

FOCUS



Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ! This is the Winter 2012 edition of *The Greater First F.O.C.U.S.* Every year, we begin the New Year with a “Starting the Year with God Revival.” But according to the calendar, the winter season is when nothing is growing and most plants and trees are not showing signs of life, fruitfulness and vitality. Often, the natural world mirrors the spiritual world. This is why we need Revival. In this article, I would like to describe four kinds of revival we need.

First, we need a **Revival of Life**. Psalm 85:6 says, “*Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?*” True revival begins with an honest recognition that we have become spiritually dull, dry, and even dead. Ezekiel describes it this way: “*The hand of the Lord came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones...and indeed they were very dry...He said to me, ‘Prophesy to these bones, and say to them, ‘O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!’’ ...And as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together...and breath came in them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army*” (Ezekiel 37:1-10 NKJV). Ezekiel’s vision teaches us the following truths: (a) revival begins with the acknowledging that we are not a healthy, connected, functioning body; (b) our church services have become too formal and dry; and (c) we must hunger for God’s Word. Otherwise we live in denial, excusing and rationalizing our spiritual condition. God said to Israel, an agricultural people, “*Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you*” (Hosea 10:12). Notice the ele-

ments in the true revival: an emphasis on righteous living; showing mercy to one another; recognizing our careless and cavalier attitude toward sin; crying out to God in sustained, heartfelt prayer, “Revive us again, that your people may rejoice in You.”

Second, we need a **Revival of Light**. Psalm 119:105 says, “*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*” Your job takes up to ten hours a day, including travel. Sleeping, eating, bathing and dressing take another ten. Your family and your hobbies, etc., account for the remaining hours. Today, a “committed church member” is in church two to three times a month. Do the math. Out of 168 hours in your week, about 90 minutes are given to spiritual growth—less than one percent! And what are the results? Spiritual ignorance and weakness. Divorce is as common inside the church as outside. Believers have as big a problem with pornography as unbelievers. The alcoholism and addiction rate is roughly the same. A recent ABC News poll found that while certain churches are growing rapidly, many of the newcomers have an “eclectic theology.” They believe in the resurrection, but they also think reincarnation is okay. They believe God guides through prayer, and also through horoscopes. While devout Muslims commit to the Koran, the average Christian doesn’t read their Bible once a week. As hard as your pastor may try, spoon feeding you from the pulpit and burping you at the door won’t make you spiritually mature. “Your word is...a light for my path.” You’ve got to put God’s Word at the top of your daily “to do” list. “*No longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of*

Pastor's Focal Point

Focal Point continued on page 4

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Linda Watkins

WEEKLY & MONTHLY SERVICES

Sunday School

9:15 a.m.

Praise & Worship

10:45 a.m.

Church Worship

11:00 a.m.

Communion

1st Sunday

Baptismal

4th Sunday

Bible Study

Tuesday

7:00 p.m.

Wednesday

11:00 a.m.

Prayer Meeting

Tuesday

8:00 p.m.

Mid-Day

Prayer Service

Wednesday

12 noon

Men's Ministry

2nd Saturday

11:00 a.m.

Daughters of Zion—

GFBC Women's Ministry

Saturday before 3rd Sunday

12:30 p.m.

Eliza Smallwood

Missionary Ministry

2nd Sunday

BTU

4th Saturday

Greater First FOCUS

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Welcome to Greater First Baptist

Why Do I Go To Sunday School?



