word, tetelestai. He further explained how tetelestai was used in Jesus' day when work was finished, and that Jesus chose this word on the cross to indicate the mission was completed. It was a cry of triumph, mission accomplished. He concluded by stating that tetelestai was used because Jesus handed Himself back to the One who sent Him.



The Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor, St. John AME Church brought the last word from Luke 23:46. He said Jesus finished just as He started; forgive them, into thy hands I commend my spirit. Pastor Wright shared how the last words of those who are dying reflect the person, some are at peace and others die struggling and in torment. He highlighted that Jesus died of His own power - He gave His life- He chose the moment that He would take up the ghost. Pastor Wright noted that as Jesus died praying to His Father, believers need to be more diligent in prayer. His concluding statements were "He died trusting. He died committing His spirit back to God. He died submitting to God. Given what Jesus did, we must submit our ways to God. He died remembering whose hands He was actually in. There are no better hands than to be in the hands of God."

Pastor Wright preaches the seventh Word.

Following these seven powerful messages, the invitation to discipleship was offered, remarks were made by Dr. Walker and the Benediction was given. This annual service set the anticipation for the celebration on Resurrection Sunday. He Lives!



St. John Hosted District Conference

By Brother Clifton Miller, St. John's delegate to the District Conference



Presiding Elder Albert Hyche addresses the Conference.

On Saturday March 24, 2018, Saint John AME Church served as the host church for the District Conference and Leadership Skills Clinic of the South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer District of the Northwest Alabama Conference of the Ninth Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Presiding Elder Albert Hyche served as the presiding officer for this event.

The day started in the St. John fellowship hall with the kitchen ministry serving up a hearty and delicious breakfast to all attendees while Presiding Elder Hyche conducted his Pastors' Council meeting. The Conference then moved to the sanctuary for the welcome and official opening by Presiding Elder Hyche, followed by the business session and organization of the District Conference. Sister Thomasine Jackson was elected secretary of the Conference. Two marshals were appointed, and the Reverend

Fox was appointed as reporter to the Christian Recorder. Next came the roll call of churches and certification of delegates. Introduction of new pastors/ ministers in the District and their spouses took place.

At approximately 10 am Morning Worship began with Retired Presiding Elder Myers Hawkins delivering a spirit-filled message that blessed everyone.

The Conference moved to the Huntsville Board of Realtors at around 11:30 a.m. where lunch was served by St. John kitchen ministry. After lunch everyone assembled together for Leadership Skills Clinics. The first clinic: The Duties and Responsibilities of Stewards and Trustees in the African Methodist Episcopal Church was moderated by St. John Steward Dr. Jeanette Jones. Other members of the panel were ministers: The Reverends,



Retired Elder Hawkins delivers the message.

Sammie Nelms, Bruce W. Hunter, T. Eric Nathan, Anne' R. Faush; laity: Sisters Dorothy Davis, Leverne McReynolds, Dr. Jeanette Jones and Brother Hodges Washington.

Leadership Skills Clinic II focused on Administrative Matters and the presenters were Sisters Thomasine Jackson and Charlie M. Evans.

Leadership Skills Clinic III focused on the role of the Allen Christian Fellowship (ACF) in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

The conference was adjourned around 3 pm with a closing prayer and dismissal by Presiding Elder Albert L. Hyche.

St. John AME Church Embarks on Its First International Mission Trip

Realizing the AME Connection in Port of Spain, Trinidad

By Jeanette Jones



The St. John delegation with Bishop Henning Byfield.

Members of St. John AME Church in Huntsville, Alabama traveled with Servant Pastor Maurice Wright II and Executive Minister the Reverend Joretha Wright to Port of Spain, Trinidad. The delegation realized the AME Connectional Church Legacy as we worshiped in unison with fellow AMEs during the Windward Islands Annual Conference in Port of Spain, Trinidad. This was an excellent opportunity for St. John, Huntsville, Alabama members to interact with members of the Annual Conference attending from Trinidad, Tobago, Barbados and Grenada. We were all on one accord.

Led by the Reverend Maurice Wright II, members of St. John AME Church travelled to Trinidad to participate in the Windward Islands Annual Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and to interact with local residents. We participated in the wor-

ship and praise, which was a spirit-filled, joyful experience. The Annual Conference was held at Metropolitan AME Church in Port of Spain, where the Reverend Godfrey E. Mitchell served as the host pastor. Bishop Anne Henning Byfield presided.

The Huntsville delegation left on Monday, March 5, 2018 and returned on Monday, March 12, 2018. Servant Pastor Wright preached at the Ordination Service on Saturday, March 10, 2018 during the Conference and served as a guest lecturer for the Conference Institute on March 9, 2018 at the invitation of Bishop Anne Henning Byfield, The Presiding Prelate of the 16th District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The theme of the Annual Conference was *Ascend and Soar* "but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles" Isaiah 40:31. St. John members were able to visit the local AME churches, interact with the



Bishop Henning Byfield addresses the Conference.

members and provide school supplies and back packs for the elementary school students. The conference institute included a very interactive discussion on "Effective Leadership." Pastor Wright emphasized that you must be willing to work hard; launch out on the deep, you cannot stay on familiar grounds; you have got to step out, but be honest with yourself and others. When you are blessed, you can and must bless others.

A highlight of the Conference was a wonderful Ordination Service where the Reverend Maurice Wright II delivered an outstanding sermon entitled "Be Thankful for Your Scars" with text from Galatians 6:17. The scars remind you that you have come through something and survived! Scars also remind us that God can heal and they remind us to whom you belong. During the Conference Bishop Byfield and members of the conference prayed for the Wright Family.

While in Trinidad, we visited some of the key sites as we travelled through Port of



School kids

(Continued on page 13)

John AME Church Embarks on Its First International Mission Trip

Realizing the AME Connection in Port of Spain, Trinidad

By Jeanette Jones

(Continued from page 14)



Pastor Wright preaches at the Conference.



Ordination service.

Spain, a beautiful city with a variety of breath taking sites and lots of historical information, old Victorian buildings and Parliament. Some of the main places were the Queen's Park Savannah, Government House, Botanical Gardens, Emperor Valley Zoo, Magnificent Architecture, and numerous types of religious buildings. As we left Port of Spain, we travelled to the southern part of Trinidad and visited "Pitch Lake", which is not a lake of water, but a drive in lake that supplies a never-ending supply of asphalt to the world for roads. The Trinidad Pitch Lake is one of the natural wonders of the world. We later travelled through the mountains, dropping down to the beautiful coconut tree lined blue waters of Maracas Beach, where we had a surprise party for

the Reverend Joretha "Rita" Wright at Crew's Inn, as she celebrated a milestone birthday. Our return took us through Santa Cruz Valley, which was once filled with cocoa and coffee plantations, and over the Lady Young Road where we stopped to enjoy a panoramic view of Port of Spain and purchased souvenirs.

The adventurous St. John delegation included Stewardess Charlise Brooks, Stewardess Juanita Washington, Trustee Hodges Washington, Steward Abbiegail Hugine, Steward Jeanette Jones, the Reverend Joretha Wright and Pastor Maurice Wright II.

The experience at the Windward Islands Conference is best described with the theme of the 16th District, "OVER AND BEYOND OUR IMAGINATION": Ephesians 3:20.



Rev. Rita and Rev. Carla Perkins,
Director 16th District YPD.



Conference Praise Team



Christ AME Church members



Prayer circle with Christ AME



Pastor and Rev. Wright
at Mountain Overlook

Dr. Jeanette Jones Receives The Jarena Lee Herstory Award as Pioneering STEM Educator

By Tonya Perry



Dr. Jeanette Jones, Distinguished Professor at Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University (AAMU) and beloved Steward and member of St. John African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, Huntsville, Alabama, was recently honored as the recipient of The Reverend Jarena Lee Herstory Award as a Pioneering STEM Educator at the First Jarena Lee Herstory Awards Brunch held on March 3, 2018 in Birmingham, Alabama. The Awards Brunch, which was inspired by the pioneering spirit of the Reverend Jarena Lee, who in 1819 became the first woman allowed to preach in the AME Church, was hosted by the Ninth Episcopal District's Women in Ministry. The Jarena Lee Herstory Awards Brunch is an annual event designed to recognize pioneering women from multiple spheres of influence who embody the pioneering and courageous spirit of the Reverend Jarena Lee.

Dr. Jones was honored for her Pioneering Contributions in STEM Education based on her groundbreaking and sustained national prominence within the STEM arena. Other exceptional women who received The Reverend Jarena Lee Herstory Award included Bishop Teresa Jefferson-Snorton, Presiding Prelate, Fifth Episcopal District, CME Church, and The Honorable Vivian Figures, Alabama State Senator.

Having earned her Ph.D. in Botany/Medical Mycology from The Ohio State University, Dr. Jones is a veteran member of an extremely exclusive and very elite group of African American women in STEM—in a very real sense, Dr. Jones is the AME Church's own *Hidden Figure*. Through the efforts of Dr. Jones and other women in STEM, the numbers of women entering STEM careers have increased exponentially over recent decades. Throughout her tenure of service at AAMU, Dr. Jones has taught, funded and mentored countless students and junior faculty. Her investment in the success of students and junior faculty has resulted in the successful matriculation of students through doctoral programs, allied health programs, dental and medical schools and their subsequent entry into meaningful careers in the STEM disciplines.

Dr. Jones has served the University in various capacities including Professor, Director, Vice-President of Research and Sponsored Programs, principal investigator of extramurally funded projects, graduate advisor, health careers advisor, Faculty Senator and University Trustee. Through her various leadership roles in the broader academic community, Dr. Jones has brought national recognition to the University. These roles include being an NIH Extramural Associate from 1989-2006 as well as serving on the United States Army Science Board from 1993-2011. Dr. Jones is the founding Director of the Biomedical, Behavioral and Environmental Health Research Center through which she pursues and manages interdisciplinary extramural research. As President of the Faculty Senate and member of the AAMU Board of Trustees, Dr. Jones is closely involved in the life of AAMU and quite instrumental in influencing the visionary direction of the institution. In 2017, Dr. Jones' stellar career led to her appointment by President Andrew Hugine, Jr. and the AAMU Board of Trustees as the University's first Distinguished Professor. Dr. Jones is a member of The Links, Incorporated and is a lifetime member of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Sorority, Incorporated.

As a church Steward and longstanding member of St. John AME, Dr. Jones has a well-earned reputation for not only being a respected STEM educator but also for being a faithful and committed servant of The Church and its members throughout the Ninth Episcopal District and beyond.

St. John AME joins with the Ninth Episcopal District's Women in Ministry in celebrating the exceptional achievements of Dr. Jeanette Jones, 2018 Reverend Jarena Lee Herstory Award recipient! Congratulations Dr. Jones!

Finance Corner

By Bobby Adkins

New to the Workforce? You should be saving for retirement now.

Sixty-six percent of Millennials have nothing saved for retirement. According to the National Institute on Retirement Security, most Millennials are not on track when it comes to saving for retirement. A March 6, 2018 review of the findings indicate there is a deeply troubling trend underway of Millennials not saving for retirement at anything close to reasonable rates, factoring in wage and salary trends and contribution data from participating employers. In reality, this should come as no surprise. After paying bills, rent and making student loan payments, there is often not much left over each month for young people, many of whom entered the workforce at a time of stagnant wages and high unemployment. Though unemployment numbers have dropped consistently over the last nine years, wage growth has not accompanied the increases in employment, thus limiting the ability to contribute for young workers.



But a new report shows just how far off track they might be. About 66% of people between the ages of 21 and 32 have absolutely nothing saved for retirement, according to the National Institute on Retirement Security. The report is based on Census data collected in 2014. "I see in practice that a lot of us are putting retirement down the goal priority list, in favor of paying off student debt or buying homes," said Douglas Boneparth, a certified financial planner and author of *The Millennial Money Fix*.

Waiting to save could significantly delay retirement. You'll be missing out on valuable years of compounding returns. "I know it will delay your ability to achieve financial independence," Boneparth said. "But how are you going to tell someone who has a child that saving in a 401(k) is more important than their immediate needs?"

But not all 83 million Millennials are behind. About one-third are saving for retirement. Most have less than \$20,000 but some have much more. The average account balance is \$67,891, according to the report. If they are saving, it's likely their employer offers a retirement plan, like a 401(k). More than 94% of Millennials who are eligible for a workplace retirement plan are saving. That's about the same participation rate as older generations.

But Millennial workers in particular often find they don't meet the eligibility requirements for a 401(k) even if their employer offers one. Sometimes they don't work enough hours, or employers require them to work for a certain amount of time before they qualify.

About 25% of Millennials said they were not eligible to participate in an employer-sponsored retirement plan because of their part-time status. Loosening these eligibility qualifications would increase the number of Millennials saving for retirement, the report said. Of course, people can save for retirement without an employer sponsored plan. Most people are eligible for Traditional or Roth IRAs, which also offer tax benefits for retirement savings.

These findings are contained in new research from the National Institute on Retirement Security (NIRS), "Millennials and Retirement: Already Falling Short," authored by Jennifer Brown, NIRS manager of research. "Financial experts recommend that Millennials set aside 15 percent or more of their salary for retirement, which is a much higher rule of thumb than recommendations for previous generations. But we find that Millennials' average retirement savings rate, including employers' matching contributions, is ten percent of their salary," Brown explained.



Chloe and Cayden Wilson Named Youth of the Month for March



Chloe and Cayden Wilson receive Youth of the Month Award

Chloe and Cayden Wilson both attend Madison Elementary. They are in the first grade.

Their hobbies include: singing, dancing (The Dance Company, 3rd year students) and St John AME Dance Ministry, soccer, baseball (Chloe) and gymnastics (Cayden). Cayden loves anything princess and they both love playing with dolls.

The twins are members of St John AME and they are active members in the children's choir,

dance ministry and children's church.

Future goals include their continuous academic growth. They also plan to incorporate song and dance in their future goals! When Cayden grows up she has plans of becoming a princess and Chloe wants to play basketball.

They are the daughters of Robert and Shayla Wilson. They are the granddaughters of Mrs. Karen Minor.



Soup Kitchen Ministry

Charlie Brooks

OUR GIFTS COME FROM ABOVE

"Every good and perfect gift is from above coming down from The Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."

James 1:17 (NIV)

Do you think about the financial gifts you make to the church and the gifts you share with others less fortunate? A stay-at-home mom, says she knew that it is a great value in giving or serving in so many other ways even if she could not provide much financial support to those in need. She volunteered and helped others as she could. However, their only income came from her husband. As the collection plate passed her each Sunday she felt wistful because she could not share as she wished.

As she prayed about her circumstances and as the collection plate passed and she placed their small donation in it, she suddenly felt a symbolic part of the offering. As the family envelope was placed in the plate, it hit her that Jesus does the same thing in our lives. Every gift we have—finances, time, health, relationships, talents—comes from Him. He entrusts each gift to us and allows us to give them back as our offering. As Jesus views the many needs of the world. He could directly send provision to each person without our involvement. Yet often, He gives us the blessing of being part of His answer. We are not the source of grace or wisdom, but He puts His resources into our hands so that we can touch them briefly and then pass them along.

Hopefully, this idea can give you a new perspective on blessings that come into your life. You can thank Him and then look for a way to share.

Let His resources to our "Bi-monthly Soup Kitchen" become a part of your extended donation of service and giving. We would welcome small donations and even food items to help feed the many who come for food. Please check with the Soup Kitchen Ministry workers to see what supplies they can use.

Note: The next time you receive a gift, a paycheck, or some other blessing, ask Jesus to show you a way to pass that blessing along to someone else.

Upcoming Election Information



Statewide Primary Election
June 5, 2018

Statewide Primary Runoff Election
July 17, 2018

Mid-Term Election

Statewide General Election
November 6, 2018

Absentee ballot applications may be obtained from Mrs. Eva Smith or Ms. Barbara Johnson or online at <https://sos.alabama.gov/alabama-votes/voter/absentee-voting>

STJOHNAME: Growing Boys 2 Men!

By Bobby Adkins

As a kid growing up in North Mississippi, I watched my parents work a variety of jobs, at the most extreme hours, and in a racially charged environment, to make a good living for their kids. I imagined then, in the mid-1970s that life as a black man in America would improve dramatically as I got older. I often said, "There's no way I'm going to do the things my father had to do to make a living". Well, I was partially right. I haven't had to do many of the things my parents did, but there is still one thing we have in common regarding hard work...paying what they and others refer to as the "Black Tax". *"Black people have to work and perform a regular task twice as well as white people in order to get half as much recognition,"* says James Burge in the article *"Young, Black and Living in Trump's America"*, written by David Yi, of the website *Very Good Light*.

To counter this "tax", my parents pushed me to get involved in a number of youth activities, many sponsored by our local church. These experiences enabled me to develop leadership and public speaking skills, and to grow comfortable interacting with community leaders and church officials. The responsibilities gained from being an usher, singing in the choir, and attending Baptist Training Union (BTU) events helped shape who I would eventually become. As such, I committed my son to church youth activities from an early age. As leaders, it is imperative that we provide a safe and dynamic avenue for our boys to grow in the constant face of the daily adversities of life for young men of color.



ST JOHN AME offers an opportunity for our Teenage Boys to develop into Spirit Filled and Exceptional Young Men. From L to R: Youth Ushers: Michael Clark, Daniel Haygood, Eddie Whitehead Jr., and Anthony Harbin.

At St John AME, Pastor Maurice Wright II and the ministry leaders are committed to reshaping and leveling the playing field by providing our Young Men with the opportunity to grow into solid and successful Christian Black Men, and to become a part of the next wave of Fortune 500 Leadership candidates and community leaders. The Youth Ministry at St John AME is working overtime to provide opportunity for our young men.

Here is the reality as written by Tamika Thompson's *Tavis Smiley Reports: Fact Sheet: Outcomes for Young Black Men*. Behind every fact is a face. Behind every statistic is a story. Behind every catch phrase is a young person whose future will be lost if something is not done immediately to change his or her reality. And when it comes to young, African American men, the numbers are staggering and the reality is sobering. *"Too Important to Fail: Saving America's Boys"* by Tavis Smiley offers grim statistics associated with young boys of color.

- 54% of African Americans graduate from high school, compared to more than three quarters of white and Asian students.
- The twelfth-grade reading scores of African American males were significantly lower than those for men and women across every other racial and ethnic group.
- The incarceration rates disproportionately impact men of color: 1 in every 15 African American men are incarcerated in comparison to 1 in every 106 white men.
- According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, one in three black men can expect to go to prison in their lifetime.
- Young Black men — across the board — score below their counterparts in other racial and ethnic groups when it comes to graduation rates, literacy rates and college preparedness.
- And many African American men, in turn, are virtually locked out of employment and are filling up the nation's prisons in disproportionate numbers.

ST JOHN AME ministries, such as Kingdom Kids, Media, Music and Fine Arts, Sons Walking a Generation (SWAG), and the Young People's Division of the WMS offer our young men a range of options to aid in their development. These ministries also offer parents an affordable pathway to augment the significant work they are performing shaping these young men into contributing adults, and defying the trends listed above. We salute the many young black boys of ST JOHN AME that are changing the existing narrative and growing in Christ from "Boys 2 Men".

Lovely Girls Ministry: Girls Night Out; "A Wrinkle In Time"

By The Reverend Rita Wright, First Lovely and Executive Minister



Interestingly, Madeline L'Engle's "A Wrinkle in Time" was almost never published. It was rejected for being too long, too female, too strange. The book went on to sell more than 10 million copies and enjoyed the distinction of being one of the most frequently banned books of all time (Meghna Chakrabarti). The story, in my opinion, is not a critics choice but an affectionate sight at the power of black girls and their faith, passion, love and intellect on a universal level.

Reflecting on my own experiences as a young girl, my heart clinches as the remembrance of self identity and private pains shaped the becoming of my own womanhood. Designing such a life portrait revealed the poverty, pain and oppression of unplanned motherhood, generational substance and physical abuse, and anti-social behaviors all of which shape the views of many girls in today's world. Recognizing that external influences determine and shape a girl's identity; media, family,

community, oppressive disparities, social stigmas, peers, and even their religious practices often encourage low-self esteem and self-confidence.

As an agent of change, I have made it my personal responsibility to expose girls, especially young girls of color, to exceptional opportunities that will build their esteem and increase their passion to support and lift up their peers and community. The Lovely Girls Ministry experienced a "Girls Night Out" to a special viewing of "A Wrinkle In Time". In attendance were 10 girls and two very active parents; Mrs. Shannon Lott and Mrs. Erica Harbin. There was plenty of conversation about faith, school, life and yes, even boys. A lesson in individuality was explored in an activity titled "Lipstick Choice." The characters in the movie A Wrinkle in Time are colorful in both appearance and personal character expression. I gave each girl the opportunity to randomly select a lipstick color. I personally took the time to recreate the famous Oprah eyes from the movie on myself. It was my hope that the girls understood that to be an individual is first choice. Often we have to work with what God has given us. Also, we are all beautiful and special with unique qualities for the purpose of serving the world in which we live. The girls left with



two key points from the movie; Love is the gateway to overcoming self doubt and fear and only the light in our hearts can get rid of "it," which represents the darkness in the world.

Sharing this time with the girls and the mothers who attended has inspired me to continue the pursuit of instilling

hope and purpose in our girls. It also reminded me that time nor generational shifts have the ability to manipulate the essence of a girl's resilience, power, influence and inner beauty.

In the voice of Lovely Girls: "When we roll, we roll together.... no one gets left behind".

Youth Agriculture Day Attended by St. John Youth

By Donna Gullatte



Zaria and Joy at Ag Day

Youth Agriculture Day was the concept of Representative Laura Hall of District 19 and Representative Anthony Daniels of District 53. They both wanted to provide and sponsor an educational resource and a program that would provide the Madison County Youth an opportunity to learn about how food gets from the farm to the table, the value of farmers, and new technology that help make the farming process easier, more productive, efficient and more cost effective.

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System Specialist Mrs. Kimberly Burgess-Neloms, Dr. Angela Williams and Urban Regional Extension Agent Mrs. Donna Gullatte provided the leadership and planning for Ag Day which was themed "Ideas to Grow With!" They partnered with AAMU College of Agricultural, Natural and Life Sciences under the leadership of Dr. Lloyd Walker.

Youth were on a real time visit to all things Ag exhibits which was held at the Alabama A&M Agribition Center. The event was open to all youth age 9-18 but targeted schools in Districts 19 & 53.

Youth participants visited exhibits around the center where they learned about career opportunities in agriculture plus they participated in several hands-on activities like soil caterpillars. Other exhibits/demonstrations and activities included: Environmental effects on food and resources used daily; dependence on the agricultural processes in the clothing worn daily; a drone demonstration and how drones are used in farm management. The youth also learned about container gardening, food and animal sciences as well as community and urban planning.



Rev. Rita with Youth Ag Day attendees.

The ACES-Urban Regional Extension Agents provided "Farm to Table" Workshops and Interactive Activities such as "Skins and Skulls," "Water Wheels," and "Nutrition on the Move Bus." There were workshops for parents that focused on growing with your children and dealing with conflict, as well as, participating in the activities with their children. A delicious Chick Fil A Lunch was served and the day ended with a Scavenger Hunt for the youth summarizing what they had learned. It was a fun day for two St. John members Joy Wright and Zaria York who were among the 80+ youth, parents, volunteers and exhibitors participating in the 1st Youth Ag Day- "Ideas to Grow With."

Representatives Hall and Daniels sponsored the event along with the Madison County Farmers Federation/AAMU College of Agricultural, Natural and Life Sciences/Publix Super Market/Chick Fil A and The Alabama Cooperative Extension System-Urban and New Nontraditional Programs.



Contact Lorraine Parham or Shelby Washington if you would like to attend.

CPR Training Classes To Be Offered

The Caregivers, Prayer and Respite (CPR) Ministry is offering a CPR Training class given by The American Red Cross. They need a minimum of 12 members to participate to reduce the cost.

Interested persons are asked to sign the sheet on the bulletin board near the office by April 30, 2018. The date and time for the class will be determined later. For more information, please contact Sister Abbiegail Hugine or any member of the CPR Ministry.

MUSIC & CHRISTIAN ARTS MINISTRY

2018 MCAM ELECTIONS

IGNITE GROWTH! | INSPIRE CHANGE! | IMPACT SERVICE!

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REV. MAURICE WRIGHT, II
SENIOR PASTOR
ST. JOHN AME CHURCH
HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

Rev. Maurice Wright, II

CANDIDATE FOR CONNECTIONAL DIRECTOR

Current Connectional Associate Director MCAM

Choral Directing Experience

- Harriett Tubman Middle School, Portland, Oregon
- Thomas Jefferson High School, Portland, Oregon
- Humboldt Elementary School, Portland, Oregon
- Fooding Director MLK Community Choir Portland, Oregon
- Big Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Atlanta, Georgia
- Martin Luther King Chapel Choir, Morehouse College Atlanta, Georgia

Minister of Music / Organist

- Bethel AME Church, Portland, Oregon
- United AME Church, Xenia, Ohio
- Powerhouse Temple Church, Portland, Oregon
- Philadelphia Community Church, Portland, Oregon

Vocal Experience

- Morehouse College Glee Club
- Atlanta Opera Company
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Choir
- Wendell Whalum Community Choir

Presiding Elder District Director

- South Birmingham Huntsville Beasomer District (9th Episcopal District)
- Phenix City District (9th Episcopal District)
- Alexandria Thibodaux District (8th Episcopal District)

Annual Conference Director

- Northeast Alabama Annual Conference (9th Episcopal District)
- Central North Louisiana Annual Conference (8th Episcopal District)

Degree in Voice and Conducting from Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia

Member of National Association of Negro Musicians (NANM)

Serves as a lecturer on Worship

Choral workshop facilitator

Founding Member of the Connectional Music Committee



REV. MYRON D. HILL
SENIOR PASTOR
CYPRESS CHAPEL AME
ABBEVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Rev. Myron D. Hill

CANDIDATE FOR CONNECTIONAL ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Current Connectional Parliamentarian MCAM

Special Education Teacher for the Greenwood School District 50 in South Carolina

Current Director of Music: Piedmont Annual Conference & Abbeville Greenwood District

Current President/Director: Greenwood (SC) Area Martin Luther King, Jr. Mass Choir

Musician: Turner Singer, Turner Theological Seminary, Atlanta, Georgia

Minister of Music: Flipper Temple AME Church, Atlanta, Georgia

Founder: Voices of Liberty Choir, Liberty Hill AME Church, Summerton, South Carolina

Founder: Allen W. Parrott Inspirational Choir, Williams Chapel AME Church, Orangeburg, South Carolina

Founder: Shulerville Community Youth Choir

Co-Founder (along with his father): Jamestown Shulerville Community Choir

Organist: Wesley AME Church, Shulerville, South Carolina

Age started playing piano: 8

OUR GOALS

1. INCREASE CONNECTIONAL MEMBERSHIP
2. INCREASE THE VITALITY OF MCAM IN EVERY EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
3. PROVIDE LITURGICAL DANCE, DRAMA AND MUSIC RESOURCES FOR CONGREGATIONS THROUGHOUT THE CONNECTION
4. CONTINUE TO PROMOTE AME ARTISTS



Church School Lesson Overview – May 2018

The lesson reviews were written by Kenneth Parham.

May 6, 2018

Lesson Title: Giving from a Generous Heart

Lesson Scripture: Exodus 25:1-7; 35:4-29; Leviticus 27:30-33; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Print: Exodus 35:20-29; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Devotional Songs: #525 [], #251 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "The one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully" (2 Corinthians 9:6).

This lesson is a continuation of events noted in Exodus 32-33. In these chapters we encounter Moses' reaction as he returned from Mt. Sinai carrying God's commandments and coming across the golden calf built by the children of Israel. Moses is so angered that he commands the Levites to slaughter 4000 family members and neighbors throughout the camp. He then seeks God's forgiveness of the Israelites' sin and asks not to destroy the Israelites. God is displeased with His chosen people but acknowledge that he will not destroy the Israelites. It is noted that Moses could not speak to God while amongst the Israelites, after what had transpired, and decided to meet with God at a distance from the Israelites. This led Moses to set up a tent for meeting the Lord away from the Israelites. It is noted that the Israelites watched from a distance at the door of their tents as Moses entered the tent to meet with the Lord and if they saw smoke rising from the tent that they would worship within their individual tents (this later observance became known as the Tent of Meeting).

In the spirit of atonement (Exodus 34-35) after God establishes a new covenant between His chosen people and giving Moses a second set of commandments, God commands His people to make an offering towards His Holy tent (tabernacle). God desires the tent to be worthy of His presence and it is noted that those who were willing and talented brought the needed materials. It is also noted that the materials gathered were precious jewelry, precious metals (gold, silver and bronze), precious stones, spices and oil (for lighting as well as for anointing), fine leather, acacia wood and fine linen (spun from purple, blue and crimson thread), and fabric spun from goat hair.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 reminds us that we should, with an unselfish spirit, be willing to share the burdens of others. It is noted that when we give sparingly, we will also reap sparingly but the one who gives abundantly will also reap abundantly for God loves a cheerful giver and will bless accordingly.

May 13, 2018

Lesson Title: Bringing First Fruits

Lesson Scripture: Leviticus 2:14; 23:9-22

Print: Leviticus 23:9-14, 22

Devotional Songs: #What Can Wash Away My Sin, []; #272 []; and #243 []

Key Verses: "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them: When you enter the land that I am giving you and you reap its harvest, you shall bring the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest" (Leviticus 23:10).

In this lesson, God gives specific instructions to Moses for the children of Israel concerning the reaping of the harvest in the land that was promised.

As noted in this lesson text, verses 9-14, God indicated that the first fruit offering should be made the first day after the sabbath. Each household was expected to make a burnt offering involving the sacrifice of a year-old lamb without blemish; a grain offering consisting of two-tenths of an ephah of choice flour mix with oil offered by fire with a pleasant odor; and, a drink offering consisting of one-fourth of a hin of wine. Additionally, no one was to eat bread of parched grain nor any fresh corn until the day of the offering. This observance was to be adhered to throughout Israel's generations and settlements. Here, referencing Matthew Henry commentary, God was establishing law to set precedence that "... one shall begin everyday with God, every meal, every business affair – seek first the kingdom of God."

God also gave instruction concerning the gathering of the harvest. His instruction was that one should not gather from the edges or gather what was spilled. This surplus should be left for the poor and the aliens. The explanation given by the John Gill commentary regarding verse 22 "... was to teach the Israelites that when they expressed their thankfulness to God, they should exercise charity and liberality to the poor."

May 20, 2018

Lesson Title: Remembering with Joy

Lesson Scripture: Leviticus 25

Print: Leviticus 25:1-12

Devotional Songs: #405, []; #258 []; and #243 []

Key Verses: "And you shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you, to your property and everyone of you to your family" (Leviticus 25:10).

(Continued on page 24)

Church School Lesson Overview

(Continued from page 21)

Just as God rested on the sabbath, we see in this lesson that He commanded this of the Israelites as well as all who inhabited the promised land. God gave specific instructions to Moses that once they entered the promise land, they would be allowed to work the land for six years. In this time period, they were allowed to sow the fields, prune the vineyards and harvest their crops. However, on the seventh year, God commanded a complete rest for the land where there shall not be any labor expended on the land except for gathering of food that might come up on its own to feed both man and animal. God's instruction also indicated that this cycle would be repeated for seven cycles or for a total of forty-nine years (each seventh year the land would rest). And on the fiftieth year, God instructed that the inhabitants hallow the year and proclaim liberty throughout the land.

Research indicates that the fiftieth year was called the Year of Jubilation. It is indicated that the Hebrew custom primarily dealt with the managing of land and property. During the fiftieth year, it is noted that all debts were canceled, slaves were freed and any land sold by an owner was be returned.

May 27, 2018

Lesson Title: Rejoicing in Restoration

Lesson Scripture: Leviticus 16; Psalm 34; Hebrews 2:5-18

Print: Psalm 34:1-10; Hebrews 2:17-18

Devotional Songs: #424, []; #77 []; and #243 []

Key Verses: "O taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are those who take refuge in him" (Psalm 34:8).

The review in the AME Sunday School Quarterly indicates that the background for this text involves David praising the Lord for his deliverance from the hands of King Saul. David had to use cunningness of feigning madness in order to escape capture. And thus, this psalm is one of praise from a personal experience of being delivered from great danger only by the hand of God. David reminds us, in verses 1-10, that if we seek God through praises and humble worship, God will deliver us from fear, He will make us a people that will never be ashamed, He will instruct His angels to protect us, and He will provide for our every need.

And we thought David was tested. Here the author of Hebrews 2:17-18 reminds us that there is one who took on mortality and humility, one that had no place to rest His head but healed the sick, cast out demons, provided comfort to the comfortless, fed thousands, raised the dead, was crucified upon the cross to redeem humanity and returned from

Church School Lesson Overview

eternity. How much more do we need to know of His love for us and that no matter what we are going through Jesus has been thoroughly tested and is there for us in the time of our personal struggles.



Church School Book Club

April 2018

Discussion Date: April 21, 2018

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Death by Honeymoon, Skye, 2011.

May 2018

Discussion Date: May 19, 2018

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Remember Me, Robinson, 2011.

Two best friends test the limits of loyalty in a stirring new novel of friendship, betrayal, and forgiveness.

Mia and Danielle had vowed to stay best friends for life until one indiscretion destroyed that bond forever. Twenty years later, tragedy reunites them in an unexpected way. Now they must confront the past, discover its untold truths, and rebuild a friendship destined to endure. - Amazon

Recycling Available for Pill Bottles



St. John Missionaries will collect empty pill bottles for recycling. Empty pill bottle recycling is critical for safe and sanitary dispensing of medications in developing countries.

Please remove the labels from the bottles and place them in the collection container at the church.



May 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	3	4	5
6 8:45a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship Communion Sunday AAMU Founder's Day	7 8:30 a.m. Fifty Plus Meeting 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	8 6:00 p.m. Stewards Board Meeting	9 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	10 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	11	12 10:30 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting
13 8:45a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship MOTHER'S DAY Kid's Kingdom (ages 1-16)	14 REFRESH Bible Study For Women 7:00 p.m.	15 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	16 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	17	18 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	19
20 8:45a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship YOUTH SUNDAY Kid's Kingdom (ages 6-12) WOMEN'S DAY	21 REFRESH Bible Study For Women 7:00 p.m.	22 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	23 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	24	25 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	26 10:00 VMS Meeting
27 8:45a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	28 Memorial Day	29	30 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	31		

St. John AME Church
229 Church Street
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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

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| April 27-29, 2018 | The Ellipsis Experience 2018, Atlanta, Georgia |
| April 29, 2018 | College Day—Please wear your favorite college or university gear. |
| April 30, 2018 | Official Board and Church Conference, 6:00 p.m. |
| May 2, 2018 | Third Quarterly Conference |
| May 13, 2018 | Mother's Day |
| May 30—June 1, 2018 | AMEC International Stewardship and Economic Development Summit,
Beeson Divinity School, Birmingham, Alabama |

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

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



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 23 Issue 5

May 2018

Retired Pastor Homer Littlefield McCall: Reflections

Bridget J. Floyd



Pastor McCall leading worship.

This writer had the privilege of speaking with the Retired Pastor of St. John AME Church, the Reverend Dr. Homer L. McCall, as he reflected on his life and particularly his time at St. John AME in Huntsville. The thread throughout the conversation was his tremendous commitment and connection to God as he quoted scripture and/or credited God, even when asked about his accomplishments and experiences. There seemed to be a sermon or a spiritual example in every response or comment.

He began by emphasizing the significance of being 'wrapped in God's anointing' as he progressed through life and his calling in the ministry. He noted several highlights from his point of view. The first being the mission of "expansion of the house of God" which includes "leave it better than you found it". The Reverend McCall stated that "I'm happy to see it... the growth continues and I'm

glad to see that when I go to St. John". He reflected on feeling "blessed by the growth of membership at St. John... the souls that were saved, growth in membership, feeding the hungry, expansion of committees and the growth in various areas, including the youth, seniors, families and infants". He noted that all ages from youth to elders/seniors were being fed, which he associated with more dependency on God and more prayer. He emphasized that the appropriate manner of reflection is to, "look at what God has done through you, not what I have done".

Dr. McCall also emphasized "thankfulness... for God and as God comes alive beyond words and you can see the presence of the gospel...". Dr. McCall referred to an essential scripture to him, the 23rd Psalm. He cited the importance of people moving beyond "recitation to living the 23rd Psalm in their homes". He quoted the scripture, stating "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord". "It's not just a recitation but becomes a prayer...then they live it, it becomes a meditation and then they are living it out".

He stated that "You feel your living has not been in vain when someone looks into your efforts". He continued, "I'm living because Christ commanded to 'make disciples of all nations...lo, I am with you always'". He noted such a command re-



Bishop Davis, Pastor McCall and Presiding Elder Dillard



Pastor McCall and Bishop Kirkland

quired that as pastor he "leave the pastor's study, go out into the community and save souls". He continued, "That's the purpose - preach the gospel, save souls, and feed the flock".

(Continued on page 2)

Retired Pastor Homer Littlefield McCall: Reflections

Bridget J. Floyd

(Continued from page 1)

As the former pastor of St. John transitioned from reflections on time as a pastor (for forty years at St. John AME, Huntsville), he described transitioning to retirement status. He noted that he is doing more than he thought he would, recognizing that *"God is not through with me yet. As long as you have breath, there is something that He wants you to do. That's true for all of us – God put us on this earth and there is something He wants us to do. We thank God for that"*. The Reverend McCall stated that his "prayer is that God continues to use us to 'work together, worship together, we can present our body as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind; that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God'" (Romans 12: 1-2 is another favorite scripture of Dr. McCall.)



Gale, Pastor and Mrs. McCall and Sonya

The Reverend McCall shared that he answered the call to preach on March 18, 1962, while at his father's funeral. He indicated that he became aware of his purpose, that is, "I'm here in obedience with that covenant that I made with the Lord". He indicated that he "had a prayer meeting with God." He continued by stating, "He promised not to leave you if you're faithfully obedient". Dr. McCall indicated that "no matter how hard things get, I know He's there so see me through". Dr. McCall cited the example of illness. He noted that as he deals with physical/medical issues, he has the additional function of helping others who have physical issues, as he manages his own status. Again, Dr. McCall presented himself, not as an entity unto himself, but always having a purpose/interface with God, being an example to/for people and serving a helpful / beneficial purpose as he strives to negotiate his daily living.

He again noted his original calling at age 10 (as he has previously shared that he was influenced by the death of his older brother and found himself at a young age, serving as a comforter/consoler to his parents in the midst of this tremendous loss). Moving forward to his senior year in college at Morehouse College, he "chose the road ministry instead of law".

Pastor McCall noted that "I grew a lot at St. John... in prayer". He stated that "to grow as a congregation worship begins in prayer and God leads the prayer... tells us we are to listen instead of us telling Him what we want to do". He paused, then stated, "Forty years of learning to listen" and commented that he is still a work in progress, with regard to this. He noted he is thankful to God for this.

Another point of reflection/instruction, was the role of failure in one's life. He indicated that a situation experienced as failure can turn out for good. That is, a seeming failure must be viewed in terms of the scripture that says "All things work together for good for those called for His purpose". [Romans 8:28] The seasoned pastor stated, *"He works it out. Don't get bogged down in the details. God will work it out for you"*.



Pastor McCall leading worship.

When asked about his experiences at Alabama A & M University, Dr. McCall stated, "God gave me many exposures and experiences for which I remain eternally grateful. [The Reverend McCall taught English and French and served as Chaplain at the University.]

When asked about family, he went on to share that "You put family and friends first." In reflecting on his "first lady" / "Lady Mabel", Mrs. Mabel Jones McCall, who transitioned from these earthly bonds in July of 2016, He noted "I think of her every day." He reflected, "Deep memories, etched by eternity". He spoke of moving forward and at family gatherings both missing her while feeling her presence. He noted that Mrs. McCall was "a dominant force" in his life and he has felt that this

(Continued on page 3)

Retired Pastor Homer Littlefield McCall: Reflections

Bridget J. Floyd

was true for the St. John congregation as well. He indicated that he remains "thankful for the memory of her influence in the church and the community, not the least of which to her family".

And as Dr. McCall did throughout, he brought things back to the redemptive power of God and that without that "life would be useless". He also returned to the significance of prayer, noting that He feels "empowered when people say 'I'm praying for you'. I feel it". He continued as if bringing his sermon to its closing points, referring again to the 23rd Psalm and the Shepherd that 'makes things happen'; highlighting that as one walks through the valley of the shadow of death, God is with them. He stated emphatically, "The Chief Shepherd provides all our needs — we're thankful for God and His providing for all humanity. He has provided, is providing and He will provide, even in that last day on earth". Dr. McCall noted that he wants to go to "The Big House". He indicated "I just want to hear Him say, 'Well done Homer, Come on in. You've been faithful over a few things'. He painted a picture: "That Big House, called Heaven, we'll go in one by one. We'll see those who have gone before us". Pastor McCall named numerous individuals, including several St. John members who have "gone on". He stated that it is important that you know the Lord and you lead others to know the Lord... no academic degrees or human accolades come before this.



Pastor McCall addressing the congregation

He stated that the functioning of the church is: Teaching, Preaching, Praying, Healing, and that praying is the most important of these. All of these components are "working under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. God will give the increase".

Dr. Homer L. McCall earned his B.A. degree from Morehouse College in 1962. He attended Yale University working towards the Master of Divinity degree. He earned the Master of Divinity, and Doctor of Ministry in 1978 and 1980, respectively. He noted proudly that for more than a 40-year period, he has attended eleven General Conferences of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church "as a delegate of the Lord". He began in 1976 and attended the most recent General Conference in 2016 (commemorating the 200th anniversary of the AME Church). He had to return home due to the unexpected death of Mrs. McCall. He indicated that he always enjoyed attending the General Conference of the AME Church which he found to be effective in sorting out the things that needed to be addressed in the proceedings of the Conference. He stated, "I'm thankful to be part of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. It has made a difference. I will never regret being in God's ministry in the AME Church".

Dr. McCall is a proud father and grandfather. The oldest of the three children is Homer McCall, II (Shakira Cummings-McCall), and grandchildren Madison McCall, Jacob McCall, and Aria Taylor. His second child is Sonya McCall-Shepard, Ph.D. (Darryl), and grandchildren Lauryn Shepard and Zuri Shepard. His youngest child is Gale McCall Teague (Gerald, Jr.) and granddaughter Genae Teague, who has a sibling "on the way".



The McCall family at the 40th Anniversary Banquet and thanksgiving. He celebrates the continuation of the growth of the congregation and ministries at St. John as the baton has been passed. **TO GOD BE THE GLORY!**

St. John has been blessed to have the leadership of the Reverend Dr. Homer L. McCall. His calling as a child; accepting/committing to that call in college; and being ordained by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; having greater than fifty (50) years in the ministry; and serving 40 years as pastor of St. John AME Church, Huntsville, give a general summary of his spiritual/ministerial journey. This journey continues as the retired pastor of St. John, in that his countenance and mission consist of sharing an educational/inspirational word about God, with a foundation in prayer, and an unending mission that he continues with reverence and

Habitat for Humanity 2018 Build



The Spring 2018 Habitat House project has begun. Each year St. John partners with Habitat for Humanity and churches in the community to build a house. Members are encouraged to volunteer on any of the dates listed.

