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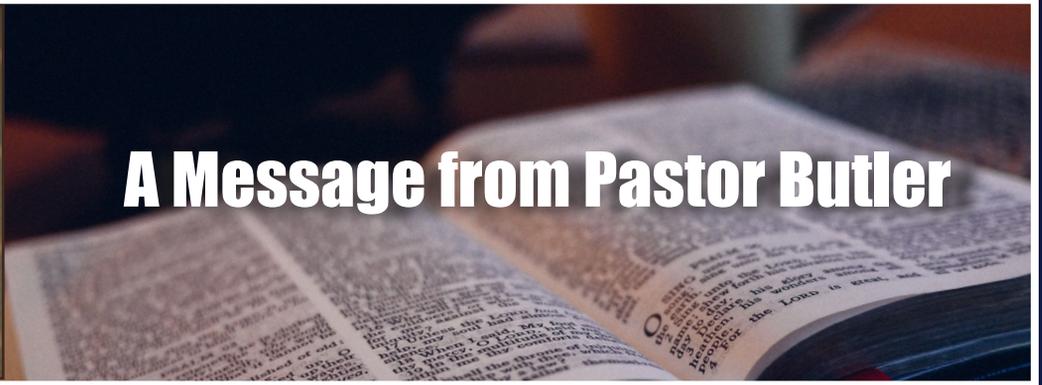
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A Message from Pastor Butler



Greetings, Beloved. I am excited to share with you a new evangelism initiative of our congregation called Operation Andrew. Inspired by the witness of the disciple Andrew in the first chapter of John's gospel – who followed Jesus upon the testimony of the John the Baptist, and subsequently went to get and tell his brother Peter that they had found the Christ – this approach to the spread of the gospel begins closer to home, in our immediate sphere of influence. The strategy is simple: each disciple-member will serve as an Andrew on the Sunday of his/her birthday recognition by inviting and hosting either a relative, friend, neighbor or coworker in worship, with the hope that our guest(s) would make a decision to follow the Christ with us.

As a fellowship of Baptist Christians, we are reminded of the covenant we make to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances. This was the matter of ultimate concern that my sister, Donetha, shared with me in the wake of her daughter's sudden and unexpected passing. At the funeral service, the family minister spoke to the heart of the concern in testifying about the manner of Christian life my sister and brother-in-law modeled in

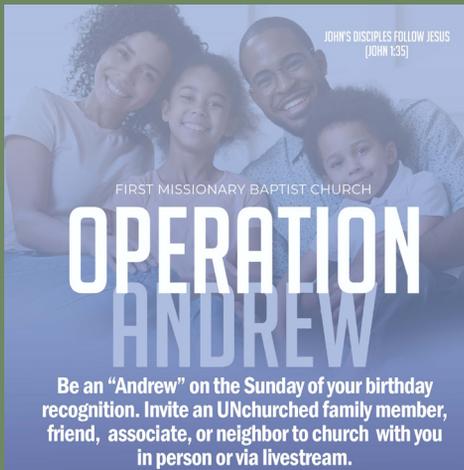
their home before Shantavia. While standing at her graveside, I marveled at the vast number of young people who had gathered to mourn having no anchor in this life nor any eternal hope for the life to come. The evangelistic burden became heavier upon heart in that moment. From the time we bring forth new life into the world and present them with all their potential unto the Lord, we make the commitment to do as my kindred have done – to live with fidelity under the scrutiny of God so that one day that might follow in our footsteps. Among the gifts we present to parents in the act of dedication is a Bible, charging fathers and mothers to read to their children from the treasury of scripture in hope that one day their child shall we read it from him/herself. In these various commitments we point our children toward a meaningful life with the Christ.

Unfortunately, in our contemporary world the missional task of evangelism has become passé. The images which once dominated our minds about evangelism – of street preachers, door-knockers, and tract-givers of years gone by – have long been forgotten. The inquiries once made about the security of one's eternal hope and destination is

regarded too intrusive for a culture preferring privatized religion without communal expression. Far be it for us to engage in acts of proselytizing in a religiously pluralistic world. Yet, the ground of our faith as transmitted to us from those who received it from their spiritual antecedents is of a calling and sending. The God we met in Jesus Christ bade both Andrew and his compatriot to “Come and see,” when they started out behind Him, and their time with Him impelled Andrew to go get his brother to share in the discovery. This, beloved, is the ground of evangelism – that we share the discovery of the richness of our relationship in Christ with others. So that they might know of Him whose life gives meaning to our days, so they might share in the abundance He offers and the companionship that is so constant, we go to get our brothers and sisters. You many never stand behind a pulpit to deliver a sermon, but that does not preclude you from being an evangelist, for among those with whom you have influence you too can share the joy of knowing the Christ, and invite them to come. Let's all become an Andrew.

