

From the Mother's Board corner: "My writing speaks for me"

She sits every Sunday on the second pew of the mother's corner, always in white, always with a smile and a twinkle in her eye.



It is from this place that Mother Ella Mae Merritt has endeared herself to thousands of Antioch members as she dishes out inspirational messages so stirring that it isn't unusual to hear snippets repeated in the sermons of some of Antioch's sons.

"Writing has always been my favorite pastime," she says, for many years, the congregation has benefited not only from her passion for the written word

but also from her kindness and compassion, gifts she quietly impart almost always in passing, sometimes in her special brand of wisdom scribbled on a piece of paper; other times in the small box of raisins or peppermint candy she gave.

That same caring has become a hallmark of her role as president of the Mother's Board, a position she has held since January 2006.

Mother Merritt said she loves her church and her pastor, the Rev. Cameron M. Alexander, but there is nothing she cherishes above God and his word, especially Psalm 121, her favorite scripture.

Sis. Mary Hicks called Mother Merritt a true Antioch pioneer and godly example all of us should emulate.

"She is an effective witness for Christ," Hicks said. Who could argue with that?

The deadline for October issue contributions is September 14, 2008.

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The Church at Antioch

Bible-based, Christ-centered, Holy Spirit-led, Mission-bound • Fellowship, Evangelism, Doctrine, Stewardship

September 2008

Volume 1, Issue 7

Moment of Silence: Antioch holds 9/11 observances

At the September 7th worship services, Antioch Baptist Church North will stop to recognize its First Responders, Ushers, Security and Health Ministers. Some will pray. Some will simply pause and remember that fateful day now simply known as 9/11.

It will be a show of solidarity with thousands of others who will pause to honor those serving in the armed forces and to remember those who were killed. It will also be a time to pray for the families who have lost loved ones and for the political and military leaders.

Members of the Youth Division, wearing red ribbons, will light a candle in memory of lives lost.

The ritual, which has become more common as people seek to embrace diversity of thought and faith, is a mournful reminder of things lost; a way to engage in a solemn,

Continued on page 6



Sis. Brenda Edwards: a phenomenal woman

From addiction to doctorate

It was a few days before Christmas 2001 and Brenda Edwards, then a supervisor for the state Department of Children and Families, laid down to sleep in her car at the West Lake MARTA station.

Edwards, who been a crack addict for 15 years, kept the engine running to stay warm.

That's when the idea hit her.

"Why not go to Antioch?" thought Edwards.

Nearly seven years later, Edwards is clean and helping other women to end their substance abuse addictions through Antioch's ministries.

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Youth encourage others and themselves



Amber Ponder

A church-wide prayer breakfast, back-to-school fellowship, and a talent show are just some of the events that have kept the youth of Antioch busy in recent months.

Since accepting the leadership torch passed to them in July from Antioch's men, they have embodied the spirit of

Continued on page 2

Church attendance boosts student GPAs

If you want to boost your teenager's grade-point average, take the kid to church, or a new study suggests, find some similar social activity to involve them in.

Researchers found that church attendance has as much effect on a teen's GPA as whether the parents earned a college degree. Students in grades 7 to 12 who went to church weekly also had lower dropout rates and felt more a part of their schools, the study showed.

On average, students whose parents received a four-year college degree average a GPA .12 points higher than those whose parents completed high school only. Students who attend religious services weekly average a GPA .144 points higher than those who never attend services, said Jennifer Glanville, a sociologist at the University of Iowa.

The study identified several reasons the students do better:

Continued on page 11

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

“Seek Ye His Face”
Rev. C. M. Alexander



The following are excerpts taken from Pastor Alexander's sermon on the tragic events of September 11, 2001.

We are experiencing something that is entirely new to us. The sight of the trade towers being demolished, the pentagon attacked, and the other tragedies say to us that we're being introduced to a new era of terror. I wish I had all of the answers but God has reserved some things to himself until we all get to heaven, so our prayers and our bereavement are with those who have loved ones, relatives, friends who have not been found.