2018 SPRING BUILD SCHEDULE

Partner Family: Shaniqua Gaillard, Building site: 6125 Belgrade Dr.

DATES	DAYS	TASKS
March 20, 22, 24	Tue., Thur., Sat.	(Warehouse) Cut lumber for walls, assemble wall frames
May 8, 10, 12	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Deliver walls to site and erect. Straighten, brace and sheath walls and corners.
May 15, 17, 19	Tue., Thur., Sat.	<u>(Trusses and roof deck by others)</u> Install house wrap. Install windows and exterior doors.
May 22, 24, 26	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Install fascia, roof bracing, dead wood, hurricane clips, <u>attic</u>
May 29, 31, June 2	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Start vinyl siding, <u>(Roofing, plumbing & electrical rough-in by others)</u>
June 5, 7, 9	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Caulk openings, install wall insulation, continue vinyl siding
June 12, 14, 16	Tue., Thur., Sat.	<u>(Sheetrock by others)</u> finish vinyl siding
June 19, 21, 23	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Paint interior walls, clean floor, paint base board, doors and trim
June 26, 28, 30	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Install vinyl floor tile, sheet vinyl
July 3, 5, 7	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Install interior doors, baseboard, window trim, cabinets
July 10, 12, 14	Tue., Thur., Sat.	<u>(Plumbing, finish electrical and HVAC by others)</u> Install door, hardware Door stops, closet shelving, window blinds
July 17, 19, 21	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Landscape, touch up paint, clean & wax floors, work punch list
July 24, 26, 28	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Catch-up (Dedication to be announced)

The schedule is contingent on weather and subcontractors. We will work 7:30 AM to noon. No lunches will be provided.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS:

From North Memorial Pkwy, go west on Winchester Road. At the bottom of the hill, turn right onto Belgrade Dr. Go to 6125 Belgrade (on the left side of the street).



*Her "Then" and My "Now":
The impact of a mother's word and experiences
on a generation.*

The Reverend Joretha Wright

Let's talk about mothers and/or mother-figures "Then and Now":

Joy asked me an interesting question...

Joy: Do you think spit cleans better than water?

Me: Why would you ask me that question Joy?

Joy: because, mommy, you always use it to clean my face.

Most mothers now will use a hand wipe or something similar. There is one thing true about a mother, her words not only have long lasting meaning, but they have power. A mother's words and experiences have the power to change who we are and how we think.

What are some sayings that your mother used, and you still remember or use them today?

The words and phrases my mother used were often so graphic that I only selected to use them in her absence. And once I became a mother with four (4) children of my own, I found myself grappling with inner glee and shame hearing myself exclaim many of her sayings and obscenities. Just when I fought not to be like her, I found myself speaking her words and influencing my own children years after her departure.

A Description of her "THEN" and my "NOW"

It was nearly twenty years before I reconnected with my mother. To my dismay after our first face to face meeting she revealed to me that she had terminal breast cancer. I explain these portions of her life to give you a peek at her heart without disclosing the extent of her pains. Her pains have been the complexity in which I have sorted and conclude; there are so many things I am glad that she did not tell or teach me.

After she lived in an abusive relationship most of her adult life, I am glad she never told me why she stayed; because I, too, may have found solace in her admittance and reasoning by inheriting abusive love as a healthy relational normal. After all the chemo, long doctors visits, sleepless nights, hair loss, and violent tummy aches, she never told me that she was tired and wanted to give up. Facing this fight with her taught me to be at peace with whatever life brings and fight if you must with class and dignity. She reminded me to always find some "cute". Girls must be cute, even on their rough days. And what I respect about her most is that she sacrificed her truth to empower my inner strength. She knew I was watching!

So now I arrive at life's reflection station.

Her Then: A community of Mother's raised the children in the village.

My Now: Young women embrace being single mothers as a badge of honor, yet lack the wise use of resources to raise their own and support other sisters in their village. We are often judgmental, confused and afraid of one another.

Her Then: Birth control methods were few and women birthed children until their body just couldn't produce any longer.

My Now: There are many forms of birth control. You can abort a child as a teenager without the permission of an adult and the foster care system is inundated with children who have been born into young families both unable and/or unwilling to care for them.

(Continued on page 6)

*Her "Then" and My "Now":
The impact of a mother's word and experiences on a generation.*

The Reverend Jonetha Wright

(Continued from page 5)

Her Then: Women, especially women of color, were not afforded the resources for counseling and support for mental illness, sexually transmitted diseases and other critical life and health traumas.

My Now: We frequent social media, sex, violence and opioids as remedies for pain, disassociated pleasures and conflicting rationales about real life. Our "NOW" lives in a virtual world.

And now I am a mother of four; two sons and two daughters each in a different "Now" phase.

What will be there Now and Then? What am I doing to prepare myself to have the honest conversation about social justice and their community? As a woman of faith, how do I speak about sex, drugs, sexuality, politics, racism, sexism, colorism, ageism, womanism, ism, ism, and more ism's. I am tired just thinking about it. How am I preparing myself to gain a better understanding of what it means to be a mother in this NOW generation

There is one truth that has stood the test of time... found in Hebrews 13:8

Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever.

My take-away as mother and a charge for each one of you who are raising children and young adults in this NOW generation:

- ♦ **Learn a new language:** Every generation speaks a different language. Words may have different meanings, but the heart of a generation is constant; for love, compassion and wisdom.
- ♦ **Open your eyes to their solutions for pain:** Drugs are different. Opioids are more common and easier to gain. Today's pain relievers are more deadly and easier to access. Become better informed and more involved in your youth's community.
- ♦ **Don't compromise your then for their now:** Be authentic and open about your experiences without compromising the value of your life story. It may seem a bit ole school, but you would be surprised how your experiences and realities from the past inspire and give hope to the NOW generation.
- ♦ **Speak God Loud in your life:** They are watching.

I posed the question to my Social Media Family: What was the best advice that your mother or mother-figure gave you?

Here are just a few responses from the many women influenced by the wonderful mothers and mother figures in their lives.

Dyan Greggs: I don't have to be afraid of anyone.

Anita Keller: Fret Not Thyself!!!

Victoria D. Parker: Kill them with kindness and you can always come back home.

Hannahgeorgiapeach: Women are to be seen and not heard you do not have to step out of character to get your point across.

Laketa Finley Scipio: Pretty is as pretty does.

Tish Conroy: Only you can say when enough is enough.

(Continued on page 7)

*Her "Then" and My "Now":
The impact of a mother's word and experiences on a generation.*
The Reverend Jonetha Wright

(Continued from page 6)

Alisha Kelley: Don't ever beg for anything.

Lisa G. Harris: Everything that looks good ain't good for you!

Fran Allen: Every dog gets a day and a good dog gets two...

La'Toya Sibley: Be okay being by yourself that way you never will be afraid to be alone or upset when people decide to leave you.

Cynthina Johnson: Don't let no man put furniture in your house buy your own.

Shrala Askin: Don't borrow other people's trouble.

Meriam Garrett: My Grandmother said, "Whatever someone gives you whether you like it or not, take it."

LaDonna Edwards: Always believe you are beautiful. What's popular is not always right and what's right is not always popular.

Maeola Peoples: Don't borrow, always have your own.

Katrina Hames-Ford: Put God FIRST and everything else will fall in place!!!

Candice Benbow: Pray for wisdom.

Brittanie Nicole Alexander: Treat others the way you want to be treated!!!

Brooklyn Mo: As a woman always have your own job, bank account and pension in case a man wants to act foolish you can always survive without him.

Cathy Samuel-Bell Theus: And this too shall pass.

Cherika Smith: Don't place all your cookies in one bag.

Cassandra A. Henderson: When referring to the "glass ceiling" in society my grandmother said: "You don't need to break ceilings in your own house."

Alana Jones: You can do anything you can be anything.

Christine Broadous: Roby don't you ever fight a woman over your man, check your man. You don't know what lies he could of told her about you!!!! HMMMMMMMM!!!!

Eraina Ross-Aseme: Insisted that I take typing and business classes.

Granny Bell Honored on Her 99th Birthday

Pastor Wright and St. John members honored Mrs. Sarah Bell, also known as Granny Bell. On her 99th birthday on Sunday, May 6th. Granny Bell was presented with a plaque and 99 beautiful long stem red roses. Stewardesses and officers marched down the aisle with roses for the beautiful vases that were on a special table.



Ellipsis Offers Empowerment for Women and Girls

By Carmella Goree

Ellipsis offered an amazing line-up of well-versed women in areas which support the empowerment and authentic wholeness of women and girls.

Such women as:

The founder of Ellipsis the Reverend Jennifer Watley Maxell affectionately known as "Rev. Jenn" is a preacher, teacher, church co-founder, life coach and writer known for her interactive teaching and creative communication style.

Antoinette G. Alvarado is the Co-Pastor of Grace Church International, established by her husband and Senior Pastor, Bishop Johnathan E. Alvarado.

The Reverend Dr. Gina Marcia Stewart is a pastor, preacher, builder, mentor, adjunct professor, and daughter of Christ Missionary Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee.

Candice Marie Benbow is a writer and educator. In 2015, she created "Red Lip Theology", a movement to encourage Black women to embrace their whole selves as good creation.

Dr. Thema Bryant-Davis is Executive Assistant Pastor at Walker Temple AME Church and Associate Professor of Psychology at Pepperdine University.

Minister Mariah Crews, "Min. Mimi" graduated from Hampton University in 2014 and is still writing her story.

Jordon Deveaux participated and now mentors as a "big sister" in the Daughters of Esther Rites of Passage program for young girls at Reid Temple A.M.E. Church

Cassandra Henderson is a licensed and ordained minister, visual and performance-based artist, activist, scholar, community organizer, entrepreneur and all-around renaissance woman.

The Reverend Raquel St. Clair Lettsome is an Itinerant Elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church with 20 years of congregational ministry experience that transcends denominational lines.

Kim Moore is an Ordained Minister in fellowship with Joy Christian Center and Global Ministry and Relief, Inc. The Georgia Association of Christian Counselors Board of Examiners licenses Kim as a Christian Counselor and Therapist (LCCT) and Pastoral Counselor (LPC).

Rev. Dr. Dominique Ayesha Robinson, began her Christian walk under the leadership of her late, paternal grandmother, DeLa V. Smith, who founded and pastored Deliverance House of Prayer in Irvington, NJ.

Jadah Quick is a recent graduate of Mount Holyoke College, where she received her B.A in Mathematics and Mandarin. This has afforded her the opportunity to become a young professional in the financial industry.

The Reverend Joretha Wright is an inspirational preacher, comedienne, teacher and public speaker.

I was blessed to be one of the young ladies chosen to attend this Ellipses Conference. I was welcomed with open arms and able to freely explore my faith and dive deeper into my spiritual journey as a young woman of God. I was able to experience, learn and engage with women from all walks of life and encounter powerful women of God. A highlight of the conference was the breakout session where the participants discussed the next steps in fulfilling their purposes. This was truly needed and the best weekend to have right before my finals. I left inspired, refreshed and renewed and hope to attend next year. I feel blessed to have found extended family with not only the St. John Church Family but also The Women of Ellipses. I hope to attend again!

Finance Corner

Money Milestones: In your 20s? Your finances should look like this.

By Bobby Adkins

Finance experts and retirement planners often focus on people in their 50s or 60s, particularly those within striking distance of retirement. Empty nesters are also targets for investors, as adults with grown children are used as examples of workers who can maximize their savings well into their golden years. The ability to sock away larger amounts of money in an Individual Retirement Account (IRA), with concessions from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regarding deductions, make it an attractive period for adults. So, with the

added focus on middle aged workers, what should a young employee, a few years removed from college, do to build a retirement nest egg? We will try to answer that question.



into her own hands, signing up for an IRA and making contributions directly from her checking account. It has been a year, and she is now signed up for her 401(k) plan, too. Indeed, the urgency needs to be getting started, even with amounts as low as \$25 per week. With the stock market's historical return averaging above 7% annual growth, getting started early will allow retirement savings to grow exponentially, doubling in value approximately every 8-10 years.

Millennials are at the greatest advantage for retirement saving, as they have time on their side, experts say, and their money earns compound interest, which is interest earned on the money they put in as well as the interest that money earns. Granted not all millennials may have the ability to put away as much as Yangchen can, but any contribution counts, even just a few dollars.

When you are in your 20s, it makes sense to weigh short-term goals more heavily than retirement, said Douglas Boneparth, a financial adviser and president of advisory firm Bone Fide Wealth in New York. That is not to say you should not be saving for retirement, as you should be putting in at least enough money to meet a company match, since that is essentially free money, and then prioritize short-term goals, he said. However, with college loans due and the cost of living increasing yearly, the will to invest at a young age is challenged every paycheck.

What anyone in their 20s can do, however, is find consistency in their money habits, such as saving for the future, allocating income toward big life goals as well as emergency situations and paying down debts. Millennials seem to be pretty good about saving, for emergencies and retirement, but still about a third of consumers say they might not be able to afford an unexpected \$2,000 emergency. One way to save for both retirement or an emergency is by investing in a Roth individual retirement account, where money can be withdrawn penalty-free if it is just the principal and not the interest earned on the assets, Alex Rupert, assistant portfolio manager at Laurel Tree Advisors in Cleveland, Ohio.

Next month, we will focus on what you should do in your 30s. Until then, happy investing!

Blake Johnson Named Youth of the Month for March



Blake receives award from
Pastor Wright

Blake Kerrington Johnson is a bright intelligent young man who is very wise beyond his years. Blake is currently a fifth grader at Morris P-8 in the Huntsville City School District. He has earned and maintained the distinction of being named to the Honor Roll for the school year. He was recognized by his school and was given a Certificate of Excellence for Academics. Blake has previously received awards for outstanding performance in math. His favorite subjects are math and science. He has continuously excelled in both subjects. He was recognized by his teacher and recommended for Huntsville City School's Gifted Program.

Blake is a member of the St. John Y.P.D. and the Children's/Youth Choir.

During his free time, he likes to play basketball for the Boys and Girls Club and Monrovia Park Recreation as a point guard.

Most importantly, Blake decided to give his life to Christ on April 24, 2016.

Blake is the son of Ms. Pamela Little and the grandson of Carver and Pearlean Myhand. Congratulations Blake!



Soup Kitchen Ministry

Charlie Brock

LEAN ON ME

"When Moses' hands grew tired—Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset." Exodus 17:12 (NIV)

One Christian writer shared that she grew up on a farm where hard work was the norm. Muscles cramped, and chores seemed endless. When they needed a break, she said, they often leaned against the closest fence. It propped them up while they drank cold water, wiped their faces, and wondered how much longer it was until quitting time. **Personal remembrance. Blacks in fields had no fences, breaks and very little water.**

She continued, good fences can be like close friends who support us during trying times. It is comforting to know you have someone who you can count on being there—firm, steady, and secure.

The scripture from Exodus reminds us that Aaron and Hur were there for Moses when he grew weary, they held up his hands so that they "remained sturdy till sunset." They stayed with him, never wavering until he completed his task of making sure the Israelites were victorious.

Examples like these and of other men and women of the Bible should prompt us to ask ourselves if we allow others to lean when they are weak? As God's family we can ask ourselves, do we offer a place for people to catch their breath before they move on. Do we provide a moment of respite when caregivers think their tasks will never end?

You are invited to help prop up the hardworking kitchen workers who serve diligently in the St. John Soup Kitchen. Serve as a fence on the 3rd and 4th Tuesday of each month. The lines of those coming gets longer and longer. They would appreciate your willingness to help.

MANY HANDS—"By many hands the work of God is done."
Richard Le Gallienns.



Northwest Conference Lay Mother's Day Brunch Honored Mrs. Powers

By Donnie Thompson



Mrs. Powers with flowers presented by the Lay Organization

On May 5, 2018 a few of St. John A.M.E. Church Lay Organization members traveled to Birmingham to participate in the Mother's Day Brunch / Comedian Show, hosted at Bryant Chapel A.M.E. Church, where the Reverend Damian Littlejohn is the Servant Pastor. The following members represented St. John: Mrs. Mildred Powers, Mrs. Mary Allen, Mrs. Juanita Washington, and Mr. Hodges Washington, Mr. Willie Sandifer, Ms. Lula Rochelle, Mrs. Carol Russ, Mrs. Edna Owens, Ms. Dorothy O'Quinn, Mrs. Claudinette Purifoy-Fears and Ms. Donnie Thompson. Attendees were served delicious food and had lots of fun while being entertained by a comedian and two young ladies who paid tribute through dance.

Several people from the churches throughout the Conference gave tributes to the mothers; St. John honored and paid tribute to Mrs. Mildred Powers for her sweet and motherly St. John spirit. Mrs. Powers' church membership with St. John spans over 25 years. Throughout this time span, Mrs. Powers' warm, friendly, motherly spirit has been a beacon, not only to St. John, but to Grady Madison AME of Madison. Mrs. Powers was one of the seven members of St. John who helped to establish Grady Madison AME in Madison, Alabama. She has served on various boards and committees throughout the Huntsville community. Mrs. Powers will be celebrating her 89th Birthday in the very near future. Brother Washington made the presentation and presented her with a dozen pink roses.

The St. John family loves Mrs. Powers and extends a Happy Mother's Day greeting to her!

Couples Enjoy a Night of Bowling

By Tullie Miller

On Friday night, April 27, 2018, the St. John Couples Ministry sponsored a couple's night out of bowling at the Redstone Arsenal Bowling Alley. A total of 17 St. John members participated in this fun-filled event. Fun, food and fellowship were the order of the day/night as the group participated in some intense bowling, eating, conversation and encouragement. Bowling skills ranged from those who had never bowled before, those who had not picked up a bowling ball in the last twenty plus years and those very skilled bowlers who eagerly showed off their excellent and unique skills.

Lots of great lessons were learned by some. For example, just like houses, bowling lanes have gutters as well. However, rain is supposed to go in the gutters, but bowling balls do not belong in the gutters of the bowling lane. That was a fun and hard lesson learned by some fellow St. John members. Also, it does matter how fast, cute, sexy or what direction you move your hips, it has negative impact on your bowling ball once it leaves your hand and heads down the bowling lane.

Couples bonded and fellowshiped with the other bowlers. The food and beverages from the snack bar were outstanding and everyone learned something.

Be on the lookout for the next couples' event and please do not miss it. For couples, the best is yet to come! Praise God, love is in the air for the St. John Couples Ministry.



2018 National Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Walk-A-Thon

(Walking With A Purpose)

By Kenneth Parham



MS PAC Team: Lillie Rivers, Kenneth Parham, Lorraine Parham, Phyllis Barrett and Pat Grier

When someone in the family is sick, family tends to surround that individual with abundant love and support. I have witnessed this outpouring towards the members of the Grier family who have lived with MS for more than two decades. In this time period we, the Parham family and others (the Barretts, the Waltons, the Trentons, the Rivers and the Rochelles) have offered our support by being there when the Grier family called for walkers during annual Walk-A-Thons. Also, last year the team name was changed to show love and support for a member of the St. John church family, Sister Lillie Rivers, who had been diagnosed with MS; as well as continuing to show support of the Grier family members with MS.

Looking back over the years, if one thought about the miles walked in support of finding a cure for MS, the Grier organized teams (Walk for Jean, PJ Partners and MS PAC (Praying for a Cure)) have gone through some sneakers. Given that the average 'Walk MS' event is a 3 miler and the average number of members on the Grier teams has been about seven (7) and the annual walks have been going on for over

twenty-five years – that means the Grier teams have walked over 525 miles. The Huntsville MS Walk-A-Thons have taken them through the downtown historical district, through the Huntsville Botanical Gardens, around the University of Alabama Huntsville campus, around Big Springs Park, around Providence Elementary campus and the Village of Providence – amazingly, the team cannot remember the MS Walk ever being canceled due to inclement weather. Using a similar type of logic, the Grier teams have consistently raised approximately \$2,000 per walk (i.e., > \$50,000 in total). The Griers and extended family have been faithful in their support to the National MS Society in helping raise funds to further research in an ongoing effort of finding a cure for this devastating disease.

Once again, the Griers and extended family have answered the call.

The MS PAC team participated in the MS Walk-A-Thon on May 5, 2018 at the Providence Village (Huntsville, AL). Participants were: Agnes Gilmore (team co- captain/virtual walker), Patricia Grier (team co-captain), Phyllis Barrett, Lillie Rivers, Lorraine Parham and Kenneth Parham. As always, the MS PAC team extends many thanks for the love and financial support given by the St John AME family again this year. And remember, we are walking to create a world free of MS.



Contact Lorraine Parham or Shelby Washington if you would like to attend.

Upcoming Election Information



Statewide Primary Election

June 5, 2018

Statewide Primary Runoff Election

July 17, 2018

Mid-Term Election

Statewide General Election

November 6, 2018

Absentee ballot applications may be obtained from

Mrs. Eva Smith or Ms. Barbara Johnson or online at <https://sos.alabama.gov/alabama-votes/voter/absentee-voting>

MUSIC & CHRISTIAN ARTS MINISTRY

2018 MCAM ELECTIONS

IGNITE GROWTH! | INSPIRE CHANGE! | IMPACT SERVICE!

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REV. MAURICE WRIGHT, II
SENIOR PASTOR
ST. JOHN AME CHURCH
HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

Rev. Maurice Wright, II

CANDIDATE FOR CONNECTIONAL DIRECTOR

Current Connectional Associate Director MCAM

Choral Directing Experience

- Harriett Tubman Middle School, Portland, Oregon
- Thomas Jefferson High School, Portland, Oregon
- Humboldt Elementary School, Portland, Oregon
- Fooding Director MLK Community Choir Portland, Oregon
- Big Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Atlanta, Georgia
- Martin Luther King Chapel Choir, Morehouse College Atlanta, Georgia

Minister of Music / Organist

- Bethel AME Church, Portland, Oregon
- United AME Church, Xenia, Ohio
- Powerhouse Temple Church, Portland, Oregon
- Philadelphia Community Church, Portland, Oregon

Vocal Experience

- Morehouse College Glee Club
- Atlanta Opera Company
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Choir
- Wendell Whalum Community Choir

Presiding Elder District Director

- South Birmingham Huntsville Beasomer District (9th Episcopal District)
- Phenix City District (9th Episcopal District)
- Alexandria Thibodaux District (8th Episcopal District)

Annual Conference Director

- Northeast Alabama Annual Conference (9th Episcopal District)
- Central North Louisiana Annual Conference (8th Episcopal District)

Degree in Voice and Conducting from Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia

Member of National Association of Negro Musicians (NANM)

Serves as a lecturer on Worship

Choral workshop facilitator

Founding Member of the Connectional Music Committee



REV. MYRON D. HILL
SENIOR PASTOR
CYPRESS CHAPEL AME
ABBEVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Rev. Myron D. Hill

CANDIDATE FOR CONNECTIONAL ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Current Connectional Parliamentarian MCAM

Special Education Teacher for the Greenwood School District 50 in South Carolina

Current Director of Music: Piedmont Annual Conference & Abbeville Greenwood District

Current President/Director: Greenwood (SC) Area Martin Luther King, Jr. Mass Choir

Musician: Turner Singer, Turner Theological Seminary, Atlanta, Georgia

Minister of Music: Flipper Temple AME Church, Atlanta, Georgia

Founder: Voices of Liberty Choir, Liberty Hill AME Church, Summerton, South Carolina

Founder: Allen W. Parrott Inspirational Choir, Williams Chapel AME Church, Orangeburg, South Carolina

Founder: Shulerville Community Youth Choir

Co-Founder (along with his father): Jamestown Shulerville Community Choir

Organist: Wesley AME Church, Shulerville, South Carolina

Age started playing piano: 8

OUR GOALS

1. INCREASE CONNECTIONAL MEMBERSHIP
2. INCREASE THE VITALITY OF MCAM IN EVERY EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
3. PROVIDE LITURGICAL DANCE, DRAMA AND MUSIC RESOURCES FOR CONGREGATIONS THROUGHOUT THE CONNECTION
4. CONTINUE TO PROMOTE AME ARTISTS



Church School Lesson Overview – June 2018

The lesson reviews were written by Willie Sandifer (June 3, 10) and Claudinette Purifoy Fears (June 17, 24)

June 3, 2018

Lesson Title: Justice and Sabbath Laws

Lesson Scripture: Matthew 12:1-14

Print: Matthew 12:1-14

Devotional Songs: #377, #251, and #243

Key Verse: "If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent" (Matthew 12:7).

In this lesson we look at the true rest that is given by God to his people through Jesus.

In His action and teaching Jesus presented Himself as having authority that belonged to God and came across belief and opposition. He was opposed at every turn by the religious leaders. Still, many chose to follow Him, believing God was about to restore Israel by fulfilling His ancient promises.

Jesus dealt with an argument about what He and His disciples were doing on the Sabbath. The Sabbath was described by the Law of Moses as a day of rest from work. It is a two-fold celebration of God resting from creation and His freeing Israel from slavery. However, the Law of Moses did not clearly define what "work" consists of.

The commentary informs us that the Pharisees started as a movement against perceived corrupted leadership in the temple. They were hopeful of God restoring His blessing to Israel if Israel started to keep God's neglected law.

The Pharisees brainstormed every situation in which the law might be applied and came up with responses to those situations. In their mind the person who went by their teachings would not come close to violating the law. Strict rules about the Sabbath were a part of these teachings and not even small, simple deeds were to be done.

June 10, 2018

Lesson Parables of God's Just Kingdom

Lesson Scripture: Matthew 13:24-43

Print: Matthew 13:24-33

Devotional Songs: #205; #272; and #243

Key Verses: "Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn" (Matthew 13:30).

Jesus taught in parables, which are similar to a riddle that were made up of commonly understood images and everyday events. The parables compelled listeners to reconsider what they understood about how God was working in the world.

This lesson text is made up of mostly parables and the parables in this text challenged views of how God was bringing about His kingdom.

In Jesus's day there were many who expected God's promised kingdom to defeat the pagan empires that ruled God's people for generations. There was an expectation by the people for God's kingdom to be political and military kingdom like any other kingdom that people knew on earth. The only difference is that kingdom would be ruled righteously and in submission to God.

June 17, 2018

Lesson Title: Jesus Teaches about Justice

Lesson Scripture: Matthew 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13

Print: Matthew 15:1-9

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

Key Verses: "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me" (Matthew 15:8).

The Scribes and Pharisees were experts in the Law of Moses and in maintaining traditions developed to keep the law. Many of the oral traditions went well beyond the rules found in the Law of Moses and were excessively burdensome man-made rules. The Scribes and Pharisees expressed concern because Jesus was performing acts that contradicted with tradition. In the past they had accused Jesus of blasphemy in forgiving sins (Matthew 9:3), of eating and drinking with publicans and sinners (Matthew 9:11), of disregarding fasts (Matthew 9:14), of casting out devils by Beelzebub (Matthew 12:24) and of breaking the Sabbath (Matthew 12:2). In today's lesson we find that the Scribes and Pharisees taking issue with the disciples because they did not conform to the ritual of washing of hands prior to partaking of a meal.

While it is common practice today to wash hands prior to eating for hygienic reasons, Jews held to the tradition of their elders and did not eat unless they gave their hands a ceremonial washing.

Jesus challenged the accusation and ritual because they

(continued on page 16)

Church School Lesson Overview

(Continued from page 15)

were taking overarching liberties with the scripture. Deuteronomy 8:10 requires that a blessing be offered in association with meals and does not address washing of hands. The Pharisees used their unbiblical tradition as a standard for righteousness which contradicted the written law.

Jesus illustrated in verses 4-6 how easily a tradition can conflict with the moral purpose of Scripture. If we are to honor and care for our parents but provide gift to the temple that would have benefitted the parents have we honored our parents? On the outside we look like we have been faithful for God but inwardly not obedient to His word. God knows our hearts. We must be obedient to His commands and not hypocritical for the sake of tradition or for the need of maintaining appearances.

Lesson Title: Reaping God's Justice

Lesson Scripture: Luke 16:19-31; John 5:24-30

Print: Luke 16:19-31

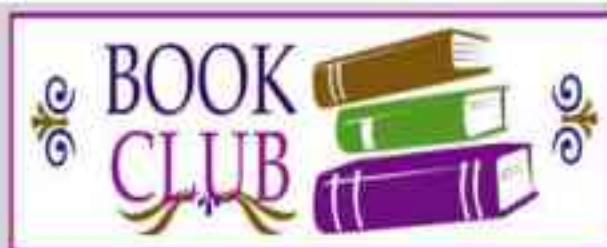
Devotional Songs: #355; #77; and #243

Key Verses: "Abraham replied, "Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony" (Luke 16:25).

Jesus tells a story of the relationship, during life and after death, between an unnamed rich man and a poor beggar named Lazarus. The rich man lived in abundance daily while Lazarus covered in sores laid at his gate and ate the scraps from the rich man's table. When the beggar died, the angels carried him to the side of Abraham however when the rich man died he was sent to Hades. The rich man was tormented in Hades and begged Abraham have pity on him. Abraham explained the reversal of fortune. The rich man while on earth had the opportunity to show love and charity but he neglected his responsibility. So, God condemns the rich man and provides everlasting comfort for the beggar. Upon coming to terms with his situation, the rich man asks Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers that they must repent or they will receive damnation. Abraham's final statement is the main point of the story and is a clear reprimand to the Jewish leaders. Abraham told him that his brothers had not believed Moses and the Prophets of the Old Testament then surely, they would not believe someone who rose from the dead.

The story warns of the danger of persistent unbelief. The name Lazarus was significant because Jesus had raised Lazarus of Bethany from the dead but the Pharisees refused to recognize Jesus as the giver of life even though they claimed to believe in the resurrection. Jesus knew that the Pharisees would reject Him even after His own resurrection.

They would fail to recognize Him as the fulfillment of the law and prophets. Furthermore, the story is a rebuke to the selfishness of the Jewish leaders and wealthy people who justified their imagined status with God. However, we are reminded that we all are in need regardless of our circumstances.



Church School Book Club

May 2018

Discussion Date: May 19, 2018

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Remember Me, Robinson, 2011.

June 2018

Discussion Date: June 16, 2018

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Prayer Box, Wingate, 2013.

When Iola Anne Poole, an old-timer on Hatteras Island, passes away in her bed at ninety-one, the struggling young mother in her rental cottage, Tandi Jo Reese, finds herself charged with the task of cleaning out Iola's rambling Victorian house.

Running from a messy, dangerous past, Tandi never expects to find more than a temporary hiding place within Iola's walls, but everything changes with the discovery of eighty-one carefully decorated prayer boxes, one for each year, spanning from Iola's youth to her last days. Hidden in the boxes is the story of a lifetime, written on random bits of paper--the hopes and wishes, fears and thoughts of an unassuming but complex woman passing through the seasons of an extraordinary, unsung life filled with journeys of faith, observations on love, and one final lesson that could change everything.

June 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship Communion Sunday	4 8:30 a.m. Fifty Plus Meeting 5:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	5 5:00 p.m. Stewardess Board Meeting	6 12:00 p.m. & 5:00 p.m. Bible Study	7 5:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	8 9 10:30 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting SBHB Church School Convention Alien Temple- Bessemer	
10 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	11	12	13	14	15	16
Vacation Bible School— June 10-14						
17 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship YOUTH SUNDAY Kid's Kingdom (ages 6-12) FATHER'S DAY	18 REFRESH Bible Study For Women 7:00 p.m.	19 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	20 12:00 p.m. & 5:00 p.m. Bible Study	21	22 5:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	23 10:00 VMS Meeting
24 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	25	26 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	27 12:00 p.m. & 5:00 p.m. Bible Study	28	29	30

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 Albert Hyche, Presiding Elder

The Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor

Important Dates to Remember

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| May 30—June 1, 2018 | AMEC International Stewardship and Economic Development Summit, Beeson Divinity School, Birmingham, Alabama |
| June 8-9, 2018 | SBHB Church School and Christian Education Conference |
| June 10-14, 2018 | Vacation Bible School |
| June 26-27, 2018 | 2018 Council of Bishops and General Board Meeting, Atlanta, Georgia |
| June 27-30, 2018 | Connectional Christian Education and Youth Congress, Atlanta, GA |

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 23 Issue 6

June 2018

Women's Day 2018: St. John Celebrates Women Youth and Milestones

By Bridget J. Floyd



The Reverend Amittia Smith, Women's Day Preacher

On Sunday, May 20, 2018, St. John, Huntsville, held its annual Women's Day Service during the 10 a.m. worship service. The Reverend Joretha Wright served as worship leader with guest speaker the Reverend Amittia Smith of St. John A.M.E. Church, Fort Mitchell, Alabama. The Praise Team, Children's Choir and Women's Day Choir provided inspirational music for the special day. The Women's Liturgical Dance Ministry offered an interpretation of the poem authored and read by worship leader, "Reverend Rita".

Sister Marissa Owens led the call to worship, followed by prayer by the Reverend Meriam Garrett. Sister Maya Ifekauche read the scripture for the morning, Matthew 5:14-15. Pastor Maurice Wright, II announced the "Youth of the Month", *Sister Samantha Adkins*; and the "Woman

of the Year", *Sister Patricia Grier*. The children's moment was led by Dr. Thalia Love-Brown. After Sister Lorraine Parham welcomed visitors and gave announcements, there was recognition of birthdays and anniversaries led by The Norwood's and The Miller's. This was followed by the graduate and retiree recognition led by Dr. Jeanette Jones and Sisters Barbara Johnson and Pam Whitehead. [See related article.] Steward Roselyne Akines led worship in giving.

The speaker was introduced by St. John's executive minister, the Reverend Joretha Wright and the speaker's



Sister Rankin leads selection by Women's Choir.



Honey Rose Smith introduces her mother.

(Continued on page 2)

Women's Day 2018: St. John Celebrates Women, Youth and Milestones

By Bridget J. Floyd

(Continued from page 1)



The Reverend Amittia Smith

daughter, Sister Honey Rose Smith. The Reverend Smith spoke from the text Matthew 5: 16, with the topic "Be the Light: Letting Your Light Shine". Beginning with the definitions of "shine", including, "to give out bright light, to be very talented, to be of the sun or another source of light", the speaker used the play on words to note that it is "because of the S-O-N, we shine brightly today".

Quoting Genesis, "... let there be light", the preacher urged those present to separate the darkness from the light in their lives, similar to the occurrence when God began the creation of the heaven and the earth. She also referred to the necessity of salt/"seasoning" noted in the bible and urged women to not "lose your salt" and to "let your good deeds shine". She stated that "God needs you to be the light when you enter a dark room". The speaker cited numerous female historical figures, ranging from Harriet Tubman to former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and former First Lady Michele Obama. She reminded that God blesses the persecuted and referenced several of "The Beatitudes". She also cited women in the Bible, urging women present to "shine like Ruth, Esther", etc. Throughout the sermon, the Reverend Smith returned to her title, "Be the Light". She stated that each person has a purpose and encouraged the women to "shine like a diamond".

The Reverend Smith also brought examples/ lessons from the musical production "The Wiz", based on the movie, "The Wizard of Oz". She noted that the key character, Dorothy, was lost; that is, her light was out. The preacher labelled the yellow brick road (that Dorothy traveled in order to find the Wizard of Oz/The Wiz) as "the shining road", returning to the theme of light. The preacher noted that, though lost herself, Dorothy was able to help others as she navigated the yellow brick road/traversed the Land of Oz. The character even overcame the disappointment of the fraudulent wizard who was not the solution as promised. However, the character discovered that the solution, power to return home, was with her much of the time – the slippers that she was wearing. The preacher changed the mantra that was used to 'go home' to "Shine, Shine, Shine". The Reverend Smith encouraged the women to "let your light so shine...it's already inside of you".



Sister Grier receives Woman of the Year Award.

To highlight the theme of the sermon, the congregation was led in singing songs illuminating the importance of "the light". Appreciation was expressed to the guest preacher and her daughter. The service was significant for celebrating numerous aspects of light – women, the youth, birthdays and the commitment of marriage, and the milestones of graduation and retirement.

Congratulations to all!

Special congratulations to Sister Patricia Grier – retiree as well as Woman of the Year.



The Reverend Smith and the Reverend Wright.

Bishop Messiah Preaches at St. John

Nedra L. McDaniel



Bishop Wilfred Messiah

Bishop Wilfred Jacobus Messiah, the 120th elected and consecrated bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church was the guest preacher and chief celebrant for Holy Communion on Sunday, June 3, 2018, at St. John AME Church. Bishop Messiah was invited to St. John by Pastor Maurice Wright II, a friend for more than twenty years.

Bishop Messiah was elected bishop in the AME Church in 2004 at the 47th General Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana. He is a native of South Africa. He was educated at Wilberforce University, an AME university located in Wilberforce, Ohio. Bishop Messiah pastored in the United States before returning to South Africa (post apartheid) to serve as dean of the R. R. Wright Theological Seminary in the Republic of South Africa. Since his election as a bishop he has presided over the

20th, 15th and 17th Episcopal Districts of the AME Church. In his current position as presiding prelate of the 17th Episcopal District, he presides over AME churches in Zambia, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Burundi. His District includes 12 Annual Conferences.

In his introductory remarks, Bishop Messiah acknowledged the Reverend Dr. Homer McCall, former pastor of St. John. He stated that one of the reasons he wanted to come to Huntsville was to meet the Reverend McCall because of the support provided by the Reverend McCall and St. John Church for books donated for the library at the R. R. Wright Seminary. He also acknowledged his endearment to Alabama because of the kindness extended to him by a student from Birmingham, Alabama while he was at Wilberforce University.

Bishop Messiah's sermon was entitled "The Cry of a Penitent Soul" with text from Psalm 51, with emphasis on verse 12. He laid the foundation for the message by noting that the Psalms include prayers for forgiveness and redemption, purification, cries over grief and sin, and restoration. He encouraged the congregation to read a Psalm a day.

Setting the background for the text, he noted that David was already "King David." It was at the height of his career that he met with disaster because he desired what was not his. He told how David plotted to kill Bathsheba's husband and stated that although others may not know about plots and plans, God sees and hears all things. He further indicated that when God is displeased He will find a way to let the person know. In David's case, the prophet Nathan went to David and revealed his sin.



Bishop Messiah and Pastor Wright

Bishop Messiah said that sin holds the sinners and there is no escape from the reminder that one has done wrong. He further said that the only way to deal with sin is to repent. He used David's repentance as an example of what to do. David did not try to justify his sins, instead he asked for "a clean heart and a new and right spirit." David realized he had lost his joy and that it needed to be restored, thus his plea in verse 12, "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit." Bishop Messiah's closing admonition was "There is nothing you can do without the power of the Holy Spirit."

Following the message, one person gave their life to Christ and another re-united with the St. John Family. Members greeted Bishop Messiah after the service.

Reflections on Father's Day

By Brother Bobby Adkins II

Father's Day is a celebration honoring fathers and celebrating fatherhood. Men who have established paternal bonds with children, as either father figures, coaches, guardians, or persons of influence are also celebrated on Father's Day. Father's Day is a great day to acknowledge the significant role that fathers play in society.

The Bible is filled with famous fathers who expressed love, patience, strength, forgiveness, and understanding. Men such as Adam, the First Man; Abraham, the Father of a Jewish Nation; Jacob, Father of the 12 Tribes; Moses, Giver of the Law; and King David, a Man after God's own Heart, are fine examples of biblical fathers. However, there are plenty of fathers who will never appear on the pages of history books who grace our presence today.

Looking a little deeper, the role of the father has been instrumental in fostering healthy relationships with family and with children. As we have often heard, while almost any man can father a child, there is so much more to the important role of being dad in a child's life. This article looks at who fathers are and why they are so important.



Fathers are central to the emotional well-being of their children; they are capable caretakers and disciplinarians: Studies show that if a child's father is affectionate, supportive, and involved, he can contribute greatly to the child's cognitive, language, and social development, as well as academic achievement, a strong inner core resource, sense of well-being, good self-esteem, and authenticity.

How fathers influence relationships: A child's primary relationship with his/her father can affect all of the child's relationships from birth to death, including those with friends, lovers, and spouses. Those early patterns of interaction with father are the very patterns that will be projected forward into all relationships...forever more: not only your child's intrinsic idea of who he/she is as he/she relates to others, but also, the range of what your child considers acceptable and loving.

The effect of fathers on young girls and boys: Girls will look for men who hold the patterns of good old dad, for after all, they know how "to do that." Therefore, if father was kind, loving, and gentle, they will reach for those characteristics in men. Girls will look for, in others, what they have experienced and become familiar with in childhood. Because they have gotten used to those familial and historic behavioral patterns, they think that they can handle them in relationships.

Boys on the other hand, will model themselves after their fathers. They will look for their father's approval in everything they do, and copy those behaviors that they recognize as both successful and familiar. Thus, if Dad was abusive, controlling, and dominating, those will be the patterns that their sons will imitate and emulate. However, if father is loving, kind, supportive, and protective, boys will want to be that.

Changing Family Roles: According to a recent study by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), in 2015 only 20 percent of American households consisted of married couples with children. Filling the gap are family structures of all kinds, with dads stepping up to the plate and taking on a myriad of roles. When they are engaged, fathers can really make a difference. Whether within a traditional marriage, single, divorced, widowed, adoptive, step-father, a stay-at-home dad, or the primary family provider. What is important is that he is involved.

Thanks Dad! Finally, on this Father's Day, it is important to recognize and reward dads for being there, and actively teaching important life skills to children. It is important to their children, and meaningful to dads everywhere when you say "Thank you, job well done!" This, after all, is what makes life worth living. This is your true legacy: ensuring the health and well-being of your children, that future generation to be.

St John A.M.E. Church Participated in Huntsville Memorial Day Ceremony

By Col. (Ret.) James O. Heyward



Col. (Ret.) Heyward addresses the audience.

The Greater Huntsville Interdenominational Fellowship (GHIMF) joined the Boy Scouts in the Annual Memorial Day Ceremony at Glenwood Cemetery in the city of Huntsville on May 16, 2018. Scouts from Urban Emphasis Scout Leaders Council (UESLC) placed U.S. Flags on the grave sites of all veterans in these cemeteries: Northside, Brandontown, Meadowlawn of Peace and Maple Hill.

St. John A.M.E. was the first member of the GHIMF to volunteer to assist in this ceremony. This most significant ceremony has been performed since 2004. It was a short program with participation of a number of St. John members. Some of those participants were the Reverend Charles Glover, who gave the invocation, and the St. John VIP (Voices in Praise) Ensemble under the directorship of Mr. Reggie Pearson provided the music for the occasion. Col. (Ret.) James Heyward served as chairman for the ceremony and introduced the guest speaker.



The Reverend Glover participates in service.

The guest speaker for the ceremony was Col. (Ret.) Glenwood Norris, a combat veteran, a DA Civilian of the U.S. Space and Missile Command, Redstone Arsenal. The program also included historical comments from Mrs. Olye Doyle Conley, retired school principal and local historian: "We know that there is a great need to provide our children with factual information about what sacrifices their forefathers and mothers made to help make this country what it is today (beginning with Crispus Attucks in Boston, MA) and that this country belongs to them as much as it belongs to the children of elected officials."

Of course the program consisted of a fitting tribute to honor service men and women who have made great sacrifices and served this country with honor and distinction. The program ended with the playing of "Taps" and a proper cannon military salute. A very large tent was provided to protect guests from the weather and chairs for seniors and handicapped attendees. Min. Vernon Spearman, President of the UESLC served as Master of Ceremony.