OPERATION ANDREW: BRINGING OTHERS TO JESUS!

By The Reverend Carolyn Landry



Every evangelistic experience begins with the Believer's story or testimony. Yes, every Believer has a story. While no two stories are the same, nor should they be, they must have some commonality. The main character of each story must be Jesus Christ the Son of God, and the central theme must be the Gospel. For the "greatest story ever told" is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And no one tells the story of Jesus better than his beloved friend, John, the writer of the book of John.

John's story is a personal account of his following closely with Jesus, and his focus is on emphasizing the divine status of Jesus. In John 1:1 he lays the foundation for the entire gospel, and he continues to show how Jesus is the Word made flesh; "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." In John 20:31 he presents the message of his entire book; "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name."

John's story is about Jesus in real life situations like the wedding in Cana of Galilee where He and his disciples were invited (John 2:2).

John's story is for all people. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever

believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." One who believed and followed Jesus was Andrew. Here's his story:

The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?" "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter). John 1:35-42

Andrew's story, "We have found the Christ," was a simple story a child could have understood, and it was a sure story—he was absolutely certain of it, "we have found the Christ!" His assurance was like that of the man born blind who received his sight. When questioned about his healing, "He answered and said, "Whether He (Jesus) is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see" (John 9:25).

But before Andrew shared his story, he first found his brother, someone that he knew, and brought him to Jesus. This is what "Operation Andrew" is all about. Bringing an unsaved or unchurched family member, friend, co-worker, or neighbor to church during the month of your birthday (John 1:35). You don't even necessarily have to tell your story, the preacher for the morning will share the greatest story, the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Andrew is only mentioned a few times in the Bible but when he is mentioned, he's introducing others to Jesus. First there was his brother Peter in the verses above, then the little boy with the five loaves and two fish (John 6:8-9), and the Greeks (John 12:20-22).

As followers of Jesus Christ there is nothing more important than bringing others to Jesus. In Matthew chapter 4, the Lord Himself called Andrew to this task, and in like manner, He has called us, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8).

Andrew was an ordinary person that the Lord used in bringing others to know Him. He did not rank with Paul or his own brother Peter. The Bible does not say that he ever preached a sermon, but he introduced Peter to Christ. Peter who preached many sermons, preached on one occasion and 3,000 souls were saved.

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. (Acts 2:38-41)

There would have been no sermons from Peter if it were not for the faithful witnessing of his brother, Andrew. Like Andrew, we must constantly be engaged in this heavenly calling – bringing others to Jesus. Operation Andrew, a simple assignment that can bring blessing to those nearest and dearest to us.

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We are off to a great start - pressing toward the mark and going for the gold! Our numbers have increased from last year and several scholars have returned to our school community. We are excited and happy to welcome them back. We also want to welcome families who chose us to be the place where their children will begin their educational journey. It's an exciting time to be part of the JRS CDCA family.

Our school year is filled with opportunities to learn, grow and be brilliant. We continue our commitment to building scholars literacy skills. One way is by participating in Accelerated Reading and the Book It programs that encourage reading.

During poetry month (April, 2020) we encouraged our scholars to submit original poetry for a National Poetry Contest. CONGRATULATIONS to Noah Green and Xavier Maldonado. Their submissions were chosen to be published. Way to go for the gold and be brilliant!

JRSCDCA STUDENT OUTCOMES



B BRING YOUR BEST SELF TO SCHOOL DAILY

R RESPONSIBLE FOR MY ACTIONS

I IMAGINATION & CURIOSITY

L LITERACY IS FOUNDATIONAL

L LEARNING TO LEAD AND FOLLOW

I INCREASE MY PURSUIT TO BE MORE CHRIST LIKE

A APPLY EXCELLENCE AND RESPECT

N NEXT GENERATION SCHOLAR

T THINK CRITICALLY



THE CAR By Noah Green

A car is a car
A car is like a chocolate bar
I like a car how about you?
I don't like it yellow, but I like it blue

I like a Tesla
It can drive by itself
And it don't need nobody else
I like a Tesla, and it is the bestla

*I like the Tesla
And it likes me
I open the windows
Go fast and be free!*



B-Ball By Xavier Maldonado

Basketball, basketball
Shoot, Swish, Swish
Guard, sneakers squeaking
Rebound, jump, get the ball, get the ball
Pass, catch it,
don't let it slip
Basketball, Basketball will make you sweat!