While I do not know the answers, I know what the response is on the part of those who believe in God. We need to pray for our leaders as they struggle to find a response to what has happened.

We've been trying to put a face and a name to this tragedy because we know how to respond when we see a face or hear a name. I don't think this has a face or a name. I think the bottom line is sin, and one of the step children of sin is hatred.

It is time to get right with God and do it now. That has been our theme for the last 3 months. I didn't know, until yesterday, why God gave it to us . . . and do it now.

I don't know about you but when things happen, I first seek God's direction through prayer and then I ask the Lord to guide me to His word. You have to trust God. When you get to where you can't go any farther, you have to trust God because he knows.

. . . and I would like to recommend His word to you in 2 Chronicles 7:14 This is God's answer to Solomon's questions raised in the 6th chapter:

If my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn away from their wicked ways, then would I hear from heaven and would forgive their sins and will heal their lands.

Those are the conditions. Then will I hear from heaven, not from the White House. I waited patiently to hear from the President, but while I was waiting for him to get some place safe, I heard from heaven. The God I serve can be called anytime, anywhere, under any circumstances. Thank God, Almighty, we are connected, connected to heaven. Heaven told me to read what I just shared in Chronicles. Remind people to take some time to hear from heaven. Let heaven talk to you. God has something else to say about this, and I am waiting unceasingly to hear from heaven.

I will forgive their sins. That's what we need and then we will hear from heaven.

Pastor C. M. Alexander
September 16, 2001

Continued from cover: Youth...

Paul's words in the 14th chapter of 1 Timothy: "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift."

More than happy to take their rightful place in the church, they have read scripture during Sunday services, prayed and gathered in fellowship with one another.

"I'm excited about being a part of the youth division," said Javetz Hudson, 13, son of Jasmine Mayfield. Hudson said youth participation has been so inspiring that he'd like to see one of the youth deliver a sermon one Sunday morning.

Sermon or not, Amber Ponder, 10, daughter of Marcus and Benicia Ponder, said the youth ministry has enjoyed taking on a leadership role and coming together to have fun and serve Christ.

Twins Kennedy and Kalyn Marks, 10, said their goal was to be active in as many activities as possible.



Kennedy and Kalyn Marks

"We also want to encourage more youth to participate in the church activities as well," said the daughters of Lilton and Allison Marks.

The youth wrap up their primary leadership of services and church-wide events later this month. The group will pass the torch to Antioch's Family Ministry.

Continued from cover: Attendance boosts student GPAs

-They have regular contact with adults from various generations who serve as role models.

-Their parents are more likely to communicate with their friends' parents.

- They develop friendships with peers who have similar norms and values.

- They're more likely to participate in extracurricular activities.

Those factors account for only half the predicted effect, said Glanville.

"There are two directions you can go with this research," she said. "Some might say this suggests that parents should have their kids attend places of worship, or, if we use it to help explain why religious participation has a positive effect on academics, parents who aren't interested in attending church can consider how to structure their kids' time to allow access to the same beneficial social networks and opportunities religious institutions provide."

Other studies have shown that regular church-goers breathe easier. And kids whose parents go to church are better behaved and more well-adjusted. In each of these studies, the researchers cite the social-network and psychological benefits

of churches.

Glanville and colleagues David Sikkink and Edwin Hernandez of the University of Notre Dame analyzed data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, a nationally representative sample of 7th- through 12th-graders that began in 1994. Students from 132 schools in 80 communities participated.

Kids who attended church also were more likely to have friends with higher GPAs who skipped school less often, Glanville said.

The study also showed whether the teens said religion was important to them.