This Memorial Ceremony is held at Noon each year on the Saturday preceding Memorial Day.



The VIP Ensemble renders music.



St. John AME Church Members Participates in Alabama A&M University's Community Breakfast, 143rd Founder's Day and Commencement Weekend Celebrations

By Jeanette Jones

On May 5, 2018, Alabama A&M University celebrated the 143rd Anniversary of its founding in 1875 by the Reverend Doctor William Hooper Council, an organizer of St. John AME Church, Huntsville, Alabama.



Dr. Wims, Dr. Hugine and Pastor Wright



Rev. Rita and Ms. Banks

Beginning at 8:00 a.m. on the morning of May 5th, Alabama A&M University's 11th President and St. John member Dr. Andrew Hugine, Jr. hosted his annual community breakfast for community leaders, alumni, retirees, faculty, staff and students. The guest speaker was Dr. Jimmy E. Jackson, pastor of Whitesburg Baptist Church, who recently retired after 40 years, provided an outstanding message on servant leadership and unity. Presiding over the breakfast was Dr. Daniel K. Wims, University Provost and St. John member, while the Reverend Maurice Wright II provided the invocation. Also in attendance was First Lady of the University Abbiegail Hugine (a Steward at St. John), First Lady of Whitesburg Baptist, Mrs. Jackson, and the First Lady of St. John AME Church, the Reverend Jor-etha Wright. Also present was the newest trustee of the university, Sheri Banks, a member the board of education and a member of St. John AME Church, Fort Mitchell, Alabama.



Dr. Jones receives award.

Following the Community Breakfast, the group gathered for the 143th Founder's Day Convocation, where alumni from across the nation gathered to honor the founding of the university where they got their start. Many are living out the current university slogan "start here, and go anywhere". One returning graduate, DeWayne O. Carter, who had given \$100,000, gave an additional \$50,000 to his university contributions. Dr. Andrew Hugine Jr. was surprised and elated.

Finally, the day concluded with the Commencement services where The Honorable Anthony Daniels, a member of St. John, delivered an inspiring and informative commencement address to 540 graduates and over 10,000 alumni, family, friends and university supporters. Following his address the president presented Representative Daniels an award for Distinguished Services.

The Alabama A&M University National Alumni Association presented several scholarships and awards during the weekend celebration. St. John recipients:



A&M faculty, staff and alumni at historic marker.

Kaitlyn McClung, a rising junior at AAMU, was the recipient of three AAMU scholarships for the 2018-2019 school year. She has earned the AAMU First Lady Scholarship, the Huntsville/Madison County Alumni Association Scholarship, and the National Alumni Association Scholarship.

Dr. Jeanette Jones received the National Alumni Association "Award of Merit".

On Sunday morning, Alabama A&M faculty, staff and alumni worshipped at St. John. Following the service, they participated in the annual walk from St. John to the historic marker of the first location of Alabama A&M University.

St. John AME Church Celebrated New Beginnings for Graduates and Retirees

By Jeanette Jones



On Sunday, May 27, 2018, St. John recognized their 2018 Graduates and Retirees in a special recognition ceremony. Each year St. John pauses to recognize youth who have reached a significant milestone in their lives. They have graduated from high school or college and we salute this significant accomplishment.

Pictured to the left is the recognition committee: Dr. Jeanette Jones, Sister Barbara Johnson and Sister Pamela Whitehead.



High School graduates Morgan Owens, Kristina Jefferson and Maya Ifekauche

The High School Graduates recognized included the following:

Maya Ifekauche, Sparkman High School
Kristina Jefferson, Sparkman High School
Morgan Alexandria Owens, Sparkman High School
Mitchell Alexander Smiley, Mae Jemison High School

Each high school graduate received a special certificate, Bible and \$400.00, which was presented by Pastor Maurice Wight, II and the Reverend Joretha Wright.



Graduates Karmen Lattimore and Erin Lott, with committee members Ms. Johnson and Dr. Jones

The college graduates included:

Kourtney Burwell, Jacksonville State University
Chelsea Carter, University of Mississippi, B.S.
Erin Lott, Associate Degree in Nursing, Dec., 2017
Karmen Lattimore, J.F. Drake State and Community College,
Associate Degree
Kyle Speight, Georgia Institute of Technology, B.S.

The College/University Graduates each received a special certificate from Pastor Wright and the Reverend Joretha in recognition of their accomplishments and as motivation to keep striving for excellence.

St. John AME Church Celebrated New Beginnings for Graduates and Retirees

By Jeanette Jones

THE RETIREES



Pastor Wright recognizes retirees Sister Pat Grier and Sister Lillie Rivers.

The St. John Church family is pleased to recognize the retirement of two individuals who have worked tirelessly over the years as servant leaders in the church and in the Greater Huntsville community. The 2018 retirees, Ms. Patricia Grier and Mrs. Lillie Rivers, each received a special certificate and a gift from the church to help celebrate a new chapter in their lives. These were presented by Pastor Maurice Wright, II and the Reverend Joretha Wright.

Ms. Patricia Grier, a native of Georgia, has been a member of St. John AME Church, Huntsville for over forty years. After working over 40 years in the system software engineering industry, she decided to retire December 31, 2017. Her employers over the years have included Computer Sciences Corporation, Electronic Data Systems, Computer Data Systems, Incorporated, and DST Health Solutions, LLC. Her work experience spanned over twenty (20) years in developing, enhancing and maintaining various engineering reporting and data management systems; and 20 years developing and maintaining health care software for Managed Healthcare providers, including Medicare member enrollment providers. She is a graduate of the University of Georgia where she earned the Bachelor of Science degree in Statistics and Computer Science. Ms. Grier is a true example of Christian womanhood.

Mrs. Lillie Rivers, a native of North Carolina, is the oldest of seven children and has five sisters and one brother. She is a graduate of Huntsville Bible College with an Associate of Arts degree in Christian Education. Lillie's desire is to return to Huntsville Bible College to obtain her Bachelor of Arts degree. After thirteen (13) years of service, Mrs. Rivers retired from Adtran on May 29, 2018. She stated that before deciding to retire she asked "God to please let her live a few years of her life on this earth without having to get up early in the morning to go to work". So, when she was offered an early retirement package this year from Adtran, God answered her prayer, she took the offer and ran!! Lillie shared with us that she thanked God for being so good and for hearing and answering her prayer.

"CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2018 GRADUATES AND RETIREES"

Habitat for Humanity 2018 Build



Workers continue construction on the Habitat House for 2018. St. John member Jesse Johnson is pictured on the right.

The Spring 2018 Habitat House project has begun. Each year St. John partners with Habitat for Humanity and churches in the community to build a house. Members are encouraged to volunteer on any of the dates listed.

2018 SPRING BUILD UPDATED SCHEDULE

Partner Family: Shaniqua Gaillard, Building site: 6125 Belgrade Dr.

2018 SPRING BUILD SCHEDULE

Partner Family: Shaniqua Gaillard, Building site: 6125 Belgrade Dr.

DATES	DAYS	TASKS
June 5, 7, 9	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Continue vinyl siding, <u>(plumbing & electrical rough-in by others)</u>
June 12, 14, 16	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Caulk openings, install wall insulation, continue vinyl siding
June 19, 21, 23	Tue., Thur., Sat.	<u>(Sheetrock by others)</u> finish vinyl siding
June 26, 28, 30	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Paint interior walls, clean floor, paint base board, doors and trim
July 3, 5, 7	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Install vinyl floor tile, sheet vinyl
July 10, 12, 14	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Install interior doors, baseboard, window trim, cabinets
July 17, 19, 21	Tue., Thur., Sat.	<u>(Plumbing, finish electrical and HVAC by others)</u> , Install door, Hardware Door stops, closet shelving, window blinds
July 24, 26, 28	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Landscape, touch up paint, clean & wax floors, work punch list
July 31, Aug 2, 4	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Catch-up (Dedication to be announced)

The schedule is contingent on weather and subcontractors. We will work 7:30 AM to noon. No lunches will be provided.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS:

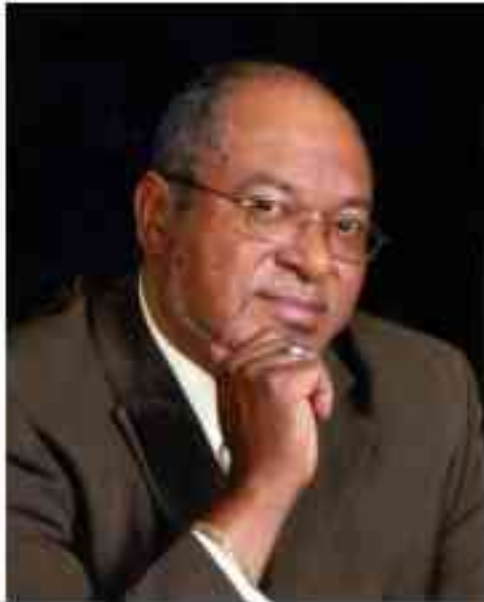
From North Memorial Pkwy, go west on Winchester Road. At the bottom of the hill, turn right onto Belgrade Dr. Go to 6125 Belgrade (on the left side of the street).

Ms. Tami McGhee is the coordinator for St. John. Please contact her if you have any questions.



Remembering

Brother Ira Bargon, Jr.



St. John is saddened by the transition from labor to reward for Brother Ira Bargon, Jr. Brother Bargon and his wife, Paulette, joined St. John when they relocated to Huntsville from Michigan. Ira and Paulette came with high commendations from their former church, St. John AME, River Rouge, Michigan. In Michigan, Ira was

very active in the church and his positions included usher and trustee.

At St. John, Ira was always willing to help in any way. He was faithful in attendance. He served on the usher board. He also served on the initial Computer Ministry committee. Although Ira was not a member of the choir, he was always at rehearsals and all of their engagements because he drove his wife to the church or the engagement and waited patiently for her. He also worked with his wife Paulette in the soup kitchen ministry.

The Bargons were known for their warm hospitality and the delicious meals that they prepared and served to ministers and guest preachers of the church.

Ira was a faithful servant of God. Please continue to pray for his wife Paulette Bargon, their children, his mother and his siblings.

*The righteous perish, and no one takes it to heart;
the devout are taken away, and no one understands
that the righteous are taken away to be spared from evil.*

*Those who walk uprightly enter into peace;
they find rest as they lie in death.*

Isaiah 57:1-2

Sister Cora Speight



St. John mourns the death of Sister Cora Bonita Hamer Speight. She and her husband, Terry, joined St. John in 1988 and she was a faithful member until her death. Cora was soft spoken and had a warm smile. She attended services regularly until her health prevented her from attending. She loved the Lord and desired to serve Him by using her skills and talents at St. John.

Cora preferred to minister behind the scenes. She served as financial secretary for St. John for over 17 years. This position is one that goes unnoticed by many, but requires hours of commitment to accurately record the financial records of the church and manage the payroll. Her accounting expertise was invaluable to the finance committee as she advised them on proper accounting procedures and IRS guidelines for religious organizations.

Cora also served other ministries in the church. She served for over 20 years on the AMEN staff. She was a contributing writer, but preferred the role of editing/proofing articles. She also served for several years on the Pastor's Aid Board. She volunteered for many special events and supported her children in their church activities.

Please continue to pray for her family, husband Terry Speight, children Meagan, Kyle and Kevin Speight, and sister Nedra McDaniel.

I Am Free

*Do not grieve for me, for now I'm free,
I'm following paths God made for me
I took his hand I heard him call
Then turned, and bid farewell to all*

- Anonymous

Samantha Adkins Named Youth of the Month for May



Samantha Adkins

The May 2018 Youth of the Month was Samantha Adkins. She just completed the 5th Grade at Mill Creek Elementary School in Madison, Alabama. She is a member of the Mill Creek Archery Team and has been a Girl Scout for six (6) years (K-5 grades). She received the Excellent Citizenship award and maintained an overall A/B average. Samantha was the 2nd Place Science Fair winner at Mill Creek and received honorable mention at the North Alabama Regional Science and Engineering Fair.

Samantha is very active at St. John AME Church where she is a member of the Children's Choir, Dance Ministry and attends Church School. Her hobbies are cooking, making hot glue creations such as bowls and purses, and crocheting.

Samantha is the daughter of Bobby and Kay Adkins.

Congratulations Samantha!



Samantha receives award from Pastor Wright and Rev. Rita

COMING SOON

MANCAVE

Men's Fellowship

A spot for mature brothers and young men to grow in God their way!

Seeking God, Sharing His Word and Strengthening Him up God our Way.



Soup Kitchen Ministry

Charlie Brooks

CREATED TO DO GOOD WORK!

"Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the work of truth."

2 Timothy 2:15

Our lives are not our own and yet God has given them into our hands. You are God's workmanship. You have been created in Christ Jesus for one purpose alone; for the good works that God planned especially for you before the beginning of time. It is God's plan that you walk in the life that He has planned and prearranged for your advantage. But the choice is still up to you. You can have it your way or God's way. You were created for good works and not for the works of the flesh or for the opinions of your emotions.

The good works that Christ planned for you before you were even born are more than reading a devotional book or listening to worship music. The good works that God had in mind when He thought of you were so glorious that He declared across the ages that you were His very own masterpiece.

God has had His eye on you since the beginning of time to do something extraordinary through your life that even the angels would stand back in wonder and long to do what you were ordered to do.

Our bimonthly Soup Kitchen can use your hands on the 3rd and 4th Tuesday of each month. Let the angels smile on you!!

"WORKING WITH GOD—if I can put one touch of any sunset into the life of any man or woman, I shall feel that I have worked with God."

-George MacDonald



Finances in your 30s...Here's what you should be doing.

By Brother Bobby Adkins II

Most folks in their 30s are already a good 10 years out of college, if not more so, and, as such have already gotten a taste of what it means to be a financially responsible adult. If you are in your 30s, here are a few milestones you will want to achieve during what could be the most pivotal decade of your career.



1. Establish a fully loaded emergency fund.

Last year, GOBankingRates.com reported that 69% of Americans have less than \$1,000 in the bank, and that statistic includes 30-somethings. Not only should you have reached the \$1,000 mark in savings by the time you hit 30, but you should also, ideally, have enough money stashed away at that point to cover three to six months of living expenses. If you do not already have an emergency fund, it should become your first priority above all else. You might need to make some lifestyle adjustments to free up more money for savings, but without that safety net, you will be opening yourself up to a world of debt or financial upheaval should you encounter an unplanned expense. And that is not what you want at this stage of life.

2. Get a handle on your debt.

Though the average borrower under 35 has about \$5,800 in credit card debt, the average borrower aged 35 to 44 has over \$8,200. But no matter what end of that spectrum you fall into, you should know that any sort of credit card debt really is not good. And the longer you carry that debt, the more money you will wind up wasting on interest at a time in your life when you could be putting that cash to better use, like building your savings. That is why your 30s are a great time to break free from debt – and that includes student debt, too. Look at your living expenses, cut a few corners, and start chipping away at whatever outstanding balances you owe. For the most part, it pays to knock out credit card debt before student debt because the former typically comes with higher interest charges, but if you borrowed for college from private lenders, your rates may be comparable.

3. Sign a mortgage.

Not everyone wants to become a homeowner, but if that is an objective of yours, you will ideally want to sign a mortgage by the time you reach your mid-30s. The reason? Most people who take out mortgages go with a 30-year loan. If you start by the time you are, say, 36, and you make all of your payments as scheduled, you will be mortgage-free by the time you retire. And that is a pretty big deal, because once you stop working and start living off a fixed income, you will need all the money you can get. Not having a mortgage payment to deal with as a senior could make for a more financially relaxed retirement, but if you wait until your 40s to buy a home, and take out a 30-year loan, you will be making payments well into your 70s.

4. Begin funding your retirement plan.

Though retirement might seem like a far-off goal, your 30s are actually the perfect time to start funding an account if you have not begun to do so already. That is because if you give yourself a long enough window to save, you will manage to turn a series of relatively modest contributions into a pretty sizable sum over time. Say you are 32 and start contributing \$400 a month to a retirement account. If your investments generate an average annual 7% return, which is a few points below the stock market's average, by the time you reach age 67, you will have a rather impressive \$663,000 to your name. Sock away \$600 a month, and, assuming the same time frame and return, you will be sitting on nearly \$1 million by the time retirement rolls around.

But watch what happens when you wait all your 40s to start saving those same amounts. If you begin contributing \$400 a

(Continued on page 13)

Student Recognitions for 2017-2018 School Year

Samantha Adkins, Mill Creek Elementary School: Excellent Citizenship, A/B Honor Roll, 2nd Place Science Fair Winner at Mill Creek.



Anthony Harbin, Meridianville Middle School: A Honor Roll for the entire school year, Superintendent

Physical Fitness Award, Certificate of Excellence Award for earning Highest Average in 4th Period Pre-AP Language Arts, Certificate of Excellence Award for earning Highest Average in 3rd Period Pre-AP Physical Science, inducted into the National Junior Honor Society.

Jessica Harbin, Lynn Fanning Elementary School: A Honor Roll for the entire school year, elected Student Ambassador, Huntsville Museum of Art Community Gallery Award.

Isaiah Wright, Huntsville Middle School: A Honor Roll for the entire school year.



Student honors information received after the publication of this issue will be included in the July issue.

The Mind-Body Connection: Maintain Mental and Physical Health

Bridget J. Floyd

Stress can be linked to poor health – mental and physical. Brief periods of stress are routinely faced by most people, but prolonged stress without sufficient coping strategies, can result in emotional illnesses such as anxiety and depression; and physical illnesses such as cardiovascular disorders, diabetes, digestive disorders, cancer, etc.

These disorders can negatively impact quality of life, and if not treated sufficiently and / or the stress is not reduced or mediated, death can result. Depression can result from chronic stress and chronic medical conditions can be associated with depression. Serious and prolonged depression can be associated with suicidal ideation and actions. Changes in appetite or sleep (increased or decreased), persistent sad feelings (beyond 'the blues'), feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness, guilt, loss of interest in things that once were enjoyable, are signs of depression. For a small percentage, suicidal ideation occurs. It is important to seek professional help, to not isolate or withdraw, as one might be inclined to do. There are psychologists and psychiatrists who can help, also mental health counselors.

Proper diet and exercise contribute to good mental and physical health. Proper nutrition from vegetables, fruit, fish, whole grains and avoiding food that is fried, high in fat, salt, sugar, and carbohydrates can support a healthy mind and body. Cravings for the problem foods can indicate that one is stressed, anxious or depressed – e.g. eating for comfort, due to boredom or habit, rather than due to hunger. Keep moving. Walking and swimming are good activities. Set aside the time to avoid plans that never reach fruition. Thirty minutes per day is recommended. Ten minutes of exercises, two to three times during the day, can break up the exercise, if preferred. Stretching can be helpful if aerobic exercise is not recommended.

Do not start or make changes in an exercise or diet regimen without consulting a physician.

Getting sufficient sleep (duration and quality) is another foundation component for good mental and physical health. The goal should be eight hours of sleep each night. Teens can benefit from nine to ten hours of sleep, and older individuals can suffice with six hours of sleep. Decrease stimulation of the brain near bedtime – have a routine to lower the lights, engage in calming activities/ quiet time which prepares the body

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Finances in your 30s...Here's what you should be doing.

By Bro. Bobby Adkins II

(Continued from page 12)

month to a retirement account at 42 and want to retire at 67, you will end up with just \$303,000 -- not at all shabby, but less than half of what you would amass by starting 10 years earlier. Similarly, that \$600 monthly contribution will leave you with \$455,000 in time for retirement -- a decent nest egg for sure, but nowhere close to the \$1 million mark. Your 30s offer a unique opportunity to set yourself up for a financially stable future. If you have yet to check the above milestones off your list, now is the time to reevaluate your priorities and start thinking long-term. You will be thankful for it later.

MUSIC & CHRISTIAN ARTS MINISTRY

2018 MCAM ELECTIONS

IGNITE GROWTH! | INSPIRE CHANGE! | IMPACT SERVICE!

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REV. MAURICE WRIGHT, II
SENIOR PASTOR
ST. JOHN AME CHURCH
HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

Rev. Maurice Wright, II

CANDIDATE FOR CONNECTIONAL DIRECTOR

Current Connectional Associate Director MCAM

Choral Directing Experience

- Harriett Tubman Middle School, Portland, Oregon
- Thomas Jefferson High School, Portland, Oregon
- Humboldt Elementary School, Portland, Oregon
- Fooding Director MLK Community Choir Portland, Oregon
- Big Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Atlanta, Georgia
- Martin Luther King Chapel Choir, Morehouse College Atlanta, Georgia

Minister of Music / Organist

- Bethel AME Church, Portland, Oregon
- United AME Church, Xenia, Ohio
- Powerhouse Temple Church, Portland, Oregon
- Philadelphia Community Church, Portland, Oregon

Vocal Experience

- Morehouse College Glee Club
- Atlanta Opera Company
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Choir
- Wendell Whalum Community Choir

Presiding Elder District Director

- South Birmingham Huntsville Beasomer District (9th Episcopal District)
- Phenix City District (9th Episcopal District)
- Alexandria Thibodaux District (8th Episcopal District)

Annual Conference Director

- Northeast Alabama Annual Conference (9th Episcopal District)
- Central North Louisiana Annual Conference (8th Episcopal District)

Degree in Voice and Conducting from Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia

Member of National Association of Negro Musicians (NANM)

Serves as a lecturer on Worship

Choral workshop facilitator

Founding Member of the Connectional Music Committee



REV. MYRON D. HILL
SENIOR PASTOR
CYPRESS CHAPEL AME
ABBEVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Rev. Myron D. Hill

CANDIDATE FOR CONNECTIONAL ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Current Connectional Parliamentarian MCAM

Special Education Teacher for the Greenwood School District 50 in South Carolina

Current Director of Music: Piedmont Annual Conference & Abbeville Greenwood District

Current President/Director: Greenwood (SC) Area Martin Luther King, Jr. Mass Choir

Musician: Turner Singer, Turner Theological Seminary, Atlanta, Georgia

Minister of Music: Flipper Temple AME Church, Atlanta, Georgia

Founder: Voices of Liberty Choir, Liberty Hill AME Church, Summerton, South Carolina

Founder: Allen W. Parrott Inspirational Choir, Williams Chapel AME Church, Orangeburg, South Carolina

Founder: Shulerville Community Youth Choir

Co-Founder (along with his father): Jamestown Shulerville Community Choir

Organist: Wesley AME Church, Shulerville, South Carolina

Age started playing piano: 8

OUR GOALS

1. INCREASE CONNECTIONAL MEMBERSHIP
2. INCREASE THE VITALITY OF MCAM IN EVERY EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
3. PROVIDE LITURGICAL DANCE, DRAMA AND MUSIC RESOURCES FOR CONGREGATIONS THROUGHOUT THE CONNECTION
4. CONTINUE TO PROMOTE AME ARTISTS



Church School Lesson Overview – July 2018

The lesson reviews were written by Willie Sandifer.

July 1, 2018

Lesson Title: Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

Lesson Scripture: Matthew 18:21-35

Print: Matthew 18:21-35

Devotional Songs: #355, #251, and #243

Key Verse: "Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?" (Matthew 18:33).

This lesson is a story to convey a fact and how it can be applied. The author of the commentary notes that anyone could have made up this parable about the questioned fact. It is also pointed out that the same truthful end would not have been reached because Scripture declares all judgment is given to the Son of God. So, Jesus could authoritatively say, "So likewise shall my heavenly father do" (Matt 18:35).

God is faithful and merciful to us. However, we can picture ourselves acting the way the unmerciful servant acted, as we hold folks accountable for every debt owed us. Whenever we choose not to forgive someone we are acting as the unmerciful servant acted.

Many of us follow the way we forgive those who have wronged us from the way baseball is played. The first wrong is strike one and we likely give a small warning. The second wrong is strike two and we likely give a stronger warning and a hard glance. The third wrong is strike three and the person who wronged us is out. We then want nothing else to do with that person.

July 8, 2018

Lesson Title: Jesus Criticizes Unjust Leaders

Lesson Scripture: Matthew 23

Print: Matthew 23:1-8; 23-26

Devotional Songs: #358, #272, and #243

Key Verses: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach" (Matthew 23:2-3).

In all His arguments, confrontations, and disagreements with the Jewish authorities and rulers of His day, nothing seemed to faze Jesus. The author of the commentary notes that this lesson records the strongest language that Jesus used against anyone. The scribes and Pharisees seemed to pull out the strongest and most negative reactions from

Him.

We learn that not everyone that is placed in authority is faithful to do what God calls them to do and we learn the importance of the positions of influence that God gives us and the responsibilities that come with those positions.

July 15, 2018

Lesson Title: The Widow and the Unjust Judge

Lesson Scripture: Luke 18:1-8

Print: Luke 18:1-8

Devotional Songs: #437, #258, and #243

Key Verses: "And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry out to him day and night?" (Luke 18:7a).

In this lesson the reputation of the one being petitioned is at risk. Although God is not like the crooked judge, there is a small amount of basis in that God will guard His reputation and justify Himself.

The widow's persistence in coming to him paid off; the judge decided to act in the widow's favor. We might get the idea that the secret to effective prayer is to just wear God down, like children sometimes do with their parents. We would then be guilty of praying like the heathen pray in thinking they will be heard for their speaking a whole lot.

We learn about God's will concerning a faithful prayer life. God desires that we continue to have a steadfast faith, even if results are not seen right away.

July 22, 2018

Lesson Title: Entering God's Kingdom

Lesson Scripture: Matthew 7:15-23; Luke 13:22-30

Print: Luke 13:22-30

Devotional Songs: #375, #77, and #243

Key Verses: "Strive to enter through the narrow door" (Luke 13:24).

The commentary alludes to Robert Frost in stating that sometimes the road that is less traveled is the best one to take. In this lesson Jesus described two roads that are very different from each other. The first road is very popular and easy to travel. It is wide and broad and is filled with many travelers. This road leads to absolute ruin. The second road is completely opposite from the first. It is narrow and compressed, making it hard to follow. Jesus taught His followers

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Church School Lesson Overview

(Continued from page 15)

that the narrow road is the road that leads to life.

It seems that every religion has a doctrine of heaven; where it is located, what it is, who gets to be there, and if it is forever. There are many imaginary concepts and ideas, however, only the Lord Jesus gives us truthful answers to these questions.

July 29, 2018

Lesson Title: Parable of the Great Dinner

Lesson Scripture: Luke 14:15-24

Print: Luke 14:15-24

Devotional Songs: #525, #77, and #243

Key Verses: "Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame" (Luke 14:21)

A lot of our social activities involve eating. The meal in Jesus' story was clearly a large occasion and very important to the host of this formal meal. The commentary points out that in many cultures, breaking bread with someone, or drinking with someone is to have a social bond with the other person. Many were invited to this supper and those invited were known to the host. The servant is sent out to bring in the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind. Each group was a social outcast. The house is still not full and the servant was sent out to bring in from the highways and hedges even more outcasts.

Church School meets each Sunday at 8:45 a.m. There are classes for all ages.

Summer Children's Church



Volunteers are needed for Summer Church. Summer Church is our new summer alternative to Children's Church. There will be outings, crafts and fun biblical

explorations that will ignite the love of Christ in our children ages 4-12.

Please email executivepastor@stjohnhuntsville.com for more information.



Church School Book Club

June 2018

Discussion Date: June 16, 2018

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Prayer Box, Wingate, 2013.

July 2018

Discussion Date: July 21, 2018

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Memory Keepers Daughter, Edwards, 2005.

This novel begins on a winter night in 1964, when a blizzard forces Dr. David Henry to deliver his own twins. His son, born first, is perfectly healthy, but the doctor immediately recognizes that his daughter has Down syndrome. For motives he tells himself are good, he makes a split-second decision that will haunt all their lives forever. He asks his nurse, Caroline, to take the baby away to an institution. Instead, she disappears into another city to raise the child as her own.

The Mind-Body Connection: Maintain Mental and Physical Health

Bridget J. Floyd

(Continued from page 13)

to rest and have restorative sleep. Without quality sleep, problems with attention, mood, as well as physical fatigue can occur.

Reducing/dealing with stress should be a constant focus. Suggestions include not only the above, but some coping strategies include:

Meditation or relaxation – deep breathing, calm music, imagining oneself in a calm setting, or accomplishing a goal.

Express feelings – Talk about feelings, do not keep them inside. Write/keep a journal. Draw feelings.

Do not be a perfectionist – Make your best effort. Manage expectations. Put things in perspective – How important will this be next year or in five years? Can things get better with time?

Focus on the positive – Spend time with people who are positive and supportive. Lessen criticism of self and others.

July 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 8:45a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship Communion Sunday	2 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	3	4 	5 6:00 p.m. Gospel Choir Rehearsal	6	7
8 8:45a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	9	10	11 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	12	13 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	14 10:30 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting
15 8:45a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	16	17 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	18	19	20 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	21
Ninth District CEC July 16-19, 2018 Troy, Alabama						
22 8:45a.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	28 10:00 VMS Meeting
29 8:45a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	30	31				

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, Interim Presiding Elder

The Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor

Important Dates to Remember

June 24, 2018	Men's Day, 10:00 a.m.
June 26-27, 2018	2018 Council of Bishops and General Board Meeting, Atlanta, Georgia
June 27-30, 2018	Connectional Christian Education and Youth Congress, Atlanta, Georgia
July 16-19, 2018	Ninth District Christian Education Congress, Troy University, 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*

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



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 23 Issue 7

July 2018

St. John AME Men's Day 2018

By Bro. Bobby Adkins

It was a day to rejoice and reflect on another spirit-filled year for the St. John AME Church, Sons of Allen, as the men hosted "Men's Day 2018" on June 24, 2018. Our theme for the program was "Men of Faith" with theme scripture gleaned from Proverbs 28:20, "A faithful man shall abound with blessings."

The service started with a burst of energy from the St. John Praise Team, as they opened with voices lifted to God and our Lord and Savior being praised with true and infectious emotion.

Brother Justin York led the congregation in the call to worship and inspired worshippers through prayer during the invocation. The Youth Ministry was well represented as young brothers Michael Clark and Anthony Harbin read scripture from Jeremiah 1:18 and 1 Peter 5:8-9. Having these young men supporting the program is a direct reflection of the desire to provide a platform for the youth to learn and prosper through their teen years and into adulthood.

Brother Bobby Adkins II presented the theme for the service, challenging the Brothers to be "Mighty Men of God". The scripture, 1 Timothy 6:11-12, which reads "But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, Godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses" served as the inspirational word of God.



The St. John Male Chorus



Program participants Justin York, Michael Clark, and Anthony Harbin



Brother Bill Williams



Brother Bobby Adkins

After reciting a number of incidents of racism in the community and across the nation, Brother Adkins looked back 30 years to the 1980's Hip Hop music group Public Enemy, by reciting lyrics from their hits "Don't Believe the Hype" and "Welcome to the Terrordome" as examples of what is going on in the nation's politics and the corrosive environment many live in as African-Americans.

Pastor Maurice Wright II presided over the service and preached from 2 Corinthians

(Continued on page 2)

St. John AME Men's Day 2018

By Bro. Bobby Adkins



Pastor Maurice Wright II preached a powerful message from 2 Cor. 13:5 entitled "Examine Yourselves."

(Continued from page 1)

13:5, with a sermon titled "Examine Yourselves". Pastor Wright stressed three key points during his sermon: (1) Real men are not afraid to look at themselves; (2) Real men are not afraid to change; and (3) Real men are changed by God. The classic hit "Man in the Mirror" performed by the late R and B/Pop Super Star Michael Jackson was referenced as Jackson states in the song "I'm starting with the Man in the Mirror." Pastor Wright, however, was quick to remind that we cannot do it alone. James 1:23-24 was also referenced for inspiration, with Pastor implying to "look in the mirror" and that the "mirror does not deceive." Pastor preached to us that "in order for us to be cleaned, we have to admit we are dirty": As David prayed in Psalm 51:10, "Create in me a clean heart." As per usual, Pastor Wright nailed the sermon and with the help of God, lifted the program to an amazing spiritual level.

Men's Day 2018 was an overwhelming success and we thank the Lord for the opportunity to worship and praise Him in the sanctuary and beyond. Hallelujah to the King of Kings!

Saint John AME Church "2018 Man of the Year"

By Bro. Bobby Adkins II



Pastor Wright presents award to Brother Johnson

Each year, under the leadership of Pastor Maurice Wright II, the men of St. John AME Church recognize a servant of God as the St. John AME "Man of the Year" during the annual Men's Day Service. This year's group of candidates reflected the highest qualities found in a "Man of God", with a variety of ministries and mission outreach being illuminated within the selection process. However, in the end, only one man was deemed to be "most worthy" of the title for 2018, and that was Brother Jesse Johnson.

Brother Johnson is a true reflection of a godly servant, with a spirit reflecting humility and committed service to St. John, as well as to the greater Huntsville community. Whether welcoming members into the sanctuary with a warm smile and hug on Sunday mornings, providing personal labor supporting church activities, delivering supplies around the community, or assisting with family moves using his trusty pick-up truck, Brother Jesse's selfless leadership and assistance are prime examples for others to follow.

Brother Johnson is a regular at church on Sunday's where he supports a number of ministry activities, and is an active participant in Church School, always seeking to learn more about the Lord through the studying of God's Word. He is also a member of the Trustee Board.

Brother Johnson is a friend to many and offers a hand and smile to all. It is with great pleasure that St John recognizes his accomplishments as the 2018 St. John Man of the Year. **Congratulations Brother Johnson!** Your dedication and sacrifice to the Lord's calling is well deserving of this special recognition.

Men's Day "After Party" 2018

By Bro. Bobby Adkins II

To conclude a packed Men's Month schedule, the St. John AME Sons of Allen met at the pastor's residence after Men's Day to relax and enjoy a great fellowship, with a cook out and plenty of fun activities. After a long day that started with Church School and the Annual Men's Day Program, it was great to change clothes, relax, and listen to some good music and watch movies. After getting filled with spiritual food at the Men's Day Program, our bellies were then filled with some fantastic food, to include catered barbeque ribs and deep-fried catfish, cooked on the spot by St. John's esteemed chef, Brother David Russ, with assistance from Brother Anthony Fears.



Incredibles 2 was playing on the Big Screen. A good movie and a good meal, all in one spot.

For fun, the fellas broke out the "bones" for a game of dominoes, and dropped the jokers, with several games of spades. For those seeking a more intense strategy, the chess masters hit the table and some even played checkers and UNO, for those who are challenged.

Gentlemen, both young and old, showed up and had a fabulous time in fellowship. There is nothing quite like having the brothers hang together in fellowship and in spirit. A big thanks to Pastor Wright and First Lady "Reverend Rita" for opening their beautiful home on the hill, to the men. It was a blessing to remember.



Bro. David Russ and Bro. Anthony Fears (rear) showed off their cooking skills to prepare some amazing catfish.



The food was fantastic!



Anyone for a game of spades? Check out the concentration.



These gentlemen possess some serious skill on the table.

St. John AME Men's Breakfast

By Bro. Bobby Adkins II

On Saturday, June 16, 2018, the St. John AME Church Sons of Allen Ministry sponsored a "Men's Breakfast" at the Golden Corral on University Drive in Huntsville. The gathering was a great opportunity for the Sons of Allen Ministry to share in fellowship and team spirit. In addition, and to add to a spirit of sharing, the men opened the door for families to attend, which created an exciting opportunity for sisters and youth to come out and join them for a good meal and great fellowship.



Sons of Allen Breakfast Fellowship at Golden Corral on University Dr. Huntsville.

After an opening prayer, the group engaged in some very thoughtful conversations, with each person learning something new about the attendees. The small groups allowed for more intimate dialogue and meaningful periods of reflection. Whether young or old, new to Christ or a seasoned saint, the breakfast provided an opportunity for members to converse in a relaxed environment.

The Golden Corral staff was engaged and spirited, with one waitress acknowledging familiarity with St. John AME and asking for the men to pray for her mother and family. Yes, the Holy Spirit was present and moving. This was the second breakfast held by the men this year, and the participation illustrated the real value of communing together away from church, and in the spirit of love.

A big thanks to Pastor Maurice Wright II, Pastor/Teacher, for supporting the men and participating in the event. His leadership and exceptionalism are greatly appreciated and inspired the men to a higher calling of service.



Young and old, new to Christ or seasoned saint, the brothers were engaged in meaningful conversation,

Pastor Wright Preaches at The Twenty-Seventh Annual Brotherhood Day Celebration

By B. Johnson



The Reverend Jermain Turner and Pastor Wright

Theme: "Godly men Given the Power, Love, and Self-discipline by the Spirit of God" ...II Timothy 1:7

The Reverend Maurice Wright, II and the St. John AME congregation were invited to Pine Grove Missionary Baptist Church for the Twenty-Seventh Annual Brotherhood Day Celebration. Members of the Pine Grove Missionary Baptist Church Brotherhood opened the worship service with a greeting, prayer and scripture readings. The St. John AME Church Choir provided the musical selections; "God's Grace" with Sister Rosemary Wells as soloist, "He Keeps on Blessing Me," and "We've Come to Worship Him." Presiding Elder (Ret.) Oliver Allen eloquently introduced the Reverend Maurice Wright, II to the congregation. The Reverend Wright greeted everyone in the AME tradition then went right into an opening prayer followed by, singing "Father I Stretch My Hands to Thee." The chosen scripture was I Kings 18, beginning at verse 41.

And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go, eat, and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain." So Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Mt. Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees. "Go and look toward the sea," he told his servant. And he went up and looked. "There is nothing there he said." Seven times Elijah said, "Go back." The seventh time the servant reported, "A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea." So Elijah said, "Go and tell Ahab, "Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you." Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain started falling and Ahab rode off to Jezreel. The power of the Lord came on Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel. I Kings 18:41-46

The Reverend Wright expounded on the sermon topic, *"In Spite of the Forecast, God is Working Behind the Scenes."* The sermon was opened with a prophetic question, "Have you ever listened to the weather forecast and prepared for what was told, only to go outside and find that what they told you was wrong?" Everything is subject to change because God is still in control. Sometimes there are sunny days. Those are the days when we walk around singing, "Showers of Blessings." And then there are the days when you feel like you are in a spiritual drought, when you cannot seem to make the ends meet. There is sickness in the family; more bills than money. The Good news is that regardless of what things may feel like, regardless of how things may look, even when you feel like God is not around, in spite of the forecast, God is in control and He is working behind the scenes. God is saying, I am checking out to see if you are still going to sing, "How Great is Our God" when your lights get turned off. As Christians we can be reassured that even when the enemy tries to cloud our minds with doubt, God has our back. But the question is what will we do? Will we keep singing, praying, and trusting God for a miracle or will we walk away and do things our own way?

In the scripture, the text is dealing with Elijah and his commitment to God and God's commitment to Elijah to do what He said He would do. Elijah had prayed a simple prayer and God had sent down a fire to prove that there was a true and living God. The land had been languishing under a drought. The Bible says that there had been no rain. The people had repented and it was time for God to send down the rain. Elijah had heard that the rain was coming. Elijah stood on the promise of God.

Three key points were lifted from this sermon. First, God knows the forecast before it gets to us. Even though we do not see it, we can trust God. Believers are not controlled by the universe. The safest place you can be is in the hands of God. If God knows the forecast, then God also knows how to take care of us. Secondly, it is no time to quit. This is

(Continued on page 14)

The 28th Connectional Christian Education & Youth Congress (CEC) Experience!

By Pamela Whitehead

The Reverend Maurice Wright, II Elected Connectional Director of MCAM



"do justice, love kindness, walk humbly with your God"



Pastor Wright at MCAM

The 28th Connectional CEC which was held June 28th-30th, in Atlanta, GA, greatly surpassed every possible expectation! The convergence of clergy and laypersons from across the Connection created a familiar energy of high-praise and worship, soul-stirring preaching, information exchange, creativity, and elevated social consciousness in a way that reminds of the godly mandate to not only engage in communities through awareness, but to also address the ills of society through action; hence the theme, "Walking Woke". The reverberating question throughout the conference was, "What does God require?" Micah 6:8 overtly answers the question as "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (NIV). This keystone verse was the foundation of nearly every worship service, meeting, session, and learning lab presented during the conference.

The Connectional CEC, under the leadership of the Reverend Dr. Garland F. Pierce, Connectional Director of Christian Education, was conducted with spiritual and professional excellence. The ease of registration and availability of both, digital and printed information, catered to the broad cross-section of intergenerational conference attendees. The conference began with a powerful opening plenary by the keynote speaker, the

Reverend Dr. Obery Hendricks followed by Bishop McKinley Young, Senior Bishop, who preached the opening worship service. The spirit of the morning carried over into the afternoon where there were a variety of learning labs that ranged from church school curriculum, worship arts, health, outreach, communication, technology, ecological justice and more.

The kindred spirit of unity was evident as attendees were "Walking Woke"



The 28th Connectional Christian Education & Youth Congress (CEC) Experience!

By Pamela Whitehead

dressed in black to take a stand in solidarity against gender-based violence (<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/get-involved/thursdays-in-black>). The impact of the social focus of the day was simply outstanding and served as the perfect gateway into an elegant presentation of the Christian Debutantes and Masters Class of 2018 where young people from across the Connection who have participated in their respective district's program were recognized. It was evident that these young people, with God's continued blessings and favor, are well on their way to taking up the mantle of Christian leadership for our Zion.

Fast forward...attendees walked into Friday energized by the musical mix played by BET's DJ Suave Burgandy. All were set and ready to engage in a panel-led discussion on social justice. At the sound of hearing Kendrick Lamar's popular song "Alright", this writer's initial thoughts were, oh my, this is a bit "edgy" for church. However, this is the essence of "Walking Woke". There must be a realization of the need to be open to new approaches and strategies that will increase the visibility of problems in communities so that the church can better address the ills of society. "Alright" is a popular mainstream song that provides reassurance that despite what has happened, is



happening, or will happen, "we gon' be alright" as its lyrics state. This song is an authentic and unpretentious description of the current state of Black America while paradoxically serving as a powerful hip-hop proclamation of hope for a better day. Christians know that their hope rests in Christ Jesus and it is only because of Him that they are and will continue to "be alright."

The day continued with more learning labs, an Hour of Power Worship Service, ministry meetings, and elections. The highlight of the day for St. John AMEC-Huntsville was the Music and Christian Arts Ministry (MCAM) meeting and elections. As St. John places a heavy emphasis on the worship arts in its weekly services, more than 60 persons traveled to the Connectional CEC to engage in growth and enrichment opportunities. It was a wonderful time of fellowship and development as many of the St. John members participated in multiple workshops. In addition to all that was learned and experienced, the paramount moment of the conference for St. John AMEC - Huntsville was when Pastor Maurice Wright, II was certified as the newly elected Connectional Director of MCAM and the Reverend Myron Hill as Associate Connectional Director. In a previous interview with Pastor Wright, he shared,

"I feel strongly about meaningful worship and offering our best to God. The arts department in our churches is moving forward in every way. I want to help to facilitate the positive direction and provide leadership so we will never be able to say that MCAM is the best kept secret."

The office and members of St. John AMEC-Huntsville pray that God will strengthen and sustain Pastor Wright as he continues to be obedient to the Spirit and do all that God requires of him in his new position. We pray God's continued favor upon Pastor and Rev. Rita as they embark upon this new dimension of their journey.