Are you looking for ways to invest in this ministry? We need your help by adopting a teacher/classroom, volunteer to teach a foreign language, coding, STEM, etc. or become a prayer partner. Please email me at talAlexander@fmbc.org for ministry opportunities. Thank you for your commitment to excellence in education and for helping our scholars to shine and be brilliant.

FMBC READER'S CORNER

JUST GRACE BY VIC JACKOPSON

Book Review by Sister Shirley Lawrence

Evangelism is our personal proclamation to lift up Jesus Christ as Lord and savior, and our willingness to share this message with others through our words, deeds, actions, and witness that Jesus would draw them into fellowship with Himself. Christians who specialize in evangelism are often known as Evangelists, whether they are in their home communities or living as missionaries in the field. Some Christian traditions refer to such people as Missionaries."

The good news for you: The book "Just Grace" provides an assurance to an already known fact, that we will all someday pass away, but it reflects on the understanding that though we will die, we should all want to know what lies beyond for our souls. Those of us who believe in God know that there is a heaven, and it is there we will live with God for an eternity (never ending). Often people do not like to think about this topic, but it is our individual and spiritual responsibility to live (right now) a life worthy of the Call of Christ upon our lives, because someday, everything we have said and done will come into an account before The Lord. Evangelists preach and teach God's Word to a people; some not yet willing to listen and accept Him. Then there are others, who are excited about coming into a relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through the Power of God The Father Almighty. That true and sincere relationship makes God's Heart smile. It is an individual and independent relationship, but rest assured, with God in your life covering your life, you are

never alone, and your battles are fought by a God who will never lose a battle.

The Evangelist took us into "Just Grace" with a spiritual understanding of God's amazing grace, mercy and gift which is eternal life. True and sincere evangelism is a discerning for God and God alone to lead, guide and direct our lives. The message of Evangelists are gifts from God that no person can escape from the calling upon their lives; however, if anyone is witnessing in their own name and not in the name of Jesus, they will be held accountable; because God gives us His amazing gifts out of love and not by anything we have said and done. "Ephesians 2:8-9, "It is the gift of God not by works, so that no one can boast." God offers eternity in heaven to each of us as a gift because there is absolutely no way we could earn our way into Glory by our works.

When God's Word is preached and taught, it is clearly understood that "to love God with our heart, mind, body, soul, and strength; is demonstrated when we sincerely care for others as much as we care for ourselves." We are all required to show LOVE to our fellowmen. God's amazing grace and mercy is what binds us close to Him, not for our perfection (which does not exist) but for His perfection. Matthew 5:48 "Be perfect, therefore as your heavenly Father is perfect." It is because of His perfection that He must punish sin. It is our solemn responsibility to accept and understand that it is not just acts of hate and lust that

demonstrate sin, but it is also, our lack of love for one another. The greatest gift that God offers to His children is the gift of love.

Our Response to God: Trust and faith in Jesus Christ should not be a "straddling the fence" moment in our lives. It should not be determined by feelings or matters of the heart. We MUST trust GOD at the start and finish of each second, minute, hour, day, week, month and year of our lives and that trust lies in our faith in God's love for us. No one can love us more than God, ABSOLUTELY NO ONE! No mother, father, sister, brother, friend, or lover can love us more than our LOVING LORD, GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY!

Assurance of Eternal Life: It is not enough to just trust and have faith in God, we must repent of our sins, pray, and ask God to show us the way He would have us to go and when He shows us, redirect and follow Him because only He can direct us into a more perfect way for our lives. In John 14:23, Jesus spoke truth to His people, "If anyone loves Me, he will obey My teachings." In John 6:47, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth he who believes will have everlasting life."

Commitment to God: The hope of God's Word through His anointed teachings and teachers is to understand who stands in the center of God's word in order that we get a true understanding of the Bible. The Center of God's Word is Jesus Christ the Son of God.