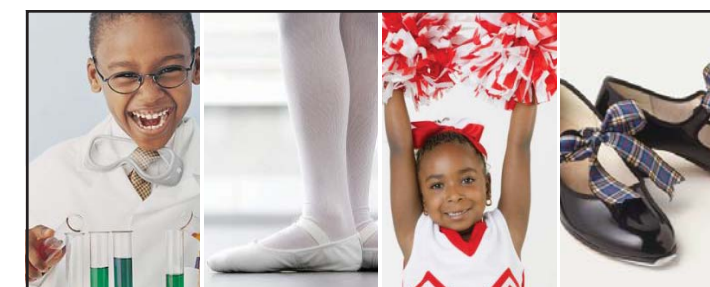
"Surprisingly, the importance of religion to teens had very little impact on their educational outcomes," Glanville said. "That suggests that the act of attending church -- the structure and the social aspects associated with it -- could be more important to educational outcomes than the actual religion."

Religious-service attendance had the same effect across all major denominations, the researchers found. The results are detailed in the winter 2008 issue of the Sociological Quarterly. (From LiveScience.com)

Birth month fellowship



Members of the July birth month gathered recently to celebrate their birthdays at Maggiano's in Cumberland Mall. The meal and free Death-by-Chocolate and Cheesecake and was sumptuous!



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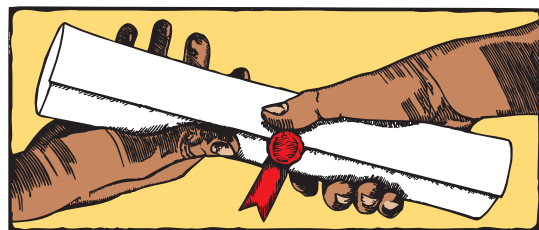
Scholarship application deadline approaching

Antioch's Scholarship Ministry doesn't just talk about helping young people – it does what it says.

The ministry, under the leadership of the Rev. Cameron M. Alexander, has grown in recent years from awarding scholarships to graduating high school seniors to now providing support to upper classmen, through book assistance scholarships and memorial scholarships.

For the 2008 school year, 14 high school graduates received scholarships and are now enrolled in various colleges across the United States.

Book Assistance Scholarships and Memorial Scholarships for the second semester of this school year will be awarded in November 2008. Interested applicants may apply for one of



the following:

- The Sherri Spann Memorial Scholarship (Education, Music or Service to Humanity)
- The Sharon Wright Willis Memorial Scholarship (Elementary or Secondary Education)
- The Luther and Lenora Cain Memorial Scholarship (all majors)
- The William "Bill" Harding Memorial Scholarship (all majors)

--The Book Assistance Scholarship (all majors)
Contact any member of the scholarship ministry for an application. Watch the Sunday bulletin for deadlines.

The scholarship ministry extends thanks and appreciation to the church family for the generous commitment and support to Antioch's young people.

Continued from cover: "phenominal woman"

Edwards, 44, also is working on her doctorate degree in counseling.

"It's been a long haul," Edwards said, reflecting on her past and how far God has brought her.

Edwards' friends and colleagues describe her as a "phenominal woman" who is a major blessing in how the church helps those with substance abuse addictions.

"She is a very pleasant change in the way we look at the holistic views of recovery," said the Rev. Terry Hightower, program director of Antioch Urban Ministries Inc. "It's not just about the dope. It's about the whole person. It's about mental health. It's about spiritual health. It's about physical health."

Edwards' story of redemption and recovery began in earnest on a cold December morning in the Antioch parking lot. She went inside anticipating a fix to her addiction.

Edwards got something else.

"They fed me. I didn't go there to eat," she said. "I wanted them to fix me."

Of Antioch, Edwards continued, "Your basic needs are met when you walk in the door."

Edwards was told to come back to Antioch the day after Christmas. The plan was to enroll her in Ruth's Place for its substance abuse recovery program. However, there was a problem. Edwards said she had 63 warrants for her arrest for writing bad checks.

She was allowed to stay at Ruth's Place for 30 days. At the end of her stay, Edwards turned herself into the authorities. However, she wasn't alone. AUMI wrote a letter of support.