Joined in December

Ricardo McDowell Rashaad McDowell

Joined in January

Julius Nichols - Received the Right hand of Fellowship

Aniya Barnes Portreona Brown
 Bria Clark Markita Irving
 Lawrence Scarborough Charles Sharp
 Brenda Williams

Joined in February

Steven Jackson and Marcella Smith - Received the Right hand of Fellowship

Aiana Cummings DeShauna Darby
 Margie Edwards Demonte Gibson
 Lolita Gibson Morgan Hatton
 Goldie Jones Melia Moates
 Michael Moates Franisha Rose
 Eric Wallace

Did your parents or grandparents take you to Sunday School when you were a child? Perhaps you attended before you moved away from home to go to college or take a new job and never returned. Well, it's not too late to return today. Sunday School is for everyone. We have Sunday School every Sunday at 9:15 am. Perhaps you think that's too early. Don't let Satan keep you from the fellowship of believers in study of God's word. Yes, it's true that you can read the Bible at home by yourself, and you need to do this. But fellowship with other believers is essential for everyone, and that includes you! You receive encouragement from other believers that you can't get anywhere else.

Listed below are just some of the reasons from members of our Sunday School.

- ◆ Sunday School is not the end of the weekend, but the beginning of my week. The teachings lead me through how I look at life's everyday outcomes. How I care about God's teachings in my life lessons. It wakes me up and keeps me going when I think there is no one to turn to. It enforces my readings and understanding of God's words.
- ◆ I come to Sunday School because I want to learn about the word of God, and to be with my family.
- ◆ My mother took me as a child! Also I like studying the Word with fellow Christians. I remember my Sunday School teachers to this day!
- ◆ I come to church because my grandmother takes me. Because she has already been taking me consistently, I am used to coming. I want to learn more about Jesus and God and what they have done for me and how to acknowledge this.

MINISTRIES

Operational and Support

Ministries
 Audio-Visual
 Bereavement
 Birthday
 Emergency
 Flower
 Greater First *FOCUS*
 Hospitality
 Kitchen
 Mary E. Peyton Nurses
 Pastor's Aide
 Transportation
 Usher Board—Junior & Youth
 Usher Board—Senior

Educational
 Baptist Training Union
 Computer
 Creative Arts
 Daughters of Zion
 Men's
 New Members

Scholarship
 Sunday School
 Youth & Young Adult

Missionary Ministries

Eliza Smallwood
 Outreach
 Warriors for Christ (Youth)

Music and Dance Ministries

Children's Choir
 Fellowship Choir
 Gospel Chorus
 Judah Worship & Praise
 Men's Chorus
 Senior Choir
 Voices of Praise Dancers
 Volunteer Choir
 Youth & Young Adult Choir

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doctrine, by the trickery of men...but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ.” (Ephesians 4:14-15 NKJV).

Third, we need a **Revival of Liberty**. Second Corinthians chapter three verse seventeen says, *“Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”* Is the Holy Spirit welcome in your church? Are you responsive to His leadings? It’s okay to have a program as long as you’re willing to let God change it. Now that doesn’t mean somebody can just jump up and interrupt the pastor’s sermon. God is God of order. You say, “But I felt led by the Spirit to do it.” Really? The Holy Spirit is a gentleman; He won’t speak through you when He is already speaking through God-ordained leadership. God works through structure. If you doubt that, look at how He planned the tabernacle in the wilderness and Solomon’s temple. There were times when God’s presence was so strong that the priests were unable to conduct the service as usual; all they could do was fall on their faces before Him. And we must pray for and welcome such times too. But liberty isn’t license to do as we please. Paul addresses the liberty/license argument in these words: *“For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use your liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”* The liberty Christ brings sets us free from the need to “show off,” and instead teaches us to “serve one another.” Paul bottom lines it: *“Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”* You say, “What does that mean?” It means when you make Jesus “Lord,” He sets you free to enjoy His presence in church, at home, in business and in every area of life.

