



THE EPISTLE

*Newsletter of the
Nineteenth Street Baptist Church*

"You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men..." 2 Corinthians 3:2



Nineteenth Street Baptist Church

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www.everyblessing.org

Ministerial Staff

Rev. Dr. Darryl D. Roberts, *Senior Pastor*

Rev. Jerry C. Cheatham Jr.

Rev. Christopher O. Crawford

Rev. James A. Crosson Jr.

Rev. Cheryl Coleman Hall

Rev. Reginald Townsend

Rev. Edward Turner

Rev. Robin L. Turner

Rev. Lorise White Wolfe

Rev. James L. Harris, *Youth Pastor*

Church School, Sunday 8:45 AM

Morning Worship, Sunday 10 AM

Prayer Meeting, Thursday 6:30 PM



GOD is Our Passion. Serving **People** is Our **Mission**.

The mission of the Nineteenth Street Baptist Church is to profoundly *experience*, joyfully *celebrate*, and meaningfully *share* God's grace.

We do this through Christ-centered **worship**, **biblical instruction**, **prayer**, **nurturing fellowship**, and **caring acts** that are reflective of our love for God and one another.

We, through the power of the Holy Spirit, proclaim the Gospel and Jesus Christ to all people while supporting the work of missions in our church, our community, our country, and the world.

The Epistle

is an official publication of the
Nineteenth Street Baptist Church.

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There will not be a January 2020 issue of The Epistle. Materials for the February issue are due on January 24, 2020. Submit articles and photographs for publication via email to Epistle@everyblessing.org.

Questions? Contact Karen Williamson at 202-829-5973 or williamsonke@gmail.com.

Three Prayers for Christmas

By Rev. Dr. Darryl D. Roberts



Now that the mad rush of the holidays is upon us, what are you expecting to experience this holiday season? My prayer is that we don't get so distracted with the commercialization and consumerism of Thanksgiving and Christmas that we miss the awe and wonder of the Advent Season. The Season of Advent marks the beginning of a holy season (December 1st through December 24th) when Christians

prepare for the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas and expectantly await the return of Christ Our Lord in the Second Coming. There are three prayers I have for you this Advent Season.

First, I pray that Jesus becomes the center of your joy. Note, my prayer is not that you believe in Jesus. Certainly, I hope that you believe that Jesus Christ is Lord. What I am saying is I pray that your relationship with Christ becomes the basis for your joy. Don't let the quality of your interactions with family and friends over the holiday season quench your joy. Don't let the quantity of the gifts you receive extinguish your joy. Don't let the conditions on your job dampen your joy. Your joy should always come from your relationship with God (the spiritual dimensions of your inner life), not what happens around you (the dimensions of your outward life).

The second thing I pray for you this Advent is for you to always seek wise counsel. Psalm 1:1 says, "Blessed is the man [or woman] who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly." May you, in all seasons, surround yourself with people who will provide

you with the kind of counsel that best reflects the Word of God and positions you to fulfill God's calling on your life. But, in order to find wise counsel, it is imperative that we study the Word of God daily.

The psalmist reminds us of the benefits that come when we meditate on the law of the Lord "day and night." (v. 2) We shall be fruitful like a "tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in season" and "whatever we do shall prosper." What a glorious promise! First, when God's law is our guide, God will provide the kind of life-giving nourishment that will enable us to be productive in every season of our lives like "a tree planted by the rivers of water." Second, whatever we do (for the glory of God) shall prosper. Maybe we would be more fruitful and productive if we read the word of God daily and we sought out counsel from those who live in alignment with the Word of God.

My third prayer for you this holiday season is for you to experience God's infinite provision. Let us not live another day with a deficit mentality. When we do so, we dishonor God. God has promised to provide bountiful blessings as we put our trust in the Creator—our sins are forgiven, we have everything we need, we abound in every good work, God will never forsake us, and we have eternal life. As the prophet Isaiah reminds us, God is our Everlasting Father. Like a compassionate and loving parent, God desires to give us everything we need so that we can bring glory and honor to His name.