The letter apparently helped. Dougherty County officials put Edwards on probation. Lee County authorities ordered her to three weeks in jail. Sumter County told her to finish the program at Ruth's Place.

Edwards stayed at Ruth's Place for six months. Unlike other substance abuse recovery programs, Antioch's recovery included Bible study and singing hymns.

The focus on spirituality was vital to her recovery.

"It made me want to change my life and be a better person and help people," Edwards said.

Edwards moved to Lydia's place when the program ended and she was asked for a favor. Start a substance treatment program there.

"You gotta be kidding me," thought Edwards, who was just six months clean. "I didn't feel like I was worthy."

Today, she does intake screenings at AUMI, manages Ruth's Place and Lydia's Place.

And yes, she's working on that Ph. D.

Edwards credits God for it all.

"The reason I know it was God is because I couldn't do this on my own."



In last month's *Wisdom to Live By* article, we mistakenly referred to Rev. Carlton Williams as Presiding Minister of Lakewood Mission. He is actually the Presiding Minister of the Madison House. We apologize for the error.

BIBLE QUIZ ANSWERS: 1. David; Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12:24) 2. Haman (Esther 3:1) 3. Father of King David (1 Samuel 16:11-13) 4. Great-grandson (son of Enoch, who was son Cain) (Genesis 4:18) 5. Noah (Genesis 5:25-29) 6. Nephew (Genesis 12:5) 7 A. (Genesis 22:21)

Dodson talks about her first love

If there is a scripture that best describes how Jacque H. Dodson is empowered to lead the BWT Verse Speaking Choir, she says it's Proverbs 5:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Dodson's path to the BWT Verse Speaking Choir started with the woman for whom the group was named.

In the mid-1970s, the Rev. Cameron Alexander charged the late Sister Beverly Willis Terrill with creating a women's choral speaking group as a "special treat" for Women's Day.

The choir was such a success that Pastor Alexander immediately declared the "Verse Speaking Choir" a "specialty" choir and the group was added to Antioch's choir schedule.

Under the direction of Terrill, the choir quickly grew to include male members. Brother Joseph Malbrough was one of the first male members and he is still an active member.

Now Malbrough participates under the direction of Dodson, wife of Dea. Milton Dodson and a member of Antioch since 1977.

In the beginning, being a member of the choral speaking group automatically made Dodson part of the Verse Speakers Choir. At the time, Dodson says her first love was singing. Dodson was a member of Psalm 150 briefly. She also was a very active member of the W. M. W. Gospel Choir for many years.

As the years passed, the Verse Speaking Choir became a vital part of Dodson's service to God. She says she allowed God to direct her path. Sister Terrill made Dodson assistant director.

Dodson says she was "abundantly blessed" to "sit at the feet" of her friend Terrill to watch, learn, listen, fellowship and mimic her unique God-given talent. As Terrill's health declined, she charged Dodson with the responsibility of directing the choir and making sure that the group thrived with its unique presentations of praise to God.

"I believe with all my heart and soul that I was chosen, not just by Beverly, but by God for this ministry," said Dodson. "I would never have believed or foreseen that I would not be singing but speaking and certainly would not have believed that I would be writing."

Terrill went home to be with the Lord in February 1998. To honor her memory, Pastor Alexander officially renamed the choir, the Beverly Willis Terrill Verse Speaking Choir and Dodson was officially named director of the group.

During the past 10 years, Dodson says God has blessed her "exceeding abundantly above all" in her work.

"I am humbled every time [the Verse Speaking Choir] stands to speak a word for Him that I have written because the words are completely, divinely inspired by God," said Dodson, who considers her talent "an awesome gift."

Selections by the Verse Speakers vary depending on the occasion but Dodson hopes the congregation gets three main things from the verse speakers — information, encouragement, and

maybe even a laugh. The group speaks poems, hymns, scripture, scriptural readings and original selections.