Fourth, we need a **Revival of Love**. First Corinthians chapter thirteen verse eight says, “Love never fails...” Stop and think about that for a moment. Just about everything else in life fails, but love doesn’t. There’s a story about a lady who said to her husband, “Will you love me when I’m old?” He replied, “Yes, dear.” She said, “But will you love me when my hair is gray?” He replied, “Yes, dear, I’ve loved you

through seven different shades already, why would I change my mind when you’re gray?” You can score points for having high morals and have all your theological ducks in a row, but if you don’t love people—in every circumstance of life—you’ve failed where it counts most. Paul writes: *“If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God’s secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn’t love others, I would be nothing. If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it, but if I didn’t love others, I would have gained nothing...Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance”* (I Corinthians 13:2-7 New Living Translation). It took a lot of commitment to be a Pharisee. Living according to the Law of Moses demanded incredible discipline and dedication. Why did Jesus condemn the Pharisees so often? Because they had light in their heads but no love in their hearts! When we, the church, experience a revival of love we won’t need to advertise; people will break down the doors to get in.

So, during this winter season it is my prayer that God will send revival of Life, Light, Liberty and Love among us here at The Greater First Baptist Church. William W. McKay and John J. Husband composed an immortal hymn that captures the heartfelt essence of this article:

“Revive Us Again”

Verse 1: We praise Thee, O God, for the Son of Thy love,
For Jesus who died and is now gone above.

Verse 2: We praise Thee, O God, for Thy Spirit of light,
Who has shown us our Savior and scattered our night.

Verse 3: All glory and praise to the Lamb that was slain,
Who borne all our sin and has cleansed every stain.

Verse 4: Revive us again—fill each heart with Thy love;
May each soul be rekindled with fire from above.

Chorus: Hallelujah, Thine the glory!
Hallelujah, amen!
Hallelujah, Thine the glory!
Revive us again!

Continued from page 3

- ◆ I'm hungry for the Word and there is no better place. I enjoy the fellowship.
- ◆ I come to study God's Word; to gain knowledge and understanding that I may apply it in my daily living.
- ◆ I attend Sunday School because I know that I must be obedient to the Word, "Study to show thyself approved, a workman need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of God." I love the fellowship of the saints as well. All learn together and from each other as we glean valuable information from each other. I also really just plainly love God's word. Our instructors are excellent teachers and very knowledgeable.
- ◆ I come to Sunday School to learn about God's words and to make me a better person because I left Him, not knowing that He never left me. He brought me a mighty, mighty long way. And I thank Him all throughout the days and weeks, and to tell others that He is real and if you trust Him, He will lead and guide you always.
- ◆ I come to Sunday School to learn. Learn more about Jesus. Learn more about the Bible. Learn, learn, and learn.
- ◆ I come to Sunday School to learn how to live a Christian life according to the scriptures.

- ◆ I come to church because I like the music and the people.
- ◆ I come to Sunday School so that the rest of my family can come and join because I need my family to come together. For God can bless us and heal my family. The church family is so amazing and I just love to be around them because they always put a smile on my face.
- ◆ I come to Sunday School because my father told me to come.
- ◆ So I can learn more on how to be more like Christ, and to bring people into His word.
- ◆ I want to learn about God.

Hebrews 10:22-25 New Century Version
(NCV)

"Let us come near to God with a sincere heart and a sure faith, because we have been made free from a guilty conscience, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.

Let us hold firmly to the hope that we have confessed, because we can trust God to do what he promised.

Let us think about each other and help each other to show love and do good deeds.

You should not stay away from the church meetings, as some are doing, but you should meet together and encourage each other. Do this even more as you see the day [the day Christ will come to judge all people and take his people to live with him] coming."

Be encouraged and join us on Sunday morning at 9:15. See you in Sunday School!!!

*Donna A. Brooks, General Superintendent
Sunday School Ministry*



“The Eleventh Commandment”

“A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are

my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” (John 13:34-35)

Let us look at ways we can show love one to another:

Giving and Sharing. When we see someone has a need and we are able to supply this need we give and share in the spirit of love as the Lord has shown us to do. They may have need of a hug and a need to hear words of kindness and love to encourage their hearts. Planting a financial seed into their life may be the answer. Just seek the Lord and He will guide you.

