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SEPTEMBER 2020, VOL 44 NO.9

First Missionary Baptist Church Newsletter

The Communicator



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What's Happening at the JRS-CDCA

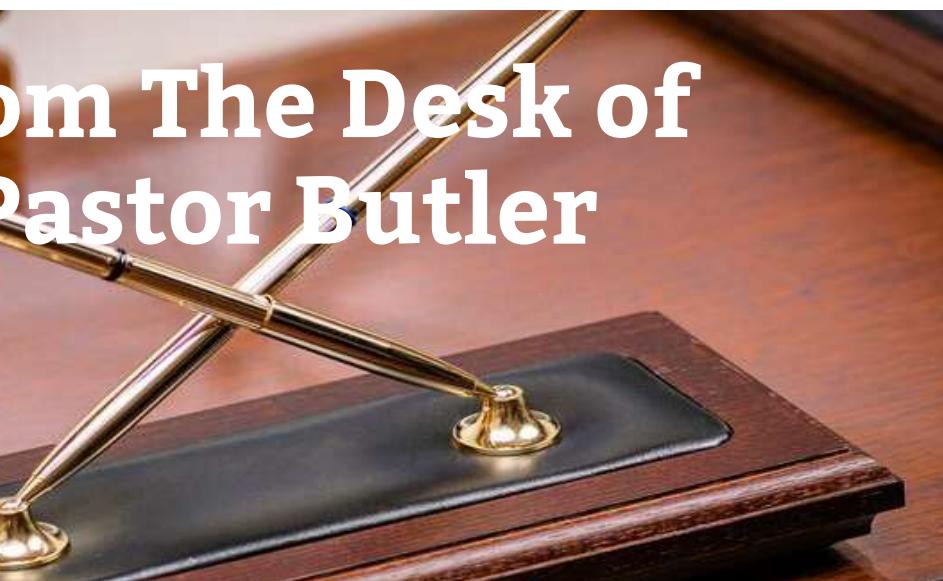
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From The Desk of Pastor Butler



Greetings, Beloved. At our annual business meeting in January, I shared with you two pastoral priorities for the congregation in 2020. The first priority was a review of our discipleship and assimilation process for new members and the second one was the strengthening of our in-reach care ministries for emotional and spiritual support of member-families. In this note, I wish to update you on progress made in these areas.

As we began the year, we transitioned from Shelby to a new membership management software, ACS Realm, to keep pace with the evolving needs of robust discipleship engagement. The new system affords us opportunities to set disciple-members on pathway tracks toward ministry participation as well as it makes special pastoral notes that prompt various spiritual caregivers, whether pastoral staffers, deacons, or lay ministers of congregational care, to respond and follow-up with you about needs that may arise along the journey. Another feature of ACS Realm is its user-friendly app for creating, updating, and maintaining disciple-member profiles with accurate family and contact information. In the app, members can also communicate with other congregants and ministries, register for ministry events and



activities, view announcements and important updates, as well as make and review financial contributions. To date, there are still many members whose profiles are inactive because they have not been updated. If you happen to be one of those persons who has yet to update your information (you will know that if you haven't downloaded the app to your smartphone or visited ACS Realm's website—included in the brochure insert), kindly contact the church office and we will gladly guide you through the process.

In addition to the new membership management software, we also conducted a successful search process for a staff minister who would be responsible creating, managing, and executing the aspects of our church life that make disciples and nurture Christian maturity. In July's edition of The Communicator, we featured the profile of The Reverend Ray Walker, Jr. and welcomed him to the staff in August and his family to the City of Huntsville and the faith-family of FMBC. As the Staff Minister for Discipleship and Assimilation, Reverend Walker will give time and systematic attention to reproducing the DNA of the congregation (love of God and love of people) into the overall discipleship system and new disciple-member experience, overseeing ministries of evangelism, assimilation, and educational programs. This includes the weekly programs of our witnessing teams; the

DISCIPLE-MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



Ted & Joyce Arterberry
Celebrated 11 years of marriage on August 9th.