The choir's roster has evolved many times during Dodson's tenure but as members leave, God replenishes the group with others that possess that peculiar quality that only a verse speaker understands.

The group, which has about 30 members, has been invited to speak at a number of places and events including Wheat Street Baptist Church, the Music Extravaganza of the General Missionary Baptist Convention USA Inc., weddings, anniversaries, at most of the mission churches, and the churches of the sons of Antioch.



The group also accompanied Pastor Alexander to New Jersey to speak for the Rev. Calvin McKinney and to Jacksonville, Fla. to speak for the Rev. Jermaine Simmons. In addition, Dodson said others have contacted the group seeking assistance with starting their own Verse Speaking Choir.

During the second quarter of the church year, the Men Division's Brother David Vaughn organized and directed a male Verse Speaking choir. Several members of the men's group have since joined the group under Dodson's leadership.

Along with Brother Joseph Malbrough, Sister Marsha McCracken (the assistant director) and Sister Phyllis West are original members that continue to serve.

Taking the mission a step further — at the 2007 church conference, Pastor Alexander assigned Dodson the Youth Verse Speaking Choir for 2008.

When asked by the pastor and others "how does she do it?" Dodson responds: "Not by Jacque's might, nor by Jacque power, but by the spirit of the Lord of hosts."

All are welcome to join the adult or youth speaking choirs. Adult rehearsal is 6:30 p.m. Mondays downstairs in the Fellowship Hall.

The youth group, which has about 30 members on the roll, rehearses from 6:30-7 p.m. Tuesdays in Room 8.

While Dodson is directing the youth group, she also is seeking other adults to work with the younger group.

Antioch holds variety show

The Apollo Theatre, The Fabulous Fox, and maybe even Broadway could not come close to the talent displayed last month during Showtime at Café 590.

The variety show, hosted by Antioch's Youth Division, featured some of the church's most talented who turned out once again to honor Rev. Cameron Alexander as he celebrated his 39th pastoral anniversary.

Members sang and danced the night away, sometimes as Michael Jackson, sometimes gospel great Shirley Caesar and other times as Stephanie Mills and Chris Brown.

They read poetry, performed gymnastics and modeled the latest fashions.

"We had a lot of fun with this, but the participants put in a lot of hard work," said Sis. Ashley Phillips when asked how the show came together.

Phillips, mistress of ceremonies along with Brandis Rencher, Khadijah Jones, and Khalil Jones (master of ceremonies), said the youth worked well together, managing the flow of the program.

"Antioch can throw a party," said Pastor Alexander at the end of the show. "We were all amazed at the talent that was displayed."

But nothing, he said, can compare to Antioch fellowship. *Visit the Antioch web site to see photos from this event!*



One man's trash is another man's treasure

The Trash to Treasure Etcetera Shoppe opened in the 590 Building August 16 to rave reviews.

Over 50 members browsed and many of them purchased items donated by the Antioch membership. Items included jewelry, fine crystal, designer handbags, home furnishings and toys.

There was literally something for everyone.

"I purchased some really unbelievable items. I spent a small amount and got some great values," said Jacque Dodson. "This concept is terrific and displays a great effort on behalf of the women of Antioch. I would like to see this again, maybe the next time we can do a hat swap."

Proceeds from the shop will go towards Antioch's 10 & 10 Free Will Offering to help underwrite the cost of church improvements.



Date	Time	Event	Location
9/6_Sat	9am	Churchwide Prayer Breakfast	Fellowship Hall
9/7_Sun	8/11am	9/11 Observance	Sanctuary
9/17_Wed	6:30pm	Baptism/Right Hand of Fellowship	Sanctuary
9/20_Sat	9am	Churchwide Prayer Breakfast	Fellowship Hall
9/22-23_Mon-Tue	7pm	Family Revival	Sanctuary
9/28_Sun	8/11am	Youth Culminating Service	Sanctuary

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Musician urges others to success

Alfred Pinkston believes that the future is now and that we must prepare our youth to dream, imagine, and create because the future depends upon their successes today.

