



the Centenarian

● SEPTEMBER, 1999

The official Newsletter of Centenary United Methodist Church, "The Miracle on McLemore"

"...all that God is doing with us, and through us, and sometimes, in spite of us, here at Centenary!"

The Write Reverend

It was a wonderful adventure! Imagine, spending 10 days on an exotic little tropical island sharing the love of Christ with fellow Methodists! As members of a Volunteers In Mission Team from our Annual



Rev. Herbert L. Lester, Jr.

Conference, we spent 12 days on the island of Vieques, Puerto Rico, at the Esperanzo Methodist Church. We helped to repair hurricane damage and prepare the church's day care center for the new school year. But above and beyond our physical work, we were able also to establish relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ who speak a different language and share a different and unique cultural heritage.

Vieques Island, also called La Isla Nena (small island), is a tropical Caribbean island with pristine beaches, crystal clear waters, and secluded bays. Vieques sports two of the few bioluminescent bays in the world. If you dive from the deck of a boat at night you see the water splash up in a burst of millions of lights as if fireworks were sent from undersea. As you move through the water you glow; when you resurface, thousands of sparkling lights remain on you, if only for a brief moment. On the island you see loose farm animals crossing the roads, they could be chickens, cows or horses, and you will be awakened by the sound of singing roosters at dawn. There are no traffic lights, Mc Donald's, or T-shirt-shop-laden-streets. You can expect the driver in front to stop at any minute to greet the driver in the

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Revival '99—Getting Our Faith on Track

from the Spiritual Emphasis Committee

Centenary's Fall Revival will be held on September 27 to October 1 with services at 7:00 p.m. nightly. The speaker for Monday and Tuesday nights is Rev. Janet Wolfe, pastor of Hobson UMC in Nashville. Wednesday through Friday is Rev. Cozette Garrett, associate pastor of Community of Faith Christian Church in Memphis. Music will be rendered by the Music Department of Centenary and guest choirs. There will be special features during the revival for children and youth and young adults.

Midday services with healing and anointing will be held daily with meditation delivered by Dr. Herbert L. Lester, Jr., Rev. Richard Cook and Rev. Autura Hampton. Members that need transportation to the revival are asked to contact their shepherd or the church office two weeks prior to the revival. Please continue to save pennies for the jar in the narthex and remember that all gleaners should be turned in by the fourth Sunday in September. Let's all prepare to board the Lord's Locomotive with Conductor Lester as we continue to get our faith on track.

Thought for the Month

To grow tall in faith, your life must be well rooted in prayer.

—THE PRAYER MINISTRY

All Church Conference Produces Plans For Year 2000

Centenarians met Saturday morning, August 28th, to discuss ways to start the new millennium (2001) on firm financial footings so we can continue and expand our many ministries and successes. The Ways and Means Committee of the church organized the meeting to determine the interest and perspectives of members. The response and enthusiasm of those in attendance was an indication that there is a tremendous spirit in the church to make the end of the current millennium a memorable year.

With four months to do in-depth planning, committees were identified to begin preparation for a year-long effort in four areas: (1) Major fund raising campaign to retire the indebtedness on the Family Life Center; (2) Establish a financial stewardship education program; (3) Alternative fund raising efforts such as auctions, etc. involving the church and the community at large; (4) Develop additional methods see CONFERENCE on page 3

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Staff:

Kerris Easley, James Haley II, Rev. Autura Hampton, Susanne Jackson, Chirelle Jefferson, Zakiya Larry, Michael Lewis, Susie Mickle, Dr. Marie Milam, Dorothy Tureaud, Stephanie Walker, Erma Williams, Canary Williams, Kametris Wyatt, Gloria Wyatt

Advisors/Contributors:

Emma Tom Johnson, Janice Sampson, Dr. Herbert L. Lester Jr., Rev. Richard Cook, Earlene Gladney

Join ^{the} Centenarian

Please call Susanne Jackson at 458-5634 or the church office at 774-7604, if you would like to join our staff. Fill in the Centenarian article form in the Narthex or in the office to contribute your stories. If we have erred in a story, please let us know. We welcome letters to the *Centenarian* and all other comments.