Deacon Issac and Judy Edmond, Jr.
Celebrated 51 years of marriage on August 23rd.



Roosevelt & Loretta Conley
Will celebrate 37 years of marriage on September 3rd.



Joe and Beverly Lampley
Will celebrate 37 years of marriage on September 3rd.



Tracy and Rev. Kim Carrington
Will celebrate 15 years of marriage on September 3rd.



Walter and Patricia Stewart
Will celebrate 39th years of marriage on September 5th.



Alvin & Dollye Hopkins
Will celebrate 51 years of marriage on September 6th.



Clyde & Ruthie Shields
Will celebrate 57 years of marriage on September 7th.



Freeman & Janie Holifield
Will celebrate 55 years of marriage on September 11th.



Wardell and Sandra Pearson
Will celebrate 52 years of marriage on September 9th.



Congratulations Jarren Mitchell

- Recipient of the Nathaniel Griffin, Calvin Parker and John R. Richie Scholarships
- Attending Alabama A&M



Congratulations Kaitlyn Elise Walker

- Recipient of the Nathaniel Griffin, Calvin Parker and John R. Richie Scholarships
- Attending Alabama A&M

Deaconess Recognition Sunday

Sunday, September 13, 2020

The Deaconess Ministry's purpose is to join the congregation in becoming one of the most loving churches in all the world by using Jesus' examples of servanthood. Appointed by the Pastor, the Deaconess assist the Pastor and the Deacons in the preparation of the Holy Communion, baptism and in caring for the membership during sickness and bereavement. Leadership goals of the Deaconess Ministry are to look for opportunities to become a helper of many, a praying servant of God by praying for the Pastor, Deacons, and congregation constantly, an example to younger women in all areas of life, an encourager of all women to grow in their spiritual journey in servanthood, studying God's word and fellowship.



Deceased

Discipleship in a Digital Age

Reverend Ray L. Walker, Jr.
Off Minister for Discipleship and Assimilation



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ther for worship, engage in the work of ministry and facilitate the development of disciple members, has changed significantly. Before the pandemic, many church leaders relied heavily on manual processes and systems to identify new members and to move people toward deeper levels of engagement and commitment to the body of Christ.

The challenges before us are many, but we can continue the witness and work of the church through Christ-centered creativity and an unwavering commitment to fulfill the mission and mandate that Christ left for the church. We now find ourselves in a digital age in the life of the church along with the opportunity to use technology in ways that shall surely stretch and strengthen us in the praxis of ministry. Although our methodology has been modified, we are still in the business of making disciples.

response, the church has a unique opportunity to reshape and redefine how we build daily community and discipleship through digital platforms and networks informed by an understanding of missional ecclesiology. This new era in the life of the church lends itself to the

they find in us the most loving church in the world a place that fosters a loving, welcoming and nurturing community of believers within the First Missionary Baptist Church family, helping them to grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ and one another.

opportunity for a collaborative extension of the church to be developed. This new mode becomes critical for the church as a method for sharing the story of the Bible with Christians and equipping them to share the story of their faith with the world.

The good news about the Digital Age we find ourselves in is that new technology makes it easier to automate and augment the Sunday school, small group sessions, team building workshops as well as the discipleship & assimilation process by setting up communication platforms via Facebook, Zoom, WebEx, conference calls and other digital steps that help people identify with the local church and find their place in it.

As a result, moving people from first-time guests to regular attenders and ultimately fully functioning disciple members can be facilitated through these various digital platforms.

The conversation about how we utilize technology to effectively minister in this Digital Age is an ongoing one. For now, it has become the digital doorway through which we enter to worship and welcome the gifts that God sends to us. May

they find in us the most loving church in the world a place that fosters a loving, welcoming and nurturing community of believers within the First Missionary Baptist Church family, helping them to grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ and one another.