****For more highlights and pictures from the Connectional CEC, you are invited to visit the church's Facebook page at STJOHNAME HSV.**



July 6, 2018

Dear MCAM Family,

We are immensely grateful to our family, friends and loyal supporters who so graciously embraced our campaign for Director and Associate Director of the Music & Christian Arts Ministry of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Your words of encouragement, contributions, but most importantly, your prayers will never be forgotten.

Our prayer is that God will be pleased with the work done through this ministry and that this ministry will continue to transform lives, serve our church and most importantly, glorify God!

Again, we are deeply humbled and genuinely appreciative for your support during the campaign. We look forward to you joining with us in ministry as we give Him the glory and edify the people of God.

In His Service,

Rev. Maurice Wright, II
Director, MCAM

Rev. Myron D. Hill
Associate Director, MCAM

"Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!" -Psalm 95:2

South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer Church School Convention "Encouraging, Empowering and Engaging the People of God"

By Thalia Love

The 9th Episcopal District-Northwest Conference, South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer District Church School Convention was held June 8-9, 2018. Friday night's service was hosted by the Reverend Anne Faush and Allen Temple, Bessemer. After the opening of the convention by Presiding Elders Oliver Allen and Myers Hawkins, Sr., Mr. Hodges Washington, St. John—Huntsville, gave an overview of the church school lesson. The lesson was followed by Bible Bowl, whereby teams entered answers via electronic devices. St. John—Huntsville handily secured first place in the Bible Bowl games.

After the Bible Bowl, there was more technology and brain work as Dr. Chris Crawford, Jr. Assistant Professor in the College of Engineering and Computer Science at the University of Alabama and Dr. France Jackson, a User Experience Researcher for Intel Corp presented a hands-on demonstration of their doctoral work through a BRAIN-ROBOT Workshop. By measuring brain activity, two volunteers were able to fly a drone using brain waves rather than a remote. Drs. Crawford and Jackson may have recruited a slew of students into STEM programs with their exciting work.

Attorney Ida Tyree Hyche, the District Coordinator, and Mr. Willie Sandifer, District Superintendent, presented awards for the poster contest winners. After repast, Bishop Harry L. Seawright led the worship service.



The worship service concluded with the consecration of four Deaconesses: Mrs. Gwendolyn Baldwin, Mrs. Charlsie Brooks, Mrs. Mary Powers, and Mrs. Eva Smith—all from St. John—Huntsville.

Saturday's activities began with a Celebration of Life for the late Presiding Elder Albert Lee Hezekiah Hyche at the Daniel Payne Community Plaza. In keeping with the late elder's wishes, the Church School Picnic, with food and fellowship, was held immediately following the service.

Four women from St. John were consecrated Deaconesses in the AME Church during the Friday worship service. Pictured above are Pastor Wright, Deaconesses Charlsie Brooks, Mary Powers, Eva Smith, Gwendolyn Baldwin and Bishop Harry Seawright.

Vacation Bible School Focused on Kingdom Building

By Thalia Love



Members of all ages enjoyed Vacation Bible School.

Vacation Bible School was a time for building at St. John AME—Huntsville. The St. John family celebrated with the theme, "Jesus the Kingdom Builder." The scripture for the week was from Hebrews 11: 10— *For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.* Helping to build were the Preschool Builders, led by Mrs. Kay Adkins; the Primary Carpenters, led by Ms. Shelby Washington and Mrs. Pamela Whitehead; the Junior Contractors, led by Ms. Patrice Holland; the Teen Architects, led by Mr. Bobby Adkins; the Young Adult City on a Hill Builders, led by Sister Karmen Latimore and Brother Justin York; and the Adult City on a Hill Builders, led by Sister Lillie Rivers and Mr. Hodges Washington.

"Build on Jesus"

The lessons for the week covered all aspects of kingdom building. Monday's lesson from Matthew 7:24-27 was "Build on Jesus". Tuesday's lesson was "Building Strong Families" from Genesis 17:5-9. Wednesday night's lesson was "Building God's House" from Exodus 25:1-9, and the week closed out with "Building Tomorrow Today" from Joshua 24:13-15.

The committees all did an excellent job. A special thank you to Mrs. Donna Gullatte and Mrs. Mary Rankin for "constructing" the decorations for the classrooms. Mrs. Lorraine Parham and Ms. Lula Rochelle made sure everyone was registered. Dr. Abreeotta Williams and Mrs. Cheryl Anderson were site coordinators for creative building crafts. Mr. Earl Fitchard made sure there were fun outdoor games. Mrs. Stephanie Scott and the Kitchen Ministry provided nutritious foundation laying meals to begin each evening. Mr. Darwin Washington captured the events in picture and provided media services. The Christian Education department gives special thanks to Pastor Maurice Wright, II and First Lady, the Reverend Joretha Wright for their leadership and support.

Vacation Bible School Focused on Kingdom Building

By Thalia Love



Habitat for Humanity 2018 Build



There is still time to participate in the Spring 2018 Habitat House project. Each year St. John partners with Habitat for Humanity and churches in the community to build a house. Members are encouraged to volunteer on any of the dates listed.

2018 SPRING BUILD UPDATED SCHEDULE

Partner Family: Shaniqua Gaillard, Building site: 6125 Belgrade Dr.

2018 SPRING BUILD SCHEDULE

Partner Family: Shaniqua Gaillard, Building site: 6125 Belgrade Dr.

DATES	DAYS	TASKS
June 5, 7, 9	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Continue vinyl siding, (<u>plumbing and electrical rough-in by others</u>)
June 12, 14, 16	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Caulk openings, install wall insulation, continue vinyl siding
July 24, 26, 28	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Install interior doors, baseboard, window trim, cabinets
July 31, Aug 2, 4	Tue., Thur., Sat.	(<u>Plumbing, finish electrical and HVAC by others</u>), Hardware Door stops, closet shelving, blinds
Aug 7, 9, 11	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Landscape, touch up paint, clean and wax floors, work Punch list
Aug. 14, 16, 18	Tue., Thur., Sat.	Catch-up (Dedication to be announced)

The schedule is contingent on weather and subcontractors. We will work 7:30 AM to noon. No lunches will be provided.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS:

From North Memorial Pkwy, go west on Winchester Road. At the bottom of the hill, turn right onto Belgrade Dr. Go to 6125 Belgrade (on the left side of the street).

Ms. Tami McGhee is the coordinator for St. John. Please contact her if you have any questions.



A Tribute To Presiding Elder Albert Lee Hezekiah Hyche

"A MAN ON A MISSION"



The Reverend Albert Lee Hezekiah Hyche was a man of commitment, courage, and a strong character destined for greatness and success.

Elder Hyche's character was most consistently identified by regarding him as a disciple of Jesus Christ and committed to carrying out his prophetic duties.

Elder Hyche accepted Christ as his Savior early in his life and in 1976 was Ordained in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. It was then that He accepted the challenge to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus becoming "A Man on a Mission of Ministry" for over 41 years.

In 1997, Elder Hyche was elevated to Presiding Elder of the Birmingham-Florence District. He also served the Montgomery-Selma District. At the time of his death, he was serving the South-Birmingham-Huntsville-Bessemer District. Elder Hyche was an organizer, a leader, and a lover of the church. He established many organizations throughout the church and community.

Elder Hyche's religious faith became a recognizable influence at the time of his illness as his zeal for unadulterated worship and administration exposed him as a wise man on a mission of ministry.

When it came to dealing with some situations, especially his health, the task was exceedingly difficult, but Elder Hyche just said bring it on, and he tightened up his boot straps and faced them head-on. The most critical episode of Hezekiah's career was the trials that he faced in his last days of his sickness and disease that cut him off not only from family and hope of life, but from association with men and women and access to the sanctuary. His illness seemed to endanger the goals of his ministry and mission, but Elder Hyche held on to his faith and for this reason he was regarded as a man of deep commitment and courage. If this reminds you of another great "Man on a Mission", that is my intent.

The death of Elder Hyche crowned a consistent character of strength and spiritual steadfastness that unveiled the greatness of a man that Paul spoke of when he said "I fought a good fight, I kept the faith, I finished my course". Elder Hyche was the husband of Attorney Ida Tyree Hyche for over 34 years, a loving father and grandfather.

Thank you Elder, for a job well done!

*"His lord said unto him,
Well done, good and faithful servant;
thou hast been faithful over a few things,
I will make thee ruler over many things:
enter thou into the joy of thy lord."*

Matthew 25:23

Kelson Hill Named Youth of the Month for June



Leonard Pastor Wright

Kelson J. Hill was named Youth of the Month for June. He is a member of the St. John YPD and Youth Choir. He enjoys playing video games, hanging out with friends and staying away from his sometimes annoying big sister. His favorite foods are macaroni and cheese and tacos. Kelson has an infectious smile and likes to laugh, as well as make others laugh; sometimes even getting in trouble for doing so.

Kelson is active in sports, plays football, basketball and baseball for the Huntsville Eastern League. He has made the baseball All-Star team the last 2 years, as well as being an All-Star for the 8U basketball team this past season.

In addition to having perfect attendance, he made all 4's and one 3 this past academic year. His favorite subjects are math and reading. He is part of GATE, Gifted and Talented Education Program, of Huntsville City Schools. He scored in the 99 and 94 percentiles on STAR testing for math and reading, respectively.

Kelson is a rising 4th grader at Hampton Cove Elementary School. He is the son of Marcus and Angela Hill and the brother of Martinee.

Pine Grove Brotherhood Service

By B. Johnson

(Continued from page 5)

not the time to sit down. There is always some work to do. Ahab went up... He did not sit down. Elijah teaches us today that a child of God's work is never done. And finally, whatever you do, do not stop praying. Elijah cast himself on the earth and started to talk with God. This is the time when Christians need to pray. Keep on praying, knowing that God is listening; keep on praying knowing that God is working behind the scenes; keep on praying when He says "no". Keep on praying even when you do not see the rain. ***In spite of the forecast God is working behind the scenes***

Worship closed with prayer at the altar. The Reverend Jermain Turner, the pastor of Pine Grove Missionary Baptist Church, thanked the Reverend Wright and the St. John congregation for a wonderful worship experience.



Soup Kitchen Ministry

Charlie Brooks

WORSHIP THAT GLORIFIES GOD

"Come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord our maker, for he is our God." Psalm 95:6 NLT

God created us to worship and has placed this inclination in every human heart. If people do not worship their Creator, they will focus their devotion on something or someone else. That is why there are so many religions in the world.

As Christians, we may assume that since ours is the God of the Bible, He must be pleased with our worship of Him. The Old Testament was very specific regarding the ways in which the Lord gave very direct instructions about how to approach Him. Although we now have direct access to the Father through the Son, we must still be careful to worship Him in ways that glorify Him—whether or not they please us.

If we wish to Worship Him in Truth, we must do more than "Lip Service". When our hearts are far from God, we may go through the routines of worship without meaning anything we say or sing. Or, we have the "Wrong Focus". If we come simply to have a satisfying emotional experience, we have missed the point. Worship is about honoring, reverencing and adoring God with our whole being—mind, will, and heart.

Finally, we as followers and worshipers of Jesus Christ, our lives must include the verbal sharing of our love of Jesus. We have to attempt to live our lives as Jesus. Show people what He looked like. How He reached out and touched poor people. He reached out to all.

Not only do we worship and Praise, but we show in non-verbal ways the Love of Christ, the way we treat people in poverty, the way you treat a neighbor, the way you look out for somebody's concerns beyond just yourself. St. John's Soup Kitchen, serving each 3rd and 4th Tuesday of the month offers you a great potential to point people to Christ and worship while serving. God bless you and please come and serve.

"The Church isn't just about a worship experience and focus on self. It's about others." Mihalis Lisikakis

Money Milestones: This is how your finances should look in your 40s

By Brother Bobby Adkins II

I have been investing for over three decades and have understood the fundamentals of investing for many years. That being said, I did not really "get it" until my mid-30s and later as I approached 40 years old, having recently retired from the military. Though I had saved monthly, I had not disciplined myself well enough to "maximize my savings opportunities", believing I needed to achieve a certain level of income. What did I not get? Well, my mindset was "I don't make enough to save enough." See, I had a specific dollar figure in mind. That was the wrong mindset. Finance professionals have long held that savings should not be based on what we make, it should be based on what percentage of our income we choose to save. Setting specific goals and establishing the ideal portion of your income to place into savings is the key. Planning for retirement means establishing goals and becoming disciplined in meeting those savings objectives. As we continue the "decades series", let's take a look at the prime earning years, the 40s.



In a January 5, 2018 article, on the website MarketWatch.com, Alessandra Malito, a finance writer, writes, "The 40s decade is a critical time for retirement savings, as it is likely when a person will reach their peak income and can make a dent in their long-term goals if they haven't yet begun to do so." For a 40-year-old with nothing saved for retirement, putting away \$650 a month (about 15% of a \$50,000 salary) can get them \$1 million in retirement savings by age 67, according to calculations on personal finance personality [Dave Ramsey's website](#).

Per an article published on January 5, 2018 on MarketWatch.com, maximizing earnings should be a main focus in your 40s, experts said. This includes negotiating salaries, [asking for raises](#) or finding additional income. If a salary is not enough to support your lifestyle and retirement savings, there are two additional options: The first, create or look over your budget and see what can be cut — the second, consider a [side hustle](#), said Jill Cornfield, who writes about retirement for personal finance site [Bankrate.com](#). You can start with a hobby or build a mini business and eventually make that side gig a full-time job if you like. Regardless, saving as much as you can is important.

Your 40s are also the time to begin using various types of accounts for retirement funds, said Patrick Amey, a financial adviser at advisory firm KHC Wealth Management Services in Overland Park, Kansas. Max out employer-sponsored retirement accounts, such as a 401(k) or 403(b) plan, and use Roth Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs). The third option is a taxable investment account, that they can use in the early years of their retirement as their tax-deferred accounts (the first two types) continue to grow. Cornfield said a good estimate is stashing away 8% to 12% of your salary, whereas Amey said anywhere from 10% to 15%.



Sticking to a plan is also key to having a comfortable amount of assets when it is time to retire, something Joe Mecca, a 40-year-old marketing manager at Coastal Federal Credit Union in Raleigh, N.C. has done, he said. Even when finances were tight — such as student loans, auto loans and at one point his dual-income household becoming a single-income household — he remained steadfast on contributing to his future's funds, knowing the money would grow to his benefit. He did admit it would have been easier to stop contributions, so he could have more cash flow every paycheck, though. "I had to have faith in the system," he said. "Even as I was going through different life changes I have always trusted the

(Continued on page 17)

Kaitlyn McClung Receives Another Scholarship

By Adrienne Pope-Kelly Washington



Kaitlyn at Redstone Federal Credit Union Scholarship Banquet

On June 21, 2018, during the Redstone Federal Credit Union Scholarship Banquet, Kaitlyn McClung was awarded yet another substantial scholarship based on her academic achievements and an essay that discussed the advantages and disadvantages of face to face communication in the digital social age.

A junior English Major at Alabama A and M University, she is the recipient of a full-tuition Academic Merit Scholarship and band scholarship. With a 4.0 GPA, Kaitlyn is presently a member of the Honors Program, Marching Maroon and White Band, Honors Program Debate Team, English Club, Poetry Club, Pre-Alumni Association, and more. An active member of these organizations and her church, she frequently volunteers and serves her community, exemplifying her University motto "Service is Sovereignty."

Her academic achievement and service have earned her four additional outside scholarships, resulting in a "full ride" for the 2018-2019 academic school year. She is a two-time recipient of both the Alabama A and M University National Alumni Association Scholarship and the Huntsville/Madison County Association Scholarship. The National Alumni Association Scholarship Reception was held on May 5, 2018.

On April 7, 2018, Kaitlyn received a scholarship during the Alabama A and M First Lady Scholarship luncheon. She is now a part of a select group of students known for volunteering their time and talent in service, not only to the university but the surrounding community.

Upon graduating from Alabama A and M University, Kaitlyn plans to continue to serve her community as an attorney and owner of a non-profit. She plans to own a nation-wide chain of art-based community centers with emotional and educational counseling for creative and underserved teenagers. Kaitlyn says the combination of community, family, and faith has encouraged her to live according to her favorite quote by Maya Angelou: "My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style."

Kaitlyn is the daughter of Ms. Kathryn Dulaney.

Kennedy Harris Receives Multiple Honors from Tuskegee University



Kennedy Harris attends Tuskegee University where she was selected as the 2017 College of Arts and Sciences Spotlight student; inducted into Sigma Alpha Pi and Sigma Xi Honor Societies; recognized as a University Honors Convocation Scholar and elected upcoming Junior Class Vice President.

Kennedy is currently participating in the Gateways to The Laboratory Summer Program at Cornell University in Manhattan, NY where she is dually conducting biomedical research as a NIH NIDDK STEPUP intern.

Kennedy is the daughter of Reginald and Yvonne Sanderson and the sister of Robyn Sanderson.

Student Recognitions for 2017-2018 School Year



Robyn Sanderson finished the year with all "A" Honor Roll and represented her school at the Madison County Regional Spelling Bee.

Robyn successfully bridged to Junior level in Girl Scouts and participated in AYSO soccer.

Money Milestones: This is how your finances should look in your 40s

By Bro. Bobby Adkins II

(Continued from page 13)

plan."

So, if you are in your 40s and have not established a long-term savings plan, it is not too late. Websites such as MarketWatch.com and MotleyFool.com offer a variety of retirement planning tools, at no cost to you, as well as access to many highly recommended investment portfolios and accounts. Again, it is never too late to plan for the future.



Ninth Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church

The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright, Presiding Prelate

The Reverend Sherita Seawright, Episcopal Supervisor

2018 Annual Conference Schedule

9th Session of the Alabama River Region Annual Conference

August 18 – WMS & YPD Annual Conference

August 21-24, 2018

Browns Chapel AME Church, The Reverend Leodis Strong, Host Pastor

410 Martin Luther King Avenue, Selma, Alabama 36703

9th Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference

September 1 – WMS & YPD Annual Conference

September 4-7, 2018

Daniel Payne Community Plaza

1500 Daniel Payne Drive, Birmingham, Alabama 35214

9th Session of the Southeast Alabama Annual Conference

September 15 – WMS & YPD Annual Conference

September 18-21, 2018

Greater St. Paul AME Church, The Reverend Elijah Shafah, Host Pastor

608 E. Academy Street, Troy, Alabama 36081

9th Session of the Northeast Alabama Annual Conference

September 29 – WMS & YPD Annual Conference

October 2-5, 2018

Washington Chapel AME Church

2508 W. Montgomery Road, Tuskegee, Alabama 36088

Hosted by "Consortium of Bullock County Churches"

9th Session of the Southwest Alabama Annual Conference

October 13 – WMS & YPD Annual Conference

October 16-19, 2018

Host to be determined.

2019 Planning Meeting &

150th Celebration of the AME Church in Alabama

November 1-3

St. John AME Church, The Reverend Roosevelt Williams, III, Host Pastor

807 Madison Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama 36104

Renaissance Montgomery Hotel & Spa

201 Tallapoosa Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36104

Ninth Episcopal District Office

1500 Daniel Payne Drive, Birmingham, Alabama 35214

205.326.4499 (office) – 205.326.4434 (fax)

www.ninthamechurch.org

Church School Lesson Overview – August 2018

The lesson reviews were written by Brother Kenneth Parham.

August 5, 2018

Lesson Title: God's Justice

Lesson Scripture: Romans 2:1-16

Print: Romans 2:1-12

Key Verse: "But glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows us no partiality." Romans 2:10-11

Upon reflecting on this lesson, the reviewer noted the theme of man's mistreatment towards his fellow man. For some reason it seems that man must have status over another and thusly, man has to label another man with labels that magnify the morale weakness of the one being looked down upon. We are shown this when we encounter the scriptural account of the woman at the well being accused of adultery by those who also had some morale deficiencies of their own (John 8:3-11).

Even though man's morale deficiencies have levels of degradation, we are reminded that there is no "greater sin" (sin is sin) and we all fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Paul reminds us to be careful in passing judgement. For in doing so, this lesson highlights that we are casting damnation upon our own souls. And if we follow the teaching of Jesus (Matthew 7:3-5), we will first be able to perform a self-examination of our own selves to remove the plank in one's own eye and then being able to clearly see and help remove the dust in our brother's eye. Paul reminds us that God is a just God and repays according to each of our deeds. That is, God will give eternal life to those patiently doing good and seeking his glory and honor and immortality. And for those who are self-absorbed not caring about truth but seeking wickedness, God will reward with wrath and fury.

August 12, 2018

Lesson Title: Global Economic Justice

Lesson Scripture: 2 Corinthians 8:9

Lesson Print: 2 Corinthians 8:7-15

Key Verse: "For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich." 2 Corinthians 8:9

It has been established by consensus that the United States is the most (blessed) richest nation on the face of the earth. It is also noted that Americans are the most benevolent in

the world. If there is a heart wrenching cry for assistance, Americans are usually the first to reach deep within their pockets contributing locally as well as internationally. America demonstrates how compassionate a nation it is on a constant basis.

Yet in the lesson text, we see Paul exploring the concept of being eager and willingly to come to the aid of those who have less. In his letter to the Corinthians, he indicates that the project that they started should be completely and with zeal. Paul notes that Jesus who was rich gave up all to become poor in order that we may become rich. Paul reminds the Corinthians that out of love Jesus gave all. And in the spirit of true love, those having much, without pressure, should be willing to give to the less fortunate and those with little will be more than willing to accept from those who have much. Paul reminds us in closing that this is simply a fair balance of nature — "the one having much did not have too much and the one who had little did not have too little (verse 15)."

August 19, 2018

Lesson Title: Loving and Just Behavior

Lesson Scripture: Romans 12:9-21

Lesson Print: Same

Key Verse: "Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold just to what is good." Romans 12:9

We have all been taught the second greatest commandment that is "...love thy neighbor as thyself (Mark 12:31) ..." But has each one of us really pondered what it truly means to love thy neighbor. The reviewer believes that this lesson provides a valid roadmap to reach that end.

The lesson indicates that we should be compassionate towards and actively engage in the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of our fellow man. Paul, in verses 12-21, identifies many noted Christian characteristics that define what it means to actively engage. The following are noted: having a generous spirit — be willing to give to the saints and poor and to show hospitality to strangers; having a compassionate spirit — be willing to rejoice and cry with others, and to be there for others during their times of trials; having a humble and meek spirit — remember God gives talents to man in many areas so do not think you are better than another; and above all, having a forgiving spirit — forgive and forget wrongs done to you and remember that vengeance is for God.

(Continued on page 20)

Church School Lesson Overview

(Continued from page 19)

August 26, 2018

Lesson Title: Practicing Justice

Lesson Scripture: Ephesians 4:25 – 5:2; Colossians 3:1-17

Lesson Print: Colossians 3:5-17

Key Verse: "As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience." Colossians 3:12

In consulting the Life Application Study Bible, the following comments are being offered in the review. In this lesson, Paul writes to the newly converts of Colossae. He lets them know that following Christ is a lifetime commitment. He let them know that in order to follow Christ which is a life-long journey one must give up the old self (i.e. earthly morals - impurity, passion, evil, anger, wrath, slander and abusive language); and to put on new God-fearing morals (love, kindness, humility, meekness, forgiveness and patience). He also indicates that the newly converted must guard the tongue and do not spread lies against one another for lies bring about separation and is also a pathway back to the old self (old morals).

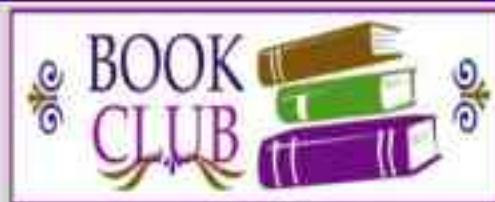
Paul also indicates that along this new walk, God favors no nationality, race, educational or social standing, wealth, religion or power. Christ breaks down all barriers and accepts all ("... Christ is all and is in all...") and during this new journey they are commanded to teach and admonish one another in wisdom with gratitude in one's heart exemplified by the singing of hymns, psalms and spiritual songs to God. Paul closes the letter by indicating that whatever we do (in word or deed) do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Date Night

All couples are invited out on July 27, 2018 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Clubhouse at 101 Legacy Drive SW, Madison, Alabama to partake in learning to Line Dance. The price is \$7 per person.

Light refreshments will be served.

Please see the Norwoods, the Millers, or the Scotts (Hosts) for more information.



Church School Book Club

August 2018

Discussion Date: August 18, 2018
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Cross Roads, Young, 2013.

September 2018

Discussion Date: September 15, 2018
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Handmaid's Tale, Atwood, 1998.

Offred is a Handmaid in the Republic of Gilead. She may leave the home of the Commander and his wife once a day to walk to food markets whose signs are now pictures instead of words because women are no longer allowed to read. She must lie on her back once a month and pray that the Commander makes her pregnant, because in an age of declining births, Offred and the other Handmaids are valued only if their ovaries are viable.

Offred can remember the days before, when she lived and made love with her husband Luke, when she played with and protected her daughter; when she had a job, money of her own, and access to knowledge. But all of that is gone now.

Funny, unexpected, horrifying, and altogether convincing, *The Handmaid's Tale* is at once scathing satire, dire warning, and literary tour de force. - Amazon



A spot for mature brothers and young men to grow in God their way!
Sharing God, Sharing the Word and Strengthening Men of God and His

August 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	2	3 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal First Friday Fellowship	4
5 8:45a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship Communion Sunday	6 SO Plus Meeting 9:30 a.m.	7	8 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	9	10 6:00 p.m. Male Chorus Rehearsal	11 10:30 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting
12 8:45a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	13	14	15 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	16	17	18 Church Picnic
19 8:45a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	20	21 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	22 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	23	24	25 10:00 VMS Meeting
26 8:45a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	27	28 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	29 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	30	31	

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, Interim Presiding Elder

The Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor

Important Dates to Remember

July 30, 2018 **Official Board and Church Conference**

August 18, 2018 **Church Picnic**

September 1, 2018 **Northwest Alabama Conference WMS & YPD Annual Conference**

September 4-7, 2018 **9th Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference**

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*

ST. JOHN A.M.E.N NEWSLETTER



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 23 Issue 8

August 2018



Welcome Back to School

By Paula M. Pippen

A new school year brings several new beginnings...friendships, learning opportunities, adventures, just to name a few things. Here are some back-to-school tips to ensure that your new school year is a successful one:

- Start each school day with a positive attitude. Remember, your attitude determines your altitude.
- Get a good night's sleep! Staying up late at night may make it difficult for you to stay focused during the school day.
- Eat a healthy breakfast. Do not skip breakfast as it is very important to get a healthy start to your day.
- Do not be afraid to ask questions in class or ask for help if you do not understand how to do something.
- Find a homework-only area in your home. This area can be anywhere, but it must not have any distractions nearby such as television, cell phone/social media, computer games, etc.
- Make sure to share important papers with your parents, particularly those that need to be signed and returned in a timely manner.
- Practice good study and work habits. Always complete classwork and homework assignments on time.
- Charge your electronic device each night (if use is allowed in class).
- Prepare for each school day the night before. Select your outfit and have it sitting out ready for the next morning. Make sure that your school supplies, homework, and/or important forms are packed in your backpack.
- Pack your lunch the night before. Make sure it is healthy and well-balanced.
- Participate in school activities. Find out what clubs and/or extracurricular activity opportunities are available in your school. This will help you develop your talents, become better acquainted with the school, and meet new people.

Have an awesome school year!!!!

Adapted from "10 back to school tips", 2014 Retrieved from <https://www.ezstorage.com/blog/10-going-back-school-tips-elementary-high-school-students/>, August 2018

Ninth Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church

The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright, Presiding Prelate

The Reverend Sherita Seawright, Episcopal Supervisor

2018 Annual Conference Schedule



9th Session of the Alabama River Region Annual Conference

August 18 – WMS & YPD Annual Conference

August 21-24, 2018

Browns Chapel AME Church, The Reverend Leodis Strong, Host Pastor
410 Martin Luther King Avenue, Selma, Alabama 36703

9th Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference

September 1 – WMS & YPD Annual Conference

September 4-7, 2018

Daniel Payne Community Plaza
1500 Daniel Payne Drive, Birmingham, Alabama 35214

9th Session of the Southeast Alabama Annual Conference

September 15 – WMS & YPD Annual Conference

September 18-21, 2018

Greater St. Paul AME Church, The Reverend Elijah Shafah, Host Pastor
608 E. Academy Street, Troy, Alabama 36081

9th Session of the Northeast Alabama Annual Conference

September 29 – WMS & YPD Annual Conference

October 2-5, 2018

Washington Chapel AME Church
2508 W. Montgomery Road, Tuskegee, Alabama 36088
Hosted by "Consortium of Bullock County Churches"

9th Session of the Southwest Alabama Annual Conference

October 13 – WMS & YPD Annual Conference

October 16-19, 2018

Emmanuel AME Church, The Reverend John Dees, Host Pastor
654 St. Michael St. Mobile, AL 36603

2019 Planning Meeting &

150th Celebration of the AME Church in Alabama

November 1-3

St. John AME Church, The Reverend Roosevelt Williams, III, Host Pastor
807 Madison Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama 36104
Renaissance Montgomery Hotel & Spa
201 Tallapoosa Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36104

Ninth Episcopal District Office

1500 Daniel Payne Drive, Birmingham, Alabama 35214
205.326.4499 (office) – 205.326.4434 (fax)
www.ninthamechurch.org

Ninth Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church

The Right Reverend Harry L Seawright, Presiding Prelate

The Reverend Sherita Seawright, Episcopal Supervisor

2018 Annual Conference Agenda and Daily Schedule

The Annual Conference Women's Missionary Society Annual Convention and YPD Day will be held the Saturday before the Annual Conference.

Tuesday	8:00 a.m. Official Opening of the 9th Session of the Annual Conference • Roll Call • Transfers • Organization • Conference Boundary • Presiding Elders' Summary Report 10:30 a.m. Opening Worship Service - Annual Sermon - Pastor Wright will be the preacher. 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Lunch 2:45 p.m. Devotion 3:00 p.m. Business Session • Pastors' Reports 5:45 p.m. – 6:45 p.m. Dinner 7:00 p.m. Worship Service Educational Night/Young Adults – featuring College Choirs
Wednesday	8:00 a.m. – 8:25 a.m. Devotion / Bible Study 8:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. Conference Institute 10:00 a.m. – Noon Business Session • Pastors' Reports 12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m. Hour of Power Worship Service 18 Page 1:20 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. Lunch 3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Business Session • Pastors' Reports 5:45 p.m. – 6:45 p.m. Dinner 7:00 p.m. Evening Worship Service – Sons of Allen
Thursday	8:00 a.m. – 8:25 a.m. Devotion / Bible Study 8:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. Conference Institute 10:00 a.m. – Noon Business Session Board of Examiners Report Ministerial Efficiency Report Conference Component Reports Women's Missionary Society Young People's and Children's Division, Lay Organization, Christian Education, Sons of Allen, Evangelism, Women in Ministry, Social and Political Action, Richard Allen Young Adult Council, Health Ministry, M-SWAWO+PKs, Christian Debutante-Masters Commission, Prayer Ministry 12:15 – 1:15 p.m. Hour of Power Worship Service – Women in Ministry 1:20 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. Lunch 3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Town Hall Meeting 5:45 p.m. – 6:45 p.m. Dinner 7:00 p.m. Evening Worship Service – Lay Organization
Friday	8:00 a.m. – 8:25 a.m. Devotion / Bible Study 8:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. Memorial and Retirement Service 9:45 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. Church School (Summary) 10:00 a.m. – Noon Business Session Administrative Committee Reports Conference Trustees Deeds, Abstracts, and Abandoned Property Missions, Circuits, and Stations Conference Boundaries Employee Security Presiding Elders' Assessment Church Growth Church School 12:15 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Service of Ordination Service of Holy Communion All ordained clergy wear white robes. 2:15 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Lunch 3:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Closing Business Session 9th District Budget Presentation Brotherhood Report Conference Treasurer Daniel Payne / Life Center 5:30 p.m. Closing and Commissioning Service Resolutions Statistician's Report Finance Report Presentation of Certificates Reading of Appointments and Benediction

Church Street's Business District: Past and Present

By B. Johnson

Ask anyone who is a native Huntsvillian about Church Street and their minds will begin to travel back in time, when Church Street was considered the Black Mecca of Huntsville. The African American business district encompassed Church Street, Holmes Street and Jefferson Street. "The 1859 map of the City of Huntsville shows only one church on Church Street. A lot of people thought the name came from the number of churches on the street. But the name predated the four churches thought to have been the street's namesake. The 1859

map showed only one church which was, The West African Church or The West African Baptist Church, which was thought to be St. Bartley. The building would later become The Cumberland Presbyterian Church." (Smith, Michael) So, Church Street was not named for the number of churches which were located on the street, but it was a substantial part of the business district. Church Street was a hustling, bustling, thriving, energizing street comprised of predominantly African American businesses. The business district ran from the current location of the train depot to the corner of Holmes and Church. Both sides of the street were filled with barber shops, beauty parlors, cafes, eateries, cab/taxi services, funeral homes, insurance agencies, doctor and dentist offices, pool halls, dance halls and yes, even churches. As can be seen from the photo listing, there were many flourishing businesses serving the African American community.

So, what happened? Where did all those businesses go? What caused them to just disappear? One simple answer Urban Renewal. Or what most people called, "Negro removal." Gentrification is the new term for Urban Renewal. It is happening in many major cities across the country. It has already happened in North Carolina, New York, Atlanta and it has happened in Huntsville. Gentrification is a process of renovation of deteriorated urban neighborhoods by means of the influx of more affluent residents. It often shifts a neighborhood's racial/ethnic composition and average household income by developing new, more expensive housing, businesses and improved resources. (Wikipedia)

At one time, downtown Huntsville east and west of Church Street to Governors Drive was predominately Black. Not anymore. The face and culture of downtown Huntsville has changed. Fifty-eight years ago there were approximately 48 Black-owned businesses on or near Church Street. Today, there are only two, Hundley Batts and Associates (established in 1972) and Albert's Flowers (established in 1958.)



Ms. Jana Goggans, owner of 81 Home, Gift and Glam
Ms. Navette Wall owner of Clachic Boutique

However, two young, vivacious, African-American women have ventured out on their own to "Reclaim our place" in downtown Huntsville. Ms. Jana Goggans and Ms. Navette Wall share 875 square feet of retail space, in a 100 year old building at 100 Jefferson St. in downtown Huntsville. Not one, but two high-end boutiques are housed in this location, *81 Home, Gift & Glam*, where "Everything is Glam" and *Classic Boutique* where the motto is in the name, "Classy and Chic." Jana and Navette always had aspirations of becoming entrepreneurs and both came to this location in different ways. Jana had thoughts early on of opening her own salon and boutique while working a day job, while Navette, finished her Masters in Business and got into the webstore sce-

(8, 10e thread on page 5)

Church Street's Business District: Past and Present

By B. Johnson

(Continued from page 4)

ne. One opportunity led to another for both. Jana started her boutique in a 6x10 sq. ft. space which eventually led to an 8x10 sq. ft. space. Jana had her grand opening in 2014. Navette had lots of product but no retail space until she moved to a kiosk at Redstone Arsenal, then to a 4.5x10 sq. ft. space in a business incubator. When the opportunity presented itself for the two to merge, they did.

Though they share retail space, their products are similar but quite different. You might find a piece in one boutique which might compliment another piece in the other boutique. There are items for the home, as well as for personal use; scented soaps, lotions, creams, jewelry, clothes, scarves, purses and the like. There are products for men - ties, socks, the ever-trending beard wash and beard oils, and during the summer months, items for children.



Opening a business was a leap of faith for both Jana and Navette. When asked about the challenges of being entrepreneurs, both shared that they had experienced financial challenges and marketing issues and being aware of the competition. They were the only boutique originally, now there are three other higher-end boutiques downtown. But regardless of the challenges, they consider hard work and faith to be their weapons of choice to

get through the difficult times.

After having been in business for several years, Jana and Navette offered the following advice to other aspiring entrepreneurs:

1. Study your market; know who you want to engage.
2. Educate yourself. Keep in the loop on business trends.
3. Set realistic expectations.
4. Be prepared. Surround yourself with good solid people for support.
5. Know your competition.
6. Remember to be inclusive and reach back and build up others.

Acknowledging the past history of African-American businesses in downtown Huntsville, both Jana and Navette have made the commitment to maintain their standing in downtown. They do not have a desire to leave their location. They like the downtown location and are looking forward to the possibility of growing with the city. But they are not so naive as to think, that that will come without the support of the community.

Congratulations to both Jana and Navette for "Reclaiming our time" in downtown Huntsville.



Zaria York Named Youth of the Month for July



Zaria York and her parents

Zaria York is a vivacious spirit who loves life! She is an upcoming 3rd grader at Providence Elementary School where her favorite subjects are math and reading. Recently she was placed into the gifted program at her school!

She is involved in numerous activities such as The Children's Choir and Sunday School at St. John. She participates at Soles Dance Studio where she enjoys all forms of dancing and she plays soccer

for James A. Lane Boys & Girls Club. Her hobbies include singing, dancing, cooking, and most of all making slime! Zaria loves people and family and when you see her, she will always greet you with a smile.

Zaria is the daughter of Brother Justin York and Sister Jakeyah Williams. Congratulations Zaria!



Soup Kitchen Ministry

Charlie Brooks

BROKEN TO BE WHOLE

"But the jar he was making did not turn out as he had hoped, so he crushed it into lumps of clay again." Jeremiah 18:4

The writer of the illuminating chapter "Broken to Be Whole" in The End of Me by Kyle Idleman touched my heart, and I share excerpts with you.

In discussing the question "Do you admit that you are broken?" he quoted sociologist Brene' Brown who says that although people fight it, they long for the freedom to admit they are broken. Brown states:

"We are not alone, we are 'those people.' Most of us are one paycheck, one divorce, one drug addicted kid, one mental health diagnosis, one serious illness, one sexual assault, one drinking binge, one affair away from being 'those people.' The ones we don't trust, the ones we pity, the ones we don't let our children play with, the ones bad things happen to, the ones we don't want living next door."

Idleman also stated:

"There are too many voices telling us to keep up appearances because if we don't, our life will fall apart. There are too many voices telling us if we entertain ourselves and if we don't think the bad thoughts, the bad stuff will somehow trickle away."

The writer, concludes:

"The good news is that God makes the broken whole. He takes the overlooked, the undervalued, the left out the written off, the damaged and destroyed and then He does what only He can do."

"God loves to make the broken beautiful."

Can you help to serve those who may be "broken" by assisting the Soup Kitchen Ministry on the 3rd and 4th Tuesdays?

God please take our broken pieces and remold them into what seems best to you.

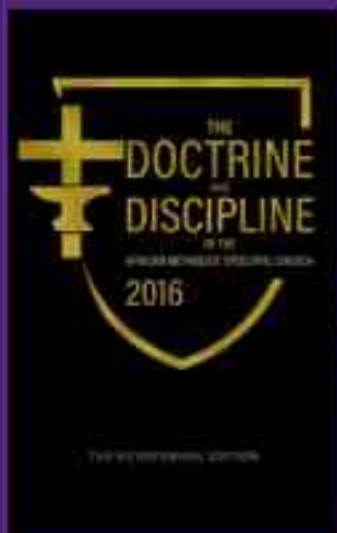
"God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for Him, the kingdom of Heaven is theirs." Matthew 5:3

AME PROUD

The Bicentennial Edition of The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2016 is now available.

You may purchase a printed copy for \$30. The book is also available in electronic form on Kindle.

Every AME should have a current copy of The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2016 so that they are informed of the history, policies and procedures of this great Zion.



Remembering.....



Sister Joyce Sales

Sister Joyce Sales served faithfully as a member of St. John. She was regular in attendance at Sunday worship services and faithful in attending Bible Study. She was softspoken and a quiet spirit; however, her strong faith was evident through her attendance and contributions to church and family. She had a very pleasant personality. She greeted everyone with a smile and words of encouragement.

Sister Sales retired from the Department of Human Services where she worked to encourage and support those in need. After her retirement, she spent time working with the elderly.

At St. John, Sister Sales was a member of the Pastor's Aid Board and supported the other ministries of the church. She encouraged her children to be active in the church and her desire was to spend time with family and to encourage them.

Please continue to pray for the Sales family.



Sister Vanona Walton

Sister Vanona Walton was a faithful member of the St. John congregation. She was reliable and many said that if she made a commitment to serve, she would be faithful.

During her years at St. John, Sister Walton, sang in the Sanctuary Choir, served on the Usher Board, worked with the Soup Kitchen Ministry, taught the primary Church School class for over 20 years, ministered as a member of the Adult Praise Dance Ministry and served as a member of the Steward Board.

Sister Walton loved her family. She was proud of her daughter's accomplishments and she and her husband loved visiting their two grandchildren. She was godmother to three members of St. John and invested in their lives as she did her own daughter.

Please continue to pray for the Walton family and Sister Walton's mother and sister.



Sister Julia Waters Phillips

Sister Julia Waters Phillips transitioned to be with the Lord on May 19, 2018. She spent most of her life in Elba, Alabama where she was a faithful member of Greater Bethel AME. She served as the faithful Church Mother, taught Sunday School, held positions in the Missionary Society, Steward Board and Trustee Board.

Sister Phillips relocated to Huntsville about a year ago to live with her granddaughter, Sister Paula Ellard. She united with St. John Huntsville. While her health did not allow active involvement in the ministries of the church, she was faithful in attendance and her sweet spirit was evidence of her love for the Lord.

Continue to pray for the Phillips and Ellard families.



"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me."

"My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?"

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."

"You know the way to the place where I am going."

John 14:1-4

Ninth District Christian Education Congress Held at Troy University

By Willie J. Sandifer



The 2018 Ninth Episcopal District Christian Education Congress was held across the four days of July 16-19, 2018 on the campus of Troy University in Troy, Alabama. A group of roughly twenty-five St. John members traveled down via the church bus and individual automobiles.

"AME Forever" was the theme for this year and was inspired by the movie "Black Panther" where the mantra "Wakanda Forever" was derived. There were T-Shirts "celebrating a community of two hundred and eighty-five churches celebrating God's blessings for one hundred and fifty years, 1868-2018" for The Ninth Episcopal District.

The four days were packed with four plenary sessions, six worship services, workshops, three debates, five bible bowls, basketball, a movie, a dance, and tours. This was a lot for attendees to choose from among. Congratulations to Bishop and Supervisor Seawright and the Ninth District CEC Committee for an enriching conference.

First Fridays Millennials Group Meeting Held

By Ashley Tait



Millennials met on First Friday

The First Friday event was held by Pastor and First Lady Wright at Cantina Laredo on August 3, and it was more than alright. These amazing leaders know how to create a welcoming environment where everyone can relax and get to know one another. The group of millennials had so much fun from the icebreaker, sharing nicknames, and playing games like completing a statement or choosing something they would rather do instead and why. I had to choose between having a free international trip annually vs. an unlimited amount of trips in America.

The black community and culture were also discussed, specifically how it varies regionally and the level of connection felt by the participants. There were two recent graduates from the counseling psychology program of Alabama A&M University in attendance at this event as well and naturally the conversation turned to mental health and the needs in the community and the church. As one of the recent graduates, it was great to hear what some of the concerns and needs were.