Dreaming, imagination, creativity and success come to mind when talking about Pinkston, the fourth of seven children, it's hard to imagine that Pinkston, Antioch's Choir Director, grew up very shy. Pinkston says a severe stuttering problem made him that way.

But after 48 years as a music educator, he has overcome stuttering through his talent. He says God gave him the gift of music, at least for that purpose. Because of his own condition, Pinkston is an advocate for special needs children.

"God gave me the talent and positions to pave the way and to make it easier for other musicians with their God-given talents to achieve everything in music that He has in store for them," said Pinkston.

While he urges others to success, Pinkston's own successes are a lengthy list indeed.

He served as head of Antioch's Music Ministry in 2007. Outside of church, Pinkston is credited with rebuilding the music program at Florida Memorial University.

Thanks to Pinkston the program grew to include majors in jazz studies, church music, and popular music, in addition to the existing one in music education. The number of majors increased from eight to more than 125 during his first three years.

The program is one of a few to recognize steel pan as an applied area of concentration. And its curriculum is primarily designed to recognize the non-traditional students with years of professional experiences. Pinkston is both an educator and musician with experience in teaching, performance, and administrative experience in public and private education, church and social affairs.

While serving as supervisor of Music for the Broward School District (Flor-

ida), the fifth largest school district in the nation, Pinkston was recognized as one of "Six warriors for music education" by a national publication for his efforts to combine music and high technology. Another national publication recognized the Broward School district's music program as No. 1 in the nation for combining music education with high technology.

Pinkston, who is married to Martha R. Pinkston, is credited with creating the present performing arts program for the district and working with the district's architects to design music classrooms and auditoriums to prepare the students for the future. Additionally, he created a musical instrument repair shop.

Although he has academic credentials from Florida A&M University (B.S. in Music Education), the University of Minnesota (M.A. in Music Education), and the University of Miami (Ph.D. in Music – completed in two years), he has maintained a strong bond with those who have accomplished their musical skills through the oral tradition.

He is a firm believer in "playing by ear," combined with playing by written music. He also believes that no two performances should sound exactly the same. Also, performing musicians should be composers, arrangers, and improvisers so that they can best communicate the original composers' expressions to the listeners.

Among his wealth of musical experiences, he became a church musician at the same time he started formal music training in sixth grade. He continues to be involved in church music – serving as Dean of Music for the Mount Olive Baptist Church in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.



Because of his academic credentials and church music experience, he was selected by the U.S. Air Force in Europe to serve as a choir and organ consultant to work with various air force bases in England and Germany. He also served as a consultant to choral music in the world of electronic music from 1988 to 1991 at Bethune Cookman College.

He is an active performing musician in the community, as he requires his staff to be. He released a solo piano CD of inspirational music – "Oliver," titled in honor of his late father, the Rev. O.V. Pinkston. He plays all types of music – from blues to jazz to pop to gospel to classical. One of his goals is to make it possible for professional musicians, who never learned to read music or get a degree in music, to earn the degree by establishing a program that will combine their professional musical experiences with traditional academics.

"God gave me the talent and position to pave the way and to make it easier for other musicians with their God-given talents to achieve everything in music that He has in store for them," he said.

BIBLE QUIZ

All in the Family

Seven quick questions – all asking who was related to whom

1. Who was Solomon's father? His mother?
2. What Old Testament villain was the son of Hammedatha the Agagite?
3. Who was Jesse?
4. Was Irad Adam's grandson or great-grandson?
5. Who was Methuselahs most famous grandson?
6. What relation was Lot to Abraham?
7. Were Abraham's brother Nahor's two eldest sons named: A–Huz and Buz; B–Huz and Muz; C–Fuz and Suz; OR D–Luz and Shuz