UNCF: LeMoyne-Owen College Honors Memory Bishop



A strong contingent of Centenarians were present August 12 at the UNCF tribute to Memory Bishop, Hank Aaron, Dr. Joseph Westbrook and James Gilliland. The Beacon of Hope Award Recipients were presented to a packed hall at the Adams-Mark. LeMoyne President George Johnson said that Mrs. Bishop personifies "A Beacon of Hope" through education and stewardship for all the world to see. She was a 1946 graduate of LeMoyne. She said, "I love LeMoyne!" and she challenged others to support the college as she has.

Susan Taylor commented on the inspirational spirit of Mrs. Bishop as she offered ideas to strengthen our health and souls. Ms. Taylor also specially recognized Ann Willis.

Kirk Whalum offered spirited music and shared reflections on his life including his transformation from a teenager playing *Amazing Grace* to 75 people to his performance of the same hymn with Whitney Houston before a mixed group of 75,000 people in South Africa.

Mrs. Bishop appreciated the strong support from Centenary, and everyone noted that even Rev. Richard Cook was decked out in a tuxedo (for only the third time in his life) to honor Mrs. Bishop at this black tie event.

METHODIST MEN IN SERVICE Our Youth Need Us

by Thomas J. Milam

Our youth need us. In 1995, the Juvenile Court in the United States processed more than 1.7 million delinquency cases. This number represented a 7% increase over the 1994 caseload and a 45% increase over the number of cases handled in 1986. Our youth need us.

Of all delinquency cases processed by the nation's juvenile courts in 1995, 60% involved a juvenile younger than the age of 16. These younger juveniles were involved in 64% of person offense cases, 42% of drug law violations and 54% of public order offenses. Compared with older juveniles, the caseloads of younger juveniles involved a smaller proportion of drug law violations and public order offenses, but somewhat larger proportions of person offenses and property offenses. Our youth need us.

Between 1986 and 1995, the number of delinquency cases involving white youth increased 34%, while the number of cases involving black youth increased 72%. Our youth need us.

The United Methodist Men are called to rise to the occasion and respond to the needs of our community's youth. Our youth need us.

The United Methodist Men are called to:

1. Be a resource for implementation of ministry of men in the local church.
2. To engage in evangelism by sharing the fullness of the gospel in its personal and social dimensions.
3. To clarify and speak to the identity and role of the man in contemporary society.
4. To engage in some definite Christian service.

An immediate Christian service fostered by the men of Centenary is the operation of the gymnasium in the family life center for community youth. A primary purpose of this service is to give these youth, who would otherwise be idle, a safe place to exert their energies – keeping them off the streets. Hopefully, this ministry will decrease the likelihood of their becoming involved with the criminal justice system and increase the likelihood of their becoming contributing members of the community. A by-product of the men's ministry is that it gives some community youth the opportunity to identify with men who can have a positive influence on their lives.

Presently, the men of Centenary supervise the gymnasium two days a week (5:00 – 8:00 p.m.) With additional participation, we will be able to expand beyond our scheduled Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Centenary men who are currently participating in this ministry are: Charles Nichols, Willis Durham, James Haley, Sr., Robert Sampson, Clarence Walton, Thomas Lamon, Thomas Milam, Melvin James, Frank Hannah, Emmet Crosby, Willie Walker, Walter McLaughlin and James Dupree.

Any man desiring to come on board with this ministry may contact Thomas Milam or call 332-2933.

Experiencing Lakeshore

A couple of weeks ago, I went to this really cool camp called Lakeshore United Methodist Assembly. There, I learned new songs, I met new people, and I had a great experience.

The first night of camp, we had a beach party. And at the end of it, we all had sand in our hair! Afterwards, we played some strange games-- one of them required us to stick one of our feet into a bucket of ice and try to get as many marbles with our toes as we could.

We went swimming every day. We also went kayaking and rode in the pontoon boats. When we went kayaking, I paddled in the back of the boat.

Creek stomping was fun because we got to play in a creek. Almost everyone was trying to catch crawdads. Lindsey Parker and I each caught one.

Everyday we went to G.I.O.M.BOREE to learn about ways that God is in Our Midst. We played lots of fun games and skits. We learned about Moses and the burning bush.