Because of this event I know more than a few faces in church and these faces recognize mine too!! The only thing left to do now is to commit to an organization within the church to get busy serving the church and community. See you at the next First Friday event!

Thank you to Pastor and First Lady Wright for taking time to spend with the Millennials. It was genuinely appreciated. It was great to be in a non-judgmental environment where you could listen and share your opinion, and everyone felt comfortable with doing so. If you were not at this event, I hope to see you at the next one. Do not miss out on fellowshiping with great people within St. John community, and your age group.

Money Milestones: This is How Your Finances Should Look In Your 50s

It is all about 'catching up' now.

By Brother Bobby Adkins II

On the first day of this year, a friend of mine, Mandy Alexander, a tech author, had a note on her calendar to start contributing more to her retirement accounts. Mandy is turning 50 later this year but she's already capitalizing on what experts say is one of the most important things 50-somethings can do for their retirement savings: catch up.

Even the industry demonstrates this — employer-sponsored retirement accounts and individual retirement accounts have "catch-up contributions," which allow investors to put away more money in their accounts beginning the year that investor turns 50. As fellow members of the 50+ club, my wife and I have also moved on the "Catch Up" plan, attempting to maximize our prime earning years, while taking advantage of tax deductions associated to employee matching contributions as well. "You have to do what you can to plan for the future," Bressler said. "You always have to be squirreling away."



Many 50-somethings are at the crossroads of their lives — between big life events that may have already occurred, such as buying a home and getting married, and the children they raised are becoming financially independent, also known as "empty nesting." When expenses start to dwindle is the perfect time for 50-somethings to start ramping up their retirement savings, especially if they don't have much in those accounts. By your 50s, you should have saved four or five times your annual salary, though those in their 50s have an estimated median savings of about \$117,000, according to a 2015 Government Accountability Office analysis. Unfortunately, some people just can't afford to retire yet.

Catching up doesn't have to be overwhelming — whether you have kids or not, expenses can be downsized, which would allow the average 50-something to put more money away for their retirement. Some people choose to move to a smaller home, or rent, to alleviate paying off a mortgage for a home too large and perhaps not fully used. Buying a smaller home could also save on taxes, utility costs and insurance, according to business forecasts publishing company Kiplinger.



Some 50-somethings may want to start by evaluating what they already have saved, according to New York-based robo-adviser Betterment. This includes looking over what accounts you already have (and possibly consolidate numerous accounts) and checking your portfolios' asset allocations. General advice is to lean toward bonds instead of stocks as you get older, since they are less risky, but some experts, such as Henry Hebel, who assists people with retirement planning, might suggest keeping a fair mix as that money will need to stretch through your retirement years. Keep in mind, how you feel about the risk associated with your portfolio is also important in determining the right mix.

People in their 50s looking to retire sooner rather than later should also start mimicking their future lifestyle, by creating a financial plan or budget and spending less than they may currently be spending. That lifestyle should also be tested, to ensure they like it and can live within its means. "By you being more disciplined on saving, it helps you be more disciplined on spending," Sotudeh said.

Of course, the age in which someone retires is becoming fuzzy, said James Nichols, head of consumer solutions group at New York-based financial services firm Voya Financial, and people are expected to live longer in the future

(Continued on page 11)

Church School Lesson Overview – September 2018

The lesson reviews were written by Brother Willie Sandifer.

September 2, 2018

Lesson Title: The First Days of Creation

Lesson Scripture: Job 38:1-11; John 1:1-10

Print: Genesis 1:1-13

Devotional Songs: #68 [], #258 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2).

The author of this lesson in the *Bible Expositor and Illuminator* for Fall 2018 describes the earth as the perfect place for man to live and thrive. Our universe is the result of God carrying out His plan.

The first chapter of Genesis gives the account of how the universe and our world came about. The Bible tells us that God was there at the beginning and created the whole universe as we see it. Genesis 1 outlines God's creation process.

In this lesson God laid the framework for His creative activities in the future. He made everything ready for setting up the world for humankind.

September 9, 2018

Lesson Title: Creations in Sky, Sea, and Land

Lesson Scripture: Psalms 19:1-6; 104:24-30

Print: Genesis 1:14-25

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

Key Verses: "God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also" (Genesis 1:16).

This lesson looks at God's work in making the universe, the world, the animal life, and humankind. It examines the creatures He made to fill the sky, the sea, and the land. God was in complete control of all details, as He made ready the world for all to reside.

On the fourth day of creation, God made the heavens above the earth. On the fifth day God created the animals. On the sixth day God created humans. All that God created is described in Genesis as "good"; however, the creation of humans is described as "very good".

September 16, 2018

Lesson Title: The First Man

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 8:3-9; Acts 17:24-28; 1 Corinthians 15:45-50; Exodus 20:8-11

Print: Genesis 1:26-2:3

Devotional Songs: #381 [], #251 [], and #243 []

Key Verses: "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:26).

This lesson looks at how humans came to exist on the earth. On a previous day God had already made the animals, birds, and nature. He then took on His greatest creation - humans. God created humans in His image.

Yes, that is right, the crown of creation is humans. The author states that the universe and everything in it was created by God for man's enjoyment. The first chapter of Genesis ends with humans as the zenith to the six days of Creation.

God provided all the food that man and animal would need. Green vegetation and every seed were provided for man and animals to eat.

Humans were given big responsibilities: They were to rule over creation; they were to increase in numbers; they were to tame creation; and by implication they were to cultivate the ground for their food.

God rested after completing His creative activity. The author described it as the rest of completion and not the rest of exhaustion. The task was finished. The seventh day became special for God. He "sanctified" it.

September 23, 2018

Lesson Title: Man's First Home

Lesson Scripture: Isaiah 51:1-3; Ezekiel 28:11-14

Print: Genesis 2:4-14

Devotional Songs: #450, [], #321 [], and #243 []

Key Verses: "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made" (Genesis 2:3).

It is made very clear by the Bible that God is the Creator of the heaven and of the earth.

(Continued on page 11)

Church School Lesson Overview

(Continued from page 10)

This lesson looks at some things about nature and the beginning of humans. God gave humans the Garden of Eden in which to dwell. It was a beautiful place that God made for human's complete security and enjoyment.

Eden was filled with all types of trees and plants that humans would need for survival. The vegetation was good in two ways: it was beautiful to look at and good to eat. God put two trees, special ones, in the middle of the garden. The tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

September 30, 2018

Lesson Title: A Suitable Helper for Adam

Lesson Scripture: Proverbs 31:10-31; Malachi 2:13-16; Matthew 19:3-9; 1 Corinthians 11:3-12

Print: Genesis 2:15-25

Devotional Songs: #441, []; #421[]; and #243 []

Key Verses: "The Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18).

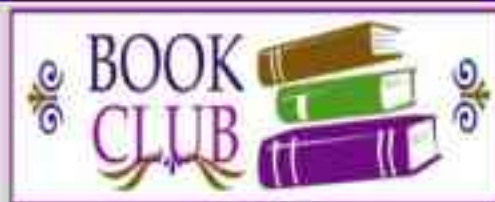
In this lesson the author of the commentary describes the privilege and joy of companionship and relationship as one to the greatest blessings of God's creation.

God looked at Adam and saw he was alone and needed someone like him for companionship. God created a suitable helper for him – the first woman.

God set the foundations for marriage, when He gave Adam a companion that was perfectly suited to him.

When God created man, He designed him to have fellowship with God. Mankind has the ability to use free will to choose to worship Him and to procreate. God gave marriage for this – One man with one woman for life. God showed the divine principle of marriage by giving Eve to Adam.

**CHURCH SCHOOL MEETS EACH SUNDAY
at 8:45 a.m.**



Church School Book Club

September 2018

Discussion Date: September 15, 2018

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

***The Handmaid's Tale*, Atwood, 1998.**

October 2018

Discussion Date: 20 October

2018

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

***The Scarlet Thread*, Rivers, 2012.**

Two women, centuries apart, are joined through a tattered journal as they contend with God, husbands, and even themselves...until they fall into the arms of the One who loves them unconditionally. Sierra Madrid's life has just been turned upside down when she discovers the handcrafted quilt and journal of her ancestor Mary Kathryn McMurray, a young woman who was uprooted from her home only to endure harsh conditions on the Oregon Trail.

Though the women are separated by time and circumstance, Sierra discovers that many of the issues they face are remarkably similar. By following Mary Kathryn's example, Sierra learns to surrender to God's sovereignty and unconditional love.

Money Milestones

By Brother Bobby Adkins II

(Continued from page 9)

than they did decades ago. By these new standards, future retirees need to push away anxiety over potential money problems and get to business: take into account all expenses you will possibly incur in retirement (such as health-care costs and bills), and save so you are not one of the many who are under-saved for retirement. That means taking the baby steps in your 50s to get to where you would like to be in the future. "You may not be able to hit the number you were hoping for, but any number you add now will improve your lifestyle in the long run," Nichols said. "You have to think of it incrementally."

THE AME CHURCH COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

CALL TO CONSCIENCE

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AGAIN, MUST SPEAK TO THE
CONSCIENCE OF AMERICA.***

DAY OF ACTION

THURSDAY @ 9AM

9.6.18

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WASHINGTON, DC**

(ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE WHITE HOUSE)



AME-CHURCH.COM

September 2018

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat



1

Northwest Conference WMB
Convention
Birmingham, Alabama

2

8:45 a.m.
Church School
10:00 a.m. Worship
Communion Sunday

3

4

5

6

7

8

Northwest Alabama Annual Conference
Daniel Payne Community Center Birmingham, Alabama

10:30 a.m.
AMEN Staff Meeting

9

8:45 a.m.
Church School
10:00 a.m. Worship

10

11

12

12:00 p.m.
and
6:00 p.m.
Bible Study

13

14

15

16

8:45 a.m.
Church School
10:00 a.m. Worship

17

18

11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
SOUP KITCHEN

19

12:00 p.m.
and
6:00 p.m.
Bible Study

20

21

22

10:00
WMB Meeting

23

8:45 a.m.
Church School
10:00 a.m. Worship

24

25

11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
SOUP KITCHEN

26

12:00 p.m.
and
6:00 p.m.
Bible Study

27

28

29

30

8:45 a.m.
Church School
10:00 a.m. Worship

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, Interim Presiding Elder

The Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor

Important Dates to Remember

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| August 26, 2018 | AAMU Athletic Day, 10:00 a.m. on the campus of AAMU |
| September 1, 2018 | Northwest Alabama Conference WMS & YPD Annual Conference |
| September 4-7, 2018 | 9 th Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference
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*

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



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 23 Issue 9

September 2018

WELCOME!



Rev. Rita, Bishop Seawright, Pastor Wright, Presiding Elder Hunter, Mrs. Gail Hunter

The officers and members of St. John AME Church, Huntsville, Alabama welcome the Reverend Maurice Wright, II; First Lady the Reverend Joretha Williams Wright; Terrence; Lessie; Isaiah and Joy. This is Pastor Wright's third pastoral appointment to St. John and the church is excited about the year ahead.

St. John also welcomes the newly appointed Presiding Elder of the South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer District, the Reverend Bruce Hunter and his wife Mrs. Gail Hunter. Presiding Elder Hunter served as pastor of churches in the Birmingham and Tuscaloosa areas before being elevated to Presiding Elder at the 9th session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference.

On the first Sunday of the conference year, Bishop Harry Seawright, Presiding Prelate of the Ninth Episcopal District, and Presiding Elder and Mrs. Bruce W. Hunter worshipped at St. John as the church launched VISION 2020.

Second Appreciation Celebrated for Pastor Maurice Wright, II and Family

Bridget J. Floyd



The Wright Family

On Sunday, August 19, 2018, at the 10 a.m. worship service, St. John expressed its appreciation to the pastor, the Reverend Maurice Wright, II and family. The theme for the occasion was "Celebrating Pastoral Excellence: God Sent, Spirit Led, Vision Driven". The guest preacher for the event was the Reverend Dr. Kenneth Hill, Pastor of Shorter Chapel AME Church, Franklin, TN, and retired General Officer, who was introduced by Pastor Wright. Inspirational music was provided by the Voices in Praise (VIP) Choir.

A special call to worship was led by worship leader, Brother Guy Ginn. After the hymn of praise, Brother Clifton Miller offered the invocation, with scripture from the Old Testament and New Testament being read by Little Miss Jessica Harbin (Isaiah 40: 28-31) and Sister Barbara Johnson (John 10:11-18).

Pastor Wright announced the August Youth of the Month, Master Caylon Mayes. [See related article.]

Dr. Thalia Love led the children's moment followed by the welcoming of guests by Sister Roselyn Akines. Member birthdays and marriage anniversaries were recognized by Brother Clifton and Sister Tullie Miller and Brother David and Sister

Katrissa Norwood. Sister Erica Harbin presented announcements, followed by offering led by Brother Eddie Sherrod and the occasion by Sister Pamela Whitehead. Dr. Jeanette Jones led the Pastor's Appreciation Litany which she authored.



Mass Choir renders music.



Steward Barbara Johnson reads scripture.



Mr. A. W. Williams gives tribute.



The Reverend Dr. Hill delivers sermon.

A special tribute was given the Reverend Joretha ("Reverend Rita") Wright, by Pastor Wright and Reverend Rita's uncle who poignantly noted the special relationship that developed after significant losses during Reverend Rita's youth and the pride that he, her aunt (surrogate parents), and cousins/siblings have as they traveled across the country to celebrate with Reverend Rita and family.

The guest preacher, the Reverend Kenneth Hill, brought the message for the day, entitled "The Good Shepherd" from John 10: 11-18, with emphasis on the 11th verse. He began by asserting that "all ministry is derived from the ministry of God". He cited a list of a number of things that might "break the spirit" of a pastor, immediately followed by things that "will bless a pastor's spirit". He expanded on the image of the "shepherd" citing the scriptural text as well as

(Continued on page 3)

Second Appreciation Celebrated for Pastor Maurice Wright, II and Family

Bridget J. Floyd

(Continued from page 2)

Psalm 23:

The Reverend Hill stated that St. John has a good shepherd, defining a good shepherd as one who "must earn the right to shepherd and lead" and one who should follow the instruction "feed my sheep". He noted that the good shepherd should pray for the sheep, have integrity and trust God, among other positive/spiritual attributes. He indicated that being such a shepherd is "a lifestyle not a technique".



Gifts were presented to the Wright family.

love from the congregation as a token of appreciation for his shepherding St. John for a second year and the hope that he would return for a third year upon appointment of the Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright of the Ninth Episcopal District. Pastor Wright expressed appreciation to his family and to his St. John family.



Presiding Elder Allen, Dr. Hill, Pastor Wright.

After the benediction, many present transitioned to an appreciation luncheon at the Ernest Knight Reception Center at Alabama A and M University, to further celebrate Pastor Wright and family.



Pastor Wright, Rev. Rita and the Board of Stewards



Rev. Rita and Pastor Wright.

Servant Pastor, Maurice Wright II, St. John AME Church takes the Sunday Morning Worship Service at AAMU "Straight to the Top"!!

By Jeanette Jones



Student athletes assembled at the Knight Center

St. John AME Church, under the servant pastoral leadership of the Reverend Maurice Wright, II, moved its worship services to the campus of one of the nation's leading Historically Black Universities, Alabama A&M University (AAMU).

On Sunday morning, August 26, 2018, over 600 students, student athletes, administrators, faculty and staff members met in the Ernest L. Knight Center on the historic campus of Alabama A&M University for the 7th Annual AAMU Day sponsored by St. John AME Church.



AAMU President, Dr. Andrew Hugine, Jr.

The St. John Praise Team, Choir and Praise Dancers ushered in the spirit of praise and thanksgiving as members joined an uplifting, spirit-filled worship service at AAMU. Dr. Andrew Hugine, Jr., the 11th President of Alabama A&M University and member of St. John, welcomed the students, visitors and friends to the campus services. He explained the divine relationship between Alabama A&M University and St. John AME Church, both founded by an ex-slave, Dr. William Hooper Council, who was also an ordained itinerate elder in the AME Church and one of the local organizers of St. John AME, Huntsville. In his welcome message, President Hugine shared AAMU's 2018-2019 theme, "AIM High". Just as one aims high in academic and athletic pursuits, he encouraged the students to AIM High in their spiritual development and provided the following acrostic based on the word

(Continued on page 3)

Servant Pastor, Maurice Wright II, St. John AME Church takes the Sunday Morning Worship Service at AAMU "Straight to the Top"!!

By Jeanette Jones

(Continued from page 4)

"AIM" from a biblical perspective.

A - "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." (Matthew 7:7)

I - "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Proverbs 3:6)

M - "May He grant you, your heart's desire and make all of your plans succeed." (Psalm 20:4)

Following this inspirational welcome from President Hugine, the choir, under the direction of Mr. Reginald Pearson, provided several songs of praise that touched the hearts, souls and minds of the congregation.



Choir and Dance Ministry lead in worship.



AAMU Athletic Director introduces athletes.



Miss AAMU addresses worshippers.



Pastor Wright delivers sermon.

Pastor Wright then shared an inspirational message based on Ecclesiastes 9:11, "Do You Have What It Takes?" He highlighted three important points on how important it is to have Courage, Love and a Sound Mind in all the things you do. The race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong, but to the one who endures. "Do you have what it takes?", he asked the attendees? If you are going to win, or experience success in life, you will have to have courage to face difficulty without fear. If you are going to succeed in life, you will need love which is the very essence of God. If you have love you will treat others right and respect others and yourself. You will then have the power to endure. And if you have all of these and a sound mind, you will have perfect peace.

After this spirit-filled message which commanded the attention of all, Pastor Wright made the call for salvation; one student answered the call and gave her life to Christ. It was another great day on the Hill at Alabama A&M University, when one student answered the call.

Ninth Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church

The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright, Presiding Prelate

The Reverend Sherita Seawright, Episcopal Supervisor

2018 Annual Conference Schedule

9th Session of the Southeast Alabama Annual Conference

September 15 – WMS & YPD Annual Conference

September 18-21, 2018

Greater St. Paul AME Church, The Reverend Elijah Shafah, Host Pastor
608 E. Academy Street, Troy, Alabama 36081

9th Session of the Northeast Alabama Annual Conference

September 29– WMS & YPD Annual Conference

October 2-5, 2018

Washington Chapel AME Church
2508 W. Montgomery Road, Tuskegee, Alabama 36088
Hosted by "Consortium of Bullock County Churches"

9th Session of the Southwest Alabama Annual Conference

October 13 – WMS & YPD Annual Conference

October 16-19, 2018

Emmanuel AME Church, The Reverend John Dees, Host Pastor
654 St. Michael St. Mobile, AL 36603

2019 Planning Meeting &

150th Celebration of the AME Church in Alabama

November 1-3

St. John AME Church, The Reverend Roosevelt Williams, III, Host Pastor
807 Madison Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama 36104
Renaissance Montgomery Hotel & Spa
201 Tallapoosa Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36104

150th Celebration Gala

November 3, 2018 at noon

Montgomery, Alabama

Bishop James L. Davis, Guest Speaker

Ninth Episcopal District Office

1500 Daniel Payne Drive, Birmingham, Alabama 35214

205.326.4499 (office) – 205.326.4434 (fax)

www.ninthamechurch.org



Caylon Mayes Named Youth of the Month for August



Caylon receives award from Pastor Wright.

Caylon Mayes is a 5th grader at Riverton Intermediate School. He is an avid reader of both fiction and non-fiction books. His hobbies are bike riding, skating, swimming, building Legos, and robotics club. He plays basketball for the Mt. Carmel Wildcats.

At St. John Caylon is a member of the Children's Choir, Church School and YPD.

His academic achievements are many. He has maintained A/B honor roll since kindergarten and finished 4th grade achieving all A's. Caylon was awarded the President's Award for Educational Excellence, Super Scientist award, and was the highest achieving Accelerated-Reader in his class.

Caylon is the son of Curtis and Stephania Mayes and the brother of Curtis Jr. and Isaiah.

Congratulations Caylon!



Soup Kitchen Ministry

Charlie Brooks

Are You a Good Samaritan?

"For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love."

- Galatians 5:13 (NLT)

Being a Good Samaritan has become cultural shorthand for showing kindness and assisting those who are less fortunate. How do we live that story in Luke 10 in today's world?

By stretching our imagination, I invite you to walk through a dangerous treacherous road, knowing the threat of armed persons at every blind bend. How do we engage in our religious convictions in this complicated situation; when we struggle over what it really means to love our neighbor the way Jesus embodied reckless love for us.

Are we the third traveler, the Samaritan, the detestable man who took pity on the man who he was supposed to hate? Jesus says, a person in dire need as well as a person with many resources are bound in a community of Friendship. We are in this together.

We must look for Jesus in every person we encounter. In Christ, God both suffered and saved, loving even the unlovely with irrational favor. And now, God invites us, by the Power of the Holy Spirit to join Him as we care for our neighbors in reckless love.

The Soup Kitchen Ministry workers are preparing food for those in need each 3rd and 4th Tuesday, monthly, please join them.

"He answered, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind,' and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

- Luke 10:27

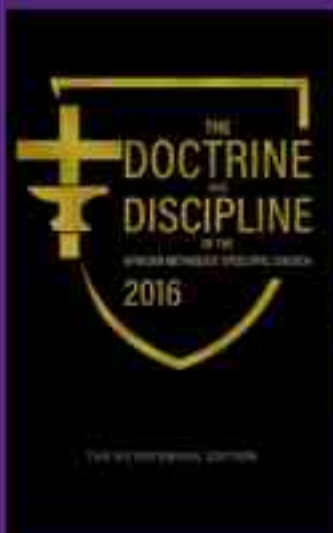


AME PROUD

The Bicentennial Edition of The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2016 is now available.

You may purchase a printed copy for \$30. The book is also available in electronic form on Kindle.

Every AME should have a current copy of The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2016 so that they are informed of the history, policies and procedures of this great Zion.



Social Justice Sunday Observed

By Nedra McDaniel

"Lord we long for your justice and your peace to heal our land."
- Social Justice Sunday Call to Worship

Sunday, September 2nd was declared "Social Justice Sunday" in Black Churches across the United States. "Social Justice Sunday" served as the kick-off to the "Call to Conscience – Forward to Action" event held September 5th and 6th in Washington DC. "Historically the Black Church has been the conscience of the nation", said Bishop Reginald T. Jackson, President of the Council of Bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. "The Black Church called and challenged the nation to live up to its words and creeds, to be its best self," Jackson added.

St. John joined with other churches across the connectional church in observing this special day. The Call to Worship and morning prayer were taken from the worship guide that was provided by the AME Church. Likewise, hymns and scripture followed the suggested worship guide.

Pastor Wright preached from Mark 10:46-48 and the sermon was entitled "Holler Until He Gets You." In the message he emphasized that the man who was calling out to Jesus was desperate for change. From this passage Pastor Wright noted four (4) points on what persons who are seeking change need to do. 1. Depend on Christ and not the crowd. 2. Do not be distracted by critics. 3. Deviate from the condition and "throw off every weight." 4. Declare the change.

To read the AME Church's press statement on Social Justice Sunday, visit the website <https://www.ame-church.com/event/social-justice-sunday-2018/>.



In Memory of Sister Doris Evans

I've had some good days, I've had some hills to climb.
I've had some weary days and lonely nights.
But when I look around and I think things over
All of my good days, they outweigh my bad days
So I won't complain.

- The Reverend Clay Evans

Sister Doris Evans joined St. John in 2012 when she relocated from Racine, Wisconsin to Huntsville, Alabama. Although she had health challenges at the time, it was her desire to be an active member of St. John. She wanted to be in worship as often as possible and she enjoyed the entire service - the music, the preaching, and the fellowship. When her family was out of town, St. John members coordinated rides to church for Sister Evans and she was always patient and appreciative of the love extended to her.

When visiting Sister Evans during hospitalizations or times when she was confined to her home, she always said that she "would not complain." She followed this by sharing how blessed she was and how much she loved the Lord.

Sister Evans was a pleasant person and enjoyed getting to know members, as well as their extended family. She enjoyed eating at nice restaurants, attending theater plays and dance recitals. Sister Evans' hobbies included seamstress and musician (who played both piano and organ).

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."

- John 14:3

Aloha - St. John Goes Hawaiian

By Deidre Walton

It may not have been an authentic Pig Roast, but St. John definitely celebrated in Polynesian style at this year's church picnic at the Winifred Thomas Agricultural Center at The Farm of Alabama A&M University on August 18, 2018. The theme this year was Hawaiian and everyone dressed in their Hawaiian styled outfits from floral and tropical shirts and dresses, straw hats and sandals. All came dressed to enjoy the festivities. There were even a couple of grass skirts spotted in the crowd.

St. John feasted on luau-themed items such as pulled pork sliders, pulled chicken, pineapple upside down cake along with good old American standards, hot dogs, coleslaw, potato salad and fried fish. Various games and activities were played such as Volleyball, Uno, Spades, Bid Whist and Bingo. But the pinnacle of the activities was the Family Feud Game; the Boomers versus the Millennials with the Millennials bringing home the victory.

The congregation had a blast. The forecasted rain even held off until later that evening.

Special acknowledgements to Chairperson Jakeyah "Shay" Williams, Brother Phillip Pugh, Sister LaCondria Bryant, Sister Karen Latimore and all their crew for an excellent event this year.



Aloha - St. John Goes Hawaiian

By Deidre Walton



The Latest News Regarding an Historic Celebration

The 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: "One Hundred Fifty Years: Celebrating God's Blessings"

Scriptural reference: "His faithfulness continues to all generations." Psalm 100: 5.

Theme Song: "Great is Thy Faithfulness"

GOAL: To celebrate the numerous generations that have been a part of the District's 150 years.



Emblem to be affixed to programs, bulletins etc. in all 9th District AME Churches throughout the year.

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION DATES: November 2, 2017 – November 2, 2018

KICKOFF CELEBRATION: Mid Year Convocation April 2018

THE BIG EVENT: Christian Education Congress – July 2018

9th DISTRICT PLANNING MEETING & CULMINATING EVENTS: NOVEMBER 1-3, 2018

CLOSING ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION GALA – NOVEMBER 3, 2018

Tickets available from your Pastor or Presiding Elder

Renaissance Montgomery Hotel & Spa at the Convention Center

201 Tallapoosa Street, Montgomery, AL 36104



Local Church History - Don't be left out! See your Presiding Elder.

Anniversary t-shirts for sale at each Annual Conference or from your Presiding Elder.

Ads for Souvenir Journal Deadline extended to September 17, 2018 - Details Attached.

Closing Celebration Gala - See Pastor or Presiding Elder for tickets -- \$65.00 donation per ticket.

Calling for a 150-Voice Choir! See your Presiding Elder.

Planning Meeting & Hotel accommodations - Details Attached

FOR MORE INFO, please contact your Pastor, Presiding Elder, or chairpersons.

Dr. Farrell J. Duncombe duncombe1@aol.com or Mrs. Bernella Knight Rose bernellarose@comcast.net

District website <https://www.ninthamechurch.org/>

District e-mail blasts/Upcoming edition of *The Ninth Hour* Newsletter

Money Milestones: This is how your finances should look in your 60s

By Brother Bobby Adkins II

My wife and I are active savers. We place a priority on three monthly payments, (1) Our tithe and offering to God and His Church; (2) Our Retirement Savings Plan, both 401K and IRA; and (3) Our personal wellness, i.e. vacation and time with family and friends. The formula is not new, but it works for us. We have squandered many dollars by spending freely early on in our marriage, but have buckled down over the past decade or so through strict financial discipline and prioritized saving. In our early 50s, we are in our prime earning years. Though we have a son in college, and a daughter in middle school, we still live with the same monthly saving priorities. Yes, there are still family milestones to plan for, such as assisting our son in establishing a career (without debt) and we continue planning for our daughter's higher education and employment career. As such, we are extremely cautious with our earnings and where each dollar goes. Nothing gets in the way of our savings and the three priority payments each month.

To do

- Put away 8% to 15% of salary
- Stash extra cash when possible
- Maximize earnings: raise? side gig?
- Open taxable account - third bucket of retirement assets
- Talk to mom and dad about estate plans

We are planning for the future, and planning to be here into our 70s, 80s? 90s? I thank God that my parents are still living into their 70s and 80s. My wife's mom is nearing 90 (she's 89). It is important that we "plan" to live that long. That is both appealing, yet frightening as well. What will we need in our finances to insure we can live reasonably well. Now, I know for a fact, God may have different plans for us. However, until that is manifested, we have a personal responsibility to secure our (and our family's) financial future.

So, if you are at that point where you have moved into pre-retirement planning, the 60s become the time to decide if you have enough, or (gulp) if you had enough.

The following excerpts were taken from marketwatch.com article published Jan 8, 2018 12:40 p.m. ET

Larry Marfise, the athletic director at the University of Tampa, was just starting his career when he decided it was important to begin saving for retirement — he saw older people who never got to follow their dreams to travel and enjoy their later years, and he didn't want that to happen to him.

Now at 66, decades after he began saving, he's still working — but because he wants to. He has two sons in college, and a wife with similar savings values, and he's accomplished all he's wanted to through the years. There were times when he had to stretch his income to have food, shelter, clothing, money for his goals as well as retirement savings, but he made it work.

"At this age, it relieves a lot of pressure and tension," Marfise said. "We don't have to worry about eating cat food and other things you hear people doing to survive."

Marfise has a point. Not everyone is prepared for retirement in their 60s, let alone decades before when they are at their peak earning years or just starting out in the real world. Unfortunately, people sometimes do not realize they have not saved enough until it is too late. Near-retirees, for example, had the least amount of money saved for retirement than any other group in a 2015 Wells Fargo survey: Americans 60 and older had about \$50,000 stashed away while people 55 to 59 had three times as much. Americans of all ages said their biggest financial regret was not saving for retirement earlier, according to a survey by personal finance website Bankrate.

The landscape of the retirement years has changed as well — traditionally, you would expect most people to retire between 62 and 65 years old, but these days people are working through those years, said James Nichols, head of consumer solutions group at New York-based financial services firm Voya Financial. Sometimes, that is because they never had the opportunity to save for retirement when they were younger. Women age 65 and older are perhaps most susceptible to this predicament, Department of Labor data shows. Women, especially those divorced or unmarried, face financial hardships, possibly because

(Continued on page 13)

Money Milestones

By Brother Bobby Adkins II

(Continued from page 12)

they lost money in the 2008 financial crisis or because they had to leave the workforce to care for their family.

There is hope for boomers, though, even for those with little to no retirement savings. If they are in the position to work longer, they can do so while building up a bigger nest egg and delaying Social Security benefits. Every time a pre-retiree postpones Social Security benefits by another year, the initial amount they receive increases about 8%, experts said. If married and in need of assistance, the spouse earning the lesser of the two should take Social Security beginning at 66 if possible. Choosing to begin withdrawals between the ages of 62 and 65 while still working could reduce the benefit they receive, experts said.

Now also is the time to think of the impact of health-care costs on your retirement, if you have not already — deductibles, premiums and other expenses could eat into your savings accounts. A 65-year-old man would need \$72,000 and a woman of the

same age \$93,000 in order to have a 50% chance of enough savings to cover their health-care expenses in retirement in 2016, an Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI) report found.

"You are not investing for the next five years but rather for the 10th, 15th and 20th year," Braglia said. "And that is not really any different than investing when you were younger."

Where are our College Students?

St. John's college students are encouraged to share their college information with the AMEN readers. The AMEN would like to publish a list of members who are in college and where they are matriculating. Please submit this information to nedra.mcdaniel@gmail.com.



Church School Book Club

October 2018

Discussion Date: 20 October 2018

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Scarlet Thread, Rivers, 2012.

November 2018

Discussion Date: November 17, 2018

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Inheritance, Alers, 2017.

Corporate attorney Hannah DuPont-Lowell always pictured herself returning to New Orleans to retire—just not yet. But after her Manhattan company abruptly lays off its staff, there is no better place to figure out a next move than the porch of her plantation-style home.

Nestled in the stunning Garden District, the DuPont House has been in Hannah's family for two centuries. With its eighteen rooms and two guesthouses, it is far more home than widowed Hannah needs. Still, it could make a wonderful inn, especially if she can convince her friends and former coworkers Tonya, Jasmine, and Nydia to join in the venture. But in the meantime, Hannah has a high school reunion to attend...

College Professor St. John McNair, Hannah's one-time classmate, is still the finest guy in any room. Between Hannah's willowy, blonde beauty, and his uncanny resemblance to Marvin Gaye, they make a striking pair. And gradually, their rekindled friendship moves toward romance. Still, Hannah is too bruised by her late husband's infidelities to trust a man again. But her friends' arrival and encouragement just might show her a path through uncertainty—straight to a vibrant, joyful new life.—Amazon



Members in Uniform

The AMEN will publish a monthly segment listing members on active military duty. If you or a family member would like to be listed, please provide information on your military status and assignment. Email this information to nedra.mcdaniel@gmail.com.

Back to School

By Samantha Adkins

What are the seven words that I hate to hear late in July?

IT'S...TIME...TO...GO...BACK...TO...SCHOOL. Ugh!

After a long hot summer, filled with trips to Texas, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Florida, I knew the summer for me was just about over when I heard my dad say those seven words.

Though I am shy for the most part, I didn't have any fears about starting this school year, even though I was moving to a new school. I am kind of use to changing schools by now. After moving from Texas two years ago, this will be my 3rd school in four years. Still, since I am not an outgoing person, just meeting new friends is usually a challenge. What helps is having a few friends at school that also attend St. John AME. I can look forward to seeing them each day.

At my new school, Liberty Middle School in Madison, I get to see Channing Wilson most days. Since Channing is also in the St. John AME dance ministry with me, it makes me feel good to see her at school, as I know she will come over to say "Hi" and to chat with me when she can. Since we are now four weeks into the new school year, I am more comfortable, but still look forward to seeing my church friends in the school hallway, in class, or in the cafeteria. We are starting to have more fun too. So far, my favorite subject is Visual Arts. My least favorite is Honors Math, though outdoor PE is not fun when it is so hot.

On the 8th of September I went to my first high school football game, and Channing and her brother Cam came with me. At first I did not want to go, but my dad convinced me it would be a good idea, plus I think

it was the perfect excuse for him going to see the Madison Bowl (Bob Jones High School versus James Clemens High School). Channing and I are also looking forward to going to see our football team, Liberty Middle School Lions, play later this year.

I look forward to the rest of the school year. I am slowly getting use to the daily schedule and all the extra work that has to be done in middle school. My first progress report was pretty good, so I will try hard and let you know how things turn out.



Church School Lesson Overview – October 2018

The lesson reviews were written by Brother Willie Sandifer.

October 7, 2018

Lesson Title: Noah's Steadfast Faith

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 6; 8:19

Print: Genesis 6:9b-22

Devotional Songs: #378 [], #345 [], and #243 []

Key Verse: "Noah did this he did all that God commanded him." (Genesis 6:22).

Because Noah was faithful, he was granted a special role in God's renewal of the world following the great flood (6:7, 8, 18-22).

In this lesson we see that things changed when sin came into the picture with Adam and Eve choosing to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The timeframe between Genesis 4 and Genesis 6, which includes being kicked out of the garden and Noah's lifetime had a huge increase in population and dramatic increase in evil. Wickedness foiled God's plans for a perfect world so badly that the only remaining option was to destroy humans and animals.

God warned Noah of the coming flood and told him a way to survive it in a faithful way Noah was to make his own way of survival in the form of an ark. The ark is like a free-floating barge without a sail or propulsion system. The measurements of the ark were huge: 450ft long, 45ft high, and 75ft wide. The overall volume came to over 1,500,000-cubic feet. The commentary matches that to the capacity of around 375 modern day tractor trailers.

October 14, 2018

Lesson Title: God is Always Working

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 9-12

Print: Genesis 10:1 Genesis 11:10, 27, 31, 32; 12:1-4

Devotional Songs: #377, [], #272 [], and #243 []

Key Verses: "I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 12:2-3).

Often called a Table of Nations, Genesis 10, shows a family history of the descendants of Noah. The Descendants of Shem settled what is known as modern day Iraq and Iran. This is where Abram was born.

The 10th chapter of Genesis begins and ends with verses that outline the lineage of Noah's sons and gives their geo-

graphical distribution of clans that later became nations. It begins with Japheth, then Ham, and finally Shem, whose lineage is the lesson focus. Abram comes from Shem's lineage.

The commentary relates that God's covenant with Abram is patterned the way ancient suzerain-vassal treaties are patterned. In the suzerain-vassal treaties a great king declared sovereignty over a weaker king and demanded complete loyalty in exchange for protection and overall security. The terms could cross generational lines if the heirs of the vassal king agreed to fulfill the condition of obedience.

In this lesson, God, the supreme sovereign, offers Abram, a local tribal leader, blessings in exchange for obedience to God's terms to leave everything to include his country, his people, and even his close relatives. He is to permanently journey to an unknown location.

October 21, 2018

Lesson Title: Abraham and Sarah Birth God's People

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 18:9-15; 21:1-7

Print: Genesis 18:9-15, 21:1-7

Devotional Songs: #424 [], #321 [], and #243 []

Key Verses: "The Lord dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as he had promised (Genesis 21:1).

This lesson shows the value of, and the need for a slow and steady way to faith. No matter the feelings about it, God moves in His own time toward the completion of His plans. The path can seem very slow as believers wait for God to act. Real faith requires that Christians keep moving forward with the knowledge that they will win if they do not give up. In last week's lesson God promised to make a great nation of Abram and make his name great. His descendants would make a formidable and respected group of people. There was one thing working against this future state: Abram and Sarai had not been able to have children.

Abram pointed out that it would not be possible for God's plan to work because he had no male heir. At Abram's death all his assets would revert to his oldest male servant who was not related to him by blood.

Abram and Sarai took matters into their own hands and produced an heir through a surrogate mother, Hagar. However, about 13 years later, God made His intentions clear: Abram would be known as Abraham, "father of many nations" and Sarah was renamed from Sarai. With the birth of their own son Isaac, they would go on to have many descendants.

(Continued on page 16)

Habitat for Humanity Home Dedicated

By Tami McGhee



2018 Habitat House



St. John members Jesse Johnson and Tami McGhee with the Gaillard family

Sister Tami McGhee and Brother Jesse Johnson represented St. John at the Habitat for Humanity Spring Build Dedication Ceremony for the Gaillard Family Home held on Saturday, September 08, 2018. The home is located at 6125 Belgrade Drive. Sponsors for the home are St. John AME Church, Church of the Nativity, First Christian Church, St. Matthew Episcopal Church, Faith Presbyterian Church, Alpha Foundation, ERC, and Provision Center for Proton Therapy.

Church School Lesson Overview – October 2018

(Continued from page 15)

October 28, 2018

Lesson Title: Isaac and Rebekah continue the Legacy

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 24

Print: Genesis 24:12-21; 61-67

Devotional Songs: #461 []; #97 []; and #243 []

Key Verses: "Then Rebekah and her maids rose up, mounted the camels, and followed the man; thus, the servant took Rebekah, and went his way" (Genesis 24:61).

This lesson shows some principles in a way that often causes Christians to ask God for a sign in choosing a spouse.

Abraham was left with one last task to find a wife for Isaac who would continue Abraham's bloodline and pass along the promise that the Serpent's head would one day be crushed by God through one of Abraham's descendants, Jesus.

Abraham was determined that Isaac's wife would be from among his own relatives. He sent a servant to choose Isaac a wife. Her family had to be willing to let her go to relocate to Canaan. There was no certainty, however, that Abraham's relatives would let one of their marriage-eligible daughters leave with a stranger and move miles away to marry a man that she had never seen or even heard of.

This lesson starts as the servant arrived with ten camels in the land of Abraham's family. The servant stopped by a well outside Nahor, a town named after Abraham's late brother. The servant needed to water his animals and it was preordained that he was there at evening time as the women came out to draw water. The servant chose this location and this time as a good place to seek a sign from God.

October 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	4	5	6
7 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship Communion Sunday	8	9	10 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	11	12	13 11:00 a.m. AMENSBOT Meeting
14 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	15	16 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	17 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	18	19	20
21 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	22	23 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	24 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	25	26	27 10:00 WMSM Meeting
28 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	29	30	31 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Bible Study			

St. John AME Church
229 Church Street
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The Reverend Sherita Seawright, Episcopal Supervisor
The Reverend Bruce W. Hunter, Presiding Elder
The Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor



"Sharing The Word. Serving The People."

*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 23 Issue 10

October 2018

Pastor Wright Preaches Annual Sermon at Northwest Alabama Annual Conference

By B. Johnson



The Ninth Session of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference was held Tuesday, September 4, through Friday, September 7, 2018, at the Daniel Payne Community Plaza in Birmingham, Alabama. The Annual Conference was led by Bishop Harry L. Seawright, Presiding Prelate. The Reverend Sherita Moon Seawright is the Episcopal Supervisor. Presiding Elders of the Conference were the Reverend Dwight E. Dillard and the Reverend Cleophas Guice, Sr., along with Interim Presiding Elders the Reverend Oliver Allen and the Reverend Myers Hawkins. Host churches for the Conference were Bryant Chapel AME Church, Grasselli Heights, Birmingham, the Reverend Damien R. Littlejohn, Pastor; New Magnolia AME Church, Muscoda, Bessemer, the Reverend Charles Marie Davis, Pastor; St. Mark AME Church, Brighton, the Reverend Roderick Callins, Pastor; and St. Paul AME Church, Adamsville, the Reverend Joseph A. Hall, Pastor.

The pastor of St. John AME Church, Huntsville, Alabama, the Reverend Maurice Wright, II was the preacher for the Opening Session of the Annual Conference. The Reverend Wright was introduced by The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright. The Reverend Wright's sermon topic was, *"In Spite of the Forecast, God is Working Behind the Scene."* Of course, Pastor Wright's delivery was powerful, exciting, intense and enthusiastic! It was very well received by the ministers, delegates and those in attendance. He made St. John members who were present very proud that he was their pastor.

At 3:00 pm the reports began and St. John members were excited to know that Pastor Wright would be giving his report on this day while they were all in attendance. The Reverend Wright, flanked by almost 30 members, stood boldly and proclaimed the positive things that had taken place over this last year at St. John AME Church, Huntsville. Praise God!

Members were also proud of St. John's delegate, Brother Clifton Miller, in his passionate request for the return of the Reverend Maurice Wright, II, Servant Pastor, to St. John Huntsville for the next conference year! He did an outstanding job and his request was granted at the Closing Session on Friday, September 7th.



"Sharing The Word. Serving The People."

VISION 2020

- IGNITE GROWTH
- INSPIRE CHANGE
- IMPACT SERVICE

Vision 2020 Launch Kicked Off the New Conference Year

B. Johnson

T minus 5 seconds and counting. Go.... for auto system start.
Five, four, three, two, one, mission control, we have Lift off!

St. John launched its VISION 2020 Building Campaign on Sunday, September 9, 2018 at 10:00 am. It was a spectacular event! The Building Committee, under the leadership of Sister Adrienne P.K. Washington left no stone unturned. The committee had planned an exciting event to capture the involvement of all the congregants.



Presiding Elder (Ret.) Allen introduces Presiding Elder Bruce Hunter.



Bishop Seawright greets the congregation.