ANSWERS ON PAGE 10

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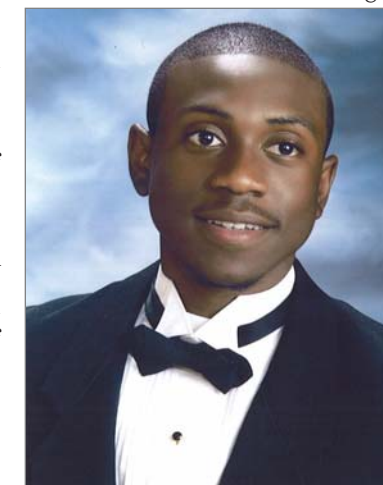


On being a junior deacon: A first person look

Being a junior deacon, in my opinion, is the first step to becoming a deacon of the church.

I remember as a young boy watching my dad attend meetings that only deacons were privy to. However, I did not understand why a church with as many folks as I saw on Sundays, only had a few men in black that would be asked to attend those meetings with the pastor. Of course, as I got older things started to fall in place.

It was last summer, during a Wednesday night service, out of the blue, Rev. Cameron Alexander appointed me to lead a group of young men my age and called this group, Junior Deacons. I was honored, but at the same time, I was lost for words and could not remember any of the names of my friends who were of the same age. I was also clueless as to what we were to do. I called my dad for help and he told me before he became a deacon he too was a junior deacon.



As time moved on, I realized being a junior deacon meant taking on the responsibility of assisting the deacons in lifting the offering and not being afraid to lend your voice to support the preacher with your Amens, so to speak.

As I write this, I can't help but remember the late Deacon Bill Harding who was a great supporter of this ministry. He was always happy to see us young guys on duty, leading devotions. He realized the importance of training junior deacons to some day take our rightful place in the church.

Since that fateful Wednesday night when Pastor Alexander established our ministry, I realize what that means. Being a junior deacon is more than just coming to church every Sunday. It is being able to continue the role outside the church and most importantly, to have the love of God in my heart.

(Junior Deacon Deshion Cochran is 18 years old and a freshman at Clark Atlanta University.)

Making the right choices; there are consequences

Youth get a dose of life lessons over breakfast

It's an old and often-used saying, but it's also something that every kid should hear over and over again: "there are consequences for your actions."

That was the theme for the second church-wide Prayer Breakfast, sponsored Aug. 16 by the Youth Division. The theme was "Making the Right Choices, There are Consequences."

Speakers included Chandra Wilson, a child advocacy attorney for Fulton County Juvenile Court; Sylvia Lester, attorney guardian ad litem for the Juvenile Court in Douglas County; and, Tonya Austin, Atlanta police officer.

Each directed their presentations to both youth and their parents, focusing on the importance of making good decisions and realizing that when you don't there are consequences for your actions.

Wilson and Austin gave examples of youth who committed crimes and are now being treated in the courts as adults. They also talked about the importance of being wise when picking the people with whom you associate. Sometimes a person can be guilty because they are with the wrong person or in the wrong place, said Austin.

Lester emphasized the importance of good behavior and dis-



cipline in school. She explained to participants that a child's educational records could follow them for a very long time. She also encouraged parents to deal with their children while they are young to avoid heartbreaking issues when they are older.

The youth and parents in attendance also received steps and health tips for a successful school year from Dr. Stephanie Smith Greene, science facilitator at Sylvan Hills Middle School, and from Jamil Woolridge, a registered nurse for Atlanta Public Schools. They both emphasized the importance of getting good rest and eating well to enhance academic performance.

The Church At Antioch is looking for you! Proud of the job you do or want to nominate your sister or brother in Christ to be featured in an upcoming issue of *The Church At Antioch*? E-mail your story idea to Sis. Gracie Staples at gstaples@ajc.com.

Meet Deacon Clarence Anderson...

When Deacon Clarence Anderson leads the medley beginning with "It's a Highway to Heaven," his animation and joy make you want to get up and get on that highway. A deacon at Antioch for the past 14 years, he also has served as director of Christian Education and enjoys teaching the Word of God, which he does with the same enthusiasm and excitement for the Lord evident in his singing.