Equipped for Growth: My heart is so full reading and

reviewing this powerful book, "Just Grace". It pulls out so many spiritual nuggets that has strengthened my walk with the Lord and helped me to reconfirm my desire to live a life worthy of the call of Christ upon my life. There is strength in God's word; there is power in God's word; there is hope in God's word; there is wisdom in God's word; there is forgiveness in God's word; there is foundation in God's word; there is healing in God's word; there is protection in God's word; but above all, Jesus Christ is God's word and it is because of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we are all equipped to grow in God's word in order that we can lead others into a relationship with Him. 2 Peter 3:9 states, "He is patient with you not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

The Evangelist in the book, *Just Grace*, clearly helps us to understand that nothing we have is by our own doing. We clearly see that our very being is only because of the grace and mercy of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ the Son and the Word of God made flesh. We are equipped for God when we repent of our sins. God wants us to know that when we repent and come into a sincere belief in Jesus Christ, then we will have eternal life. The Bible confirms this very fact in 1 John 5:13, "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life." We freely receive His Amazing Grace for no other reason than, "GOD IS LOVE. 1 John 4:8.

Evangelism and Discipleship in the Digital Age

By Sister Janet Slaughter



Evangelism (witnessing) and discipleship have always been core components of the Christian church. The terms are not synonymous and should not be used interchangeably. Evangelism is defined typically as the act of preaching the gospel with the intention of sharing the message and teachings of Jesus Christ. Stated another way, evangelism is proclaiming the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit in order to bring lost people to accept Christ as Lord and Savior through repentance (John 3:16; Romans 10:13).

Discipleship is intentionally equipping believers with the Word of God through accountable relationships, through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit in order to replicate faithful followers of Christ. "Disciple" comes from the Greek word that means, "to learn." When we examine the practical ministry models of Jesus and Paul, we can conclude that discipleship is: Pouring into others, training them in Word, in relationship, and in ministry, so that they might develop as healthy believers who can walk by faith, share their faith and multiply their faith.

In the words of a famous quote, "Evangelism is telling people about God's grace. Discipleship is helping them to walk in it." In its purest form, evangelism is sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with others. Discipleship is "living out" the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) and the Greatest Commandment (Matthew 22:37-38). Prayer fuels and ignites every aspect of evangelism.

Although the unrelenting effects of the coronavirus pandemic can be credited for causing havoc and heartache in lives, businesses, and entities around the world, the evangelistic ministry of

the Christian church managed to escape a spiral downfall. In fact, COVID-19's impact on the evangelistic efforts of the church was minimum. Undeniably the attendance in many churches waned and/or gatherings for public worship ceased. Additionally, the procedures in which a variety of ministries operated were tweaked or revised. Flexibility and creative avenues ensued in Christian education departments. Yes, a variety of communication venues and broadcasting medias for worship services became necessary and there was modification for the way gospel messages were shared. However, evangelism and discipleship efforts continued.

Although God and the Gospel did not change (nor will it ever change), the pandemic did cause church leaders and believers to rely heavily on technology as a means to hear and share the Word of God. The historical virus also brought awareness that the mission, mindset, and methodology of evangelism and discipleship needed reexamining in the explosive digital age.

Mission

Jesus the Christ established the mission of evangelism and discipleship when He commanded, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20). The specifics on how the disciples were to "go" were not outlined. The Holy Spirit came and led each individual on how they were to fulfill their part of the Great Commission.

Although some believe the responsibility of The Great Commission belongs to ministers or ministries called to evangelize (Ephesians 4:11), God gives each person a gift that can be used to reach more people. Spreading the good news about Christ should not be frightening. After all, individuals find it easy to talk about matters of the heart (i.e., children, sports, politics, vacations, relationships). George Whitefield stated,

"God forbid that I should travel with anybody a quarter of an hour without speaking of Christ to them." Hallelujah and Amen!

Jesus declared, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me" (Acts 1:8). The Great Commandment of Jesus (Matthew 22:36-40) calls for sharing the good news about Him; therefore, love of neighbors certainly involves telling them about salvation in Christ. Therein lies a major reason the evangelistic efforts of the church were not stopped when the world appeared to come to a screeching halt. Christians 'are' the church! Evangelism and discipleship endeavors continued because the church of God is not a building. The church has no address. The church rides in cars. The church walks down streets. The church continues to talk, give, serve, and share the gospel even when the church 'building' of worship closes. Jesus said, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Luke 16:18).

Traditionally, however, the discipleship and evangelistic efforts usually occur in the physical building of the church. To broaden that spectrum without this religious facility, mindsets must change to embrace and use the many spectrums of technology to further the advancement of God's Kingdom.

Mindset

The internet and overall usage of technology have caused a paradigm shift in the way many typically think about proclaiming the gospel. Conventional approaches for telling others about salvation in Christ appease the mindsets of those who have grown accustomed to traditional evangelistic and discipleship efforts. Preaching and teaching the Word of God through worship services, Sunday school, Bible study, Vacation Bible School, conferences, witnessing team meetings, and similar platforms in the church building have been familiar avenues for sharing the message of God's love and training how to witness. Routine. Comfortable. Non-threatening.