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And so, as we prepare our mind, heart and spirit for this Season of Advent, may we remember the reason for the season. If you don't get what's at the top of your Christmas list, if you don't get the invitation to the holiday party, and if you don't get the deal on Black Friday, know that, in the words of the poet, "the love of God in gifts abound." That love is made complete in the "babe of Bethlehem"—Jesus Christ Our Lord! ❖

We Salute the Elders of Nineteenth Street (Members who are 90 or more years young)

"God has given them work until their life shall end
and life until their work is done."

Deaconess Eleanor Banks

Sister Sehon Grigsby

Sister Wille K. Hill

Deaconess Philicia R. Jones

Deaconess Jean Jordan

Deacon Harrison Lightfoot

Deaconess Gloria J. Morris

Deacon Oddie Stevens

Sister Mozelle Watkins

"Our hearts are grateful for your work and for the many ways you have made
our world a better place."

By Deaconess Philicia Jones,
Emeritus Member, Missionary Society and Christian Mite Society

Two Good and Faithful Servants

By Donza M. Poole, Trustee

This month marks the last full month of service for Trustees William Quander and James Rodgers. They will end six years of dedicated service to the Board of Trustees in January.

Our church is blessed to have trustees who bring a wide diversity of experience and training to the Board, as exemplified by the contributions of Trustees Quander and Rodgers. Trustee Quander, who works for the federal government by day, is also a very capable handyman. Need a room painted, flooring laid, or door installed, just call on Trustee Quander. He'll get the job done. Although trustees are assigned to teams for the offering count, it would be difficult to tell what team Trustee Quander is on because he helps with the count, whenever needed. Trustee Quander also assists the Board in evaluating contractors for the various improvement projects the Board oversees. His contributions to the Board, including his willingness to roll up his sleeves when needed, will be missed.

“The Board of Trustees will miss the commitment and dedication exemplified in these two individuals,” said Trustee Board Chairman Franklin Smith. “Whenever I needed a memorial plaque installed in the alcove or

any task he felt comfortable performing, I knew I could always call upon Trustee Quander to get the job done,” Smith said. “We would mention something in our board meetings that needed to be done, and two or three days later, Trustee Quander would be at church getting it done. Projects around the church will forever have his mark of commitment and dedication attached to them,” said Smith, who had this message for Trustee Quander, “thanks for all you have done and will continue to do for our church.”

The end of Trustee Rodgers' term will also leave a void on the Board. Trustee Rodgers has a depth of experience few on the Board possess, having served as a trustee prior to his current six years of service. As a retired architect, Trustee Rodgers also brings valuable insight to discussions and decisions concerning building maintenance and improvement projects. With his background and experience, it should come as no surprise that Trustee Rodgers currently serves as the Board's Vice Chair. He also served as Board Secretary for several years and chairs the Transportation Ministry. It will be hard to fill the shoes of this proud



(Left to right) Trustees William Quander and James Rodgers

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graduate of Howard University and member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity.

“As Vice Chair, Trustee Rodgers has been a mainstay in helping to keep this Rock of Zion on a steady path during this past year,” said Chairman Smith. “Occasionally, I have had to be out of the city, and Trustee Rodgers was always willing to step up to the plate and pinch hit for me. His time and service as the Board Secretary prepared him well for his role as Vice Chair. In addition to being one of our team leaders for the money count on Sundays, he is also one of the three computer operators for the count teams. As one of the trustees with signature authority for signing checks, I can always depend on him reporting to church on Tuesdays to sign as the second required signature,” said Smith, who had this message for Trustee Rodgers, “Jim, thanks for your dedicated service.”

“The departure of these two experienced trustees will leave a tremendous void in fulfilling some of the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees,” Chairman Smith said. “Knowing them as I do, I am positive that they will be amenable and up to the task whenever called upon. Again, thanks for your service.” ❖

End-of-Year Giving Tips

By Donza Poole

It's the time of year for gift-giving, including to the church. Your faithful giving and generosity make so much possible all year round—Sunday worship, Youth Church, Homecoming, Lenten services, the Food Pantry, His Homeless Ministry, and the 180th Anniversary yearlong celebration. And this year, that also incorporated church improvements, including replacing the kitchen ovens, repairing and refinishing the fellowship hall floors and upgrading the sound system, and installing a new outdoor electronic marquee for the church. These are just some of the ways your tithes and offerings help our church fulfill its mission and vision.

