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*Happy
New Year*

*Connecting
People
to Christ*



The Church at Antioch

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

October-December 2011

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Let your praise be real

Praise is a lifestyle that testifies to God's power in our lives.

In fact, the Rev. Ronald Peters told those gathered for the 7:45 a.m. anniversary service Nov. 13 that it doesn't matter what the circumstances are, real Christians can still praise the Lord and affirm what God is doing in their lives.

"That's how you tell the difference between cake and cornbread," said Peters, president of the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta.

Peters, who said he sensed Antioch had a culture of praise during his first visit to the church, told the congregation the problem he finds today is too often lifestyles seem to evidence praise but "I think it's cornbread."

"Everybody who carries around a big Bible, every new bishop's case is not



"Through many dangers, toils, and snares..."

From generation to generation

They donated \$134 above their tithe.

And in a lunch time tribute to the church founders, dozens gathered to show their appreciation.

But in, perhaps, the most significant of celebrations marking the 134th church, thousands gathered Oct. xx to worship and praise God for his marvelous works down through the years.

There were two stirring messages – both preached by Pastor Cameron Alexander – but one word taken from Psalms, a song the Israelites performed at religious events and focus of this year's theme: "From generation to generation we declare the mighty works of our God."

The book, pastor said, expressed depression, frus-

Stir up the gift

The second letter of Paul to Timothy is the kind of note a father would write to his son telling him how to conduct himself.

In it, the Rev. Cameron Alexander said during the 11 a.m. anniversary service Nov. 13, Paul encourages Timothy to stay firm in the faith that had been passed on from his mother and grandmother.

"There's eternal gain on up the road," Pastor said. "If you got to get off make sure you get back on."

The greatest gift a child could ever have is Christian parents and grandparents who pass on their faith as did Timothy's mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois.

In fact, Paul told Timothy to stir up the gift that was within him.

"There are times when you're going to feel the gift is not there, when you don't know if you're going

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A Message From The Pastor



My Brothers and Sisters:

As we settle into a brand new year with wonderful new opportunities to be stronger, more committed Christians, I trust that all of us realize that life is a gift of God! As such, we should all give thanks for life every day that He blesses us to have and invest in each “new” day in ways that are pleasing to God and brings benefit to those around us as well as glory to God.

I am so glad that we serve a God of new beginnings and as such, I want to remind every member of Antioch that all things can be made new. With Him, all things—regardless of the circumstances—can be made right.

It is my prayer that you will let this be your year for making all things right; including your family life, your personal and professional life, and especially your spiritual life. In so doing, your year will be filled with incredible joy.

As pastor, I am truly excited about the promises and possibilities that lie ahead during 2012. Hopefully, we will get out of our routines and comfort zones and go beyond our church walls to serve God’s people; especially those who all too often counted among the least, the less, and the lost. I challenge every member of Antioch to join me in making certain that our church has the feel of a gracious place where people will want to come and worship with us. We can do this through our Christian service and through our stewardship by serving others.

Let us all have a great journey through 2012. Let us all experience added growth in our faith as we collectively stay focused in our worship and in our witness.

Yours in God’s service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. M. Alexander'.

Reverend C. M. Alexander
Pastor

*Continued from cover:
“From Generation to Generation”*



Members view the 134th Anniversary Pictorial History in Fellowship Hall.

tration, despondency.

“The book has in it the agony of a nation,” he said, “words that have been preached and put to music.”

It also contains the sayings that come to us in the middle of the night, that bring comfort and are centered in God.

And so whether blessed or burdened, Pastor said, our focus should be on the Almighty.

“Look what he did this morning,” he said. “Even though man’s time and clock changed, the Lord was mighty in getting us all up in due time.

“How do we discover that God is mighty in his work?”

It has to be passed down from generation to generation what he has done for us; how we came from riding the back of buses to sitting in the front, how we won the right to vote and the right to use any water fountain not just those marked “colored.”

“I got the word but what needs to be passed down is the works of God in my life,” he said. “Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had their own story to tell but I got a story and you got a story and that story needs to be handed down.

“God’s been good to us,” he said. “We got to pass it down.”

Continued from cover

7am: Let your praise be real

cornbread,” he said.