Even though it took 150 miles to get to Lakeshore-- for a camp like that, I think it was worth it. — **AYANNA HAMPTON**

While at Lakeshore, I had a chance to participate in arts & crafts, swimming, speed boat riding, basketball, creek stomping (hunting for crawdads) and more. Each day we attended worship and early morning praise. We would wake up every morning and attend breakfast then lunch, and dinner. In between we were allowed drinks and chips or candy for free. This was my first time at Lakeshore for a week and I had a really fun time. — **CHRIS ROSS**

A Prayer for Our College Students

by Kametris Wyatt

Lord, be with our college students as they seek Knowledge through higher education and Wisdom through Your Higher Power. Wrap Your loving arms around them, Heavenly Father, as they travel away from the comfort of family and friends to a new, different, exciting, and often-times challenging world. Open their minds so that they may receive the learning that will help them to achieve success in their future careers. Guide their feet in the Christian path that will lead to self-fulfillment and glory in Your sight. Finally, Lord, we ask that You touch their hearts so that they may always be receptive to Your Word and Your Presence in their lives. Grant them Courage to overcome life's obstacles, Perseverance to withstand the travails of college life, and Eternal Hope for brighter tomorrows. In the Name of Your Son and Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

Births by Erma P. Williams

Mr. and Mrs. Claude O. (Karla) Bynum are the proud parents of a baby boy, Kalon Mason Bynum, born on August 11, 1999, weighing 7 pounds and 10 ounces. Grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Claude (Geraldine) Bynum.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward (Elaine) Cain are the proud parents of a baby girl, Eboni Chirelle Cain, born on May 29, 1999, weighing 6 pounds and 2 ounces. Grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. N.Z. (Callie) Cain.

Wonderful, Exciting, Magical....

by Zakiya Larry

Wonderful, exciting, magical....Disneyland? Not quite. These heartfelt words describe Phillips Exeter Academy's Summer Session. As a rising junior, I, Zakiya Larry, decided to challenge myself academically and socially, so I applied for Exeter. After endless essays, applications, exams and interviews, I was accepted to Exeter, and it seemed as if my life began. Upon arriving ~ lonely, tired and hungry ~ I had to drag a ton of luggage up to the third floor of Dunbar Hall, my dormitory. The rest was history.

Outside of my accelerated Social Psychology class (one of my favorite classes), Observational Astronomy, SAT Math and Creative Writing class, I made friends from several different countries and social statuses. I had a close friend from a small village in India ~ and everything, including ice cream cones and silver forks ~ were a luxury to her. My Latin friends from Colombia, Chile and Argentina taught me Marengue and Flamenco dancing, while my Japanese roommate and our Korean friends taught me about their Eastern way of life!

I could go on and on about my friends mentioned above and even people I've met from Jamaica, the Bahamas and the Dominican, but my closest 'girls' were from deep down South, Jackson, Mississippi! In Exeter, I laughed, cried, danced, sang, performed and amassed enough memories to last a lifetime ~ and I thank God for the chance to do so!

I auditioned for a mass production of *A Mid-Summer Night's Dream* by Shakespeare and was granted the role of Titania, queen of the fairies. I worked up a killer sweat in my High-Low Cardiovascular Aerobics class, attended a jazz, chamber music and Japanese drumming concert. I performed poetry in the International Coffee House. I sang in a Cultural Assembly plus many other things ~ and yes, I attended church on Sundays. I actually found a United Methodist Church! Exeter was a world of its own, and in the structure of this world - I was tops (academically that is). After completing the full six-week session and receiving honors marks and good comments from my teachers, I was sent kicking and screaming back to everything familiar and well-known...Memphis.

Did I like Exeter? Let me just say I DID NOT WANT TO COME HOME (Sorry, Mom.) So I'm back with stereotypes crushed, mind broadened, rave reviews from my professors and a new found drive to reach my goals.

CONFERENCE FROM page 1

of receiving tithes and offerings.

Prayer will most certainly be at the center of this effort. A Day of Prayer and year-long activities are being planned to focus the entire congregation on this campaign and its goals for the year 2000 - our dedication to continue advancing and living Christian ideals.

It is hoped that every member will get involved in the year 2000 campaign. If you are interested in serving on a committee or lending support in some other way, simply contact the church office (774-7604) and say you want to be involved in planning the Year 2000 campaign.