The Trustee Board appreciates the generous gifts made throughout the church and hopes your giving this month will include a special year-end gift for more kingdom building at our historic church. With your support, the church will make a major capital investment in 2020 to improve the church's aging HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) system.

To ensure your end-of-year gift is properly credited, please keep the following giving tips in mind:

- Use an offering envelope to make your gift—your contributions record is based, in large part, on the information you provide on the offering envelope.
- Remember to write your envelope number on the offering envelope if not using a personalized offering envelope.
- When designating an offering gift for a specific purpose or ministry, such as the HVAC improvement, remember to write the purpose or name of the ministry on the “Other” line of the offering envelope.
- When writing a check, don't forget to sign it.

And for added convenience, remember, you can give online at *any time*—even just before midnight on December 31—using the church's Givelify app or by visiting the church website at www.everyblessing.org and clicking on the “Donate” button or Givelify link at the bottom of the homepage.

As we enter this year's giving season—be blessed and be a blessing! Merry Christmas, from your Board of Trustees. ❖

Living the Christmas Season at Nineteenth Street!

Join us all month as we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ through worshipful and joyful activities for church members and visitors of all ages.

Sunday, December 1: Communion Sunday and lighting of the first Advent Candle. New Advent Sermon Series starts. Celebrate the Pastor's Birthday. Fruit baskets donated by the Church School delivered to sick and shut-in members.

Sunday, December 8: Lighting of the Chrismon Tree and Devotions, led by the Pastor's family, in the church lobby, 8:30 AM. Church School Family Holiday Breakfast in the fellowship hall at 8:45 AM.

Bring a toy to donate to support the Missionary Society Toys for Tots drive. The Marines will pick up the toys after the worship service.

Shop at the 6th Annual Fair Trade Christmas Bazaar & Bake Sale, 12-3 PM, featuring gifts that give back, a photo booth and photos taken with Santa Claus, candles made and sold by the Youth Ministry, and a Bazaar sponsored by the Building Fund Committee.

Tuesday, December 9: Dave Koz at Strathmore, Progressive Adults Outing (tickets required).

Sunday, December 15: "A Soulful Messiah Worship Celebration," featuring choir selections from Handel's Messiah, dancing by the Liturgical Praise Dancers, and a Nativity Story drama presentation, 10 AM.

Wednesday, December 18: Donate to the Helping Hand Club's gift baskets to be delivered to sick and shut-in members. See Sheila Beale or Trustee Carolyn Wilson.

Sunday, December 22: Worship Service at 10 AM. The Church School with combined Adult Class and combined Youth Class at 8:45 AM.

Sunday, December 29: Culminating 180th Anniversary Worship Service with Liturgical Praise Dancers performing to African drumbeats; youth presentation on the principles of Kwanzaa, and Pastor Roberts' sermon on Kwanzaa and our 180th anniversary. After the service, an historical quilt, sewn by church member Rachelle Ferguson Washington, will be unveiled.

Tuesday, December 31: Watch Night Service at Zion Baptist Church, 10 PM.



Christmas Bazaar to Feature ‘Gifts that Give Back’ and Santa!

By Donza M. Poole, Trustee

The Building Fund Committee (BFC) is putting the finishing touches on this year’s Fair Trade Christmas Bazaar and Bake Sale. It is the sixth year of this annual “giving experience.” The bazaar will take place on Sunday, December 8, from 12 PM to 3 PM, in the fellowship hall. The BFC invites the church family and friends to make the bazaar part of your Christmas season experience.

The bazaar’s focus on giving is rooted in the Fair Trade foods, beverages, and crafts that are featured. Fair Trade is a business model where small-scale farmers, many in developing nations, are paid a fair price for their goods and employ sustainable farming practices that help protect the environment. Your purchase of these products helps give back to small-scale farmers and artisans around the globe, many from the African diaspora, enabling them to provide a better life for themselves and their communities. The BFC sells Fair Trade products by Equal Exchange, a Fair Trade coffee pioneer. When it comes to chocolates, Equal Exchange chocolates are produced without



the use of child labor, a problem that has plagued the cacao industry. This year, Equal Exchange added pecans grown by an African American farm collective in Georgia. The pecans have been a popular item at Nineteenth Street.