Q: What do you most like about serving in the Deacon's Ministry, and what excites you about being a member of Antioch?



Dea. Anderson & wife Debra

A: Serving the people of God is what I like most when it comes to the Deacon's Ministry. The thing that excites me as a member of Antioch is the love of the congregation. In my 30 years of membership, I have learned that the Antioch

members will embrace you in good times and bad, failures and successes, struggles and accolades.

Q: What is your favorite hymn, and how did you develop your love for music and musical ability?

A: My favorite hymn is "Lord I Would Come To Thee." I came from a musical family. They started me with piano lessons at eight years old. My singing ability is a God-given talent.

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sacred act.

These brief communal acts are appealing, experts say, because they allow people the freedom to "craft their own ritual, to fill the time and space with whatever suits them."

Participants --- whether at a church or synagogue, in a football stadium or on MARTA --- can pray, but they can also think about a favorite poem, a special memory or about the country in general.

It's one small sign of the increasing cultural sensitivity that we're all grappling with, experts said, especially in public ceremonies where there is a greater hesitation to frame those rituals in one particular faith.

It is hard to pinpoint when these observances began, but historians believe they date back to at least the Colonial era, when Americans had fast days as communal expressions of sorrow, said Steven Mintz, professor of history at the University of Houston.

Q: What is your favorite scripture, and what advice do you have for maturing as a Christian?

A: My favorite scripture by which I strive to live daily is Proverbs 4: 5-6. My advice for maturing as a Christian is to believe the truth of the gospel without doubting.

Q: What advice do you have for maintaining a strong marriage? Raising children?

A: There are three components in maintaining a strong marriage. They are love, faith, and hope. Love must be unconditional; faith in God must be unchanging, and always hope for a bright future. For rearing children, the Bible gives us a perfect answer: "Train them in the way they should go and they will not depart from it." (Deacon Anderson is married to Debra Anderson. They have two children, Kevin and Nivek.)

Q: What is your profession; your hobbies; and your talents?

A: I have been a postal employee for 28 ½ years. My hobbies include playing the word game Scrabble and building Lego designs. My talents are teaching the Word of God and singing.

Q: Do you have words of wisdom that you have lived by that may help someone else?

A: "Love God. Love yourself. Love others." This is my formula to a successful life. Trust God in all that you do. It is important that you seek God first and then act. Remember faith without works is dead.

By the 19th century, Mintz said, fast days had disappeared, though Thanksgiving Day remained, becoming an official part of American culture during the Civil War.

In recent years, moments of silence have become more controversial. While they were once seen as a way to be more inclusive, a growing number of people view moments of silence as a way to get prayer back into some schools, Mintz said.

The observances took on new meaning after the Supreme Court outlawed prayer in school in 1962.

In 2000, Virginia, for example, enacted a law mandating a moment of silence for public school students to "meditate, pray or engage in other silent activity."

An appeals court, Mintz said, upheld this law, --- and the Supreme Court declined to review the ruling. Today, more than a dozen states have mandatory moments of silence in public schools, including Georgia.

Sail-ebrating 39 years of service

Antioch Baptist Church North set sail early last month on the Stone Mountain Paddlewheel River Boat, the Scarlett O'Hara.

The annual cruise upon the tranquil waters of Stone Mountain Lake was part of a month-long celebration honoring the Rev. Cameron Madison Alexander's 39th anniversary as pastor of Antioch.

Brother Barney Simms kicked off the evening with a warm welcome, reminding members of the love Rev. Alexander holds for each them.

"I never worry about Antioch because Antioch never gives me anything to worry about," said Simms, quoting the pastor. "I love being Antioch's pastor."

Members danced and fellowshiped into the wee hours.

When the boat returned to shore, the captain had to turn off the lights to signal that the cruise was over.

No one wanted to leave. No one wanted the night to end.