Caring is another way to show God’s love. When we show that we care by sending a card, calling someone on the phone when someone is sick or has experienced a loss, it allows the love of God to flow through us in a way that will bring a blessing to someone in need. It will express our compassion and let them know that we do care. We can share the Word, “*casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*” (I Peter 5:7)

As a result of the Spirit’s filling, we will **Edify and Submit** to one another (Ephesians 5:18-22). We will show love as we communicate with one another in an edifying manner. As we submit we are obeying the instructions given by the Lord. The Word tells us that we are to “*submit to one another*” (Eph. 5:21); “*wives are to submit to their husbands, as to the Lord.*” (Eph. 5:22).

To **Obey and Honor** shows forth love to the Lord as well as to our parents and spiritual leaders. “*Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. “Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment of promise.*”(Eph. 6:1)

“*Obey your spiritual leaders and submit to them—continually recognizing their authority over you; for they are constantly keeping watch over your souls and guarding your spiritual welfare, as men who will have to render an account [of their trust]. [Do your part to] let them do this with gladness, and not with sighing and groaning, for that would not be profitable to you [either].*” (Heb. 13:17 The Amplified Bible) “*Now also we beseech you, brethren, get to know those who labor among you—recognize them for what they are, acknowledge and appreciate and respect them all—your leaders who are over you in the Lord, and those who warn and kindly reprove and exhort you. And hold them in very high and most affectionate esteem in [intelligent and sympathetic] appreciation of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.*” (I Thess. 5:12-13 The Amplified Bible)

Exhort and Admonish in love those who are unruly. “*And we earnestly beseech you, brethren, admonish (warn and seriously advise) those who are out of line—loafers, the disorderly and unruly.*” (I Thess. 5:14 The Amplified Bible)

“**Encourage** the timid and fainthearted, help and give support to the weak souls [and] be very patient with everybody—always keeping your temper. [Isaiah 35:4]” (I Thess. 5:14 The Amplified Bible)

Therefore, by operating in **giving, sharing, caring, edifying, submitting, obeying, honoring, exhortation, admonishing and encouraging** we will have “**love one to another**” like Jesus commanded us in what has been called, “**The Eleventh Commandment**”.

Jesus said, in John 14:23, “*If a man loves me, he will keep my words.*” Love is as love does. In Scripture, love is never defined by what it is. It can only be defined by what it does. Agapé, God’s unconditional love, always manifests itself in action. It is like holiness which does not manifest itself in the prayer closet, but rather in the family, in the church, in school, in the streets, and in **human relationships which are a reflection of our relationship to God.**

Beloved of God let us purposely walk in the love of God always and foremost loving our Lord God with a passion; therefore, having “*love one to another*” as we continue to live as our pastor Dr. Winston C. Ridley, Jr., declared The GFBC theme for 2012, “*Living Abundantly From God’s Wells in 2012*” *Isaiah 12:3*

Resources from Dr. Ridley’s Bible Study on Consecration; “*The Amplified Bible*” by Zondervan; and “*The Woman’s Study Bible*” by Nelson.

We are one in the bond of love,
We are one in the bond of love;
We have joined our spirit with the Spirit of God,
We are one in the bond of love.

Otis Skillings
(African American Hymnal)

I give you a new commandment, that you should love one another; just as I have loved you, so you too should love one another. By this will all [men] know that you are My disciples, if you love one another—if you keep on showing love among yourselves.

John 13:34-35

Lady Bonita L. Ridley

Physical *Wssssssss*

The Heart Truth® About Heart Disease Risk Factors

February is National Heart Month, a month used to raise awareness that heart disease—the #1 killer of women—is largely preventable. [Coronary heart disease](#) (CHD) is a condition in which plaque gradually builds up inside your coronary arteries. These arteries supply oxygen-rich blood to your heart muscle. Over time, plaque hardens and can narrow your coronary arteries, or the plaque can rupture (break open) and cause a blood clot to form on its surface, both of which can limit blood flow. When the flow of oxygen-rich blood to your heart muscle is reduced or blocked, [angina](#) or a [heart attack](#) may

occur.