The bazaar will also include Haitian metal art from the Fair Trade company, Singing Rooster. The pieces, some of gallery quality, are made by Haitian artists out of recycled oil drums. The unique designs are inspired by nature, religion, and everyday life. The purchase of Haitian metal art helps provide income to

people in a country where some 70 percent of all adults lack full-time employment.

Fair Trade dates back over 70 years and has its roots in the faith community. Today, Fair Trade products can be found at most major grocery stores and many coffee shops, including Starbucks. The Fair Trade Christmas Bazaar is an expanded version of the BFC’s periodic Fair Trade Coffee, Tea & More table sales. In addition to the BFC’s Fair Trade items, the bazaar will feature local vendors selling unique gifts, jewelry, clothing, art, Christmas decorations, and

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Afrocentric items. The bazaar offers people the opportunity to shop local and support local artists and entrepreneurs in the process, including several church members.

For the second year in a row, the Youth Ministry will join the bazaar as a vendor, and this year, will be selling soy-based candles hand made by church youth. It's a project of the 180th Church Anniversary Committee. The bazaar will also feature Christmas ornaments and cards from the 180th Anniversary Memorabilia Shop.

Joining the bazaar for the second year will be Santa Claus. His appearance last year, as part of the bazaar's photo booth, delighted youth and adults alike.

There will be something for everyone at the bazaar, including assorted home-baked goods from the Nineteenth Street bakers, a snack bar, a tasting station featuring Fair Trade coffee, vintage hats, and dishware, plus a Fair Trade shopping spree giveaway. Proceeds from this giving experience will benefit the church Building Fund for capital improvements and other great causes. ❖

Men's Ministry Announces Rites of Passage Program

By Trustee Reginald Cole

The Men's Ministry of Nineteenth Street Baptist Church is beginning a new initiative called The Branch of Zion. The initiative is a rite of passage and scholarship program designed to help guide and mentor boys, aged 16 to 18 years old, into manhood. In the context of this program, the Men's Ministry will share the wisdom of the men of Nineteenth Street with our boys as they grow into men.

We will launch The Branch of Zion rites of passage program by scheduling a meeting with prospective boys, their families, and the Men's Ministry in January 2020. Upon welcoming the boys into the program, we will provide them with an outline detailing the expectations. The prospective boys will be introduced to the church in February 2020, during Black history month.

The Men's Ministry has been preparing for this program for several months, and we are excited about its development and progression. Stay tuned for additional announcements on the application process in the coming weeks. ❖



Check out and follow our social media accounts:

-  **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/Everyblessing.org
-  **Instagram:** www.instagram.com/explore/tags/nsbcdc
-  **Twitter:** twitter.com/_nsbcdc

Watch broadcasts of our weekly Worship Services on YouTube



Christian Mite Sunday - A Day of Praise and Honor



Chaplain Barry C. Black

The Christian Mite Society celebrated its 152nd anniversary on November 10, 2019, with a special worship service and reception that paid tribute to veterans and their service to our country. Chaplain of the US Senate, Chaplain Barry C. Black, was the guest preacher and gave a powerful sermon in keeping with the day's theme, "Serving Our God, Serving our Country." A flag service by the Dunbar Senior High School Honor Guard opened the worship service, highlighted by Siera Toney's angelic rendition of the "Star Spangled Banner." A slide show that paid tribute to church members who served in the military was projected during the celebratory reception following the worship service. ❖



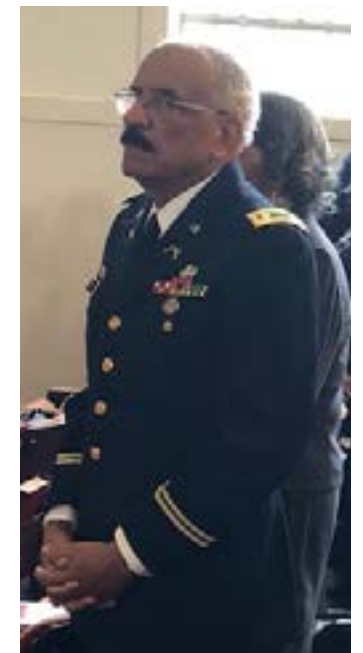
Christian Mite Society President Hilda Douglas with Chaplain Black