Women Act and Advocacy in Nashville

from the General Board of Global Ministries

Earlene Gladney and Shannon Hadley from the Memphis Conference gathered with more than 200 other women August 14-20 in Nashville at the Scarritt-Bennett Center to review timely social and global issues and the action they could take to address these. Together the participants analyzed a variety of global issues affecting women, children and youth, reflected on approaches to faith-based action and advocacy; studied Biblical mandates to "do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God;" and developed concrete actions to accomplish these tasks.

"Justice work is prayer," said Traci West, the Bible Study leader. "United Methodist Women must be sold on social action as we move out into a world of violence, racism and injustice," said Chris Keels, vice president of the Women's Division and chairperson of the event.

Intertwining the Biblical studies and reflections into the rest of the seminar, participants attended one of 15 workshops that addressed issues such as the impact of welfare reform; environment and children; hate crimes; ethics and access to the Internet.

The women spread throughout Nashville for hands-on advocacy and learning. They met with various government officials and legislators; attended a Jewish synagogue to discuss the impact of hate crimes and hate speech; researched first amendment issues at a special center dedicated to those issues; and held dialogues with women in housing projects about the impact of welfare reform on their children.

Family Night

Ann Willis and Earnestyne Toney coordinated an evening of challenging puzzles, games, cards and other festivities for the crowd that gathered on Friday the 13th in the Family Life Center. Youth and adults appreciated the extraordinary salads and the activities. Fun prizes were awarded.

Welcome New Members

by Erma P. Williams

The Centenary Family would like to extend a hearty welcome to our newest members. They are Mrs. LaRhonda Rochelle Smith and Ms. Tawana Monique Campbell.

LaRhonda is the wife of Jason Smith and the daughter-in-law of Cynthia and Ollie Smith. She and Jason were married here at Centenary and she has been a regular visitor since that time. They have one son, Kenterius, and is expecting another child. LaRhonda is a member of the Eastern Star organization.

Tawana is the daughter of Mrs. Mamie Henderson and has also been a regular visitor. She is the mother of Tiffany Davis. Tiffany is a member of the confirmation class of 2000.

Centenary Calendar of Events • September 1999

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Bible Study - 6 P.M.	2 Gym Open 5-8 PM	3	4 Sun. School Teachers' Mtg - 10 A.M. Youth/Young Adult Choir - noon
5	6 Labor Day	7 Gym Open 5-8 PM	8 Older Adults - 10:00 A.M. Bible Study - 6 P.M.	9 Gym Open 5-8 PM	10	11 Prayer Ministry - 10 A.M. Youth/Young Adult Choir - noon
12 Men's Day - 10:15 A.M.	13	14 Gym Open 5-8 pm Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m.	15 Bible Study - 6 P.M. Centenarian Deadline	16 Spiritual Life Retreat - 12:20 SCI Candidates Night 7-8:30 P.M. <i>see page 7</i> Gym Open 5-8 pm United Meth. Men 7 P.M.	17 Spiritual Life Retreat - 12:20	18 U.M. Women - 10:00 a.m. Youth/Young Adult Choir - noon Worship Committee - 12 noon Spiritual Life Retreat - 12:20
19 Strength to Love dialogue about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s sermons at Centenary with Centenary-Trinity Connection-first of six monthly sessions 2-4 P.M.	20	21 Gym Open 5-8 PM Choir Rehearsal 6:30 P.M.	22 Bible Study - 6 P.M.	23 Gym Open 5-8 PM SCI Candidates Night 7-8:30 P.M. <i>see page 7</i>	24	25 Youth/Young Adult Choir - noon 2-3:15 p.m. Sacred and Secular Concert with Marvin Ching and Retirement Party at Trinity, Evergreen and Galloway
26 Unsung Heros - 10:00 A.M. Finance Committee - 12:30 P.M.	27 Healing Service 12 noon Revival - 7:00 P.M.	28 Gym Open 5-8 pm Healing Service 12 noon Revival - 7:00 P.M.	29 Healing Service & Lunch 12 noon Revival - 7:00 P.M.	30 Healing Service 12 noon Gym Open 5-8 PM Revival - 6:00 P.M.	1 Healing Service 12 noon Revival - 7:00 P.M.	