A Message from Dr. Alexander

Interim Head of School

The JRS CDCA scholars returned to school on Thursday, August 6, 2020. Our school days and classrooms look different because of social distancing; however, some things remain the same. In the past scholars would gather as a school group for morning prayer and meditation. We still "gather" just over the intercom. Our morning meetings are known as Harambee led by scholars and teachers.

If you could walk the halls of our school, you would see and hear scholars praying and memorizing scripture. You would hear songs and laughter. You would see their eyes light up when they get an answer correct. You can feel the excitement

because they are back with friends and the joy found in making new ones. PE, lunch and naptime continue to be the favorite times of the day for our CDC little scholars. Ms. Fisher, Ms. Mullins, Ms. McCrary and Ms. Gordon make learning fun and engaging. Our Academy scholars are getting back into the routine of school. Math, reading, STEM, Social Studies and Coding have been in our curriculum in the past. This year we added Power Hour. Teachers are choosing to share their hobbies with our scholars.

Sewing, gardening and life skills are just a few of the Power Hour choices.

For the past few weeks, we have received books for our BLM Book Drive.

Some titles include *Chocolate Me!, Dream Big, Little One, I am Perfectly Designed, I Am Enough and I Can Be Anything!: Don't Tell Me I Can't*. Our scholars will see themselves in the stories they read. THANK YOU!!!!

Finally, we would like to welcome to our JRS CDCA family Mr. Edison Banks, Jr. and Mrs. Wendetta Langston. Mr. Banks joins the Academy staff as a 2nd grade teacher and Mrs. Langston serves as the office manager.



"How Can The Gospel Get Out When You're In?"

Written by Sis. Sarah Drake & Deacon Charles Scruggs

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be [a] witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:8 NKJV

Since March 2020, our homes, church buildings, schools, sports arenas, recreational activities & employment sites have been affected by Covid-19. This pandemic has created havoc in every city, state, and nation throughout the world. Because of severe restrictions, people have been encouraged to STAY HOME, WEAR MASKS, & SOCIAL DISTANCE WHEN TRAVELING. Sociologists and psychiatrists are warning people that mental, social, and physical problems will consume people if not treated.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is still available for sharing even in perilous times. As we remember in Acts 1:8, ALL believers in Christ have been given power and commissioned to be witnesses in Jerusalem (home), Judea (Alabama), Samaria (all other states), and to the ends of the earth. Jesus has chosen his church to lead people to him even in the midst of the pandemic. The Gospel must be proclaimed by any means necessary. Jesus came to seek and save the lost and does not want anyone to perish. Telling others about Jesus Christ is a privilege and responsibility for all believers in Christ. It is urgent that we continue to share the Gospel! This is a life or death situation. In 2nd Corinthians 5:18-19, Paul reminds every Christian that we have a newness of life. Old things have passed away, leaving us with a ministry of reconciliation. We are thankful that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.

Even though Covid-19 has limited our physical contact with people, the Gospel is sharper than a double edged sword. When the Gospel is spoken, it will accomplish its purpose and will not return void. As in the book of Acts, when the church was under severe persecution, and Christ scattered the Christians, the church multiplied tremendously as believers witnessed wherever they were. We too, are separated and scattered but Jesus compels us to "Go [a]therefore and make disciples of all the nations" as stated in Matthew 28:19-20.

Finally, Christ died for our sins according to I Corinthians 15: 3-4. Therefore, we must share the Gospel by demonstrating the following:

1. Create a list of people unsaved, unchurched, delinquent and new to the neighborhood. Consistently follow up with your list by making

phone calls, sending text messages or reaching out via social media platforms. (Don't be afraid to share your story! #MyTestimony)

2. Connect with people experiencing depression, illnesses, bereavement, etc. by calling, sending cards, or text messages.

3. Offer to shop for and assist people with health challenges and limitations.

4. Be Holy Spirit vigilant as you look for opportunities to witness. Always pray and allow the Holy Spirit to direct and control your witnessing with a friendly countenance.

Finally, witnessing is so powerful that it reaches people even through their masks. Let's all abide by the CDC health guidelines but remember, we must obey God rather than man. The Gospel can go out while we are in.