Can you name these church veterans? (Answers on page 18)



Dunbar Senior High School Honor Guard



Veteran Richard Jones



Anniversary Talk Highlights History of NMAAHC and Nineteenth Street

On November 17, Judge Robert Wilkins presented the long history of the founding of the National Museum of African American History and Culture to a rapt audience of about 100 church members and guests. The presentation highlighted the roles that Nineteenth Street Baptist Church played in the history of the museum, starting on May 24, 1916 when the church hosted a meeting for the National Memorial Association. One hundred years later, member Ruth Bonner and several generations of the Bonner family helped President Obama ring the opening bell for the museum. The presentation was sponsored by the 180th Anniversary Committee. Program attendees demonstrated their appreciation for Judge Wilkins' presentation by buying out all of copies of his book, *Long Road to Hard Truth*. ❖



Pastor Roberts, Judge Robert Wilkins, and Karen Williamson, presentation coordinator



Attendees during Q&A Session



“Upon This Rock...”

180th Anniversary Historical Review in 15-Year Intervals (1959 – 1974)

- Trustee Wyatt A. James served as chairman of the Trustee Board from the spring of 1959 to December 1976. In recognition of his outstanding leadership, the church named the fellowship hall in his honor.
- In celebration of Nineteenth Street’s 120th anniversary in October 1959, the church sponsored Soprano Adele Addison in concert at Constitution Hall. Regular tickets for this auspicious event ranged from \$1.50 to \$3.50; box seats were \$4.00.
- Nineteenth Street member Dr. Nannie Helen Burroughs died on May 20, 1961. She founded a school for girls in northeast Washington, DC and served as its president for 52 years.
- The Deacons took a formal vote in the spring of 1961 to ensure uniformity in Deacons’ attire. They agreed to wear a dark suit, white shirt, and black or brown shoes on communion Sundays.
- On August 27, 1963, Nineteenth Street hosted a special prayer service for freedom and jobs, which were critical issues for the community and country.
- The Hospitality Club was organized in 1963.
- The Cathedral Choir, comprised of Nineteenth Street’s young adults, was organized in 1965 and performed various concert engagements throughout the Washington metropolitan area.
- Our annual Lenten services began in 1968 and were attended by many government employees who worked in downtown Washington, DC.
- With the purpose of beautifying the pulpit with flowers, especially at Easter and Christmas, the Flower Committee was formed in 1970. They later expanded their adornments throughout the church.
- Nineteenth Street’s first Maundy Thursday dinner was held on March 30, 1972.
- The first annual joint retreat of the Deaconesses and Deacons was held in 1973.
- A new organ was installed in the sanctuary in the fall of 1974, before the official move into the new church site on 16th Street.
- Nineteenth Street established the Evangelism Committee in 1974. One of their major activities continues to be an annual prayer breakfast each fall.
- In the first election after the establishment of home rule, Rev. Jerry Moore ran and won an at-large seat on the Council of the District of Columbia in 1974; he served in that position until 1984.
- Nineteenth Street purchased the B’nai Israel Synagogue in the fall of 1974 for \$1,050,000, making it the new home for Nineteenth Street Baptist Church. ❖

Honoring Sister Pearl J. Davis

By Wilma F. Bonner

Although you may not see her often, Sister Pearl J. Davis has been a committed member of Nineteenth Street Baptist Church for eighty years. She was one of the last children to be baptized during the centennial year of 1939. It was the evening of Thursday, December 28, when Rev. Walter Brooks dutifully immersed her; on the following Sunday, she received the right hand of fellowship from the church body. During those years, baptisms were held during prayer meetings. When Rev. Jerry Moore, Jr. became pastor, he eliminated the “wait period” by performing baptisms on Sundays when the entire congregation was present, and both rituals could take place. Although her aunt Harriet Ray, who was a member from 1919 until her death in 1989, likely experienced the same “delay,” her daughter, Cheryl Davis, and granddaughter, Markisha Garner, benefitted from Rev. Moore’s new system decades later.

One of the main reasons you may not see Sister Davis frequently is because she lives quite a distance from the church in Cheltenham, Maryland. But, even as a child, proximity was a challenge. Since she lived closer to Third Baptist Church, one of the six churches rooted in Nineteenth Street Baptist, she attended there more often. But her grandmother and mother,

who were first- and second-generation members, made sure she was at the “mother church” at 19th & I Streets NW on the first Sunday of each month.