By adopting a healthy lifestyle, you can prevent or delay your risk for heart disease. Here are six steps you can take, starting today:

- **Eat right.** Follow a healthy eating plan, which can help prevent or reduce high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol and help you maintain a healthy weight.
- **Be physically active.** You can benefit by adding even 10 minutes at a time of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week. For major health benefits, adults should aim for at least 150 minutes (2.5 hours) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity each week.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Follow a healthy eating plan, watch out for [portion distortion](#), and stay physically active. If you are overweight or obese, work with your doctor to create a reasonable weight-loss plan.
- **Don't start smoking. If you already smoke, then quit.** Smoking can damage and tighten blood vessels and raise your risk for [atherosclerosis](#).
- **Manage stress.** Anger and negative emotions can trigger heart attacks. If you have difficulty handling life's everyday challenges, consider taking part in a stress management program.
- **Know your numbers.** Talk to your doctor about your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood glucose numbers. [High blood pressure \(hypertension\)](#), [high blood cholesterol levels](#), and diabetes are all key heart disease risk factors.

Regardless of your age, background, or health status, you can lower your risk of heart disease. Protecting your heart can begin with a simple step like taking a brisk walk, whipping up a good vegetable soup, or getting the support you need to maintain a healthy weight.

Submitted by Sister Donna Brooks

Pancakes, Anyone?

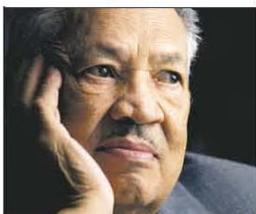
Tuesday, February 21, 2012 was an important date on the Christian calendar. Pancake Tuesday, more popularly known as **Shrove Tuesday**, Fat Tuesday or Mardi Gras, is celebrated the day preceding **Ash Wednesday**, the first day of **Lent**.

Shrove Tuesday is named for the “shriving,” confession and absolution of believers that takes place on that day. Because early Christians would fast or give up certain types of luxury as a form of penitence during the Lenten season, such as rich and fatty foods, they would commemorate Shrove Tuesday by using up ingredients like milk and eggs for one last indulgence, and making pancakes was the best way to do this. These days, many churches hold Shrove Tuesday pancake suppers as the last blowout before Lent.



In the News: The below article appeared in the Friday, February 17, 2012 edition of *The Washington Post*, Style section.

The appeal of ‘The Butler’



KEVIN CLARK/THE WASHINGTON POST
Hollywood plans to tell its version of former White House butler Eugene Allen's life story.



BRJESH SINGH/REUTERS
Oprah Winfrey might play Allen's wife, Helene, who was his partner for 65 years.

Looks like **Oprah** is headed back to the big screen: She's eyeing a starring role in “The Butler,” according to the Hollywood Reporter. The movie, directed by **Lee Daniels** (“Precious”), is based on the life of White House butler **Eugene Allen**, who was profiled by our colleague **Wil Haygood** days after **Barack Obama** was elected in 2008. Allen and **Helene**, his wife of 65 years, were especially excited to be voting for an African American presidential candidate because Allen worked at the White House from 1952 to 1986, spanning the civil rights movement and eight presidents. In a sad made-for-Hollywood twist, Helene died the night before the election, and he cast his ballot alone. After Allen's story appeared, he received a VIP invitation to Obama's swearing-in ceremony.

Actor **David Oyelowo** is Daniels's pick to play Allen (who died in 2010 at 90), while Oprah would co-star as his wife. This would be her first movie role since “Beloved” in 1998, reports the paper. Also named as part of the all-star cast: **Hugh Jackman**, **Mila Kunis** and **John Cusack**.

Ash Wednesday derives its name from the practice of placing ashes on the foreheads of adherents as a sign of mourning and repentance to God. The ashes used are typically gathered after the palms from the previous year's Palm Sunday are burned.