Our Jewels

by Dorothy Tureaud

There is a legendary Greek story about the lyric poetess, Sappho, who lived around 600 B.C. Asked on occasion to display her jewels, with great aplomb she presented her two stalwart sons, stating with pride, "These are my jewels." Here at Centenary, as we approach the end of this millennium, we share Sappho's opinion that our children are our jewels. Because we regard them as such treasures, it is incomprehensible to us how so many can take their welfare so lightly.

At a very early age, we commit our children to Christ by having them christened. We enroll them in Sunday School and as they grow older there are other Christian activities and organizations in which they participate. The children's message is an important aspect of our service each Sunday. Through these channels, children are able to sense their importance to us. The Methodist Women's organization has strengthened this concept to our young people by presenting, from time to time, a review titled, Centenary Jewels.

Young people eagerly anticipate participation in this beautiful affair. The name was adopted from the first kindergarten of black children in Memphis, organized by Mrs. Edith Cox, the wife of a Centenary minister and conducted at the old Centenary parsonage on Alston Avenue. Mrs. Cox called her little charges, "Mother's Jewels." She was an ideal teacher and mother who acted as a foster mother for the State of Tennessee for many homeless children.

Since Centenary was the home of the first school for Blacks in Memphis, many of the first public school teachers in the city were from this church.

Another former minister's wife, Vivian Jones, contributed to the success of Early Childhood Development. She worked as lead teacher at the Bethlehem Center, nursery and kindergarten, before going on to establish the Jessie Mahan Kindergarten, which has long been regarded as a model center. She later set up a center at Prospect UMC. At any center where she worked, parents were always eager to enroll their children.

With models like Mrs. Cox and Mrs. Jones in mind, we wonder about the caliber of people to whom parents entrust their children at this time. Recent events indicating the laissez-faire actions of some nursery school employees leaves us amazed. It is sad to reflect that even with the outcry about the seriousness of the first tragedies, terrible oversights are still occurring.

Let us hope that steps taken by the Mayor and Human Services will be enforced for the protection of our little ones. We know that there are good centers.

For more than 25 years, a HeadStart Center has been housed at Centenary. While we are not responsible for its maintenance, we are proud of its reputation. Our own Juanita Powell was lead teacher for the preponderance of its existence, and since her retirement, her former assistant Anne McVay has been director. Parents vie to have their children enrolled here because it is known to be a good center.

In contrast, many of the day care centers are set up for the monetary benefits of the owners. The personnel of these places have little or no training and are hired—not to help the children—but because they will work for minimum wages. At many centers, when parents question certain practices, they are quickly advised that the center has a long waiting list and they can remove their children. Such callous dis-

Pack the Pews Sunday

Sunday, August 15, was designated as Pack the Pews Sunday and it was just that! Friends and relatives of Centenarians turned out from churches all over the city. It was truly an inspirational worship experience. Dr. Lester delivered a powerful message in spite of the fact that he had just returned from Puerto Rico on Saturday night after being involved in a mission with the Volunteers in Ministry Team. The music rendered by the Sanctuary and Youth and Young Adult Choirs was soul stirring as they sang praises to the Lord together as a combined choir for the first time.

The Prayer and Shepherding Ministries wish to express their thanks to everyone who helped to make this effort a huge success. Let's continue to invite others to come and worship with us for as Kyndall Lewis said in her welcome, "We're not Baskin 'n Robbins or Dairy Queen, but at Centenary we have some very good Sundays!"

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opposite lane. The sun is usually out; it does not rain much in Vieques and when it does the sun usually prevails.

Our team of 10 was led by Dr. Cecil Kirk, pastor at 1st Methodist Church in Dyersburg, and his wife Tharon. Both of the Kirks have extensive experience on the mission field and their caring leadership made the experience even more meaningful.

The Esperanza Church is one of two Methodist Churches on the 4 mile wide, twenty mile long island. Their pastor, the Rev. Theodora (Ted) Escobar has served the church for the last five years. Under his leadership, the church has experienced significant growth and has developed an extensive ministry with youth and young adults. Their services were lively and energetic, much like pentecostal services in the US. We even witnessed an exorcism in one of the worship experiences. The members of this congregation, however, do not think of themselves as pentecostals because they are much more liberal in terms of dress, make-up, and general lifestyle; they are Methodist!