In fact, Peters said we live in a culture that has forgotten about praise, that is willing to let injustice roll down like water.

Drawing from the wisdom passed down to him from his father, Peter said that you can put icing on cornbread but that doesn't

make it cake.

How does one tell the difference between an authentic Christian and a pretender?

Peters said that authentic Christians i.e. cake can praise God no matter what they are going through.

“I can still walk and not get scared,” he said.



Rev. Ronald Peters

11am: Stir up the gift

to make it or not, stir it up,” Pastor Alexander said. “When it seems there's no

reason to pray, Paul told Timothy to stir up the gift that is within you.”



Hymnals and Bibles dedicated at 134th Anniversary services

Fifth District holds Soul Bowl

Spiritually informative and uplifting services marked this year's annual Fifth District Soul Bowl held Nov. 28-30 at Mt. Nebo Baptist Church in Atlanta.

Lectures on Christian doctrine in addition to the preached word centered on the theme from Psalm 51:12, “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.” The historical context of David's sin with Bathsheba and his desire to repent and be restored to joy in the Lord spoke to the unsaved,

backsliders, and those who are saved but whose growth in the Lord has been stunted by sin that still has a hold on their lives as each lecturer and preacher expounded upon the text.

Two sons of Antioch, the Rev. Ervin Richards, pastor of Antioch Loving Spirit Baptist Church, presided and the Rev. William Smith, pastor of Israel Missionary Baptist Church, preached the message.

“I don't like to be around miserable Christians,” the Rev. Smith said after break-

ing down the difference between happiness and joy. “You can't minister to a dying soul if all they see from you is doom and gloom. If you have lost the joy of your salvation, tonight is the time to say like David, ‘Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me’, and you can walk out of here with joy and dance like David danced.”

On Dec. 3, members of the Fifth District traveled to Macon to participate in the Statewide Soul Bowl,

started by Pastor Alexander during his administration.

“I got to thinking one year that December is full of college football bowl games leading up to the Rose Bowl on New Year's Day [called ‘the granddaddy of them all’ because it is the oldest] and you can't plan anything that will interfere with the Super Bowl, so why shouldn't we have a Jesus Bowl,” he said. “We're in the greatest contest of them all, the battle for souls.”

OCTOBER

Baptist ministers hold revival

The focus of the Atlanta Baptist Minister's Union Revival held Oct. 5-7 was the health of the church—spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical.

All of the elements of the typical revival were in place—spirited devotions, uplifting singing, and exhilarating preaching, and outreach to lost souls, but the essence of the revival and the sessions held during the day was to take an honest look at the church—specifically the Baptist denomination—assess her health, and determine how to fix the areas where illness and disease have eaten away at the underpinnings.

The Rev. Cameron Alexander, pastor of Antioch Baptist Church North and guest lecturer, pulled no punches in assessing the state of the church today. He asked the pastor of St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church, Rev. Dr. C.E. Taylor, the President of the Minister's Union, Rev. Dr. Ronald Hill, Sr., and those assembled if they really wanted to know the hard truth or did they want a "sugar-coated message."

Speaking to a packed house, Alexander laid out the hard realities of the



Spring Concert held...



church not adhering to her mission.

"We know that the church is a hospital; what do you find in a hospital? Sick people, but the medical personnel—the pastors, the Sunday School teachers, the missionaries—shouldn't be as sick as the patients, or no one will ever be healed," he said.

Mixing in his characteristic humor with the hard facts of preachers afraid to tell people that they will go to hell if they do not accept Jesus Christ as Lord and savior and giving motivational speeches instead of preaching the Word, he made the message palatable, but clearly laid out the challenge.

"Who is the church? Do your co-workers and neighbors know that you are a Christian, or do you act just like they do? What are you—not the person sitting next to you, not just the preacher or the deacon—what are you going to do to live so that other people want to know Jesus, too?," he asked.

Rev. Jenkins celebrates first anniversary

Antioch turned out “three on a mule” to join son of the church Rev. Brendan Jenkins as he celebrated his first anniversary Oct. 30 as pastor of the historic Old Friendship Baptist Church in Marietta.