Lent: According to the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus spent forty days fasting in the desert before the beginning of His public ministry, where He endured temptation by Satan. Thus, Lent is described as being forty days long, though different denominations calculate the forty days differently, thus, the date of Shrove Tuesday will typically be slightly more than forty days before Easter Sunday.

2011 Christmas Celebrations

All That Jazz: On Saturday, December 3, 2011, The Music ministry presented its third annual Christmas and All That Jazz at 5 pm.

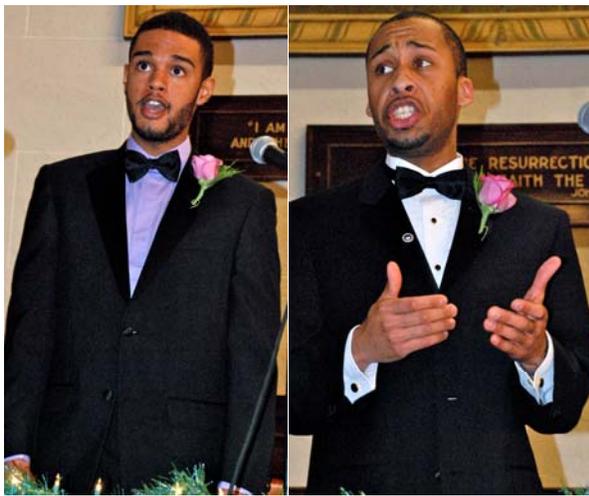
Sister Barbara Hood was the hostess once again. Deidra Johnson gave the Welcome. Perennial favorite David Tauler was featured, as well as the West Biles Trio and Owen Brown – a 16 year old who played keyboard and performed two songs, one an original. Pastor and First Lady Ridley sang a jazzy version of “The First Noel”; Quenshell Williams sang “O Holy Night”; Ebony Jackson sang “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas”; Leon Clark, Jr. sang “This Christmas”; Cilista Johnson sang “Mary, Did You Know?”; Darnell Roulhac sang “The Christmas Song”; and Nia Murphy Price sang “Do You See What I See?” with Darnell and Ebony.



Musical Men of Vision—A Royal Celebration:

On Sunday, December 18, 2011 at 3:00 pm., the Music Ministry presented a concert featuring six of the very talented, young male voices of Greater First Baptist Church and Maurice Watkins who played the marimba. Both traditional and classical songs were featured. Deaconess Helen Grymes served as the Mistress of Ceremonies. Ebony Jackson and Nia Murphy-Price were the co-chairs of the program.

Not pictured below: Terrell Lee, Kendall Brown and Norman Daniels.



Lamar Gaskins and Leon Clark, Jr.



Darnell Roulhac and Maurice Watkins

Photographs by Lenita Clark

Starting the Year With God

Our 2012 Revival Services left us with Powerful messages to go forward in 2012!

On January 8, 2012, Rev. Patrick J. Walker, Pastor of New Macedonia Baptist Church, inspired us with the message “Advancing Through Adversity,” Genesis 39: 1-2. He said to advance through adversity:

- ◆ You cannot allow your circumstances to discourage you;
- ◆ You have to remember that the Lord is with you, and;
- ◆ You must remain faithful.

On Sunday, January 15, 2012, Rev. Dr. Lloyd T. McGriff, Pastor of Galilee Baptist Church, lifted our spirits with the message, “Not Gonna Let the Haters Stop Me,” Nehemiah 2:11-20. He advised that you can’t share your vision with everyone because there are dream haters among us. To stop the Haters:

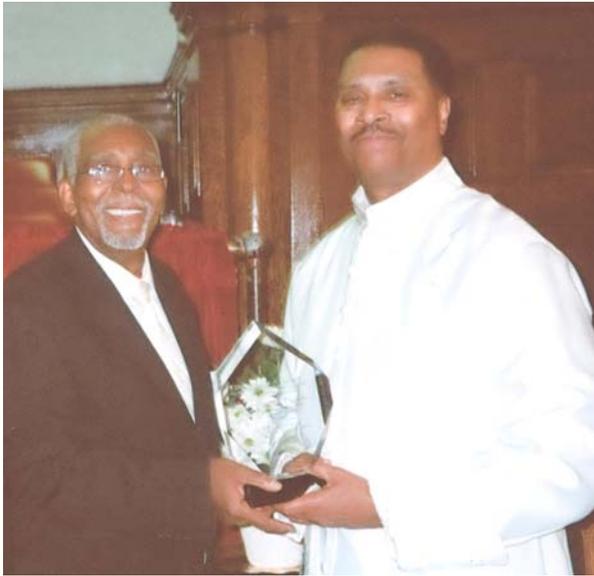
- ◆ We need to walk together;
- ◆ We need a word from God; and
- ◆ We need to testify as to what the Lord has done for us.

On Sunday, January 22, 2012, Rev. A. Michael Charles Durant, Pastor of the Tenth Street Baptist Church blessed our souls with the message, “A Promise You Can Hold Onto,” Isaiah 43:2. He advised that you can trust the promise of God:

- ◆ When there are unexpected circumstances (He will be with you);
- ◆ When there are unmovable obstacles (You will be in His care);
- ◆ When there are unrelenting conditions (He will comfort you).

Revival

GIVE HONOR TO WHOM HONOR IS DUE



Deacon James A. Jackson receiving the plaque from Rev. Dr. Winston C. Ridley, Jr.

At the morning worship hour on the second Sunday in December, 2011, The Greater First Baptist Church family, under the leadership of Reverend Doctor Winston C. Ridley Jr., Pastor, delightfully presented to Deacon James A. Jackson, a beautiful, exquisite glass plaque in recognition of faithful leadership and service to the Sunday School Ministry for over two decades as its General Superintendent. During his tenure, Deacon Jackson also taught and continues to teach the Adult No. 2 class of the Adult Department.

Under the present Superintendent, Sister Donna Brooks, Deacon Jackson now serves as the Sunday School Ministry's Advisor. Visibly moved, Deacon Jackson thanked everyone and remarked how blessed he is to be a part of such a kind and loving church family.

“AND LET US NOT BE WEARY IN WELL DOING: FOR IN DUE SEASON WE SHALL REAP, IF WE FAINT NOT.”

GALATIANS 6:9 (KJV)

Caleb's Corner

Submitted by Caleb's Class

Caleb's Class, a non-traditional Sunday School class, meets every Sunday morning to feed our spiritual bodies by discussing the word of God, and to feed our physical bodies with herbal teas and pastries.

Caleb's Class is a class that does not limit the Holy One of Israel through unbelief (Psalm 78:41). As Caleb stood in faith for forty-five years, and received what God had promised him, we in Caleb's Class stand in faith on God's word being fully persuaded, that what God has promised he will perform (Romans 4:19-21).

Students are taught directly from the word of God how to develop faith in God (Romans 10:17).

We started our class by learning and meditating upon scripture that cause us to have confidence in God. We were taught if religious tradition says one thing and God's word says the opposite, **always** choose God's word, for God's word is settled forever (Psalm 119:89). We were also taught that the same God who promises and provides salvation is the same God who promises and provides health, provision, and prosperity. In the same way God does not pick and choose who He will save; He saves all who call upon the name of the Lord; God does not pick and choose which part of His word He will fulfill. All of God's word is true, but we must stand in faith believing we receive, for scripture assures us that God is not a man that He should lie (Numbers 23:19).