The US Navy and Marine Corp occupy three-fourths of the island, and there is real political unrest around the accidental death of a civilian employee during a bombing exercise. The people of the island want the military out so that some economic development can take place and the bombing, which happens about 280 days a year, stopped. Jesse Jackson arrived in Vieques the day we left the island for our return trip home to lend his support to the islanders. Unemployment on Vieques runs at almost 70%.

All-in-all it was a wonderful experience and I look forward to the opportunity to return. Would you like to go with me? Let me know!!! Perhaps we can put together our own VIM team for the trip!

regard is insupportable.

We are therefore hoping that amendments that have been proposed for improvements in all centers will be implemented and monitored closely. Let us remember that

"Jesus loves the little children
All the children of the world
Red, yellow, black, brown and white
All are precious in his sight..." Anonymous

Annual Men's Day Celebration

by Lawrence Jones, President

The men of Centenary will celebrate Annual Men's Day on Sunday, September 12, at 10:15 a.m. and 4: 00 p.m. The morning speaker will be our own minister, Dr. Herbert L. Lester, Jr. The speaker for the afternoon program is Willie McGee, a member of Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church and owner and chief instructor of Insight's A.T.A. Black Belt Academy. Mr. McGee is a motivational speaker for schools and churches. He also conducts success seminars for churches, organizations and businesses. Music will be rendered by Centenary's Male Chorus and the Male Chorus of Cummings Street Baptist Church. All members are encouraged to attend both services.

All men of Centenary are asked to wear dark suits and red ties. The men are also asked to invite at least five other men to join them for this celebration. Please be reminded of the \$100 donation that is requested of each man. Remember men, if you are a member of Centenary, you are a United Methodist Man. We hope that all men will come on board the Lord's Locomotive and be a part of not only the Men's Day Celebration, but will join the Methodist Men's Organization as well. Let's be men on the move on a mission for Christ.

Congratulations!

Andrea Merriweather, R.N. - Employee of the Month -

from St. Francis Hospital Highlights

Andrea Merriweather, R.N., Trauma Center Coordinator is "Employee of the Month" for August! Many may know her from the Customer Service Classes she teaches. Those who nominated her cited her team spirit and "can do" attitude.

Comments included: "Andrea is not assigned to patient care, but she can often be seen in the ER rendering patient care to help the busy staff." "She is ever mindful of managing costs." "She enthusiastically serves on many hospital committees and finds time to serve on the citywide Disaster Committee. "Andrea is very customer focused and doesn't mind doing whatever it takes to achieve patient satisfaction." "She spends many hours researching and preparing training classes for the staff while continuing to educate herself." "Andrea embodies what an "Employee of the Month" should be. She has an excellent attendance, has a bubbly personality, is patient focused and excels in every facet of her job." "Andrea is one of the best when it comes to extending 'Special Service...Warm Welcome' to everyone she meets."



Moving an Urban Agenda Forward

Organized people can move mountains...and this city certainly needs some improvements. Shelby County Interfaith has adopted an urban agenda that will seek candidate support for :

- \$150,000 for Meals-On-Wheels program to serve the 200 seniors currently on the waiting list;
- Economic integration for downtown and inner-city redevelopment; 1,000 affordable homes for families with incomes under \$18,000 over the next four years, and a deferred property tax program (to counter gentrification and move out/shove out efforts)
- Evaluation of MATA fund use and routes to assure that busses carry people to existing jobs and services; and appointment of two regular bus riders to the MATA Board; and
- Convene appropriate parties to achieve affordable home access to computer technology and the Internet for all Memphis households.

Centenarians are encouraged to attend a forum with City Council Candidates Thursday, Sept. 16, from 7-8:30 p.m. at Cane Creek Baptist Church, 1785 Elvis Presley Blvd. A forum with Mayoral candidates will be held Thursday, Sept. 23, at St. Luke's UMC, 480 South Highland, from 7-8:30 p.m. Rev. Lester chairs the clergy caucus and we have committed to bring at least six people to the City Council forum and at least 10 to the Mayoral forum.