Evangelism and Discipleship in the Digital Age Continued



However, everyone doesn't attend church and there needs to be a variety of ways to reach the masses. Thanks to the explosive age of technology, a more accessible medium is available for spreading the message of salvation to a wider population. Christian leaders, teachers, and believers who are reluctant to embrace this additional digital resource to make disciples must, therefore, be willing to change their mindsets from "I can't" to "how can I?" and "what other methodologies can be used to evangelize and make disciples?"

Methodology

Since spreading the good news of Jesus Christ with the unsaved is extremely important, utilizing technology as another method of communication becomes essential. According to recent statistics, 65.6 percent of the entire world's population has internet access and 54.6 percent of the global population are unique mobile internet users. Implementing digital means to advance the ministry of Christ does not eradicate or replace traditional and/or conventional methods that are already in place. It merely affords a myriad of additional methods to communicate the gospel and develop disciples. God, oftentimes, changed the way He conversed with His people. He appeared to some face to face or in visions and dreams. While He communicated to others through prophets, priests, angels, or scrolls.

Although many churches have been incorporating technology into their communication arsenal for years, the pandemic reminded many of the plethora of benefits it offers. Usage of Zoom took many out of their comfort zones, including teachers. Yet, the referenced digital platform and software

communication programs like it, played a powerful role in supporting and sustaining the evangelistic, teaching, and discipleship mission of the church. The Center of Online Evangelism provides popular digital methods that have proven effective:

1.Social networks - These platforms are beneficial to churches and ministries in many ways. The audience is large, global, and covers all demographics. There are 2 billion users on Facebook alone. Sites like Facebook and Twitter allow you to connect with people, build relationships, and share stories of how the Gospel has changed lives.

2.Media sharing networks - A media-sharing platform is perhaps one of the greatest tools for spreading the Gospel online. Video and audio content and sermons can be uploaded and shared, along with podcasts and photos. If you are a ministry leader, it helps to get your audience sharing content as well. If you are an online missionary, invite online contacts to share your material if they were blessed. Examples of media sharing networks are YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat.

3.Discussion forums - Users come to discussion sites like Reddit and Quora to discuss opinions, share information, ask questions, and search for answers. Posting to discussion forums is one way to increase Biblical answers online.

4.Bookmarking and content curation networks - Pinterest is probably not the first website that comes to mind when you think about evangelism. However, Pinterest and other bookmarking networks like Flipboard can give members and digital missionaries creative opportunities to build awareness of churches and ministries, engage others and drive traffic to Bible-based websites.

5.Blogging and publishing networks- Content marketing is undoubtedly an effective way to connect with people and build awareness around the beauty of the Gospel. Publishing content that describes how the Gospel is changing

lives is a sure way to grab and arrest attention. Many have heard that Jesus is the answer; blogs give you an opportunity to show people how Jesus has been the answer. Your content allows online users to discover truth, comment, then share it with their circle of influence.

Usage of technology to evangelize and make disciples is a necessary and wonderful way to reach millions online. Reexamining the mission, mindsets, and methodology of evangelism and discipleship efforts currently in place, in churches, could prove beneficial for reaching more people in order to share the gospel. It should be noted that traditional approaches for sharing the gospel of Jesus the Christ will always be relevant, important, and have its place (i.e., talking to people, knocking on doors, serving those in need, phone calls, writing letters, and more). Furthermore, Christians will always be admonished not to forsake the assembling of themselves (Hebrews 10:25). However, employing emerging online resources and tapping into the digital age means many more can have access to God's message of love.

We are creating a digital footprint via our webpage, Facebook, YouTube, and other social media platforms. As we introduce the church to a broader online community, we can no longer just use technology to share the Gospel of Jesus through a sermon or Bible lesson, but we must use it to make "digital-disciples." The pandemic among other things has expanded our membership beyond the local area. Members have relocated but choose to stay connected. Some of our out-of-town friends and family members have connected, and new members have joined who only want to connect virtually. We must intentionally explore evangelism and discipleship in this digital age; helping people connect and stay connected. We must become "First Missionary Baptist Church Anywhere," because The Great Commission is still The Great Commission! If you are passionate about evangelism and discipleship, please contact Rev. Carolyn Landry at 256-852-6665 or clandry@fmbc.org.