The morning service took flight with the church welcoming the Reverend Maurice Wright, II Servant Pastor, the Reverend Joretha Wright and the Wright family back for the beginning of their third conference year at St. John. Presiding Elder (Ret.) Oliver Allen led the hon-

or. This presentation was followed by the introduction of the newly appointed Presiding Elder, the Reverend Bruce Wayne Hunter and his wife, Mrs. Gail Hunter. Also, among the honored guests was The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright, Presiding Prelate, 9th Episcopal District, AMEC. Once all the introductions were concluded, the service proceeded with the usual order of worship. Pastor Wright preached on the sermon topic, "I Can See Clearly Now" with supporting scripture from 1 Corinthians 13:12.



Adrienne P-K Washington presents Vision 2020



Sharon Butler presents Vision 2020 Giving Campaign

Through the power of creative imagery, Sister Washington presented VISION 2020 to the entire congregation. She explained

(Continued on page 3)

Vision 2020 Launch Kicked Off the New Conference Year

B. Johnson

(Continued from page 2)

while there had been talk for years regarding expanding St. John, the time for talk was over; "We are flat out of space" and need to expand in order to meet the needs of a growing, thriving congregation and to continue to grow and expand ministries. She described the plan for moving from the idea, to the concept, to actually beginning and ending the building stages. She clarified that no actual building plans have been determined; no architect has even been decided. What she was most explicit about was the plan to begin raising the necessary capital to begin a building project. She ended her presentation on three key concepts as the church begins the process. She stated that, "We will take into consideration, what we want, what we need, and especially what we can afford."



Building Committee members submit pledges.

Sister Sharon Butler followed with a specific strategy for raising the capital for the building campaign. She explained that everyone would be encouraged to participate, this was an inclusive project. She shared the beautifully designed pledge cards and how to submit them to the Stewardship and Finance Commission, which would honor everyone's confidentiality. Sister Butler stressed that it was not so much what one pledged, as much as, being consistent with the pledge. Pledge cards were distributed to the adults and to the children and youth. A copy of the pledge card is on page 8, for use by persons who have not submitted a pledge card.

As the VISION 2020 launch came to a conclusion in the sanctuary it moved to the next stage which was a fellowship meal. The entire congregation was invited to a delicious meal. The weather did not behave as was hoped, so all the outside activities were either postponed or brought inside. Nevertheless, everyone enjoyed the camaradery. Stage three of the launch had everyone to return to the sanctuary for a spirit-filled concert by *In One Accord*, under the direction of Brother Roberto Burton. The benediction was rendered thereafter and the St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church VISION 2020 Launch concluded. Amen.



Setup in place for outdoor activities.



The food committee prepares the meal.



Members enjoyed food and fellowship.

The 50 Plus Auxiliary Celebrates National Hispanic Heritage Month

By B. Johnson



Pastor Wright, guest presenters and Fifty-Plus members

"The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself" Leviticus 19:34

The 50 Plus Auxiliary, under the leadership of Sister Agnes Gilmore, celebrated National Hispanic Heritage Month during the September meeting. While the membership is comprised mostly of retirees, they never stop learning. The monthly agenda always presents an opportunity for the members to learn something new and this month's agenda was no exception. National Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated from September 15th to October 15th. The histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America are recognized. The observation started in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon Johnson. It was expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to cover a 30-day period.

The public has been intrigued for months as they have witnessed the horrendous events occurring at the United States borders and with the immigration crisis. They have heard the dismay of the inaction towards the young immigrants, known as "Dreamers." Citizens across the United States have been appalled by the "Zero Tolerance" Policy of the Trump Administration towards immigrants and the separation of families. The African Methodist Episcopal Council of Bishops, (Bishops 2018) wrote a scathing rebuttal to Attorney General, Jefferson Beauregard Sessions's use of scripture to defend the "Zero Tolerance" Policy.³

To bring clarity to this discussion, two experts were invited to share their knowledge. Mrs. Ann Marie Batista, Coordinator of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOLE), for Huntsville City Schools and Mrs. E. Yalitza LaFontaine, Regional North Organizer, Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice (ACIJ) were the guest speakers.

Here are just a few of the points shared by Mrs. Batista:

- Huntsville City School's Admission Policy states that enrollment of immigrant or migrant children shall not be denied or delayed due to lack of appropriate government issued documents, (i.e. birth certificate, social security number, school records etc.)
- Huntsville City Schools has an enrollment of approximately 2000 Spanish-speaking students.

(Continued on page 3)

³The Council of Bishops of the AME Church. (2018, July 16). AME Church Condemns Use of Scripture by Attorney General Sessions to Separate Immigrant Families. *The Christian Recorder*, pp. 15

The 50 Plus Auxiliary Celebrates National Hispanic Heritage Month

(Continued from page 4)

- Spanish-speaking countries or territories represented in Huntsville City Schools are Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, Venezuela and the USA. So, students are not coming just from Mexico.

Mrs. LaFontaine spoke passionately on the state of immigration and the crisis, not only happening at the border, but across the United States. Her presentation was extremely informative and encompassed more information than space will allow. However, here are just a few highlights.

- She began by explaining the difference between Latina, Hispanic, illegal alien and undocumented, terms which people of Latin heritage are often identified by. "Illegal Alien" is considered a government tag. The preferable term is "undocumented immigrant."
- She gave a brief history of immigration in the United States and how the demographics have changed. Initially Europeans comprised the majority of immigrants in the 1700 and 1800's. As time passed and conditions and the economy changed, the color of immigration changed from African (forced migration) to Caucasian, to Asian, to Mexican.
- DACA Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals was designed to protect the children that were brought here illegally by their parents. DACA requires that the students be in school, cannot be arrested, and must check in. A DUI, domestic violence and theft will get you deported. Over 800,000 children are literally waiting to renew their status at a cost of \$450.00 every year.
- If an undocumented parent is deported and the child is a U.S. citizen, the child can go with the parent, but they can only stay in that country for 180 days because they are considered a foreigner. They cannot attend school unless the parent pays for schooling. The child must have dual citizenship in order to remain in that country with the parent or be returned to the U.S. after 180 days.
- There are 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. And there is no path to citizenship for these people, not even for those refugees seeking asylum.
- She spoke on Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and how they are enforcing the current administration's harsh regulations. ICE has contracts with privately owned prisons and detention facilities across the country. Thirty-four thousand ICE beds are filled each day at a substantial amount of money. Immigrants apprehended in Huntsville/Madison County are sent to Etowah County for holding and then sent to a facility in Louisiana. And yes, Mrs. LaFontaine reported that there had been at least 30 people arrested in Huntsville by ICE.
- Unlike citizens, those that are arrested and detained have no right to Due Process because they are undocumented immigrants. Bail can range from \$300 to \$5000 dollars, CASH.

It was truly an eye opening presentation. She concluded with several suggestions on how to relieve some of the pain of this civil rights issue.

- Most importantly....VOTE! Vote for those regulations and persons who are compassionate towards the plight of the immigrant families.
- Volunteer with agencies that are fighting for the rights of immigrant families.
- Engage with the immigrant community.
- Advocate and donate.
- Write legislators.

Following the conclusion of the presentations, the 50+ Auxiliary shared a real Mexican Fiesta with Mexican foods, decorations and Mariachi music.

The 50+ Auxiliary meets the first Monday of each month at 9:30 am. All are welcome. Please consider joining us next month, where, we may be retired, but we are still learning and doing.

Reflections on Grandparents Day and Grandparent's Love

By Charlsie Brooks

"I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother, Eunice and, I am persuaded now lives in you also." - 2 Timothy 1:5

Sunday, September 9, was National Grandparents Day. This is not a "Pop-up" holiday, but a legitimate and growing celebration. Grandparenting is nothing new to Black families. Statistics reveal that for some, generation after generation of Black children were raised by grandparents. "Great-grandmother hobbles in on crutches, her garment pinned across her chest with a safety pin, and her cap tied on with a black ribbon. But it takes more than crutches and discarded ribbons to abash a colored grandmother. In fact, they are the only grandmothers whom I have ever known to come into their own. They are still persons. They never quail before a stylish granddaughter by so much as a fraction of an inch...They have all drunk at the fount of youth and never lost its flavor."¹

"My grandmothers were strong.
They followed plows and bent to toil.
They moved through fields sowing seed.
They touched earth and grain grew.
They were full of sturdiness and singing.
My grandmothers were strong.
My grandmothers are full of memories..."²

Oprah Winfrey wrote "I pray every day. Not only do I pray, but I pray on my knees. Like my grandmother taught me. As long as God allows you to bend, you bend. And I've bent every day of my life."³

National Grandparents Day has more than one origin. Some people consider it to have been first proposed by Michael Goldgar in the 1970's after he visited his aunt in an Atlanta nursing home. Spending \$11,000 of his own money in lobbying efforts to have the day officially recognized, he made 17 trips to Washington, DC over a seven-year span to meet with legislators.

Others consider Marian Lucille Herndon McQuade, a housewife in West Virginia, to have been the main driver for the day of observance. Throughout the 1970's McQuade worked hard to educate the people about the important contributions senior citizens made and the contributions that they would be willing to make if asked. She also asked urged people to adopt a grandparent, not for one day a year and not for material giving, but for a lifetime of experience.

In any event, National Grandparents Day was finally signed into law by President Jimmy Carter in 1978. Marian McQuade received a phone call from the White House to advise her of this event. Many people believe that National Grandparents Day was inspired by her efforts. A presidential proclamation on September 6, 1979, made this day official—it designated Sunday, September 9, 1979, (being the "first Sunday of September following Labor Day") as National Grandparents Day.

Each year the President is requested to issue a proclamation for this day and to call on people to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities. This is now a special and recognized day. Many find simple ways to honor their grandparents. While Barack Obama was President he took time to issue Presidential proclamations urging Americans to "honor the anchors of our families and recognize the immeasurable ways they enrich our lives."

The St. John church family loves grandparents and grandchildren. This article shares comments from several grandparents and pictures of some of their grandchildren.

(Continued on page 7)

¹Eleanor Wembridge, Life Among the Lowbrows, 1931.

²Margaret Walker, "Lineage," For My People, 1942.

³Oprah Winfrey, in "An Intimate Talk With Oprah," Essence, August 1987.

Reflections on Grandparents Day and Grandparent's Love

By Charlsie Brooks

(Continued from page 6)



Karen Minor's Grandchildren

and feed the fish and ducks. (6) Cayden Wilson is a 2nd grader also; she is the twin sister to Chloe. They are eight years old. Cayden loves her grandma and they watch as Cayden does gymnastics at Altitude Trampoline Park and she performs in her own front yard. (7) Baby Carter Wilson is two years old and is now a "Terrible Two" according to grandmother Karen. Carter likes to play patty cake and loves playing outside with grandma. Carter also loves grandma's cooking.

Sister Karen Minor has eight grandchildren and she shared information of each of them. (1) Austin Franklin attends Piedmont International University in Winston Salem, North Carolina where he is majoring in business. Austin and Karen love to spend time just talking. (2) Channing is a 6th grader at Liberty Middle School in Madison, Alabama. Karen said that Channing has a silly laugh that she loves to hear. They enjoy shopping and doing crafts. (3) Cambridge Wilson attends Madison Elementary School in Madison, Alabama where he is in the 5th grade. Cam loves to play football and baseball. Cam also loves to eat grandma's cooking, especially chicken. (4) Grandson, Justin Franklin, lives in Hopewell, Virginia and is in the 5th grade. Karen loves attending Justin's soccer, football and basketball games when she visits Virginia. (5) Chloe Wilson is her granddaughter who is in the 2nd grade. Chloe loves playing basketball. They love to go to the park to ride so she can ride her bike



Lanita Slaton's Grandchildren

Sister Lanita Slaton, happily shares the following about her darling grandchildren. "My grandchildren Erin Minor (15), Jordan Slaton (10), Tristan Slaton (9) and Slaton Anderson (5) are the lights of my life. They keep me busy enjoying their extracurricular activities. Erin is a cheerleader at Austin High School. Jordan enjoys participating with her swim team. Tristan is a fantastic artist and recently had her work featured in the River City Arts Festival. Slaton, the youngest and only boy of the crew, loves to study space and wants to be an astronaut when he grows up. My grandchildren make my heart smile."

Sister Agnes Gilmore shared how important it is for she and her husband to pray for their grandchildren.

"As grandparents, we pray daily that our grandchildren will understand the meaning of the cross. We pray for their physical needs and protection. We pray they remember to treat family members, friends, teachers and everyone with the same kindness and respect they would like to receive. We pray that they feel secure in our love for them."

Grandparents feel blessed and honored to be able to shower love and care



Agnes and Rufus Gilmore with their grandchildren.

(Continued on page 8)

Reflections on Grandparents Day and Grandparent's Love

By Charlsie Brooks



Charlsie Brooks' Grandchildren

(Continued from page 7)

on their dear grandchildren. This writer's grandchildren are pictured on the left.

This poem from Leaves of Gold, published in 1948, entitled "When We Are Old", says it all.

When you are old and gray and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace
And loved your beauty with love false and true;
But one man.. (your grands) ..loved the pilgrim soul in you
And they..(grands) loved the sorrows of your changing face;

And bending down beside the glowing bars,
Murmur, a little sadly, how love fled
And placed upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of Stars.

— William B. Yeats.

Finally, Alex Haley wrote, "Grandparents somehow sprinkle a sense of stardust over grandchildren."

MY PLEDGE		VISION 2020		GIVING LEVELS	
 ST. JOHN AME CHURCH "Sharing The Word, Serving The People."		Name _____ Address _____ City State Zip _____ Phone _____ Email _____		Agate Gemstone \$1-\$250 Stepping Stone \$251-\$2,500 Milestone \$2,501 - \$10,000 Keystone \$10,001 - \$20,000 Cornerstone \$20,001 - \$30,000 Capstone \$30,001 and Greater	
I WILL Support Vision 2020 with My Our Faith, Pledge, and Commitment and Make the Following Pledge: \$ _____ WEEKLY for 156 Weeks \$ _____ MONTHLY for 36 Months \$ _____ ANNUALLY for 3 Years \$ _____ OTHER _____		<< TOTAL PLEDGE: _____ 3 Year Promise Period (Sept 2018 – Sept 2021)			
Signature: _____		Date: _____			

Return your completed Pledge Card in the sealable envelop provided by placing it in the offering tray or mailing it to:
 St. John AME Church
 Attention: Stewardship & Finance Commission
 229 Church Street NW
 Huntsville, Alabama 35801



Ninth Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church

The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright, Presiding Prelate
The Reverend Sherita Seawright, Episcopal Supervisor

**2019 Planning Meeting &
150th Celebration of the AME Church in Alabama
November 1-3, 2018**

St. John AME Church, The Reverend Roosevelt Williams, III, Host Pastor
807 Madison Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama 36104
Renaissance Montgomery Hotel & Spa - 201 Tallapoosa Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36104

150th Celebration Gala

November 3, 2018 at noon
Bishop James L. Davis, Guest Speaker

St. John's Betty E. Derrick Women's Missionary Society Attended the Annual WMS Convention in Record Numbers

By Lorraine Parham



New members of the NWAC WMS including St. John missionaries Parker-Monroe, Baldwin, Philadelphia and Booker, at this connectional meeting.

Nineteen members of the Betty E. Derrick WMS Society attended the 2018 Northwest Alabama Conference WMS Annual Day, on September 1st at the Daniel Payne Community Plaza in Birmingham, Alabama.

The session began with the Tanner Turner Memorial tribute to our missionary sisters called home during the year. St. John's circle remains unbroken "to God be the Glory".

The business session focused on the election of delegates to the 2019 WMS Quadrennial Convention, which is scheduled for Jul 28 -Aug 1, 2019, in Columbus, OH. The conference elected 5 delegates and 1 alternate. Our own Dr. Monica Dillihunt is an elected delegate; she will represent St. John and the 9th Episcopal district

Each year Northwest Conference WMS engages in a compassionate care project. This year the Conference awarded four \$850 Book Scholarships to deserving students and donated \$300 to the 9th Episcopal District GED program.

During the afternoon in white worship service missionaries received a challenge from Dr. Dolly Desselle Adams, wife of the late Bishop John Hurst Adams to "Go and Be Useful Christians". Dr. Adams spoke from Matthew 21:18-19, expounding on Jesus' reaction to the fig tree that did not have any fruit on it. Because it did not serve its purpose Jesus caused it to wither and die. Dr. Adams described all the ways Christians have become useless due to their ego-driven pursuit for power and position. We were encouraged to stop catering to our desires and recognize that blessings come with responsibility, and Christians have a responsibility to be useful in fulfilling the mission of the church.

St. John Missionaries attending the Conference included Mary Allen, Gwendolyn Baldwin, Earnestine Barnes-Ivery, Renee Booker, Charlsie Brooks, Angeline Brownlow, Eleanor Burnett, Janice Hereford, Monica Dillihunt, Claudinette Fears, Annie Hall, Thalia Love, Pearlean Myhand, Lorraine Parham, Sylvette Parker-Monroe, Mary Powers, Eva Smith, Donnie Thompson and Rosemary Wells.

Addison Bradford Named Youth of the Month for September



Addison Bradford

Addison Bradford was the youth of the month for September. She is an up and coming artist and a lover of all things purple and pink. She takes great pride in creating life-like portraits of her family and friends. Her artwork has been featured in the offices of many distinguished individuals like Pastor Wright.

In addition to being a budding artist, she is also a dance student at Soles Dance Center, a gymnastics student at The Little Gym, and a piano student of her mother. She is a wonderful big sister who takes pride in making her younger sibling laugh at her various antics.

Her educational journey is just beginning at Central Elementary School, where she is in the Pre-K program. Her favorite thing to do at school is play on the swings during recess. When she is not drawing, you can find her putting together puzzles, reading one of her favorite books, or watching Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood.

Addison is the daughter of Willie and Jamela Bradford and the big sister of Breanne.

Congratulations Addison!



VISION 2020

● VISION 2020
● PURPOSE 2020
● IMPACT 2020

"Catch The Vision"

Three Year Strategic Plan (September 2016 - September 2022)

GIVING LEVELS

Anchor Contributor	\$1-\$1000	Gift Receipts for All Members
Stipendiary Member	\$1001-\$2,500	Recognized in Program of Your Special Presentation
Majority	\$2,501-\$10,000	
Minority	\$10,001-\$25,000	
Overseer	\$25,001-\$50,000	
Cornerstone	\$50,001 and beyond	

Thank you

Please see the Membership & Finance Commission for more info



Soup Kitchen Ministry

Charlie Brooks

Are You on Fire With a Passion to Serve?

"But be sure to fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you."

- 1 Samuel 12:24

When you are attuned to the Holy Spirit the desire to serve others is awakened. Are you eager to express God through your thoughts, words, and deeds? As you wake up to the Spirit's voice within the heart it expands in gratitude. You willingly desire to serve God and others faithfully and sincerely. You then become a vehicle through which God is revealed in the world. Others see you and see God.

Ask the Holy Spirit how can you be of service? May you open your heart to be of service to those who come to St. John's bi-monthly "Soup Kitchen"? Open your heart and mind and act on the guidance that God will give.

We invite you to share your gifts with passion. Let the energy of the Holy Spirit become ignited. You can be on fire with a passion to serve when you accept His will.

"They came, everyone whose heart was stirred, and everyone whose spirit was willing, and brought the Lord's offering to be used for the tent of meetings and for all its service."

- Exodus 35:21



Be sure to let the church office know when you move so that your contact information in the membership database will be correct. Email your new address to office@stjohnhuntsville.com.

Missionaries' Outreach Ministers to Women and Children

By Nedra McDaniel



On Saturday, September 22, 2018, the Women's Missionary Society (WMS) of St. John served lunch at the Women's and Children's Center of the Huntsville Downtown Rescue Mission. This is a quarterly service project for the WMS.

At the center, the missionaries served a warm meal that was prepared by the Downtown Rescue Mission staff. Some members worked the serving table, while others served beverages and desserts. Another group worked with the staff to prepare vegetables for the Sunday meal. As missionaries served, they also mingled with the residents of the center and offered greetings and encouragement.

WMS members who participated were Lorraine Parham (WMS President), Monica Dillihunt, Pamela Arrington, Nedra McDaniel, Claire Philadelphia, Mary Allen, Eva Smith, Angeline Brownlow, Rosemary Wells, Renee Booker, and YPDer Robin Sanderson.

The St. John WMS meets the 4th Saturday of each month at 10:00 am. Sister Lorraine Parham is the president. Members are invited to join this ministry.

In Memory of Sister Barbara Jean Leonard

By Rufus Gilmore III

Sing to the Lord, for he has done wonderful things.
Make known his praise around the world.
Isaiah 12:5



Barbara Jean Leonard, daughter of the late William Sr. and Margaret Leonard was born on March 19, 1936 in Birmingham, Alabama.

She accepted Christ as her Lord and Savior and was baptized at an early age in Birmingham, Alabama. She moved her family to Boston, MA in the late 50's where she began her career at the Raytheon Corporation. She moved to Huntsville, Alabama in 1978 where she continued working in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) field and eventually retired from Lockheed Martin Missiles and Space Co. After retirement she enjoyed volunteering with Meals on Wheels and sitting with the elderly. Barbara loved to travel and sing in the St. John AME Senior Choir.

Barbara became an important part of the St. John Music Department by participating in the Senior and Gospel Choirs. As we became acquainted with each other we discovered that we were both from Birmingham and immediately bonded and our friendship grew stronger and stronger as time passed. As choir director, Barbara and I spent hours preparing music for the worship service. Barbara was faithful and dedicated in her service to St. John. She had a lovely soprano voice that would touch the hearts of those who heard her sing. The congregation would often request that Barbara sing, "Christ Is All," "God Is Still On the Throne," "God Cares For You," "What A Friend We Have In Jesus," and "Let God Abide."

Barbara had a loving and caring spirit as she interacted the choir and the congregation of St. John. She will be missed.

Call to Conscience - Day of Action Held in Washington, D.C.

Don Clemons, Co-Chair, Social Action Commission
9th Episcopal District Lay Organization



On September 5 & 6, 2018, under the leadership of Bishop Reginald T. Jackson, President of the Bishop's Council of the A.M.E. Church and Bishop Frank Madison Reid, III, Chair of the Social Action Commission of the A.M.E. Church, a Call To Conscience Rally was held in Washington D.C. The rally's purpose was to reassert the Black church's role as the "Conscience of Nation". The Black Church has been involved in nearly every progressive social and human rights issue in this nation of ours, the protest led by Bishop Richard Allen walking out of St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church, the voting rights act, the bus boycott, Brown vs Board of Education, the civil rights act. The rally was attended by several faith communities (A.M.E., A.M.E.Z., C.M.E., Baptist, COGIC, and several other denominations).



Bishop Reginald T. Jackson



Bishop Frank Madison Reid III

Reid Temple A.M.E. Church of Glenn Dale, Maryland served as the headquarters for the first day of the rally. Workshops on Evangelical Christian and Conscientious Christians; Mid-Term elections - National and State Implications; Registration, Mobilization, Early Voting and Organization. The master of order was the Reverend Steven Greene, Son of Bishop Sam Greene. The chosen workshop presenters were millennials, the Reverend Willie Francois, Ms. Stephanie Young (Bishop McKinley Young's daughter) and Ms. Rose Simmons (daughter of the late Reverend Daniel "Super" Simmons, who was one of

the Emmanuel 9). The workshops were both inspiring, encouraging, and informative.

Lafayette Park, across from the White House, was the site for day two of the rally. The National Park Service estimated that approximately 2,000 were in attendance. This was a spirit-filled rally that included great singing and speeches by the likes of the Reverend Jessie L. Jackson, Bishop Reginald Jackson, Bishop Gerald Ingram, Bishop James Davis, Bishop John Bryant, Bishop Anne Henning Byfield, Bishop Dennis Proctor, Brother Louis Reed and several dignitaries with the keynote speakers again being millennials, the Reverend Jamal Bryant, Brother Louis

Reed and Sister Alice Marie Johnson. The proceedings of the day in the park may be viewed on YouTube: #RolandMartinUnfiltered: AME Churches 9.6.18 Call To Conscience/Forward To Action Rally at WH. After the rally in the park, the clergy and lay met with members of the congressional leadership at the U.S. Capitol.

Bishop Reginald T. Jackson's closing remarks were a charge to the Black Church that this was not an end, but a beginning and the most important work would not be done in Lafayette Park, but when rally attendees returned home. He encouraged pastors and lay leadership to go to work ensuring every person eligible to vote is registered. He set a goal that before election day 80 percent of congregations would have voted by early voting where permissible, or by absentee ballot.

The closing theme was: Call To Conscience - Forward To Action



Don Clemons and the Reverend Jesse Jackson



Don Clemons and Brother Louis Reed

Retirement Planning General Orders

By Brother Bobby Adkins II

Prior to becoming a U.S. Marine, one of the first things I learned in boot camp was my military "11 General Orders". For those in the military, general orders are designed to cover every possible scenario a sentry (guard) might encounter while on duty. All recruits learn these orders verbatim during recruit training and are expected to preserve this knowledge for the remainder of their military careers. I have been off of active duty for over a decade, yet I still remember them, such as General Order #1 "To take charge of my post and all government property in view". At this point in the article, you may be asking yourself, "What does this have to do with the financial corner?" Well, I am glad you asked! I have the answer for you.

As we continue on this journey to learn more about retirement planning, we have been exposed to varying investment strategies, often based on income and age. Likewise, as we monitor the news, we are bombarded daily with headlines reporting that the markets are up, or the markets are down, or that individuals have difficult financial decisions to make regarding their future. Questions, such as "How do we keep Social Security solvent?" "How do we make Medicare affordable?" "Why are Americans not saving enough?" These become political tag-lines. We are constantly faced with a host of thorny retirement issues that affect retirement strategies and hinder patience. These type questions create anxiety amongst investors who are counting the days to retirement. What should be done? How can one focus within this stock market chaos?



In the midst of all of this uncertainty, we should have some fundamental investment guidelines that we can rely on to help us make the best decisions as we plan for retirement. I call these the "11 General Orders of Investing." They are written down in no specific order of importance.

1. Place your retirement savings ahead of other goals, like college or a vacation home. Unless you have a good pension, plus Social Security, it is mostly up to you. Remember, there are no financial second chances.
2. Save as much as possible, as soon as possible. You can always reduce savings rate later. Investment compounding really is powerful. Load up on savings early in your career and let the money work for you in the decades that follow.
3. When money gets tight, such as when paying for the kids' college, you may need to trim savings for a few years. But if you over-saved during the first 10 years or so of your career, you will likely still reach retirement in good shape.
4. Have a financial and estate plan, to include a Will and Power of Attorney that provides coverage and support for your spouse or others who depend on you financially, as well as those who may outlive you. Income annuities, investment income streams and life insurance might all be part of that plan.
5. Place health care high on your list of fixed expenses. Medicare plus supplemental insurance can cost a retired couple more than \$700 a month. Those premiums are a big monthly hit and they will grow each year. Prescription drugs can also be a large expense. Remember that Medicare has no out-of-pocket limits.
6. Invest in ways that will provide a steady income stream in retirement. In many ways, retirement is no different from your working years: You want a steady flow of income. Do not be totally exposed to stock market fluctuations. You do not want to worry about where that 4% withdrawal rate will come from each year.
7. If your pre-retirement lifestyle is set with a vision as to what you can sustain after you leave the workforce, you are likely on track. If not, retirement could mean a sharp drop in living standards.
8. Never forget that non-financial aspects of retirement are important, too. Think about any significant relocation long be-

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Retirement Planning

By Brother Bobby Adkins II

(Continued from page 13)

fore you retire, and consider trying it out first. It is a big mistake to think of retirement purely as leisure time. And remember, when living in retirement, the fun stuff takes money.

9. Remember, Social Security is designed to replace no more than 40% of pre-retirement income, and for many, that 40% is an overestimate. The benefit calculation is skewed toward lower income Americans. In retirement, you will want some steady sources of income, and Social Security is probably the most secure. However, recognize that it's intended to be a smaller part of your total income.
10. Pay attention to communications from your former employers, Social Security, Medicare, personal advisers and others. What you don't know can hurt you. A missed deadline and any number of other errors can do severe financial damage. Weigh the pros and cons of applying for early pension payments or social security.
11. Recognize that your taxes may not be lower during retirement. All the signs point to higher taxes in the future for everyone. To reduce your retirement tax bill, a Roth IRA account or municipal bond mutual funds may be more favorable.

There are surely other guidelines that are not listed, but adhering to these 11 general orders for retirement planning should cover many of the life events that affect your later years and retirement planning.

Until next month, Happy Savings!

Where are our College Students?

St. John's college students are encouraged to share their college information with the AMEN readers. The AMEN would like to publish a list of members who are in college and where they are matriculating. Please submit this information to nedra.mcdaniel@gmail.com.



Mid-Term Election November 6, 2018

October 22nd Last day to register to vote in the November 6th Election

Applications for Absentee Ballots may be obtained from Mrs. Eva Smith.

November 1st Last day to make application for an Absentee Ballot

November 5th Last day to hand-deliver or postmark an Absentee Ballot



November is Caregivers Appreciation Month

SSSSS Retirement? Are you Ready? Start Now! SSSSS

The Annual Caregivers Workshop

Thursday, November 15, 2018 from 6:00pm-7:30pm.

Mrs. Latoya Ford, Social Security Specialist from the cooperative office in Atlanta, Georgia will be the guest presenter. Everyone is invited to attend, especially millennials and young adults.

A light repast will be served from 5:30 to 6:00pm. Please make plans to attend.



Members in Uniform

The AMEN will publish a monthly segment listing members on active military duty. If you or a family member would like to be listed, please provide information on your military status and assignment. Email this information to nedra.mcdaniel@gmail.com

Breast Cancer Awareness

Breast Self-exam and Survivor Testimony

By Rosemary Wells



John Hopkins University estimates that as many as 40 percent of diagnosed breast cancers today are detected by women who find a lump themselves. A study published in the *Journal of Women's Health* in 2011 found that 57 percent of female survivors said there was more involved in their breast cancer detection than a mammogram—with 25 percent reporting self-exams as the additional method and 18 percent saying they found a lump accidentally.

The National Breast Cancer Foundation (NBCF)—is perhaps one of the biggest endorsers of the breast self-exam by urging women to perform self-exams at least once a month. The organization reasoning is simple: No one knows your breast better than you do. "While mammograms can help you detect cancer before you can feel a lump, breast self-exams help you to be familiar with how your breast looks and feels," the NBCF writes. [Then] you can alert your healthcare professional right away if there are any changes.

Before you begin to perform a breast self-exam, you may find it helpful to discuss the instructions and technique with your doctor. If you menstruate, choose a time in your cycle when your breasts are least tender. Your hormone level fluctuates each month during your menstrual cycle, which causes changes in breast tissue. Swelling begins to decrease when your period starts. The best time to perform a self-exam for breast awareness is usually the week after your period ends.



Begin with a visual examination of your breast. Stand in front of a mirror with your arms at your sides. Look for puckering, dimpling, or changes in size, shape or symmetry. Check to see if your nipples are turned in (inverted). Inspect your breast with your hands pressed down on your hips. Inspect your breast with your arms raised overhead and the palms of your hands pressed together. When you raise your arms above your head, the mass if there is one, stays there and the skin pulls away. Lift your breast to see if ridges along the bottom are symmetrical.

Next use your hands to examine your breast. Choose a bed or other flat surface to lie down on your back. When lying down, breast tissue spreads out, making it thinner and easier to feel. Use the pads, not the very tip, of your three middle fingers. Use different pressure levels. Use light pressure to feel the tissue closest to the skin, medium pressure to feel a little deeper, and firm pressure to feel the tissue closest to the chest and ribs. Be sure to use each pressure level before moving on to the next spot. In the shower, lather your fingers and breast with soap to help your fingers glide more easily over your skin.



Take your time. Don't rush, it may take several minutes to carefully examine your breasts. Your goal is to feel different depths of the breast by using different levels of pressure to feel ALL the breast tissue. Follow a pattern. Use a methodical technique to ensure you examine your entire breast. For instance, imagine the face of a clock over your breast or the slice of pie. Begin near your collarbone and examine that section, moving your fingers toward your nipple. Then move your fingers to the next section.

Finding a change or lump in your breast is not a reason to panic. Breasts feel different in different places. A firm ridge along the bottom of each breast is normal, for instance. The look and feel of your breast will change as you age.

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Breast Cancer Awareness

Breast Self-exam and Survivor Testimony

By Rosemary Wells

(Continued from page 15)

Make an appointment with your doctor if you notice:

- ◊ A hard lump or knot near your underarm.
- ◊ Changes in the way your breast looks or feels, including thickening or prominent fullness that is different from the surrounding tissue
- ◊ Dimples, pucker, bulges or ridges on the skin of your breast
- ◊ A recent change in a nipple to become pushed in (inverted) instead of sticking out
- ◊ Redness, warmth, swelling or pain
- ◊ Itching, scales, sores or rashes
- ◊ Bloody nipple discharge

Your doctor may recommend additional tests and procedures to investigate breast changes, including a clinical breast exam, mammogram and ultrasound.



A personal testimony...

My name is Melinda and I am a 12 year breast cancer survivor.

My journey with breast cancer began in 2006 when I was first diagnosed at the age of 41. At that time I was diagnosed with stage II triple-negative breast cancer, with positive metastasis to the lymph nodes in my right breast. Triple-negative breast cancer is different from the three more common types of breast cancer. It is less common, harder to treat and more aggressive. Triple-negative breast cancer refers to cancer that has not tested positive for any of the three other types. Triple-negative breast cancer has no targeted therapies available, currently. It is more likely than the other types of breast cancer to spread and recur.

My second diagnoses with breast cancer was in April of this year. I was diagnosed this time with stage II triple positive breast cancer in my left breast. Triple positive breast cancer is Hormone Receptor-Positive breast cancer. It is breast cancer that has a significant number of receptors for either estrogen or progesterone. Estrogen receptor-positive breast cancer is the most common type of breast cancer diagnosed today. According to the American cancer Society, about 2 out of every 3 cases of breast cancer are hormone receptor-positive. Tumors that are ER/PR positive are much more likely to respond to hormone therapy than tumors that are ER/PR negative.

One month after having a "normal" mammogram I discovered a lump by performing my monthly breast self-exam. I was devastated with feelings of disbelief, anger, fear, confusion, death and even wondering what was going to happen to my young daughter, all types of feelings came to mind. But, I literally **SAVED** my life twice by doing my BSE and knowing what my breast normally feels like and reporting the changes to my doctor. I cannot express how **important** it is for women to examine your breast (BSE) regularly on a monthly basis.

I had no family history of breast cancer when I was first diagnosed, but my sister was diagnosed with breast cancer in March of 2017. I am number 7 of 14 siblings and have a good support system in place. My family, parents, husband, friends around the world (military family), church family, including co-workers all play an important role in supporting me as I continue this battle with breast cancer. There are breast cancer support group classes available for family and patients, as well as an enormous amount of information on-line.



Melinda Bowers

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Breast Cancer Awareness

Breast Self-exam and Survivor Testimony

By Rosemary Wells



(Continued from page 16)

My treatments were very scary. I had CT scans, MRI's, labs, ultrasounds, a total of 34 rounds of radiation treatments including mastectomy. One year after treatments I had reconstruction breast surgery. Each test done was scary because I did not know whether the cancer had spread to other parts of my body. Tests included extensive lab work. I had a port-a-catheter placed for chemo therapy treatments and lab draws. My insurance company needed to approval all treatments and paid for certain medications.

Some of the obstacles I have faced during my treatments included, after using my 12 weeks of FMLA, I was terminated by my employer. The Oncologist treated the tests, labs and reports not me (the patient). I had to **own** my treatment plan for myself. I was too sick to take care of myself and had to depend on others for meals, taking me to appointments, cleaning my house, and at times assisting me with ADL's (activities of daily living).

My message to **ALL** women in the community:

- ❖ Make your appointments and get **yearly mammograms**.
- ❖ Take **CONTROL** of your health.
- ❖ Do monthly **breast self-exams**.
- ❖ If you think it is nothing, visit your doctor anyway and **ASK** questions.

Like I mentioned before, I have saved my life **twice** by performing my monthly breast self-exam. I thank God I am back at work part-time and by His grace doing well!

Melinda Bowers, RN

Couples Ministry Enjoys Night of Bowling and Fellowship

By Katrisa Norwood



On Friday, September 28, 2018, St. John's Couples Ministry hosted bowling night at the Redstone Arsenal's Bowling Alley where a total of 14 people attended. It was a great outing where there were couples who were seasoned as well as those who were sharpening their skills.

The spirit amongst everyone was competitive but fun. Brother Gilmore and Brother Keys took a silent, but deadly, approach as they bowled; whereas Sister Parham, Brother Williams, and Brother Scott were no-holds-barred as they led with the higher scores. The technique award went to Brother Parham as he showed how to properly spin the bowling ball down the lane. Now as the couples finished the last game of the night, Sister Scott received the award for her high score, even though she was entering her first game, and the rest of the group was tired. Throughout the night there was the "It's about time" as bowlers

hit multiple strikes, the "hipsters" that tried to push the ball where they wanted it to go, and those that just prayed every time they let the ball go because they did not know which direction it would go.

It was a joyous night to fellowship.

Church School Lesson Overview – November 2018

The lesson reviews were written by Brother Kenneth Parham.

November 4, 2018

Lesson Title: A Troubled Birth

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 25:19-34

Print: Genesis 25:19-34

Devotional Songs: #355, #251, and #243

Key Verse: "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples born of you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the elder shall serve the younger." (Genesis 25:23).

The reviewer's approach in commenting on this lesson is to depart from the obvious retelling of how Jacob became the vessel for which God fulfills the promise made to Abraham but to provide another viewpoint of what is being revealed in this lesson.

We see God's works being placed into motion as being the ultimate provider. God answered Isaac's prayer for providing his wife a fertile womb after sixty years (continuation of promise to Abraham). God provided an avenue for the fulfilling of the prophecy that the younger nation (Jacob) would rule over the older nation (Esau) by allowing Esau to be born first; and also, by providing Jacob an avenue to receive the birth right from his brother, Esau). God provided an avenue (character trait) for Jacob to fight for God's blessings (Jacob grabbed onto Esau's heel in order to enter this world and later he wrestled with the angel to receive blessings that God had promised. – Gen 42:22-32).

So according to the scriptures, all the stars were aligned and the opportunity is presented in this lesson where Esau, who in his own right was a hunter (a provider) was so famished that he sold his birthright to Jacob for a pot of lentil stew. The Life Application Study Bible Commentary notes that acting on impulse can lead to short-term and immediate power and satisfaction, but later there is a let-down once we realize the long-range consequences of our actions.

November 11, 2018

Lesson Title: Jacob Receives Isaac's Blessing

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 27:1-28:5

Print: Genesis 27:5-10, 18-19, 21-29

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

Key Verses: "[Isaac] did not recognize [Jacob], because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him" (Genesis 27:23).

Based on this being a continuation from the previous lesson where Jacob was in a position to be blessed, but the reviewer ponders on why deception was used by the mother and Jacob to obtain the blessing from Isaac.

Since the last lesson, time had passed, and the sons were approaching or had approached manhood and with Isaac's health rapidly failing, Rebekah was reminded of the angel's words prophesying that she was carrying two nations and that the younger would rule over the older. Rebekah probably wondered how the angel's words could come to pass if Jacob did not have the right to receive Isaac's blessing not knowing that Jacob had already obtained the birth right from Esau. Rebekah devised and executed a plan, after overhearing Isaac's instruction to Esau to bring him game and savory food so that Isaac could bless Esau (Jewish custom of blessing the first-born son), with participation from Jacob to get Isaac to think Jacob was Esau and to get Isaac to bless Jacob. With Jacob placing animal hair on his arms and taking his father Esau's favorite food and wine, Isaac somewhat confused and nearly blind, finally resolved any doubt that it was Esau he was blessing before he died.

Noted in the AME commentary is that despite the actions taken by Rebekah and Jacob, the promise to Abraham was still in place. If not by deception, another avenue may have developed where Jacob could have rightfully received the blessing from Isaac. Biblical research reminds us that according to scripture, the lineage from Jesus to David to Abraham was through one of Jacob's sons (Judah). God had already appointed the lineage outcome to occur and thus it was so.

November 18, 2018

Lesson Title: Jacob Forms a Relationship with God

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 28:10-22

Print: Genesis 28:10-22

Devotional Songs: #461, #258, and #243

Key Verses: "Know that I am with you and will keep you whenever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you" (Genesis 28:15)

(Continued on page 19)

Church School Lesson Overview – November 2018

(Continued from page 18)

Herein we see that after Isaac blessed Jacob, Isaac sent Jacob to a distant land to find a wife (Gen 28:1-9) and yes, away from Esau who was in a state of murderous rage over the deception played out by Jacob. During the journey he decided to rest for one night and he used a stone to rest his head while he slept. He dreamed of a ladder reaching heaven with angels ascending and descending. And the presence of the Lord appeared to Jacob and indicated that the promise made to Abraham he will fulfill through blessing Jacob and his offspring. The Lord promised to give Jacob the land that he slept on as well as distant lands in all four directions. The lesson goes on to indicate that upon awakening, Jacob decided to build a pillar using the stone that he slept on because he knew that the land he was on was holy ground. He also made an agreement that as long as the Lord kept him safe on his journey providing food and clothing and allowing Jacob to return to his father's land in peace, that the Lord shall be his God and the land on which Jacob built the pillar will be God's house and Jacob made a commitment to give back a tenth of all of his blessings.

The AME commentary explored the symbolism noted in the lesson. The ladder has been identified as being a spiritual reconciliation between God and earth; and the stone as being the cornerstone used in the foundation of the great temple of Zion. It is also noted that this lesson reminds one of the faith walk between God and man. We say, we walk by faith in asking for God's blessings but are we truly committed in going the extra mile in ensuring God will answer our prayers (i.e. being good stewards over the things currently entrusted to our care).

November 25, 2018

Lesson Title: God Blesses Jacob and Rachel

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 30

Print: Genesis 30:22-32, 43

Devotional Songs: #77; #97; and #243

Key Verses: "God heeded [Rachel] and opened her womb" (Genesis 30:22).

In this lesson, we find Jacob in the land of Haran, married to Rachel, having kids whilst in voluntary servitude of his father-in-law (Laban). In fact, as the biblical account of this story goes, Jacob had worked seven years to marry the daughter of Laban but the morning after the wedding feast, Jacob

learned that he had married the first-born female (Leah) per Jewish custom. Both Jacob and Laban agreed that after a week Jacob could marry Rachel if Jacob agreed to work another seven years. And during the fourteen years, Laban had prospered due to God's blessing on Jacob.

After completing the fourteen years of service, Jacob was ready to leave and Laban was so overjoyed from Jacob's years there that he had to somehow repay Jacob for the abundance that God had bestowed on Laban. Both agreed that Laban did not owe Jacob anything but Laban (an opportunist attempting to get more years of service from Jacob) insisted that he do something for Jacob. Jacob indicated that for one last time he would feed Laban's herd. Jacob indicated to Laban that he would thin out Laban's herd for himself. Jacob would take any blemished or spotted sheep and every black lamb and the spotted and freckled amongst the goats.

Inferred within this lesson is that Jacob was at peace with himself. Through patience, he had honored his Lord and he had honored his father-in-law and, was ready to return to his own country to make things right. The Life Application Study Bible Commentary notes that it is hard trusting God when things are going against man's plan that God seems to have initiated, but yet still it is harder to live with the consequences of taking matters into one's own hands.