While Sister Davis can’t get to church physically, she graciously acknowledges that Rev. James Crosson, recently retired Assistant Pastor, extends the church to her. She said he keeps her updated on what’s happening; she’s able to continue her lifelong relationship with the church even if she’s not present. He visits and brings her communion on a regular basis; sometimes, he even brings other ministerial staff and church officers. For being her “link,” she calls Rev. Crosson, a sweetheart.

Reflecting on some of her early days in the church, Sister Davis laughed. She remembered one Sunday morning when she was a child sitting in one of the pews in front of the sanctuary. This pew was equipped with a hearing device, about which she knew nothing. Someone had apparently left it on, and when she picked it up, she heard Rev. Brooks’ bellowing voice assuring the congregation that Christ had come so that we may have a more abundant life. The volume startled her; she said she can still hear his loud voice echoing “abundant life, abundant life.” One of her favorite longstanding scriptures,

continued on next page

which she advises all to heed, is Proverbs 3:6, “In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” For sure, He continues to direct hers.

We honor Sister Davis as one of the four esteemed elders who had eighty or more years of membership on our official 180th anniversary date of August 29, 2019. The three other elders were Deaconess Jean Jordan (baptized in 1939) and the recently-deceased Deacon Emeritus Walter Jackson (baptized in 1933) and Sister Thelma D. Fagin Hyman (baptized in 1928). We pray for God’s continuous and *abundant* blessings for them. ❖

Nineteenth Street Members for 50+ Years

We thank God for the “individual rocks” and resulting boulder upon which we continue to build our church. We extend heartfelt appreciation to the Archives Committee, especially June Jackson, for maintaining our church records and continuing to document our history. Members listed below have belonged to the church for 50 or more years*.

Shirley G. Ali	Emily Ghassaway	Rosemary Mills Massey	Karen R. Sidney-Drumgold
Eleanor T. Banks	Sehon Grigsby	Josie M. Meeks	Elvera Edmunds Snow
Donald Beasley, Sr.	Lawrence Bruce Hayes	Sharon O. Miller	Gloria T. Spann
Sidney H. Blakely	Shirley A. G. Hayes	Betty J. Montague	Joe W. Sudduth
Ernestine Blakemore	Jean D. Jackson	Jerry A. Moore III	Jacqueline Tatum
Ernest Blakemore, Jr.	Leola Jackson	Juran D. Moore, Sr.	Ronald J. Taylor
Margarette C. Blakemore	Eleanor C. Jefferson	Dorothy J. Morgan	Inez C. Walker
Geraldine M. Bowie	Denise P. Johnson	Pamela D. Morgan	Rachelle F. Washington
Elmer T. Brooks	Dennis Leon Johnson	Gloria J. Morris	Mozelle E. Watkins
S. Eugene Byrd	Laverne Johnson	Diane Wendy Morris	Bernard H. White, Jr.
Sandra Caviness	Philicia R. Jones	Cathy S. Nunn	E. Louise M. White
Eunice W. Cothran	Eugene J. Jordan III	Sandra W. Patterson	Ronald P. Williams
Pearl J. Paige Davis	Jean R. Jordan	Donald B. Rankin	Carolyn B. Wilson
Gloria B. Dempsey	Sheila Y. Jordan	Nathaniel Robb	Natalie Q. Winters
Ora M. S. Drew	Laurice P. Juggins	Ella M. B. Roberson	Elvinese S. Wyche
Lewis M. Edmunds	Nannie S. Leake	Ann H. Saunders	
Thelma D. Fagin Hyman	Ellen Roberta Mills Lewis	Dorothy D. Sayles	
Alverta Ghassaway	Erma Long	Myra Banks Scott	

*as of 11/19/19

Managing Holiday Grief

By Rev. Reginald Townsend, Associate Minister



The Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays can be emotionally intense. Each holiday after the death of a loved one will bring changes, and you will question whether it will be any easier *this* year? Be encouraged that it does get easier as life moves on. While feelings of loneliness may seem overpowering at times during the holidays, don't forget that you are never alone.