NATIONAL WELLNESS MONTH

By Sister Phyllis McMillan

This month there are three disease processes that come to focus for Health Awareness: Suicide Prevention Awareness, Alzheimer's disease, and Prostate Cancer Awareness.

Suicide Prevention Awareness

Unfortunately, the pandemic has played a role in an increased rate of suicides whether from the feeling of isolation due to quarantine, loss of income, loss of family members, or the general feeling of the lack of normalcy in the world.

Suicidal thoughts, much like mental health conditions, can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, or background. Suicide Prevention Awareness Month is a time to raise awareness on this stigmatized, and often taboo, topic. Hopefully, we can shift the perception of suicide and spread hope and vital information to people affected by suicide. The goal is to ensure that individuals, friends, and families have access to the resources they need to discuss suicide prevention and to seek help. Throughout the month of September, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) encourages people to bring their voices together to advocate for better mental health care, including a crisis response system. NAMI wants any person experiencing suicidal thoughts or behaviors to have a number to call and a system to turn to that would connect them to the treatment and support they need.

Warning signs of suicide may include increased alcohol and drug use, aggressive behavior, withdrawal from friends, family and community, dramatic mood swings, and impulsive or reckless behavior. Other warning signs may include collecting and saving pills or buying a weapon, giving away possessions, tying up loose ends, like organizing personal papers or paying off debt and, saying goodbye to friends and family. It is always good to address issues prior to them becoming a crisis. Remove weapons that can be used such as guns, knives, or stockpiled pills. Let your family member know you are available and validate them as a person of importance.

Keep an open line of communication and talk openly and honestly to anyone attempting suicide, express support, concern, and ask calm direct questions.

Suicidal behaviors are a psychiatric emergency and immediate attention is needed from a healthcare provider or call 911. The National Alliance on Mental Illness Helpline number is 800-950-NAMI. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number is 800-273-8255. The Crisis Services for North Alabama number is 256-716-1000. Suicide is not the answer. There is HOPE. You are Worthy of Love and Care.

Alzheimer's Awareness

Alzheimer's disease is not a normal part of the aging process. It destroys parts of the brain responsible for memory, learning, decision-making and behavior. Patients also lose motor abilities like walking and swallowing. The condition is ultimately fatal. African Americans are two to three times more likely than non-Hispanic white Americans to develop Alzheimer's. Alzheimer's is the sixth leading cause of death overall in the U.S., and the fourth leading cause of death for older African Americans. There are medicines that can treat the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease but there is no cure. It is the only disease in the top 10 that is increasing and the only disease without a drug that can stop its progression, slow it, or prevent it. Alzheimer's is a brain disease that causes a slow decline in memory, thinking and reasoning skills. There are 10 warning signs and symptoms. If you notice any of them, don't ignore them. Schedule an appointment with your doctor:

1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, work, or leisure
4. Confusion with time or place
5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
6. New problems with words in speaking and writing
7. Misplacing things and losing the

ability to retrace steps

8. Decreased or poor judgment
9. Withdrawal from work or social activities
10. Changes in mood and personality

<https://www.alz.org/>

<https://www.usagainstalzheimer.org/networks/african-americans>

Prostate Cancer Awareness

Men should begin focusing on prostate cancer screening at age 40 especially if there is a family history. The prostate is a small walnut-shaped gland in males that produces the seminal fluid that nourishes and transports sperm. Prostate cancer is one of the most common types of cancer and it can be detected early. When it is still confined to the prostate gland, it has the best chance for successful treatment.

African American men have a greater risk of prostate cancer than do people of other races. Other risk factors for prostate cancer include older age, and obesity. In obese men, the cancer is more likely to be more aggressive and more likely to return after initial treatment. Screening for prostate cancer includes a blood test called prostate specific antigen (PSA) and a digital rectal examination to check the prostate gland which is adjacent to the rectum. Preventive measures for prostate cancer include choosing a healthy diet and healthy foods full of fruits and vegetables, low fat diet, foods rich in vitamins and minerals; exercise 2-3 days a week; maintain a healthy weight, annual prostate exams beginning at age 40

Complications of prostate cancer include metastasis to nearby organs such as bladder, lymphatic system, and bloodstream; urinary incontinence, and erectile dysfunction which can occur because of the prostate cancer, and treatments that may include surgery, radiation, or hormone treatments (mayoclinic.org and everydayhealth.com).

Reference
(nami.org)

MORE THAN WOMEN IN WHITE

By Deaconess Debra Scruggs

If you were to ask a regular attendee of First Missionary Baptist Church who the Deaconesses are, the answers would vary between “the women who wear white on first Sunday” to “the women who prepare communion.” Still others may say “they are the women married to Deacons.” While all these answers are true, there is much more to the Deaconess Ministry than just that we are women who wear white. We are women servants!