**GREATER HUNTSVILLE
INTERDENOMINATIONAL
MINISTERIAL FELLOWSHIP**

GHIME City-Wide Revival

The Greater Huntsville Interdenominational Ministerial Fellowship will hold its annual City-wide Revival

October 22-25, 2018.

**First Missionary Baptist Church
7:00 p.m. nightly**

**The Guest Evangelist will be
the Reverend Dr. Marcus D. Davidson**

**Pastor, New Mount Olive Baptist Church
Fort Lauderdale, Florida**



OCTOBER
NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AWARENESS MONTH

Domestic Violence Statistics

<https://domesticviolencestatistics.org/domestic-violence-statistics/>

- Every 9 seconds in the US a woman is assaulted or beaten.
- Around the world, at least one in every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused during her lifetime. Most often, the abuser is a member of her own family.
- Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women—more than car accidents, muggings, and rapes combined.
- Studies suggest that up to 10 million children witness some form of domestic violence annually.
- Nearly 1 in 5 teenage girls who have been in a relationship said a boyfriend threatened violence or self-harm if presented with a breakup.
- Every day in the US, more than three women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends.
- Ninety-two percent of women surveyed listed reducing domestic violence and sexual assault as their top concern.
- Domestic violence victims lose nearly 8 million days of paid work per year in the US alone—the equivalent of 32,000 full-time jobs.
- Based on reports from 10 countries, between 55 percent and 95 percent of women who had been physically abused by their partners had never contacted non-governmental organizations, shelters, or the police for help.
- The costs of intimate partner violence in the US alone exceed \$5.8 billion per year: \$4.1 billion are for direct medical and health care services, while productivity losses account for nearly \$1.8 billion.
- Men who as children witnessed their parents' domestic violence were twice as likely to abuse their own wives than sons of nonviolent parents.

Let us break the silence!



Church School Book Club

November 2018

Discussion Date: November 17, 2018
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Inheritance, Alers, 2017.

December 2018

Discussion Date: December 15, 2018
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Better Late than Never, Lawson Roby, 2018.

Rev. Curtis Black is no stranger to scandal. Throughout the decades, he has done much in the public eye, both good and evil. But what most people do not realize is that Curtis has been hiding a horrific childhood that has affected him in countless, unspeakable ways.

His buried past resurfaces when his estranged sister becomes alarmingly ill and his youngest child, twelve-year-old Curtina, becomes the kind of problem daughter whom he never imagined she could be. This is only the beginning.

The horror of Curtis's childhood secrets, as well as Curtina's wild and rebellious behavior, takes a critical toll on Curtis and the entire Black family. All the public scandals they have experienced over the years now seem like child's play compared to the turmoil they are facing in private. Who could have known that the deepest wounds would come from within?
- Amazon



Domestic Violence Assistance in Huntsville, Alabama

There are currently four (4) centers in Huntsville, and others in Madison, Albertville and surrounding areas, that offer assistance for domestic violence victims and survivors.

Crisis Services of North Alabama
Downtown Rescue Mission
Legal Services Alabama
Asa Kiran

The National Domestic Violence Hotline is 1-800-799-7233

November 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
				Ninth District Planning Meeting Montgomery, Alabama 150th Anniversary Gala November 3, noon		
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Daylight Saving Time Ends 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship Communion Sunday		your VOTE is your VOICE ELECTION DAY	12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Bible Study			10:30 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship			12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	6:00-7:30 pm Caregivers Workshop		10:00 WMSM Meeting
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship Bake Sale	6:00 p.m. Lay Organization Meeting	11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	THANKSGIVING DAY 		1
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. and 6:00 p.m. Bible Study			

St. John AME Church
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The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright, Bishop
The Reverend Sherita Seawright, Episcopal Supervisor
The Reverend Bruce W. Hunter, Presiding Elder
The Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor

Dates to Remember

**2019 Planning Meeting &
150th Celebration of the AME Church in Alabama
November 1-3, 2018**

**The Annual Caregivers Workshop
Thursday, November 15, 2018 from 6:00pm-7:30pm.**

**Pastor's Aid Board Bake Sale
November 18, 2018**

**Annual Convention of the 9th District WMS
and Observance of Rosa Parks Day in Alabama!
November 30-December 1, 2018**



*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 23 Issue 11

November 2018



Thanksgiving: Faith, Food, Family

The Reverend Meriam Garrett

When I think about Thanksgiving, I am reminded of the hymn, "It's Harvest Time":

*Oh lord I've come to receive my blessing
Patiently awaiting for the harvest is nigh
I got that Hebrew 11:1
Faith to know my blessing shall come;
It's mine, all mine, It's harvest time*

From the time the seeds are planted until the harvest, there is great anticipation of what the final reward will be. Once you fertilize the ground, plant the seeds and water them, you wait on the seedlings to peak through the ground. During the growing season, you rely on prayers and faith in God to protect your crops from drought, floods, storms or plant disease. When the growing season is over, it's harvest time!

(Continued on page 2)

Thanksgiving: Faith, Food, Family

The Reverend Meriam Garrett

(Continued from page 1)

Harvest time is defined as the process of gathering a ripe crop from the fields. Harvesting is the most labor-intensive activity of the growing season. The completion of harvesting marks the end of the growing season or the cycle of a crop. The importance of this event makes it the focus of the seasonal celebration.

In the past, harvest time was celebrated as a festival, a time to thank God for a plentiful harvest. The Europeans and the Native Americans would harvest crops and share them. Then they would prepare some of the harvested crops along with venison, fish, fowl and other foods for the feast.

In the present time Thanksgiving means different things to different people. To some people Thanksgiving is all about the food. The enjoyment of the macaroni and cheese, the greens, the green bean casserole, the yams, the dressing, the chitterlings, and the hot water corn bread. The decision to roast, bake or fry the turkey can be a great concern.



To some people it is all about the football game. A great seat in front of the TV and a plate of food is all that is needed for the football fan. It does not matter which team is playing.

To others Thanksgiving is all about the beginning of one of the biggest shopping seasons of the year. You make a list of items you must have. You check the time the stores open and what you must have from which store.

To other people Thanksgiving is all about family. The coming together with those you love to enjoy a day of prayer, thanksgiving, love, togetherness, food, and fun. Fellowship with parents, sons, daughters, grandmothers, grandfathers, grandchildren, great grandchildren, aunts, uncles, cousins and best friends.

As we harvest our crops, we see the signs of God's goodness. He protected our seed from drought and storms. He kept our seedlings from plant disease and wind damage. He allowed the plants to bloom and produce fruit. He enabled us to harvest a full crop.

Oh give thanks to the Lord for He is good and His mercy endures forever.

- Psalm 136:1

Dear God, thank you for the opportunity to come together with family and friends on this Thanksgiving Day. Thank you, Lord for each generation represented. Thank you for life and the freedom to enjoy it. Thank you for a reasonable portion of health and strength. Thank you, Lord for the food served on this special day. Bless the hands that prepared this food and those who harvested or purchased it. Thank you for traveling grace for all who traveled on this special day. Thank you, Lord for each planting season and for each harvest. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen

The 100th Observance of Armistice/Veterans Day

Written by Dr. Arthur L. Waller, Jr.
Major, USAF (Ret.)



A century ago, at the eleventh hour on the eleventh day of the eleventh month, fighting between the allied forces—which included the United States along with more than a dozen other nations—and the warring factions aligned with Germany stopped, putting an end to the horrific bloodshed of World War I. An armistice agreement detailing the terms of Germany's surrender was signed that same day.

In 1919, on the one-year anniversary of the armistice agreement, President Woodrow Wilson signed a proclamation commemorating November 11th as Armistice Day. The celebrations were to include parades, public meetings and a two-minute suspension of business

at 11 a.m. The proclamation read: "Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations..."

Seven years later, congress passed a resolution urging state governors to observe Armistice Day with "thanksgiving and prayer and exercises designed to perpetuate peace through goodwill and mutual understanding between nations." In 1938, Armistice Day became an official U.S. holiday dedicated to world peace.

Sadly, World War I was not the war to end all wars as it had been billed. Roughly two decades after the armistice, the world was once again engaged in global war and on the heels of that war the United States was engaged in war on the Korean peninsula. Lawmakers believed that veterans of these two wars—World War II and the Korean War—also deserved their own day of remembrance. To that end, in 1954, President Eisenhower signed a bill changing the name from Armistice Day to the more inclusive Veterans Day, a holiday to thank all who had served the United States of America. Eisenhower's proclamation read: "On that day," [meaning November 11] "let us solemnly remember the sacrifices of all those who fought so valiantly, on the seas, in the air, and on foreign shores, to preserve our heritage of freedom, and let us reconsecrate ourselves to the task of promoting an enduring peace so their efforts shall not have been in vain."

Just as World War I did not end all wars, Presidents Wilson and Eisenhower's vision of an enduring world peace has also been elusive. In addition to World War II and the Korean War, over the century which witnessed the end to World War I, U.S. troops have been engaged in armed conflict in Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, Kuwait, Iraq, Bosnia/Kosovo, Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya, Syria, Yemen and other areas around the globe, some known and others not. Whether the mission is combat, peace-keeping, humanitarian, or disaster recovery, U.S. servicemen and women have been front and center.

Through it all, U.S. (and, yes, even some non-U.S.) citizens continue to answer the call to duty in America's armed forces. Many are motivated by patriotism, some by family tradition, some by employment considerations; still others by a yearning to "see the world," or the desire to get away from home/neighborhood/negative influences, and so on. The reasons are but small matters. What is most telling is that they serve and they sacrifice. And for this, they deserve America's gratitude. Not just through the utterance of "thank you for your service" or tying yellow ribbons around trees or lining parade routes on Veterans Day waving miniature American flags but through promoting and supporting policies and initiatives which impact the lives of veterans and their families in positive and tangible ways.



Trunk or Treat Provided Fun and Fellowship at St. John

By xx

On Wednesday evening, October 31, the youth of St. John enjoyed an evening of fun as they received treats from the trunk of cars decorated for the evening. There was plenty of candy and food for all to enjoy as they fellowshiped. Games were also played to add to the fun.



Michael James Clark Named Youth of the Month for October



Michael and Pastor Wright

Michael James Clark was named the St. John October youth of the month.

He is a 10th grader at Madison Academy. He is a member of the Madison Academy Basketball Rec Team and Concert Band (plays the drums) Michael loves to play basketball with friends, spend time with his dog, Cody, and play video games.

Michael excels academically. His overall grade average is B and his favorite subject is Physical Science. His most recent grades were A in Bible, A in 3D Modeling, A in History and B in Physical Science.

Michael is active in several ministries at St. John. He is a member of the YPD, Usher Board, and Media ministry (where he assists during Sunday Services).

His future aspirations are to attend the University of Alabama to study Video Game Design. Michael is the son of Mike and Yvette Clark.

Congratulations Michael!



November is Caregivers Appreciation Month



Soup Kitchen Ministry

Charlie Brooks

Is Thanksgiving for Everyone?

"Grain must be ground to make bread; so one does not go on threshing it forever. The wheels of a threshing cart may be rolled over it, but one does not use horses to grind grain. All this also comes from the Lord Almighty, whose plan is wonderful, whose wisdom is magnificent." Isaiah 28:28-29

As we reflect on Thanksgiving, the farmer uses special tools to plant and harvest tender herbs so he will not destroy them. He takes into account how fragile they are. In the same way God takes all our individual circumstances and weaknesses into account. He deals with each of us sensitively. We should follow his example when we deal with others. Different people require different treatment. As believers we must be sensitive to the needs of those around us recognizing the special treatment they may need.

Upon celebrating Thanksgiving this year, we celebrate with gratitude. We thank the Father that He treats us tenderly, loves and forgives us as He sees our weaknesses. He loves those who may not think much of Him during this season, for God is good and His kindness extends to all.

As we remember those who may not celebrate Thanksgiving, we remember that none of us deserves God's kindness and His grace. By showing kindness and love we must tell others, "He'll forgive you, just as He forgives us." At Thanksgiving we share that He will grant them eternal life and they will be overwhelmed with love and gratitude for what Christ did for us and will do for them.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Have you moved?

Be sure to let the church office know when you move so that your contact information in the membership database will be correct. Email your new address to office@stjohnhuntsville.com.

St. John Members Participate in Voter Engagement Campaign

By Thalia Love

St. John members partnered with Faith in Action Alabama (FIAA) in its Voter Engagement Campaign. They assisted with Phonebanking (calling registered voters). The vision of the Voter Engagement Campaign was to:

- build a 100% voting congregation within the beloved community through action.
- build the capacity to strengthen our work outside election cycles, while not just securing the power to vote, but to govern our communities in a way that is transformational, redemptive and centered on meeting the needs of the people we love.



In addition to Phonebanking, FIAA mobilized marginalized communities by canvassing, providing voter education, and assisting with voter registration. The goal is to narrow gaps in voter participation within marginalized communities and low-propensity voters across the spectrum of race and income.



Faith in Action Alabama offers training for teams of volunteers inside each congregation or other organizing group — teams built cross-generationally and focused 100% on community engagement—that will drive turnout for their community benefit programs, bridge relationships within their community

and offer mentorship programs and jobs to directly impacted people and youth from within the congregation and community. These teams will continue to exist within congregations beyond the mid-term elections, allowing them to integrate their civic engagement and community benefit programs moving forward.

Where are our College Students?

St. John's college students are encouraged to share their college information with the AMEN readers. The AMEN would like to publish a list of members who are in college and where they are matriculating. Please submit this information to nedra.mcdaniel@gmail.com.



Members in Uniform

The AMEN will publish a monthly segment listing members on active military duty. If you or a family member would like to be listed, please provide information on your military status and assignment. Email this information to nedra.mcdaniel@gmail.com.



"Sharing The Word. Serving The People."

VISION 2020

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- IMPACT SERVICE

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CAPSTONE	-	\$30,001 AND GREATER

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Please see the Stewardship & Finance Commission for pledge card.

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Retirement Planning Mistakes You Probably Do Not Realize You Are Making

By Brother Bobby Adkins II

What are the keys to a successful investment strategy? What expertise do I need? How much money should I save? These are some of the questions investors have asked for decades as they have started out on the path to retirement. We ask ourselves, "Can I do this?" Well, research indicates that financial planners and professional investors do not weigh too heavily on the notion that saving for retirement is a science. Yes, there are a variety of factors, such as investment strategy, age, and analytic research involved. However, the most basic elements of a successful savings strategy are consistency, planning, and patience. To ensure you cover the essential elements of retirement savings, do not make these mistakes.



1. Relying too heavily on Social Security: Millions of seniors collect Social Security in retirement, and those monthly payments play a pivotal role in helping beneficiaries keep up with their expenses. But if you are planning to live on Social Security alone once your career comes to a close, you are making a huge mistake. Contrary to what you may have been led to believe, Social Security is not designed to replace your former paycheck. If you were an average earner, those benefits will translate into roughly 40% of your previous income. If you were a higher earner, they will replace an even smaller percentage. Since most seniors need more like 80% of their former earnings to live comfortably, you will need to take steps to secure income outside of what you get from Social Security. For the most part, this means funding a retirement plan like an IRA or 401(k) during working years, but it could also mean planning to work part-time in retirement, renting out your home as a senior, or a host of other possibilities.

2. Assuming your living costs will drop drastically: Many people assume that once they retire, their living expenses will magically shrink. But chances are, your monthly bills won't change all that much once you're no longer working. Think about the things you spend money on today, like housing, food, utilities, and clothing. These are all items you'll continue to need when you're older, and whether or not you're working at the time won't really matter. You may even come to find that some of your expenses go up in retirement, like healthcare and leisure.

3. Not taking advantage of catch-up contributions: Many workers fall behind on retirement savings during the earlier stages of their careers, when student loan payments, housing costs, and other expenses eat up most of their income. Thankfully, those who are 50 and older get a prime opportunity to make up for lost years of savings in the form of catch-up contributions. If you are saving in an IRA and are at least 50 years old, you can currently put in an additional \$1,000 each year for an annual total of \$6,500 (workers under 50 can contribute just \$5,500). If you are saving in a 401(k), you can make a \$6,000 catch-up contribution for an annual total of \$24,500 (compared with \$18,500 for younger workers).

4. Forgetting about taxes: Between your Social Security benefits and your nest egg, you might find yourself on the receiving end of a pretty healthy income stream in retirement, especially if you have saved well. But do not assume all of that money will be yours to keep. Chances are, the IRS will also be entitled to its share, especially if your retirement income is substantial. There are several ways you might get taxed in retirement. First, unless you have a Roth IRA, your nest egg withdrawals will be taxed as ordinary income — meaning your highest possible rate. The same holds true for many types of pensions. Furthermore, if your income exceeds a certain threshold, you could get taxed on up to 85% of your Social Security benefits. Finally, just as interest and investment income are taxable during your working years, so too are they subject to taxes during retirement.

The takeaway? Be sure to factor taxes into the mix when calculating your anticipated retirement income. If you are planning to withdraw \$30,000 a year from your 401(k) and you expect your ordinary income tax rate to be 25%, know that you'll end up with only \$22,500, and plan your expenses accordingly.

Healthy Living for Seniors: 10 Best Tips

By Bobby Adkins

(Health tips taken from <https://www.thehelperbees.com/healthy-living-for-seniors/>)

As people age, there are a number of life and lifestyle events that hinder their ability to maintain a healthy body. Eating right, regular exercise, spiritual growth, and mental stimulation are compromised. Outside pressures, such as caring for elders and those with disabilities stunt the ability to properly take care of self. When this writer turned 50, it seemed as if a personal exercise wall was hit, and have been banging my head against that wall ever since.

Eric Corum, in his article "Healthy Living for Seniors: 10 Best Tips" on the helperbees.com, listed these ten tips for seniors who want to eat healthy.

1. **Stay Hydrated.** Drinking water is a great way to make sure your body is receiving all the care it deserves! As simple as this tip might seem, it is one of the most crucial. Every cell, organ, and tissue in your body is counting on water to help them work properly. In addition to drinking water, herbal tea and vegetable or fruit juices can supply a substantial amount of hydration. A simple start towards a healthy living for seniors!
2. **Read the Nutrition Facts Labels.** Sometimes, food packaging can be deceiving. Make sure you take the extra time to look at the nutrition facts label at the grocery store when purchasing food. Pay attention to the serving size and how many servings you are actually eating. Also, if someone is sent to the grocery store on behalf of the senior, make sure they know of any dietary restrictions/recommendations that are specific to that person.
3. **Keep It Colorful.** Have you ever been told that it is best to have more color on your plate? Think green, orange, red, and purple when it comes to veggies and fruit.
4. **Choose Foods that are High in Fiber.** To help control and regulate the speed of digestion, choose the foods that are perfect companions in this area, such as: split peas, lentils, lima beans, black beans, artichokes, broccoli, peas, raspberries, brussels sprouts, avocados, blackberries, bran flakes, pears, pearly barley, whole-wheat pasta, and oatmeal. (You can also add flaxseed meal to smoothies, yogurt and baked goods to help with digestion).
5. **Remember to Incorporate Vitamin D.** For aging adults, it is highly recommended to include Vitamin D in their diets, as it is important for muscle and bone function and preservation. It has been said that Vitamin D can actually assist in fall and osteoporotic fracture prevention, leading to less visits to the emergency room. Vitamin D can be obtained through supplements, food, and a little old-fashioned exposure to sunlight. Incorporating calcium-rich foods (including dairy, nuts, leafy greens and fish) into your diet helps to build and protect your bones.
6. **Limit Sodium Intake.** Hypertension (high blood pressure) can be lowered or avoided by consuming food that is lower in sodium, such as fresh or frozen fruits, dry beans, unsalted nuts, grains, brown rice, and oats. Be careful when eating out, as some restaurant-prepared meals can be loaded in sodium without you realizing the amount.
7. **Do not Rush.** There are many studies that show eating slowly can be beneficial to the body. Think: smaller bites + slower eating + more chewing = better digestion! Eating a nutritious meal should be a marathon, not a sprint.
8. **Consider Probiotics.** Gut health is important at any age. Some benefits of taking probiotics include increased levels of bifid bacteria, reduction of constipation, and enhanced immunity. Probiotics are available in foods, such as milk, juices, soy beverages and yogurt.
9. **Eat with a friend.** For seniors, it can be beneficial to combat malnutrition by eating with a friend or family member. In social settings, aging adults tend to eat more and make better food choices. Plus, laughter and conversation can make a meal much more enjoyable.



(Continued on page 11)

Church School Lesson Overview – December 2018

The lesson reviews were written by Brother Willie Sandifer.

December 2, 2018

Lesson Title: Love and Obey God

Lesson Scripture: Mark 12:28-34

Print: Deuteronomy 6:1-9

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

Key Verse: "Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." (Deuteronomy 6:5).

Deuteronomy opens with Moses reviewing the history of Israel up to that point to include the disobedience of the first generation. He refreshed the people's memory of the faithfulness and the power shown by God while helping the people win the territory to the east of the Jordan River. This power also guided the second generation in winning the area west of the Jordan River.

The second generation was to stay away from the wrongful doings of the first generation. The fifth chapter of Deuteronomy ends with a call to the people to obey the Lord and not turn right or left. It is that call that continues in this lesson.

The commands from God, however, are not limited to the second-generation Israelites only; but are for following generations as well. His commandments are to be passed from one generation to the next one by teaching that is faithful and consistent.

December 9, 2018

Lesson Title: Love and Serve God

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 81; Exodus 20:1-11, Joshua 24

Print: Joshua 24:1-3A, 13-15, 21-24

Devotional Songs: #112, [], #108 [], and #106[]

Key Verses: If serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD" (Genesis 27:23).

In this lesson Joshua gives his farewell address to the nation of Israel. Joshua is now an old man with lots of experiences that include assisting Moses, leading the fight for the promised land, and leading the people.

Joshua is mentioned for the first time when he was ordered to choose some men to fight against the Amalekites by Moses. He was with Moses when the two of them descended

from Mount Sinai after Moses got the Ten Commandments that had been written on tablets of stone by God. Joshua was one of the two of the ten spies to give a positive report about the state of the promised land.

With this ardent background Joshua was a shoe in to succeed Moses in leading Israel into the promised land and completing what Moses had started.

December 16, 2018

Lesson Title: Love and Worship God

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 103:1-17, 21, 22

Print: Psalm 103:1-17a, 21, 22

Devotional Songs: #111[], #118 [], and #115 []

Key Verses: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12)

Israel's hymnal, chockfull of emotions expressed to God, is the description given in the book of Psalms. The emotions cover praise to frustration at how God handles the issues of a fallen world. There are oft expressions about how the Israelites are being treated by evildoers who seem to not suffer for their actions.

The Psalms contain contributions by many authors and cover a vast span of time. Psalm 90 is the old oldest psalm and was written by Moses. Psalm 137 had a setting around the captivity of God's people in Babylon. A period of 900 years separates these two.

December 23, 2018

Lesson Title: Love God for the Gift of Jesus

Lesson Scripture: Luke 1:26-31; 2:21-35

Print: Luke 1:26-31; 2:21-35

Devotional Songs: #120 [], #109 [], and #116[]

Key Verses: "My eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations" (Luke 2: 30, 31).

In this lesson we see as backdrops the things that Jesus' parents did that were according to Jewish custom of that day. Jesus was circumcised when he was eight days old. Friends and relatives would have attended and it would have been a celebration time for the small family.

The circumcision and naming took place while Joseph and Mary were still in Bethlehem, which is about a three-hour

(Continued on page 11)

Church School Lesson Overview

(Continued from page 10)

trip by foot from the temple in Jerusalem. Luke mentions that they stayed in Bethlehem until about 40 days after Jesus' birth, when Mary was ready to undergo purification at the temple.

December 30, 2018

Lesson Title: Love God and Serve Others

Lesson Scripture: Matthew 25:31-46

Print: Matthew 25:31-46

Devotional Songs: #122 []; #108[]; and #112 []

Key Verses: "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me'" (Matthew 25:40).

Jesus' triumphant entry in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday began the last week of his ministry. The events of that week, known as Passion Week or Holy Week, are contained within all four Gospels. The largest percentage is in John (44), followed by Mark (37), Matthew (36) and Luke (28) in descending order.

Matthew 25 can be divided into three sections: The first is a story about wedding attendants and their preparations for a delayed bridegroom, the parable of the 10 virgins. The second section is about how servants have used resources entrusted to them during their master's absence, the parable of the bags of gold. The gist of both parables is to be prepared as the day and hour of the bridegroom's or master's return is unknown. This lesson comes from the third part of Matthew 25, which starts with a picture of the Messiah's return.

Healthy Living for Seniors: 10 Best Tips

By Bobby Adkins

(Continued from page 9)

10. **Do not Forget Omega 3's.** Eating foods that are high in Omega-3's, such as fish and nuts, does wonders for the body. Not only is it known to decrease chances for heart disease and stroke, but it can improve general brain function, including memory and Parkinson's disease.

By focusing on these tips, a healthier you is possible at any age!

Community Matters

The "Invest in a Girl Celebration"

Featured Lynn Troy

By The Rev. Joretha Wright



Several members from St. John attended the "Invest in A Girl Celebration" that was hosted by the Girls Inc. of Huntsville.

"You have the power to make the decision that will change your life forever." This quote was a constant reminder from my mother in ministry. These words opened my eyes and gave me a clearer understanding of what it meant to be female, girl and woman. It meant that female was the vessel, girl was the heart, and woman is the soul mixture of elements that mystify even the Creator's miraculous human design. Girls Inc. embodies the creative strength of all girls and the descriptors - bold, strong and smart - are proof positive to the fabric of today's girls and tomorrow's leaders.

The "Invest in A Girl Celebration" was hosted by Girls Inc. at the Huntsville Botanical Garden Grand Hall. Girls Inc. gave recognition to community leaders and program alumni for their support, service and leadership in their communities. The purpose of the celebration was to raise funds to support the growth initiative of Girls Inc. of Huntsville, which will allow the organization to increase opportunities for participation and expansion.

The program featured both alumni and current participants of this non-profit organization. Each participant gifted the platform with their story of success as a result of Girls Inc. programming. The elaborate décor and wonderful food gave the event an exceptional flare and style. The program includ-

(Continued on page 12)



The Executive Board Meeting of the Music and Christian Arts Ministry (MCAM) of the African Methodist Episcopal Church will be held in Huntsville, Alabama. All are invited to attend the following sessions.

Opening Worship Service

Thursday, November 29, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.

Bishop Harry L. Seawright, preacher

St. John Praise Dance Ministry

The Aeolians, Oakwood University

Guest Presenters

Friday, November 30, 2018 at 9:00 a.m.

Dr. Lisa Allen McLaurin, ITC—Atlanta, Georgia

Saturday, December 1, 2018 at 9:00 a.m.

Dr. Ethel Wellington Terrywick—Orlando, Florida

Community Matters

By The Rev. Joretha Wright

(Continued from page 11)

ed greetings from the Executive Director, Stephanie W. Malone, and an award presentation by Candace Jones, a Jemison High School senior. Current youth from Girls Inc. posed questions to the panel members. St. John AME Church is proud that several of its girls are active members of Girls Inc. Jessica Harbin is not only one of this year's poster children for the Girls Inc. of Huntsville, but she also posed a panel question. Her question was "When did you find your voice and who inspired you?"

The inspirational presentation from the keynote speaker, Ms. Lynn Troy the co-founder and CEO of Troy 7, Inc., a weapons intelligence and assessment company, was authentic and refreshing. Although she is an accomplished business woman, she shared her story of teen pregnancy, abuse and finding her voice.

Each year Girls Inc. inspires over 700 girls nationally and the growth momentum is a reminder that Girls Inc. is an effective resource for the empowerment of girls everywhere.



Church School Book Club

December 2018

Discussion Date: December 15, 2018

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Better Late than Never, Lawson Roby, 2018.

January 2019

Discussion Date: January 19, 2019

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Dollhouse: A Novel, Davis, 2017.

When she arrives at the famed Barbizon Hotel in 1952, secretarial school enrollment in hand, Darby McLaughlin is everything her modeling agency hall mates are not: plain, self-conscious, homesick, and utterly convinced she does not belong—a notion the models do nothing to disabuse. Yet when Darby befriends Esme, a Barbizon maid, she is introduced to an entirely new side of New York City: seedy downtown jazz clubs where the music is as addictive as the heroin that is used there, the startling sounds of bebop, and even the possibility of romance.

Over half a century later, the Barbizon has gone condo and most of its long-ago guests are forgotten. But rumors of Darby's involvement in a deadly skirmish with a hotel maid back in 1952 haunt the halls of the building as surely as the melancholy music that floats from the elderly woman's rent-controlled apartment. It is a combination too intoxicating for journalist Rose Lewin, Darby's upstairs neighbor, to resist—not to mention the perfect distraction from her own imploding personal life. Yet as Rose's obsession deepens, the ethics of her investigation become increasingly murky, and neither woman will remain unchanged when the shocking truth is finally revealed. —Amazon

VISION 2020

- IGNITE GROWTH
- INSPIRE CHANGE
- IMPACT SERVICE

December 2018

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat



1

MCAM Executive Board
Rosa Parks Day

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

8:45 a.m.
Church School
10:00 a.m. Worship
Communion Sunday

Fifty-Plus Meeting
8:30 a.m.
Gospel Choir Rehearsal
6:00 p.m.

12:00 p.m.
and
6:00 p.m.
Bible Study

Gospel Choir Rehearsal
6:00 p.m.

10:30 a.m.
ANIEH Staff Meeting

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

8:45 a.m.
Church School
10:00 a.m. Worship

12:00 p.m.
and
6:00 p.m.
Bible Study

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

8:45 a.m.
10:00 a.m. Worship

11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
SOUP KITCHEN

12:00 p.m.
and
6:00 p.m.
Bible Study

23

24

26

27

28

29

8:45 a.m.
Church School
Christmas Program
10:00 a.m. Worship

Christmas Eve Service
6:00 p.m.



30

31

8:45 a.m.
Church School
10:00 a.m. Worship

Watch Night Service

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 Bruce W. Hunter, Presiding Elder
The Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor

Dates to Remember

Annual Convention of the 9th District WMS
and Observance of Rosa Parks Day in Alabama!
November 30-December 1, 2018

MCAM Executive Board Meeting
Huntsville, Alabama
November 29-December 1, 2018



*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 23 Issue 12

December 2018

Pastor's Christmas Message

Family,

Once again the Lord has blessed us to see this most blessed time of year. In the midst of the festive lights, the trimmed trees and all of the holiday cheer this season brings, we are ever mindful of the true meaning of Christmas. The birth of our Lord is the reason we celebrate. God's greatest gift given to mankind came meek and lowly. This gift of love, joy, peace and hope was sent that we might receive life.

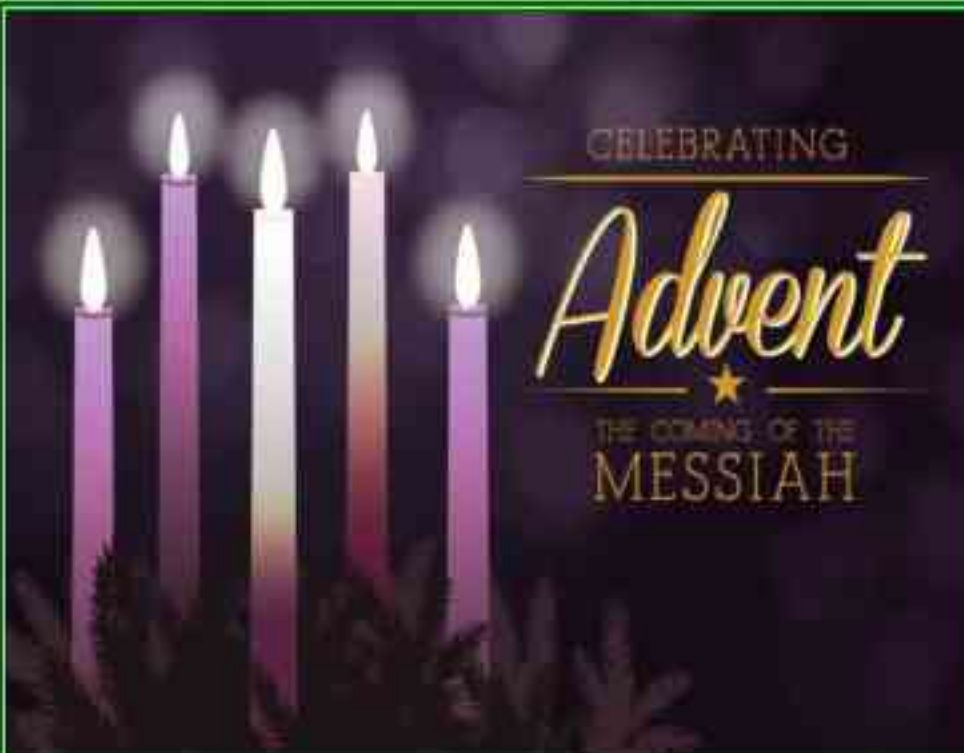
As we look back over 2018 each of us has much for which to be thankful. Through moments of both joy and sadness, God has been with us every step of the way. As a congregation we have experienced the joy of growth as new members have joined the family. We have also endured loss as several members passed from labor to reward. During this time especially, we lift up those who are dealing with loss. Our comfort remains in Jesus, who gives us the strength to make it each day.

Looking forward to 2019, we are excited about what God has in store for St. John Church. There are many ministry opportunities that are before us, and there are many people in need. Down through the years, the hallmark of our congregation has been service. Let each of us recommit ourselves to sharing, caring and spreading the love of Christ in our words and deeds.

Family, I am more than grateful for the love and care you have shown my family. Your thoughts, calls, encouraging words, expressions of love and prayers have strengthened me more than you will ever know. It is a pleasure to serve each of you.

May you have a truly Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!

Peace & Blessings,
Pastor Wright



Advent is the season of preparing for the coming of the Messiah that focuses on the themes of hope, peace, joy and love. St. John members have written devotionals on each of these themes. Please prayerfully meditate on these as you prepare to celebrate the coming of the Messiah. The writers are Dr. Thalia Love (Hope), Brother Justin York (Peace), Sister Karmen Lattimore (Joy), and Sister Lillie Rivers (Love).

HOPE

That first advent, the shepherds and lowly peasants waited expectantly, as did the king on the throne. There was a hope and an expectation. Modern culture sometimes sees this hope as an unrealistic optimism; however, this HOPE is a hope in the promises of God.

Our HOPE is believing in and waiting for while fully trusting and expecting fulfillment of God's promises. This hope is in the promise of help from on high. This hope is the promise of power from on high. This hope is in the promise of life eternal. Our hope in Jesus is not just a hope in the baby in the manger; it is hope in the plan for redemption set forth to anchor us to our faith in the promises of the Father.

Sometimes the very act of waiting is difficult for us. We are disappointed because our timing is not observed. We are anxious because we see the obstacles as too great. We feel weak during the battles. That is the beauty of the Christmas story. Behind all of the glitter and tinsel, shopping, present giving, and hustle and bustle, a baby was born to bring hope for help, power and victory to a world that had lost its way.

Isaiah encourages his people with the good news that the Lord God will heal the brokenhearted and proclaim freedom to the captives. The glory of the Lord will be revealed and "he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace..." (Isaiah 61:1-3 and 9:2-7) This good news is the foundation of our faith. We embrace the birth from a virgin, a life without sin, a death that atones, and a resurrection that redeems. Thus, our hope is in all that His life promises.

While we love the preparation for and celebration of the birth of our Savior, let us never forget that he is coming again, and He has told us to be prepared. Our HOPE in this advent season is not just in the present or the immediate future. Our hope is in the Advent—coming—arrival—of the Messiah. Our hope is in the promise that He will come again. We must never lose sight of this promise. Let our lives reflect a confident expectation of this promise as we walk in the hope of this promise...

PEACE

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."¹⁰⁰

Luke 2:8-14 NV

The shepherds witnessed the angels praising God prior to the birth of Jesus. They were afraid while in their presence. After receiving the news of Jesus' pending birth, they wanted to witness this momentous occasion and tell the story. The message from the angels: "God grants peace to those He favors." What does this mean to you? We do not have to be afraid when the unexpected happens in our lives. We do not have to wonder why. We do not have to wait in anticipation for the outcome as if God will not protect, provide, or prepare. We have seen Him do it way too often to doubt. When we focus on the issues of our world and allow them to consume our peace, we leave no room for the joy God's love brings to our lives. We do not have to

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

fear, wonder, or anticipate. We know we have the victory through Jesus. Rest in that peace. Trust God's promises; they never fail. During this advent season—this season of expectancy—expect the peace of God to comfort, strengthen, and keep you.

"And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:7 NV

JOY

"That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. 'Don't be afraid!' he said. 'I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Saviour—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!'" (Luke 1:8-11)

The third candle of Advent represents Joy! During this time of the year we are supposed to be happy, cheerful, and celebrate the coming of the Messiah. As Christians it is perceived that we all have great joy in spite of all the things that life brings. Joy can be a bit blind to the real world. Some are experiencing the fight of their lives; others may be dealing with sadness and/or despair. But even as much as those things plague us, we cannot escape the laughter, the song, the dance and the joys of life. It is in those very dark moments where joy is born. Just like the birth of Jesus, it comes unexpected and it is found while holding on to the faith and trust we have in the Lord. It is said that "Joy is the affirmation of the things that are truer than any trouble and any affliction," but joy is the affirmation that Love prevails over all.

During this holiday season cast all your cares away and focus on the reason for the season. In Luke 1:8-11 it tells of the night that Jesus was born. People all around were afraid, they were unsure of what was to come but an angel from on high came to reassure them to not be afraid, not to worry, do not despair! He was there to spread the good news to the people that the Messiah, our Savior has been born! So rejoice, shout, dance and be filled with JOY for our Lord has come. Whatever we face, joy is the truest thing and this is not the end. May your joy overflow this holiday season.

LOVE

Love is more than a deep affection for or attachment or devotion to someone, or the expression of this. Love comes from God; so true love brings you closer to God. 1 John 4:7-8 (NLT) says, "dear friend, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God for God is love."

True love makes great sacrifices. It does extraordinary things. It goes out of its comfort zone or sacrifices things important to it just to show its love. "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 (KJV)) True love is not based on words or hypocritical deeds, but it is based on truthful actions. 1 John 3:18 (HCSB) says; "Little children, we must not love with words or speech, but with truth and action." Love loves even those who do not love it. True love does good things even to those who hate it. Jesus said, "But, I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you." (Luke 6:27-28 (KJV))

Love will stand the test of time. "Love is patient, love is kind, love does not envy, is not boastful, is not conceited, does not act improperly, is not selfish, is not provoked, and does not keep a record of wrong. Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things; Love never ends." 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

The greatest command in the Law, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. ...Love your neighbor as yourself." Matthew 22:37-39 (HCSB).

During this Advent Season spread the love of God everywhere. Do not forget the greatest was the gift of Love (Jesus Christ).

Presiding Elder Bruce W. Hunter: Leading the South Birmingham-Huntsville-Bessemer District

Bridget J. Floyd



Presiding Elder Bruce Hunter (Center) presides over his first quarterly conference at St. John

On Saturday, November 17, 2018, St. John AME met with its new presiding elder, the Reverend Bruce W. Hunter for the First Quarterly Conference of the Conference Year for the South Birmingham – Huntsville-Bessemer (SBHB) District. Subsequently, Presiding Elder Hunter shared some insights regarding his plans for the District and to allow St. John and others to learn more about their presiding elder.

He began by sharing his view that one should prepare to preach a sermon as if it were the first sermon ever preached, regardless of how long the person has been preaching, even if one is a seasoned preacher. He noted that another of his tenants is that one comes to leadership through life experiences. Presiding Elder Hunter shared that one of his life experiences (and that of his wife) was the sudden loss of his (their) recently deceased son. He noted that this experience, as well as his role as a husband and father (of two sons) have prepared him for preaching and

teaching. Presiding Elder Hunter emphasized the relationship of “faith, hope, and vision”. He indicated that if one limits oneself, this takes away from faith (referencing Hebrews 11:1 as the “foundation”). He stated, “You must see beyond your limitations and maintain faith and continue to have hope and perseverance”.

Presiding Elder Hunter returned to the loss of a son, noting that “the journey is ongoing”. He insightfully shared his view/concern for his wife, noting that in his view “the love of a mother for her offspring is the closest thing we can see as an example of agape love. I can see her pain when nobody else can”. He described their mutual “expression from the soul in losing our first born child”. He reflected on the lack of opportunity for closure [due to a motor vehicle accident] and that “God didn’t ask my permission. I have to trust in His divine wisdom”; and the mutual process of both parents “trying to digest reality”.

The Elder shared that as a pastor he has worked with members, supporting them in times of distress and loss – in the emergency room, aiding in decisions regarding life support/life and death. He indicated that even with tremendous empathy, one cannot imagine the pain of such situations/loss. He noted the pastor’s role is to “pray, sit, cry with them”. In regard to the transition from pastor to presiding elder, the Reverend Hunter noted that he no longer has the “day to day responsibility of taking care of a congregation” nor preparing sermons on a weekly basis. He noted that he was about to preach his third sermon since September 2nd. He noted that at this point, as he prepared to preach and hold the quarterly conference at Grady Madison (Madison, AL) he would have visited all of the churches in his District.

When asked about unexpected aspects of the position, the Elder indicated that he has learned that there are times when there is not “100% cooperation” and so he finds that he “must assume responsibility ... represent the 9th District – all churches”. He noted that he finds that he “must appreciate what everyone brings to the table ... work with them”. He seemed to describe this as both a challenge and privilege.

(Continued on page 5)

Presiding Elder Bruce W. Hunter: Leading the South Birmingham-Huntsville-Bessemer District

Bridget J. Floyd

(Continued from page 4)

Presiding Elder Hunter indicated that he grew up in Birmingham, AL and had the rare opportunity to pastor the church in which he grew up, St. James AME, Avondale. He pastored there for over nine years. He noted that the change and challenges which occur when one takes on a leadership role are similar whether in the church or secular setting. Before being appointed as presiding elder, the Reverend Hunter was pastor of Payne Chapel AME Church, Birmingham.

Most persons can identify persons who have served as a mentor for them and Presiding Elder Hunter is among those. He shared three mentors: The Reverend J. C. Bonner, Sr., the late, former pastor of St. James AME Church, Avondale; the Reverend P. H. Lewis, Sr. pastor of Bethel AME in Mobile, Alabama; and the Reverend Dr. Homer L. McCall, former pastor of St. John AME, Huntsville. Presiding Elder Hunter described Dr. McCall as a "strong inspiration" and noted appreciation for all of his mentors. He referenced the sage advice given by Dr. McCall as the Reverend Hunter was preparing to attend his first General Conference of the AME Church: "Make sure you know who you are...by knowing who you are it will ground you". He indicated that he found this to be helpful and true.

In sharing his goals/plans for the SBHB District, Presiding Elder shared not only his ideas, but had readily available, hard copy templates of his vision for programs / ministries / informational efforts that he would like to see in the District. These include:

SMILE! [Shining My Inner Light to Edify]

EON->ONE [Each One, Reach One]

Moms Day! [Mammograms for Our Mothers, Sisters, Daughters and YOU!]