When you consider that God is an ever-present help in times of trouble, that's a perfect time to just fall on your knees, cry out to the Lord, and experience that He is Immanuel, "God with us." God's presence in our lives means that there is hope in every situation. Just because you don't feel God's presence does not mean He's not there. Psalm 23:4 reminds us that even when we walk through the darkest valley, we should fear no evil, for the Lord is with us.

The holidays can heighten feelings of loneliness. In the event you find yourself in this situation, these are steps you can follow to deal with the pain of being alone:

- Recognize that loneliness is what you are feeling, which is normal.
- Accept the reality of your situation.
- Seek structured activities to help ease the lonely times.
- If you find you are stuck, don't be afraid to ask for help.
- If we didn't have the hope and the promise of the gift that God gave us through Jesus, we could not deal with the losses that we've experienced because of death. Your mind and body may grow weak, but God is your strength; He is all you will ever need.

Jesus knows how you feel, even when others may not understand. In the words of Isaiah, "...he hath no form, nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him, he was despised, and we esteemed him not." (Isaiah 53:2-3) Jesus knows the worst feelings of all our infirmities—even when we can't find the words to pray. He will not leave us alone, for the Holy Spirit helps us with our infirmities. (Romans 8:26)

At Christmas, we celebrate the gifts of forgiveness and eternal life that Jesus brought us. His birth marks a new chapter in God's plan to save us from our sin and ultimately end our suffering. So, if you're discouraged during the holidays, remind yourself that the baby Jesus came not only to save you from your sin but to heal your heart and the pain of this world. One day, because of Him, there will be no more suffering. And even right now, in the middle of your hurt and suffering, Jesus wants to be a part of your life, to comfort you, and to help you heal.

Have you considered joining GriefShare? GriefShare is a network of more than 15,000 churches worldwide equipped to offer grief-support groups. The program is nondenominational and features biblical concepts for healing from your grief. For information, speak with a member of the GriefShare Support Ministry team, or contact the church office (202-829-2773; office@nsbcd.org) for GriefShare meeting dates, times, and locations. ❖

Grateful Note from a Love Pal

By Virginia C. Lee

In this season of thanksgiving and reflection, we share this note from one of our Love Pals, who has moved on. This is from Love Pal Edmund Hundley, Class of 2018. It speaks to the wonderful gift of gratitude.

"I want to express how grateful I am for having had the Love Pal experience. Although my responses were few and far between, you consistently took the time to write me meaningful and encouraging letters. Those messages meant a lot to me. It was comforting to know that you were rooting for me and always wishing me well. Your constant love and support were things I never took for granted. I hope we continue to stay in touch in some form. Thank you once again, and I wish you nothing but the best."



Sincerely,
Edmund

Nineteenth Street Baptist Church Progressive Adults 2020 Theatre Shedule



"SEVEN GUITARS"

The New Arena Stage
(Fichandler Theater)

Saturday, April 18, 2020, 2:00 pm

COST: \$75.00 (Bonus Package)

Written by August Wilson
Directed by Tazewell Thompson
The 1940s Pittsburgh is the backdrop for this production. Seven lives are interconnected when old friend and blues singer Floyd Barton vows to turn his life around after a surprise windfall leaves him hopeful for a second chance. Infused with deep and soaring blues rhythms, this "rich and exceptionally vivid" (Variety) play pits the desire for a better future against the harsh realities ultimately leading to heartbreaking and inescapable circumstances.

Lunch or dinner may be pre-ordered at Arena for \$20 per individual. To order, call 202-488-4380 and reference Nineteenth Street. Transportation is available from the church to all shows. Please sign up.

These events benefit our Love Pal Program.

Call Ann Saunders, 202-52903188 or Cynthia Thompson, 202-722-4694



"TONI STONE"

The New Arena Stage
(Kreeger Theater)

Saturday, May 30, 2020, 2:00 pm

COST: \$75.00 (Bonus Package)

Considered a pioneer, Toni Stone is the first woman to play baseball in the Negro Leagues, also making her the first woman to play professionally in a men's league in the 1950s. Based on Martha Ackmann's book *Curveball, The Remarkable Story of Toni Stone*, the latest work from award-winning playwright Lydia R. Diamond (Smart People, The Bluest Eye) tells the dynamic and uplifting story of Stone's journey of perseverance and resilience just to do what she loved the most — play baseball.