A Convocation of Parents, Students and Concerned Community People will also be held Saturday, Oct. 9 from 10 a.m. to noon at Mississippi Blvd Christian Church. More in the next Centenarian.

Three Good Reasons to Serve Your Church

from Emma Tom Johnson

Before you say no when asked to take a job in your church, think about some of the reasons why you should say yes. There are at least three good reasons why every Christian ought to serve in church.

1. Your Christian life needs a service outlet. Nothing helps you to grow as a Christian like putting your faith into practice by teaching, singing, ushering, or serving on a church committee.
2. You have a testimony to share with others. The reason why you are asked to serve is that your fellow Christians have confidence in you and your ability. Your Christian testimony will be a good influence in the lives of those whom you lead and serve.
3. Your church needs you. There is no way for our church to get its work done unless members volunteer their time to teach and lead. When you accept a place of responsibility, you help our church move forward in the name of Christ.

Getting Our Power from the Main Man

As we continued with our study of the gospels, we spent several weeks studying John. John's gospel reflects the promise of life, abundant and eternal. Jesus, through John's eyes, is the giver of life. John's gospel is unlike the gospels of Matthew that focused on the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecy, Mark which spoke of the Hidden Messiah, and Luke which targeted the Least, the Last and the Lost in relation to Jesus.

John describes not just one - but four trips of Jesus to Jerusalem, where tension mounted with every journey. The Pharisees and others felt more and more threatened by the presence and miracles of Jesus.

As we shared our thoughts about John's gospel, we also tried to transform parts of Chapter 10 of this gospel to modern terms. Here's one of the versions, written mostly by Gloria Wyatt (with help from Vietta Lewis, Emma Stokes, Minnie White and Susanne Jackson)

Listen up, Dudes. I am y'all's leader. You did not listen to those low-lives, the Crypts and the Bloods, who came before me. I am The Man. If you listen and believe in me you will be saved. You will have a place to stay and countless blessings. Those other outcasts, including the Vice Lords and the Gangster Disciples, will destroy and murder anything that they can get their hands on. I came here to give you the 4-1-1 on how to clean up your act and have peace and the good life and all that it has to offer.

I am The Man because I laid down my life for you. Those rascals are not who they claim to be because when the going gets tough, the tough get going, and they will leave you high and dry, suffering alone. Again, I tell you, I am The Man! I keep telling you I laid down my life for you! I know my people. You need me. There are other homeys out there wandering around aimlessly who do not belong, but I am determined to win them over, too, so we can get this world on track and start living as One like my Father taught.

And speaking of my Father, I know he loves me. I am doing what he has commanded me to do that's why I laid down my life to try to reach the masses, but I will rise again.

I refuse to allow anyone to take my power away from me. I get my power from the Main Man!

We acknowledged that often (maybe too often), we don't know when to come in out of the rain. By ourselves, we don't even know what we need. Yet, with God's grace we are given an abundant life—if only we will receive it and respond to God's call.

We reflected, too, on the commands given to disciples and the promises Jesus shared that the presence and power of the Holy Spirit would be with them in every trial and tribulation. We spoke of Jesus as Advocate, Comforter and Counselor to us all.

We renewed our discussions about how difficult building community is in this nation where individualism is so prevalent and so promoted. And we considered how hard it is to share the Good News, especially to youth, with songs and stories written in such different times with such distant cultures.

Many of our hymns were written in the 1700s and 1800s with images echoing those times. We agreed that we must be more open to a multitude of means to reach out to others in our discipleship.

We tried to imagine how the disciples might have felt

as Jesus washed their feet in this humble act of service. We reflected on the incredible love he exemplified as he washed the feet of all the disciples — even Judas — who he knew would betray him. God gave us a choice — to love God or not. For where there is no choice, there is no real love.

Jesus called Peter and the other disciples to "Feed my sheep" and "Follow me." He did not promise a life without troubles, but promised that the Holy Spirit would be with them as they each bore their own cross. We, too, are called to this discipleship. How do we respond?