HEAL! [Help Encourage Another to Live]

Yah Mo Initiative [The Lord Helping Us to Help Each Other]

Church Pamphlet – to highlight ministries/provide information about individual churches

Church Calendar – 2019 – to highlight / profile individual churches

These range from outreach to fellow man/parishioners, partnering with family and friends to prompt them to get health screenings to prevent breast and prostate cancers, and to share information/highlight individual churches.

Presiding Elder Bruce W. Hunter spoke of his vision for the District, his commitment to giving his all to this new role, and to represent all in the District in a fitting manner as he responds to the Bishop of the 9th Episcopal District, The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright. This soft-spoken, reflective minister/presiding elder, moved from the interview to give a glimpse of character as clergy and human being—to offer a moving, inspirational, optimistic sermon focused on thankfulness at all times, on the Sunday before Thanksgiving. This was without hint of the tremendous loss upon which he had just reflected. It seems as though he practices what he preaches.

May we pray for Presiding Elder Bruce W. Hunter, District Coordinator Mrs. M. Gail Hunter, and their son Nicholas, as they take on their new roles in the SBHB District. May God undergird them as they journey through a challenging time/process, with faith, hope, perseverance, and thankfulness; and one day soon, memories of Brian bringing them smiles.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1

Veterans Day Celebration And Special Salute to Veterans of St. John AME Church

By Jeanette Jones



LTC (Ret.) Angelo W. Johnson, USA

November 11, 2018, Americans around the World paused to honor all who served in the United States Armed Forces, especially the World War I Veterans. St. John recognized those World War I Veterans who were related to members of St. John in a special program booklet. In addition to the World War I Veterans, all members of St. John who have served in any branch of the Armed Forces were listed in the booklet with their pictures, in their service uniforms along with the dates of service to our country. As we viewed the pictures with admiration and pride, St. John AME Patriots reminded us of the great country we have and the service and sacrifices so many made to protect this country, both domestically and abroad. The hearts of these men and women were moved to place their lives in danger's path so that we, whom they never would meet, might enjoy the blessings of liberty bestowed on the United States of America.

The special Veterans Day Service at St. John was led by the posting of the Colors by the Color Guard of the Alabama A&M University Bulldog Battalion, under the leadership of the Professor of Military Science, Lt. Col. George Bolton. This was later followed by a special Veterans Day Litany which was presented in recognition and in appreciation of the service and sacrifices of the men and women who have served this nation with distinction.



Posting of the colors.

The Veterans Day speaker, LTC (Ret.) Angelo W. Johnson, USA, served as Director of Middle East Operations, Reliant Global Solutions. Col. Johnson was introduced by his sister, Steward Barbara Johnson, who gave a loving and informative story of her life and interactions with her brother, who has such a colorful and interesting life story. Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Johnson is a native of Huntsville, Alabama and a graduate of Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University with a B.Sc. in Civil Engineering Technology and a Masters in Military Arts and Sciences from the United States Air Force, Air University, Montgomery, Alabama. Colonel Johnson served his country with distinction, having taught, coached and mentored over 60,000 elite warriors on 4 continents and 9 sovereign nations. Johnson shared his experience in the service and highlighted some very interesting historical facts about World War I, on the 100th anniversary of the "War to End All Wars".



Program participants and committee members
with LTC (Ret.) Johnson.

Let the spirit of courage, and the love of country, which moved these heroes and other veterans like LTC (Ret.) Johnson, continue to thrive in our nation that there will always be those ready to answer the call and pay the price for liberty. We give thanks for our Veterans.

Pictured on the next four (4) pages are members of St. John who have served our country in the armed forces. These pictures were printed in the special Veterans Day bulletin.

St. John AME's Patriots



James O. Heyward, Sr.
U.S. Army
July 1953 - August 1983
Colonel



James Russell Johnson, Sr.
U.S. Army
December 1962 - June 1992
Lieutenant Colonel



Darwin Washington
U.S. Army
1973 - 1993
Lieutenant Colonel



Felicia Carter
U.S. Army
1986 - 2014
Lieutenant Colonel



Katrissa Norwood
U.S. Army
1995-2016
Lieutenant Colonel



Lars Avery
U.S. Navy 1973-1977
Navy Reserve 1978-1984
Nco



Adrienne C. Smith
U.S. Navy
1996 - Present
Lieutenant (LT)



Robert Bernard Hereford, Sr.
U.S. Army
March 1969 - March 1971
SPC4

St. John AME's Patriots



Dr. Arthur Walker
U.S. Air Force
1962 - 1988



Homer H. McCraw, Sr.
U.S. Army
August 1942 - Nov. 1945
Staff Sergeant



Sammie Walton
United States Air Force
October 1983 - November 2003
Technical Sergeant



Delroy C. Petgrave Jr.
U.S. Army
1999 - Present
First Sergeant (1SG)



Mike Clark
U.S. Army and Army Reserves
1985-2001



Robert Wilson
U.S. Army Reserve
December 2012 - Present



Austin L. Franklin
U.S. Army
August 2006 - Present



David Norwood Jr.
U.S. Army
1980 - 2000



Bobby Adkins II
United States Marine Corps
August 1984 - September 2004
Gunnery Sergeant



Clifton Miller
U.S. Army
May 19, 1975 - June 1, 1995
Major



Keri V. Daniels
U.S. Army
March 2006 - Present
Major



Ira M. Bargon, Jr.
U.S. Army
Oct 20, 1969 - April 24, 1972
Sergeant

St. John AME's Patriots



Nathaniel Brownlow
U.S. Navy
Active Duty
Petty Officer Second Class



Rev. Charles E. Glover
U.S. Marine Corps
May 1974 - 1976
SGT
U.S. Air Force
March 1982 - January 2002
MSGT



Carver C. Myhand, Sr.
U.S. Army
January 1959 - March 1962
SP4



Ray Sconiers
U.S. Army
1979 - 1990
E5/SGT



Sylvester Daniels
U.S. Army
October 1979 - October 1982
Specialist



Hodges Washington
U.S. Army
22 yrs 6 months
Major



Wesley L. Daniels
U.S. Army
October 2016 - Present
Sergeant



Glenda O'Neal Sconiers
U.S. Army
1979-1982
SP/4



Adidojen C. Lewis
U.S. Army
1977 - 1995
Sergeant First Class (SFC)



Rickey McGrow
U.S. Army
August 1976 - January 2004
MAJ/SSG



Angela V. Daniels
U.S. Army
May 1995 - May 2002
Lieutenant Commander



Johnathan Scott
U.S. Army
December 1985 - July 2015
CW2/ Chief Warrant Officer

St. John AME's Patriots



Stephanie Scott
U.S. Army
4/20/89- 2/27/1997
SGT/E5



Yvonne Barbour
Army National Guard
1985-1989
SP4



Brandy Powers Lockett
U.S. Army
July 1997 - July 2001
Staff Sergeant
U.S. Marines
January 2004 - June 2011
Staff Sergeant



Terrence Sigler-Wright
U.S. Coast Guard
2012 - Present
Lieutenant



Karl Gullatte
U.S. Navy & Naval Reserves
August 1987 - 2000
E5/ Petty Officer Second Class



Otha Owens
U.S. Army
1961-1963
E4

Not pictured

Cleophas Haygood
U.S. Army
1965 - 1968
SP4

Not pictured

James Avery Burnett
U.S. Navy
1987 - 1995
Private

Pastor Wright Leads MCAM Executive Board Meeting

The Executive Board of the Music and Christian Arts Ministry (MCAM) of the AME Church met in Huntsville, Alabama, November 29 – December 1, 2018. This meeting was under the leadership of Pastor Maurice Wright II who presided over his first meeting since being elected Connectional Director of MCAM. Bishop David Daniels, Chair of the Commission of Christian Education for the AME Church, the Reverend Garland Pierce, Executive Director of the Department of Christian Education, and the Reverend Kenneth Hill, Ph.D., former Executive Director of the Department of Christian Education, were among persons from across the

Connectional Church who were present for this meeting.



The Aeolians sing during opening worship.

A worship service was held at St. John to begin this meeting of the executive board. St. John's MCAM participated in the service by leading the moments of praise and ministering in dance. The Aeolians of Oakwood University were the special guest artist for the service. They sang a medley of spirituals and hymns including "Lift Every Voice and Sing," "Steal Away," "Keep Your Hand on the Plow," and "Holy, Holy, Holy."



The Reverend Hill

The message for the opening worship service was delivered by the Reverend Myron D. Hill, Assistant Director of MCAM and pastor of Cyprus Chapel AME Church, Abbeville, South Carolina. The Reverend Hill chose the text Genesis 12:1-9 and the sermon was entitled "The Actions of 'Big' People." As he repeatedly reminded the congregation, he preached the word in "his own style." He noted that "big" people understand that God is big and cannot be contained. In the text, Abraham had to leave home for God to do something big in his life. The Reverend Hill stated that God wants MCAM to move from where they are to where God wants them to be. He further indicated the big people follow God, accept the blessing trinity (from God to us, from us to others and from others back to us), carry everyone along, worship God wherever they are, and leave the familiar, as directed by God. In closing he urged MCAM to "accept the blessing and share it."

On Friday and Saturday the MCAM Fall Executive Board met on the beautiful campus of Alabama Agricultural & Mechanical University. The Connectional Director, the Reverend Maurice Wright, II called the meeting to order at 9:00AM. The Reverend Dr. Lisa Allen-McLaurin, Helmar E. Nielsen Associate Professor of Church Music and Worship at the International Theological Center (ITC) and the Pastor of West Mitchell Street, CME Church, Atlanta, Georgia, presented an enlightening workshop on utilizing the arts in worship. The presentation focused on key components of worship including music, dance, drama and visual design.

The Opening Plenary was followed by greetings from Alabama A&M University which were brought by Dr. Jeanette Jones on behalf of Dr. Andrew Hugine, Jr. In the MCAM Connectional Director's Report, Pastor Wright shared his appreciation for the immediate past Connectional MCAM Director and all of those who have served. He gave a report that cast a great vision for the future of the Connection ministry that includes increased membership, resource availability for small and growing churches, a new worship CD and ecumenical partnerships. As well, the Reverend Wright highlighted the ministry's accomplishments during the current administration to include, paying the debt to the Connectional Christian Education Department in full, reaching out to all of the Bishops across the Connectional Church to identify District Directors,



Dr. Wellington-Trawick's presentation

(Continued on page 13)

Rosa Parks Hymn Commissioned by MCAM

Pastor Maurice Wright, the Connectional Director of Music and Christian Arts Ministry (MCAM) for the AME Church, commissioned this hymn to celebrate the life of the beloved Deaconess Rosa Parks. The hymn debuted during the Fall Executive Board Meeting of MCAM and coincided with the state of Alabama's first celebration of official state holiday - Rosa Parks Day, December 1, 2018. Pastor Wright commissioned the talents of Bishop E. Anne Henning Byfield and the renowned composer, Dr. Uzee Brown, Jr. of Morehouse College to write this celebratory hymn.

Rosa Parks A Warrior for Good

For the Inaugural Celebration of the Rosa Parks Holiday

Lyrics by Bishop Anne Henning Byfield

Uzee Brown, Jr., November, 2018

♩ = 111 with reverence

The musical score is written for piano and voice. It consists of four systems of music. The first system begins with a tempo marking '♩ = 111 with reverence'. The melody is in the right hand, and the accompaniment is in the left hand. The lyrics are written below the notes. The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The third system includes a key signature change to one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The fourth system includes a first and second ending. The first ending leads back to the beginning of the third system, and the second ending leads to a final chord.

A - wigh - ty ser - vant of our God, a - rose - ted at her
out when she was dead, with her - den in her
house. He - ro's life with joy who knew she would not

with, a - sing for shield and sword, for just - ice on the
mind. This choice is as is - spread, Lib - er - a - tion for the
full, with God's (you're) one pho - to in - just - ice has not yet -

fully
kind,
valued.

a free - dom fight - ing lib - er - a - tion, re - com - mit - ted, a

our - ti - ce for good. Ro - sa Parks a our - ti - ce for good. 2. She good.
3. Cl - a -

Commissioned by the Reverend Maurice Wright, II Connectional Director of Music and Christian Arts,
African Methodist Episcopal Church for the 1st Celebration of the Rosa Parks Holiday.

Bishop Daniels Preaches for First Sunday of Advent

By Nedra McDaniel

Photography by Brother Bobby Adkins II



Pastor Maurice Wright II and Bishop David Daniels

Bishop David Daniels, the 124th elected and consecrated bishop in the AME Church, was the preacher for first Sunday in December services at St. John. He is the presiding prelate of the 15th Episcopal District, 15th District encompassing Western South Africa, Namibia and Angola, and Chair of the Commission on Christian Education. Bishop Daniels' was in Huntsville for the executive board meeting of MCAM.

Bishop Daniels preached from Luke 1:26-38, with emphasis on verse 28. His sermon was entitled "You Are Highly Favored." This message was very fitting given that this was the first Sunday in Advent. In the sermon he emphasized that Christians, like Mary, have been chosen by God. Continuing the comparison to Mary, he stated that Christians should not be afraid of their calling because of God's love for them (John 3:16) and the power He gives to those who He has called. Bishop Daniels was the chief celebrant in the communion service that followed.

St. John was also blessed with the presence of Dr. Ethel Wellington-Trawick. Dr. Trawick was Pastor Wright's middle school music teacher and he credits her for his being in the AME Church. She was also in Huntsville for the executive board meeting where she was a presenter on Saturday. At the request of Bishop Daniels, Dr. Wellington-Trawick sang a solo, "He Touched Me," prior to his sermon.

These special worship guests/participants contribute to the rich experiences of being a part of a world-wide connectional church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Pastor Wright Leads MCAM Executive Board Meeting

(Continued from page 11)

and the most recent accomplishment of commissioning the Rosa Parks hymn. Several vacant appointments were filled and the new proposed logo was presented. Other business conducted included the 3rd reading of the bylaws, reports from the Associate Directors and a thorough review of the calendar of events for the Connectional Church, with emphasis on expectations of MCAM.

Saturday morning's session included a presentation by Dr. Ethel Wellington-Trawick. Dr. Wellington-Trawick is currently a member of St. Mark AME Church in Orlando Florida where she serves as youth choir director and director of the Second Sabbath Spiritual Ensemble. She has served as director of music at several churches, directed the Tacoma Symphony Gospel Choir and has been a soloist at Carnegie Hall. Pastor Wright credits Dr. Wellington-Trawick, his middle school music teacher, with his being in the AME Church.

Saturday, December 1, 2018, was the inaugural celebration of the Rosa Parks Holiday in the state of Alabama. To commemorate this day, the Reverend Maurice Wright and MCAM debuted the hymn, "Rosa Parks A Warrior for Good." The text was written by Bishop E. Ann Henning Byfield and the hymn tune by Dr. Uzee Brown, Jr. of Morehouse College.

Congratulations to Bishop David Daniels, the Reverend Garland Pearce, and Director Maurice Wright on a successful board meeting.

CPR November Workshop Held

By Patricia Grier



Mr. Gosa discusses
Social Security

The St. John Caregivers Prayer and Respite (CPR) Ministry hosted a workshop on Thursday, November 15th for the St. John members and guests. The focus of the workshop was Social Security retirement benefits.

A light repast preceded the workshop presentation. The workshop was held in the Sanctuary and opened with words of welcome and an opening prayer by Mrs. Lorraine Parham. Next, Mrs. Rosa Walker introduced the presenter for the evening, Mr. Rickey Gosa, a Financial Advisor for Edwards Jones.

Mr. Gosa's presentation was 'Social Security: Your Questions Answered'. He stated that the primary questions often asked are:

1. How does Social Security fit into my retirement income plan?
2. When should I start receiving Social Security benefits?
3. What about taxes on Social Security?

He then gave general and detailed responses to each of the above questions.

As a general response for question #1, Mr. Gosa stated that Social Security would likely be the foundation for your retirement income; so plan wisely on how to build on that foundation with other income sources. As a general response for question #2, Mr. Gosa stated that deciding when to start receiving Social Security income is a very personal decision and should be based on several considerations — your full retirement age, your earnings and other income, and your health and life expectancy. As a general response to question #3, Mr. Gosa stated that Social Security retirement benefits can be taxable at any age and the benefit amount taxed is determined by the taxable amount of your other retirement incomes and a percentage of your Social Security benefits.

After responding to the three key questions, Mr. Gosa then briefly discussed the following related Social Security benefit items: spousal benefits, Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) to benefits, health insurance prior to Medicare eligibility, and the impact of Pension Plans on Retirement income planning. The information presented was well received by the attendees.

A brief Q&A period followed the presentation with Mr. Gosa supplying answers and sources of additional information for the attendees. Mrs. Hugine concluded the workshop with a thank you to Mr. Gosa and to the attendees. The CPR Committee is very thankful for the continued support of this ministry by the St. John members.



Kids Kingdom

Jesus Loves the Little Children

Kingdom Kids

*Motto is Identity * Relationship * Service **

By Lydia Owens

This writer had the pleasure of attending St. John's Kingdom Kids Children Church on the 4th Sunday in November. Kingdom Kids assembles every 3rd Sunday of the month and welcomes members of the church and their guests ages 6 – 11. The service began with Sister Jana Goggans playing "Every Time I Feel the Spirit" and greetings were extended by Sister Mary Rankin with the kids being asked to give their definition of Kingdom Kids. Their answers ranged from "Church" to "Children's Church" to "all kids and children of God".

A mini devotion was given by Ann Marie Gaines and it was entitled "How well do you listen?" She emphasized that "God wants us to listen to His word so we know what he wants us to do."

Ms. Shelby Washington then asked the children a few questions:

- How many people have you talked to today?
- How many people have you listened to today?
- Do you know that you can talk to and listen to God?
- Do you think praying is talking to or listening to God?

The kids seemed to all agree that "it's hard because you can't hear his voice" and that praying is both talking to and listening to God.

The thought of the day was "It is alright to hold a conversation but sometimes we all need to learn to listen."

The scripture, Psalm 85:8, was read by Jordan Williams and the prayer was given by Cayden Wilson. Visiting Kingdom Kids on that Sunday were Steve Hassan and Kalaih Wyatt. The Children then recited AME Church History & The AME Church Motto.



Dr. Love makes presentation to group

Devotion was given by Dr. Thalia Love Brown and included in her bible lessons were activities that required the kids to decide whether Jesus was listening or talking. The walls were set up with an ear on one wall and a mouth on the other and the kids were instructed to listen to the lesson and move to the mouth if Jesus was talking and move to the ear if Jesus was listening. In summary, Jesus prayed by talking and listening to God. Jesus had a conversation with God. That is why we pray - to have a conversation with our heavenly Father. We can do as Jesus did, by talking to God and also by listening to Him.



Jesus is on the Main Line : Ms. Barbara Johnson brought an old rotary phone for the next activity. We all know we do not need a telephone to talk to God, however for this activity the kids used the old rotary telephone to have a conversation with God. When we use a telephone, we talk and we listen. When we talk with God, we talk and we listen.

After a prayer by Chloe Wilson, the children had two group activities before dividing into groups for the last activity of the day.

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Kids Kingdom

Jesus Loves the Little Children

Kingdom Kids

*Motto is Identity * Relationship * Service **

By Lydia Owens

(Continued from page 15)

1. "Praying Hands" (5 ways to Pray (have a conversation with God))
2. "The Whispering Game"

HOW WELL DO YOU LISTEN? The sentence was: "God is very happy when we talk and listen to Him every day"

It begins when one person whispers the sentence in the next person's ear and so on...The last person who hears the sentence says it out loud. The person who heard the sentence first repeats what he or she heard to see how well the children listen.

Sister Johnson worked with the younger children on these activities:

1. Jesus Hears Me
2. Dot to Dot...Pray in Secret
3. Pray Daily Coloring Activity



Sister Rankin worked with the older children on these activities:

1. Talking to God
2. Word Search...The Lord's Prayer



Children work on activities



Sister Rankin and Sister Johnson work with the children

If all activities are not completed, the children can take them home to complete with their parents. Benediction was given by Sister Rankin and Sister Johnson asked for volunteers for the next Kingdom Kids Sunday Service. The children are encouraged to sign up and participate in the service. Snacks are served and the children are dismissed.

Kingdom Kids Ministry

Leader: Sister Mary Rankin

Assistant: Sister Barbara Johnson

Music: Sister Jana Goggans

Helper: Ms. Shelby Washington

Missionaries Decorate Christmas Wreaths for Sick and Shut-In

By Nedra McDaniel



Missionaries display completed wreaths.



Paulette demonstrates bow making.

After the November business meeting of the St. John WMS, members decorated Christmas Wreaths for the sick and shut-in members of the church. Sister Paulette Williams provided instructions in decorating techniques and bow making. The WMS members fellowshiped while working as teams on this project. They also enjoyed a buffet of foods brought by the members.

Missionaries Attended Annual State Meeting

By Nedra McDaniel



St. John WMS members pose after opening worship.

Members of the Betty E. Derrick WMS of St. John traveled to Montgomery, Alabama to attend the 34th Annual Convention of the Ninth Episcopal District Women's Missionary Society on November 30-December 1, 2018. The Reverend Sherita M. Seawright is the Episcopal Supervisor and Sister Susie Bonner is the District President. The meeting was hosted by St. John AME Church, Montgomery, where the Reverend Roosevelt Williams is the pastor and the Reverend Dr. Jacquelyn Denson is the Presiding Elder. The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright is the Presiding Prelate of the Ninth Episcopal District.

Activities began with an afternoon session for the Young Adult Missionaries (YAMs). Dr. Monica Dillihunt represented St. John Huntsville at this session. The evening worship session was attended by all in the WMS delegation from St. John: Lorraine Parham, local WMS President, Charlsie Brooks, Nedra McDaniel, Paulette Bargon, Annie Hall, Claudinette Purifoy-Fears and Monica Dillihunt. Participants in the worship were the Episcopal YPD President, the Alabama River Region YPD Choir and members WMS and YPD. The preacher was the Reverend Carolyn E. Brailsford, Episcopal Supervisor of the 20th Episcopal District. In addition to being a preacher of

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Derryn Goode Named Youth of the Month for November



Derryn Goode and Pastor Wright

Derryn Chrisette Goode is a charismatic and intelligent young lady. Derryn is currently a 4th grader at Providence Elementary School. She has earned and maintained the Honor Roll for each school year since 1st Grade.

She currently plays soccer for the AYSO 498 League, which her team won 1st place in the Alabama State Championship this fall season.

She also plays basketball for Dublin Park. She loves to draw, paint, dance and design clothes for her dolls.

Derryn is a member of the Y.P.D. and the Children's/Youth Choir at church. When Derryn grows up she wants to be a visual artist. She is the daughter of Donald and Shannon Goode.

Congratulations Derryn!

Pray for our College Students

Alicia Brownlow

University of South Alabama, Mobile, Alabama

St. John's college students are encouraged to share their college information with the AMEN readers. Parents and students, please submit this information to nedra.mcdaniel@gmail.com.



Soup Kitchen Ministry

Charlie Brooks

**WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS
& HAPPY NEW YEAR**

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 willfulness.

Grant that we 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.

Presenting the Good News at Allen Chapel AME Church

By Bobby Adkins

On Sunday, November 18, 2018, the St. John AME Church family traveled to Albertville, Alabama, to share in fellowship and the receiving of the Word of God with the Allen Chapel AME Church family. The outing was both inspirational in message and enlightening as to the trials facing the modern church, and particularly the AME family.

In many rural areas in the southeast, and across the United States, church membership and attendance has been in decline. Allen Chapel has certainly reflected this unfortunate trend. For the past few years, the Allen Chapel membership has been reduced to only a hand full of members, which places a tremendous financial burden on those who still attend and seek the Word of God within the AME family. Understanding the power of prayer and fellowship, as well as illustrate what a few faithful servants of God can accomplish, St. John AME Pastor Maurice Wright II encouraged members to visit with him to provide a bit of inspiration to the Allen Chapel family. Oh, what a wonderful and inspiring time for those in attendance!

When worshippers arrived they were informed that the church was experiencing severe financial hardships which resulted in the electricity having recently been turned off. Though the sun was beginning to set, there was a constant ray of light, shining from the west at the perfect angle to provide lighting to the program. As expected and understood, God can provide just what is needed, at just the right time.

After the Call to Worship, prayer, and a beautiful selection by the St. John choir, Pastor Wright asked the congregation for a sacrificial offering to bless the Allen Chapel family with financial resources needed to cover building expenses. With a blessing from God, the congregation came through with needed funding.



Brother Justin York gave a powerful sermon from the book of Hebrews, chapter 10, entitled "Why Do You Go to Church?" Brother York reminded the congregation that "Some go for the singing, Some go for the dancing, Some go to hear the Preacher preach, and others, they go to see what someone else wore." "Some people go because they were raised in the church and that's just what they know to do." He then added that many people who attended church in the past have stopped for a number of reasons, with doubt being one of them. Brother York referenced that the Book of Hebrews was written to those who were experiencing doubt.

While being blessed with this wonderful Word from God, and with the sun settling behind the trees within the neighborhood, God showed up once again, on time. The lights, which had been off at the start of the service, came on, with the congregation shouting "Hallelujah" at the very moment God worked things out. It was not just electrical power coming on, but a reflection and very present illustration of God's Holy Ghost Power!

Brother Justin York blessed us with a powerful Word for the book of Hebrews.

Retired Presiding Elder Oliver Allen, though not on the program, provided quite the moment of inspiration as he reflected on an event that helped shape the very fabric of the Allen Chapel Church. He told an incredible story about the survival of the church, focusing on an incident a number of years ago when Pastor Jerry Smith was serving Allen Chapel. One morning, while watching the news, he saw that there was a fire in the Albertville area. Paying closer attention, he recognized a house, located right next to the church, was burning. He jumped in his car and rushed from Huntsville to Albertville. Presiding Elder Allen said that he had called the resident pastor and informed him of what was happening. Well, when he arrived on site, he realized that God had already worked things out. He said, "the fire wasn't just next door, but we measured, and it was eight feet!" BUT GOD!

With a strong conviction, the Reverend Allen marveled that "the windows got so hot that they burst." He pointed to the valence on the windows closest to where the fire burned and stated that those were the original items hanging from the windows. He motioned that the paint of the walls had not been damaged or repainted. It was still white. Lastly, and reminding us that God is always in control, he said the Fire Chief came over and told them "last night when this house was burning, we made a decision....burn the house down, save the church." HALLELUJAH! The fire chief told them, "We took the water that we

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St. John AME Prison Ministry is Moving Forward

By Bobby Adkins

After much prayer and preparation, the St. John AME Church Prison Ministry was reestablished under the leadership of Brother Bobby Adkins and Reverend Gloria Madison. In advance of the November 2018 Kickoff Meetings, Sis. Abigail Hugine provided the group with a solid foundation by managing the scheduling of the meeting, the selection of ministry leadership, and establishing a solid cadence for future events.



Brother Adrian Muller, from the Alabama Non-Violent Offenders Organization, spoke to Wednesday Night Bible Study Group.

Having conducted a November 28th kickoff meeting, the St. John Prison Ministry invited Brother Adrian Muller, from the Alabama Non-Violent Offenders (ANVO) non-profit organization, based in Huntsville, to speak to the Wednesday night Bible Study attendees. With over twenty persons in attendance, Brother Muller spoke in great detail about the objectives of the organization, the basis for its founding, the daily opportunities for volunteers to impact the lives of those incarcerated, recently released from prison, as well as the training opportunities needed to enable effective ministry participation and partnering with ANVO.

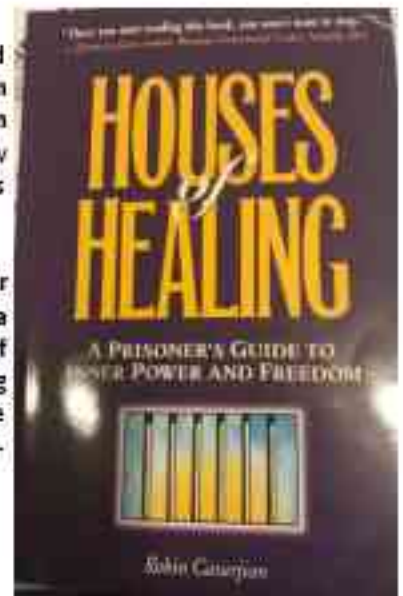
The Mission of Alabama Non-Violent Offenders Organization is to assist those seeking to regain their place in society by connecting them to resources and services to reach their full potential as productive members within their families and community.

Since 2009 ANVOO has assisted and informed hundreds of individuals with support in areas such as the Reinstatement of Voting Rights; Records Pardoned; Expungement of Records; Employment Services, Housing, and Education Referrals; Alabama State Identification Cards, and Clothing Programs.

Christians believe that Jesus—Himself brought to trial, executed, buried, and brought to life again—offers hope, healing, and a new purpose for each life. Even the most broken people and situations can be made whole again. Through an amazing awakening to new hope and life purpose, those who once broke the law are transformed and moved to serve their neighbors, and the cycle of crime, is replaced by a cycle of renewal.

What if you could participate in a rehabilitative program to assist a former prisoner and send him or her back to their family and community a new man or woman - a person who knows how to resolve conflict peacefully? What if you could be part of a support system as these non-violent offenders work to become a contributing member of your community again? Through Prison Fellowship, you can! We are waiting for you to join us! This is a great time to get involved in helping to transform the lives of ex-offenders and their families.

Additional information about the Prison Ministry will be uploaded to the St. John AME Church Website, with reading material located in the church foyer. Please contact Brother Adkins at 817-781-5820 or bjadkins@gmail.com if you are interested in supporting this great ministry and assist in the doing of God's Work. For more information on ANVO, visit <http://www.anvo.org> or contact the organization at (256) 288-3175 or (256) 715-7054.



The ANVO Non-Profit provides training the Prison Ministry Volunteers and references "House of Healing" as a guiding book for those seeking to support the ministry.

Four Personal Finance Rules That Are Meant To Be Broken

By Brother Bobby Adkins II

We all have our own opinions on what a "Rainy Day Fund" should look like in our savings. For some folks, having a few weeks salary in a savings account is sufficient. For others, having access to extended credit to cover times of financial turmoil works. Mostly, it depends on your income and ability to establish a pattern of consistent savings, that slowly matures into a comfortable savings account. So, what really constitutes adequate savings? Well, with a number of written and unwritten rules for how to handle your personal finances, it is easy to get overwhelmed and not know which rules to follow or which ones will work best for you. When it comes to your managing money, it is important to remember that one size does not fit all, and that some flexibility is encouraged. Here are some old-school practices that we think deserve a second look. Ready to break some rules together? Additional guidance can be found at

<https://www.theladders.com/career-advice/4-personal-finance-rules-that-are-meant-to-be-broken>.



1. Saving six months' worth of expenses in an emergency fund

Conventional wisdom says you should have an emergency stash of cash that you can survive on for up to six months. Most people take this piece of advice and believe that is the most they should be saving up when in reality, this is more of a baseline for you to start with. The amount you need depends entirely on your personal circumstances, and once you hit a goal that works for you, do

not stop there! If you are able to save enough money to survive on for six months, set a new goal for yourself and keep going. You never know when life will throw you a curveball, so it is important to set yourself up with a strong safety net.

2. Not using credit cards

Credit cards can be daunting at first. Many people shy away from them, fearful of overspending and being burdened by debt. But here is the thing: Credit cards are not inherently good or bad for you. They are financial tools, and while they can get people into trouble, they can also be used for good. Using them can help you build your credit score (as long as you make timely payments) and, in some cases, even help you rebuild it with a secured line of credit.

3. Staying at the same job for most of your career

While this might be one of the oldest "rules," this is one that everyone should be willing to break. Yes, most of our parents and grandparents may have worked at the same company for 15+ years for the pensions, but with a thriving job market in certain cities, this is not a reality for most. By hopping around the corporate ladder or starting a side hustle, you can help your career advance faster by taking on roles at new companies and trading up for a better salary or title (or both), which can open doors to new financial milestones.

4. Relying entirely on a financial advisor

Having a financial advisor may seem out of reach for someone fresh out of college and is an expensive option when you are on a tight budget. So where to turn for advice on how to make your money work for you and guidance on where to allocate all your resources? Luckily, there are plenty of apps and personal finance tools that help you budget, manage your money, and provide insights that are personalized for you. With apps like Mint, you can utilize the new MintSights feature, which offers personalized recommendations to help you improve your financial situation, such as tips on creating a first budget to debt consolidation, to growing investments. It is just like a personal advisor in your pocket.

Church School Lesson Overview – January 2019

The lesson reviews were written by Brother Willie Sandifer.

January 6, 2019

Lesson Title: Hold Fast to God's Love

Lesson Scripture: 2 Thessalonians 2:13 – 3:5; 2 John 4:11

Print: 2 Thessalonians 2:13 – 3:5; 2 John 4:11

Devotional Songs: #513, #251, and #243

Key Verse: "This is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment just as you have heard it from the beginning – you must walk in it." (2 John 6).

Claims of false teaching have been around since the beginning of the church. Most seem not to apply today like claiming that circumcision is needed to be a member. On the other hand, some seem to apply today as well like the role of works in salvation.

A consistent threat from false teachers revolved around the nature of Christ. The early church taught that Jesus was fully human and fully divine. Overemphasis or underemphasis of either part by church leaders would lead to heresy quickly.

In this lesson Paul and John deal with false teachers who threatened the church's existence and denied the teaching of the apostles. Readers glean from them ways to identify false teachers and how they should be handled.

Many early Christians were Jews and believed that all parts of the Jewish law applied to the early church as well. This belief extended to those believers with Gentile backgrounds. This belief included circumcision for males and strict application to Jewish food laws for every Christian. This belief is in error because salvation does not require the keeping of such laws.

January 13, 2019

Lesson Title: Submit to God in Love

Lesson Scripture: James 4:1-10

Print: James 4:1-10

Devotional Songs: #221; #77; and #243

Key Verse: "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you" (James 4:8).

In this lesson, James gave guidance on managing conflict. He provided the source, the consequences, and strategies to resolve it appropriately. Some conflicts that James witnessed were the feeding of the widows, the rule that Gentile believers be circumcised and Peter breaking bread with uncircumcised people.

James observed that these tense struggles revealed problems that reside in a person, as there was a desire for what others had, or there was a belief that something had been denied to them. The author of the lesson points out that what made these conflicts worse is they did not have anything to do with God, however, they were motivated by personal gain.

January 20, 2019

Lesson Title: Submit to God in Christ

Lesson Scripture: Philippians 1:12-21

Print: Philippians 1:12-21

Devotional Songs: #412[]; #251 []; and #243[]

Key Verse: "I want you to know, beloved that what has happened to me has actually helped to spread the gospel" (Philippians 1:12).

Paul continued to teach and preach even while imprisoned and awaiting a trial before Nero. The writing of this letter to the Philippians was among the things that Paul did during that time.

The commentary mentions that the effectiveness of Paul's ministry stirred others to preach the Gospel, although for a variety of reasons. Paul rejoiced, however, as they were spreading the message about Jesus, specifically His death, burial, and resurrection.

Early Christians underwent periods of persecution. Some of them were imprisoned like Paul was, some were boiled in oil, some were crucified, some were fed to lions and some were beheaded. In spite of their plight, they shared the Gospel.

January 27, 2019

Lesson Title: Devote All to Christ

Lesson Scripture: Philippians 2:1-11

Print: Philippians 2:1-11

Devotional Songs: #365; #97; and #243

Key Verse: In humility regard others as better than yourselves." (Philippians 2:3).

Paul's letters to the various churches usually addressed problems with interpersonal conflict, however the central theme of Paul's teaching is seen in this lesson.

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Church School Lesson Overview

(Continued from page 22)

In his letter to the Philippian church, Paul encouraged the spiritual growth of the believers. One way to become more Christ-like is to think like Jesus. Paul used Jesus' leaving heaven and coming to earth and His surrendering completely to God's will as an example. This change from living in a heavenly realm to living on earth required Jesus appear in physical form.

Paul told the church that single mindedness will make his joy complete because their new mind will be like that of Jesus Christ. They will have compassion for others and no longer think of themselves first. Willingly putting the needs of others first is the result of having the mind of Christ.

Annual WMS Convention

By Nedra McDaniel

(Continued from page 17)

the Gospel, she is a national recording artist, songwriter and founder of CaBraiSong School for Vocal Arts. Both her preacher and vocal skills were displayed as she preached a powerful message, "Uncommon Faith (Go Hard for God)" from Luke 7:37-50.

The Saturday morning session of the conference included the business session and a leadership workshop. The officers and committees of the Ninth District were called upon to make their annual reports. From finance to mission to membership to spiritual growth, the Ninth District WMS is on the move. Mrs. Patricia Rutledge led an inspiring workshop on leadership. She used a cupcake acrostic to emphasize the characteristics of a great leader: Capable, Unstoppable, Personable, Charitable, Accountable, Knowledgeable, Enjoyable.

The Convention concluded with the Rosa Parks Legendary Leader Awards Luncheon. The honorees were Missionary Joyce Parrish O'Neal, also president of the host conference's WMS, and Mr. Anthony Brock, an active member of St. Paul AME Church in Montgomery and Head of School at Valiant Cross Academy. The guest speaker for the luncheon was Patricia-Russell-McCloud, Esquire, Episcopal Supervisor of the 14th Episcopal District. Supervisor Russell-McCloud is a distinguished inspirational speaker. In her unique style, she shared the story of Rosa Parks and at the same time inspired missionaries to a greater service.

Church School Book Club

January 2019

Discussion Date: January 19, 2019
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Dollhouse: A Novel, Davis, 2017.

February 2019

Discussion Date: 16 February 2019
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

The Great Alone, Hannah, 2018.

Ernt Allbright, a former POW, comes home from the Vietnam war a changed and volatile man. When he loses yet another job, he makes an impulsive decision: he will move his family north, to Alaska, where they will live off the grid in America's last true frontier.

Thirteen-year-old Leni, a girl coming of age in a tumultuous time, caught in the riptide of her parents' passionate, stormy relationship, dares to hope that a new land will lead to a better future for her family. She is desperate for a place to belong. Her mother, Cora, will do anything and go anywhere for the man she loves, even if this means following him into the unknown.

At first, Alaska seems to be the answer to their prayers. In a wild, remote corner of the state, they find a fiercely independent community of strong men and even stronger women. The long, sunlit days and the generosity of the locals make up for the Allbrights' lack of preparation and dwindling resources.

But as winter approaches and darkness descends on Alaska, Ernt's fragile mental state deteriorates and the family begins to fracture. Soon the perils outside pale in comparison to threats from within. In their small cabin, covered in snow, blanketed in eighteen hours of night, Leni and her mother learn the terrible truth: they are on their own. In the wild, there is no one to save them but themselves. — Amazon

Presenting the Good News

By Bobby Adkins

(Continued from page 19)

were putting on the fire, and put it on the church." BUT GOD!! God's church will survive, and that was the lesson of the day. All praise to the King of Kings!

It was a very present reminder that when things look bleak and there seems to be no hope...GOD IS STILL IN CONTROL

To God be the Glory!

Health and Wellness

Common Walking Mistakes That Lower Your Calorie Burn

By Brother Bobby Adkins

I like to walk. I have to walk. I need to walk. I walk at work. I walk at home. I walk thru my neighborhood. I walk...walk...walk. It is a healthy alternative for someone with bad knees like me. Just 30 minutes of walking a day has been shown to help reduce stress, improve mood, increase bone density and more. But turning a walk into a workout, as well as up the calorie burn, requires paying attention to details including the route, speed and form. Correcting these four walking mistakes helps you burn more calories and turns your daily walks into serious workouts.

Mixing up your speed during a workout not only torches calories, it helps burn fat. One study found walkers who varied their pace burned 20% more calories than those who maintained a constant speed. More information can be found at <http://rsbl.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/11/9/20150486>. Additional research indicated alternating between a moderate-intensity pace and bursts of high intensity was more effective at reducing belly fat. See <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs40279-017-0807-y> for additional information.

MISTAKE #1 **Maintaining the Same Pace**

The fix: To add intervals to your walk, Leslie Sansone, creator of the Walk at Home Workouts and author of "Walk Away the Pounds" suggests starting slow, walking at a warmup pace for two minutes, a brisk pace for the next two minutes and then jogging for 30 seconds, repeating the pattern for 20 minutes. "Your body has to adjust to different speeds, which requires more energy and leads to a bigger calorie burn," notes Sansone. While a brisk walk is an excellent cardiovascular workout (60 minutes burns an estimated 259 calories) adding a strength-training component to your walk burns even more calories. See the full article at <https://www.myfitnesspal.com/exercise/calories-burned/walking-3-5-mph-brisk-pace-196>.

MISTAKE #2 **Focusing Solely on Cardio**

The fix: Incorporate strength-training intervals. Erin Nitschke, therapeutic exercise specialist and American Council on Exercise-certified health coach recommends walking for 3 minutes then performing 30 seconds of walking lunges, jump squats, jumping jacks or other resistance exercises.

"Climbing engages more muscles in the glutes and thighs [and] these are big muscle groups that use a lot of energy and burn more calories," explains Sansone. One study found energy expenditure or calories burned was as much as 30% higher on uneven terrain. See <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4236228/> for more details.

MISTAKE #3 **Following a Flat Route**

The fix: Change your routine and add more hills or variation in terrain such as stairs, gravel or sand, which use different muscle groups and can help with balance and core strength. If you live in a flat area, you can also take your workout to the treadmill to play with the incline.

Walking might be all about putting one foot in front of the other, but that does not mean your arms should hang by your sides when you power walk. "Using the upper body when walking is good body mechanics; it is how the body is meant to move," Nitschke says. "The more muscle groups you engage in a workout, the greater the caloric expenditure."

MISTAKE #4 **Ignoring Your Arms**

The fix: Bend your arms 90 degrees and pump your fists toward the sky as you walk.

For even more of a challenge, try holding 1-3-pound hand weights while you walk. According to the American Council on Exercise, this can boost your heart rate up to 10 beats per minute and increase oxygen consumption between 5-15%, adding to the number of calories burned during a workout. See <https://www.acefitness.org/education-and-resources/lifestyle/blog/1123/do-the-benefits-outweigh-the-risks-if-individuals-hold-dumbbells-in-their-hands-while-doing-step> for details.

January 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	3	4	5
6 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship Communion Sunday AMEN Deadline	7 Fifty-Plus Meeting 9:30 a.m. History Males Ministry 5:00 p.m. CPR Ministry 6:00 p.m.	8	9 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	10	11	12 10:30 a.m. AMEN Staff Meeting
13 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	14	15 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	16 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	17	18	19
20 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	21 Dr. M. L. King, Jr. Day	22 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SOUP KITCHEN	23 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Bible Study	24	25	26 10:00 a.m. WME Meeting
27 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship	28	29	30 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Bible Study Prison Ministry 5:00 p.m.	31		

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

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The Reverend Sherita M. Seawright, Episcopal Supervisor
The Reverend Bruce W. Hunter, Presiding Elder
The Reverend Maurice Wright II, Servant Pastor

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Dates to Remember

December 23, 2018	Annual Christian Education Christmas Program, 8:45 a.m.
December 24, 2018	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 6:00 p.m.
December 31, 2018	Watchnight Service
January 15, 2019	Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Emancipation Proclamation Celebration, Progressive Union Missionary Baptist Church, 7:00 p.m.

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



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