Angela Griffin (fifth from right) with her winning tennis team

Congratulations to...

Angela Griffin and her USTA 55 & Over 8.0 women’s tennis team, who represented DC and Mid-Atlantic at the USTA National Championships in Surprise, Arizona in November. Of the 1,100 teams participating from across the nation, including teams from the Caribbean and Hawaii, Angela’s team “The Divas “ placed 3rd. They advanced to the Nationals by winning the Mid-Atlantic Sectionals in September. Preceding Nationals, she and her team placed 2nd in the USTA 40 & Over and 1st in the 55 & Over matches, which consisted of teams from DC, Maryland and Virginia. ❖

Communications Ministry seeks volunteers

with strong writing, editing or graphics expertise to help with several projects.

Contact Edith Bullard-Britt or Deborah Heard if you are interested.

Epistle Cover Contest

After two years, it is time to find a new picture for the cover of *The Epistle*. We invite church members of any age or ability to submit a photo or image that will make a great cover for the newsletter. The current photo, which has been used for the past two years, was submitted by amateur photographer Gloria Tisdale.

If you think you have a great picture for the cover, please email your original photo or image to Epistle@everyblessing.org by January 6, 2020. The new cover will be introduced on the February issue. (There will be no January 2020 issue.) Contact Karen Williamson at williamsonke@gmail.com if you have any questions. ❖





Baby Pierce Dedicated

Chloe Marie Pierce was dedicated by Pastor Roberts on October 27, 2019, surrounded by her loving family:

Parents Cheryl Pierce and Leon Pierce Jr.

Big Brother Jeremy Pierce

Paternal Grandparents Deacon Leon Pierce Sr. and Maxine Pierce

Maternal Grandparents Ray and Jenny Koenig

Chloe Marie was born on May 1, 2019 and weighed 7 lbs. 15 oz.



New Member

By Baptism

Brother Ayden R. Williams, 10 years old



Answers to Veterans Question (page 10):

Top Row: Deacon Donald Rankin and Deacon Oddie Stevens

Bottom Row: Deacon Stan Britt and Brother Bernard White

Calendar

DECEMBER

Sunday, December 8 – Church School Lighting of the Chrismon Tree, Devotions and Family Holiday Breakfast, fellowship hall, 8:30 AM

Sunday, December 8 – Toys for Tots Collection, sponsored by Missionary Society, 8:30 AM– Noon

Sunday, December 8 – Annual Holiday Bazaar, sponsored by Building Fund Committee, fellowship hall, Noon to 3 PM

Monday, December 9 – Progressive Adults Outing, *Dave Koz & Friends Christmas Special*, Strathmore Music Center, North Bethesda, Maryland, 8 PM

Sunday, December 15 – “A Soulful Messiah Worship Celebration,” 10 AM

Tuesday, December 24 – Christmas Eve, church office closed

Wednesday, December 25 – Christmas Day, church office closed

Sunday, December 29 –Worship Service of Thanksgiving Celebrating Kwanzaa, 180th Anniversary Event, 10 AM

Tuesday, December 31 – Watch Night Service at Zion Baptist Church, 4850 Blagden Avenue NW, Washington, DC, 10 PM

JANUARY 2020

Wednesday, January 1 – New Year’s Day, church office closed

Sunday, January 12 – 51st Annual Ushers Day Worship Service, 10 AM

Friday, January 17– Church Business Meeting, 7 PM

Monday, January 20 – Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday, church office closed

FEBRUARY

Friday, February 7 – Sunday, February 9 - Youth Ministry at THE ROCK Retreat, Ocean City, Maryland

Sunday, February 9 – Helping Hand Club Sunday Worship Service, 10 AM

Friday, February 14 – Valentine’ s Day Jazz Concert, sponsored by The Ushers Ministry, 7 PM

Monday, February 17 – President’s Day Holiday, church office closed

Sunday, February 23 – Jubilee Sunday Worship Service and Vendors Market

Tuesday, February 25 – Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, sponsored by The Progressive Adults, 5–7 PM

Wednesday, February 26 – Ash Wednesday Lenten Service, 12 Noon, with lunch served at 1 PM