Disciple Bible Study continues on Wednesdays from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

As a Christian: Doing What Comes Naturally II—No Apathy or Complacency Here!

by Germaine Merriwether

- This means that Christians are not to become apathetic when involved in the service of the Lord, but are to maintain a productive enthusiasm in this endeavor. For instance, many of us want to hold on to traditional worship services. There are others who are in favor of contemporary services, even with their pastors in casual dress...sometimes. These attitudes are normal, but we can run the risk of becoming too apathetic or complacent.
- This also means that former "Who's Who" personalities in God's work are forced into becoming merely "Who" people. Maybe this reflects that uncomfortable adage, "It's not what it used to be" or "What was done back then," but "It's what is being done now" or "What is going on now!?" We realize that historically, time should bring about progressive change. But what about us, if this were basically true. Would we be here, if not for some past occurrence? And aren't we glad we're here? No apathy or complacency here!
- Finally, this means that when these "Who" people are frequently asked about not being in church services on Sunday mornings, they should fervently say, "I've been there, even before you and done that; such as singing in the choir to great vocal heights. Some of us have already honored our great church in the past. What we do now, we do quietly to keep alive this "Miracle on McLemore." No apathy or complacency here.

Centenarians,

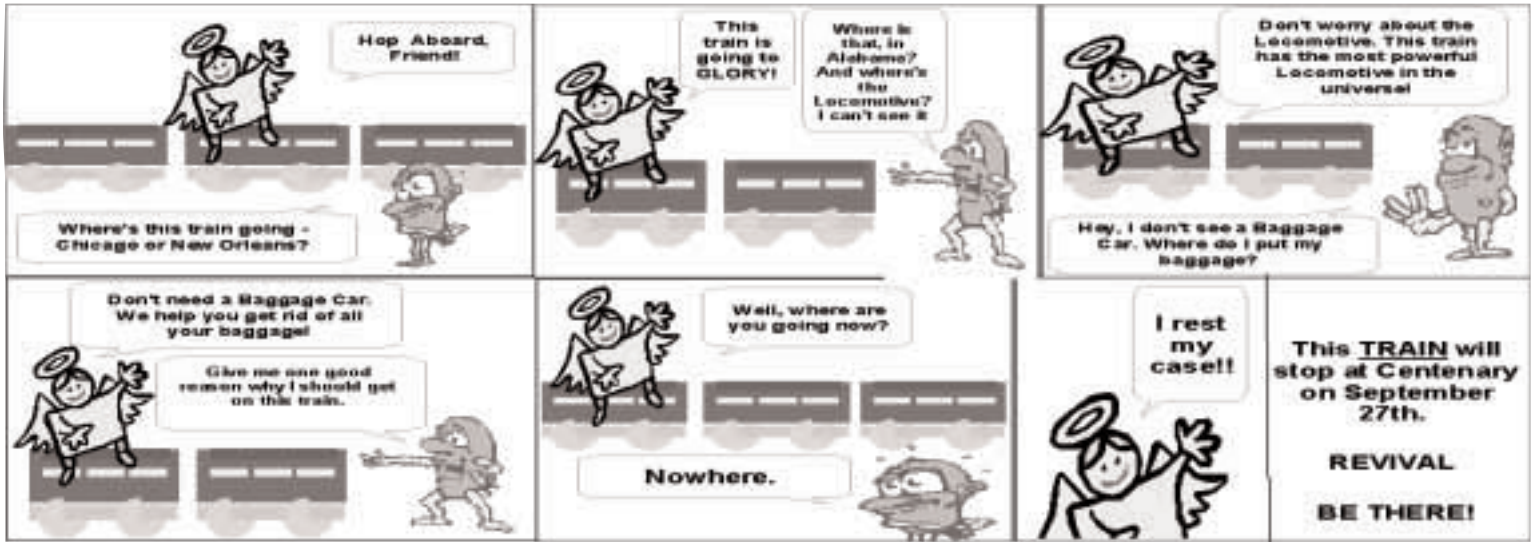
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Southern Pastors Tackle Bats...

via the Internet

Three pastors from the South were having lunch in a diner. One said, "Ya know, since summer started I've been having trouble with bats in my loft and attic at church. I've tried everything--noise, spray, cats--nothing seems to scare them away."

Another said, "Yeah, me too. I've got hundreds living in my belfry and in the attic. I've even had the place fumigated, and they won't go away."

The third said, "I baptized all mine, and made them members of the church, gave them a pledge card...Haven't seen one back since!"

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