The character of women who serve is clearly spelled out in 1 Timothy 3:11, “In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.” Women are servants who assist in all areas of ministry—in the home, church, community and around the world.

The Bible commends women who serve. Romans 16:1-2 states: “I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchera, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints.” Sister Phoebe is recognized as a model servant by the Apostle Paul who viewed himself a servant; helping others even at a cost to himself rather than someone who commands others to do his will (Colossians 1:1). In a like manner, we are servants, performing acts of service such as: assisting the Pastor and Deacons with the ordinances of Baptism and Holy Communion, visiting the sick, providing godly counsel to other women in the church, instructing single and married women and young teens in church etiquette, protocol and general matters of faith. As Deaconesses, we are so much more than the women in white on first Sunday. We are servant leaders of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, striving to be like Jesus, as we serve!

Specifically, the FMBC Deaconess Ministry functions to assist the Pastor, Pastoral Staff and Deacons Ministry in caring for the needs of the overall church membership, including sickness and bereavement. As mentioned above, Deaconesses assist the Pastor and Deacons with preparation of Communion, including preparing trays, linens and communion kits for sick and shut-in members. Some of the Deaconesses also team with their husbands to take Communion to these members. Deaconesses are responsible for ensuring candidates for baptism are prepared. They ensure the baptismal wardrobes for the Pastor, assistant and candidates are maintained. Deaconesses are also involved in the following:

- *Providing support and assistance to facilitators and children in Children’s Church*
- *Participating in evangelism efforts*
- *Visiting members in local healthcare facilities on a monthly basis*
- *Sending cards of encouragement to the sick and shut-in members on a monthly basis*
- *Assisting the Youth Ministry as needed*
- *Assisting other ministries of the church as needed*
- *Serving as flower bearers at funeral services as needed*
- *Hosting an annual luncheon in honor of the First Lady, observed during Pastor’s Appreciation weekend*

Being a part of the Deaconess Ministry is a calling by God and a commitment. The work of a Deaconess is a blessing not only to those being served, but also to those involved in the work. Their work is often not seen however, it is important in the life of the church. So, when you see the white attire, know they are more than women in white, they are women who serve.

“Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Matthew 20:28

OPERATION ANDREW: BRINGING OTHERS TO JESUS! CONTINUED

Every evangelistic experience begins with the Believer's story or testimony. At some point, we have all been Andrews and Peters... introducing others and being introduced to Christ. Here are a few personal stories or testimonies freely submitted in their own words:

"It was during and following our Christian Education classes that I reconciled this dilemma that I had embodied for a protracted amount of time. I recall that in our class we declared that God knows everything, past, present, future even our most secret words, thoughts and actions. It was then I decided that, because God knows everything, past, present, future even if I sin, He would not allow me to die on a day that I sin. I thought that my Salvation depended on "keeping" myself. I am certain that, at the age of eleven, I did not frame my being saved in terms of "keeping myself", but I surely thought that securing my baptism and remaining good was burdensome. God surely must have a big sense of humor! As my studies continued and my understanding increased, I took comfort in what I later learned was the doctrine of the security of my faith or the security of the believer. God allowed me to rationalize the understanding about my security as a young child in a way that made sense to me until I was mature enough in my faith and had developed a greater knowledge and understanding of the believer's eternal security. In fact, I became more excited about this revelation than when I decided to accept Jesus and be baptized."

-Minister Gloria P. Batts

"My salvation experience happened when I was a freshman at Alabama A&M and ran into two brothers in the dormitory hallway one evening. One of the brothers was Tony Reeves and the other was our very own member Brother Tyrone Sumlin. These brothers were inviting and leading freshmen students to an on-campus Bible study in their dorm room. I had not heard of it and was curious. I accepted the invitation and went to the Bible Study. Once at the Bible study meeting, I was very interested and intrigued by the lesson. Afterward, they approached me, asked me what I thought about the lesson and would I be interested in having a one-on-one Bible study. I agreed and scheduled a time with them. We met for several one-on-one Bible study lessons. We would study lessons such as the Authority of the Word, The Church, Sin, Repentance, Forgiveness, Baptism, etc. As we studied the lessons I could now see how my sins caused Jesus

to die on the Cross at Calvary. I was hurt at the core of my being with tears flowing down my cheeks, I asked the brothers what I must do to be saved. I was told that I must repent of my sins, believe in Jesus Christ, confess Jesus Christ as Lord and the Son of God, and be Baptized. I was baptized on Valentine's Day, Sunday, February 14, 1982, by Elder Dan Cabe. This is my Salvation Testimony and I thank God for working in the lives of all those who helped lead me to Christ."