One of the scriptures we studied was, “and my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in Glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). Many Christians confess this scripture when believing God for provision. But before

you can believe for this scripture you must fulfill the requirements. Verse 14 of that same chapter tells us that the church communicated (shared financially) with the man of God (Paul). Upon thanking them for their contribution to him, he told them that his God would provide their need. Caleb's class activity was to be doers of the word. Each student sowed a financial seed, named the seed, and believed God for the harvest. We then planted that seed into the life of our pastor, Rev. Ridley (the man of God). Within four weeks, two members of our class received jobs; one member received two jobs!



When one of our class member's son was falsely accused and placed in jail, we studied scriptures which, among other things, promised protection for our children (Isaiah 54:13, 54:17; Revelation 12:11; Isaiah 41:10; John 14:27; Isaiah 26:3; Psalms 118:6 Isaiah 59:19). We studied Scriptures that admonished us not to fear; for in the same way that faith causes God to move in our lives, fear will cause Satan to move in our lives. Romans 15:1-2 in The Message Bible tells us, *"those of us who are strong and able in the faith need to step in and lend a hand to those who falter and not just do what is most convenient for us. Strength is for service, not status. Each one of us needs to look after the good of the people around us, asking ourselves, how can I help."* That's exactly what the class did. We stood in strength; we stood on one accord (Matthew 18:19); and we prayed in faith; for his protection while there, and for his speedy release. Before our next class, the young man was released.



The following week we rejoiced and thanked God for answering our prayer. Class members were encouraged to name one of the many things that they were thankful to God for. As a result, the class members re-wrote Psalms 136. It was tailored to the answers they provided, i.e., *O give thanks unto the Lord, He spared my life when the*

deer ran out onto 270 in front of my car, for His mercy endureth forever. O give thanks unto the Lord for family and friends for His mercy endureth forever.



During our Pre-Valentine's Day class, students were taught about love. Scriptural references included, but were not limited to, Leviticus 19:18; John 3:16; John 13:34-35; James 2:8; 1 John 3:16-18. We learned that love is an action word. We should not only love in words, but in deed also. As a class assignment each student was given a homemade Valentines Card and a one dollar bill. Their assignment was to show their love to someone in the congregation by giving them the card with the one dollar bill enclosed. Everyone was excited, as they fulfilled *1 John 3:18* which says, *"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth."*



Won't you join us!



Gone But Not Forgotten

The following Greater First Baptist members crossed over in 2011:

*Sister Janie Richardson
Sister Thelma Brooks
Sister Pauline Gray
Sister Debora Williams
Sister Natalie Phillips
Sister Margaret Brown
Judge Norma Johnson*

Announcements

Save the Date!

Saturday, March 31, 2012

FELLOWSHIP CHOIR MEMBERS

The Music Ministry invites you to participate in the Easter Cantata, which will be held on the Second Sunday in April at 7:00 a.m.

We are planning to have **one** main rehearsal. It will be held on Saturday, March 31, 2012 from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm. We can use your beautiful vocal talents in our annual celebration of the Resurrection of Christ.

Sign up and save the date. PLEASE acknowledge your participation by contacting Carmen Peters (202) 399-4725.

God wants a **YES**, and **WE NEED YOUR VOICE**.

Thank You,
Dr. Blanche R. Hammond

The Warriors for Christ Junior Missionary Ministry would like to personally extend a warm invitation to any young people ages 7-21 years old who would like to be a part of great ministry. In this ministry, we learn about God's word and we become skilled at how to help one another. If you are interested, please see Sister Robyn W. Parks or Deaconess Lisa W. Felder.



*The Greater First Baptist Church
will be updating its
Church Directory
in the near future.*

*Further information will
be forthcoming.*

The Directory Committee



The 2012 *FOCUS* Schedule

May: Please have all articles, announcements, pictures, etc. to the FOCUS ministry by Sunday, April 22, 2012.

July: Deadline for submittals is Sunday, July 15, 2012.

October: Deadline for submittals is Sunday, September 23, 2012

January 2013: Deadline for submittals is Sunday, December 23, 2012.

Note: Extra copies of the latest FOCUS are available in the FOCUS ministry mailbox outside of the church office.