-Minister Jonathan K. Ford, Sr.

"I was led to Christ on a Wednesday night at revival in 1968. We were on the Moaner's Bench where the deacons and mothers surrounded the candidates, prayed and sang hymns of Zion and I believed in my heart and confessed with my mouth that Jesus died on the cross for my sins and transgressions and rose in 3 days with all power in Heaven & Earth in His hands. I got up from the Moaner's bench, convicted that I wanted to accept Jesus as my Lord and Savior. I was baptized the following Sunday morning in a creek and have been serving the Lord in ministry continually. Even though I confessed a belief in Christ at the age of twelve, I did not experience the Baptism of the Holy Spirit until age 43 when I was taught by a persuasion of Apostolic faith that I had to ask for the filling of the Holy Spirit. Several weeks later God spoke to me and said that I was filled with the Holy Spirit. One Saturday morning as I was getting ready to go to a Family Reunion Picnic, God spoke to me and said that I would be an evangelist one day. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit anoints and empowers the individual to do extraordinary ministry to the glory and honor of God. In order to be effective in ministry, one must be filled with the Holy Spirit as we have learned these things through the study of God's word. To God be the glory for the things He has done!"

-Minister Priscilla Montgomery

"I accepted Jesus Christ at the age of 14 at East Florence Missionary Baptist Church, Reverend Sparks presiding Pastor. It was a Thursday night on the Mourners Bench during Revival. One of my brothers, my neighbor, and I were on the Mourners Bench together, they both accepted Christ

that evening. After they went down, I was left alone on the bench and wondering am I also supposed to accept Christ at this time, and so I did. When I accepted Christ as Lord and Savior, I really didn't understand what it meant. I truly did not comprehend the severity of what I was doing because Salvation and Baptism had never been explained to me. It was several years later when my salvation became real to me, and I began to understand what giving my life to Christ meant. I was 26 years old living in St. Louis where I was a member at New Sunny Mount Baptist Church, Pastor Donald Hunter. It was there, attending Sunday school and bible study that I was taught and understood the meaning of Salvation. My cousin who was also my roommate in St. Louis died in a car accident, at his funeral I accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior within my Spirit, with the full comprehension of what I was doing and what it meant."

-Brother Allen Poole

"I was baptized at an early age in Montgomery, AL at Bryant Street Baptist Church, however it was many years later, after I moved to St. Louis at the age of 23 my understanding began. It was at New Sunny Mount Baptist Church where I was taught what accepting Jesus Christ into my heart and being baptized meant. Learning, understanding, and growing in God's word provided needed peace, confidence, and assurance that my salvation was real and secure. I wholeheartedly believe it is most important to recall when you accept/accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior and the Baptism experience, I also believe it is even more important to come into the full knowledge, reality, revelation, and understanding of what Salvation and the Gospel/Good news of Christ (His birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension) means."

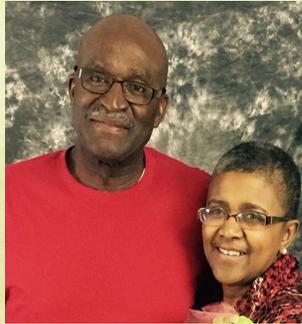
-Minister Arnatta Poole

Peter 3:15b says, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." The hope we have is in Jesus Christ our Lord. To share your salvation story, please email Rev. Carolyn Landry at clandry@fmbc.org

FMBC MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



Roosevelt & Loretta Conley celebrate 38 years of marriage on September 3rd



Joe and Beverly Lampley celebrate 38 years of marriage on September 3rd



Walter and Patricia Stewart celebrate 40 years of marriage on September 5th



Alvin & Dollye Hopkins celebrate 52 years of marriage on September 6th



Jesse & Lovie Cook, III celebrate 29 years of marriage on September 5th



Wardell and Sandra Pearson celebrate 53 years of marriage on September 9th



Congratulations to Macario Kelley who is a University of South Alabama accounting major selected out of 253 students to receive a \$10,000 scholarship for the 2021-2022 academic year.



WANT TO BE SHOWN IN THE COMMUNICATOR?

Email a picture and your information of an anniversary or accomplishment to clynk@fmbc.org

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