In his introduction of his father and Pastor of Antioch Baptist Church North, Rev. Kenneth Alexander said, “The sons of Antioch are living proof that we are made in our Pastor’s image: we walk like him; we talk like him; we dress like him; and even when we try not to, we preach like him. I believe one reason why it’s such a happy occasion to be here is that Rev. Jenkins was trained by him.”

The M.A.D.D. for Christ Choir and Youth Dancers ignited the church as they sang and danced in praise at the 3 p.m. service.

In his sermon based on Hebrews 13:7, Pastor Cameron Alexander said that he was “betwixt” regarding which translation to use. The first word in the NIV printed on the program reads “Remember” but the KJV reads, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls...”

“It is easier to remember than it is to obey and submit,” he said. “Nobody wants to obey anymore.”

An anniversary, however, “is a day when we remember every day is a day to obey,” he said.

Pastor Alexander extended his congratulation to Rev. Jenkins, his wife Jelyne, and the entire congregation for the growth “in just one short year.” He attributed the growth to Rev. Jenkins obedience to the Lord.

He said, “prayer has changed things.”

Taylors renew vows

Bro. Samuel and Sis. Miriam Taylor renewed their marriage vows Oct. 15 at Antioch Baptist Church North before dozens of family members and friends. The couple was joined in holy matrimony 50 years ago by the Rev. Paul McDonald McDaniel Sr.



Samuel & Mariam Taylor

Wedding Congratulations

The following couples were recently united in marriage:

Bro. Milton and Sis. Carol Roberts Aaron on July 9, 2011

Bro. Donald and Sis. Terri Meaux Hilliard on Sept. 17, 2011

Minister Harry and Sis. Karen McKinney Holley on Oct. 8, 2011

Source: Sis. Rosa Tomlinson, wedding coordinator

Mt. Hermon Annual Session

The Mount Hermon Association met Oct. 18-20 in its 71st annual session at Springfield Missionary Baptist Church, where the Rev. Arthur Carson is pastor.

The Rev. Scott Copeland, chairman of Antioch Baptist Church North’s Care and Comfort Ministry, Sis. Francene Coleman, coordinator of Mission, and Mothers Eunice Harrison, Frances Miles, Ernestine Shaw, Eunice Harrison, and Sis. Aurelia Barnes represented Antioch.

In message after message, the theme, “Being Committed to God’s Word in the New Millennium ‘NOW’” was expounded upon throughout the three-day session.

The Dean of the Mission Institute, Sis. Alice Doanes, speaking on Luke 10:38-42 initiated the series of messages and emphasized the need for each believer to “sit at Jesus’s feet and hear his word” then rise and put the word into daily practice.

Visit the 134th Anniversary Pictorial History Display in Fellowship Hall!



Happy Anniversary

More than 45 Antioch Baptist Church North couples celebrated wedding anniversaries during the months of October, November and December. We congratulate them and wish them many more!

October

Bro. John and Sis. Shirley Alexander
Bro. Clarence and Sis. Debra Anderson
Bro. Gilbert and Sis. Lillie Bowles
Bro. John and Sis. Stephanie Callaway
Bro. Telly and Sis. Ayanna Clark
Bro. Daryl and Sis. Sheryl Grayer
Bro. Samuel and Sis. Dorothy Hardin
Bro. Robert and Sis. Irene Hudgins
Bro. Millard Jr. and Sis. Diane Johnson
Bro. Joseph and Sis. Stephanie Malone
Bro. Acey and Sis. Mary Palmer
Bro. Paul Sr. and Sis. Joyce Scott
Bro. Cedrick and Sis. Berdell Smith
Bro. Marquis and Sis. Hazel Stephens
Bro. Samuel and Sis. Miriam Taylor

November

Rev. Cameron and Sis. Barbara Alexander
Bro. Eric and Sis. Pamela Alexander
Bro. Ricky and Sis. Regina Allen
Bro. George and Sis. Rena Brown
Bro. John and Sis. Lisa Camp
Bro. Ryan and Sis. Jacklyn Davis
Bro. Herbert and Sis. Beverly Dawkins
Bro. Doc and Sis. LaNore Hammond
Bro. Darryl and Sis. Tracy Hodge
Bro. Ronald and Sis. Cindy West
Bro. James and Sis. Lenora Williams
Bro. Rodney and Sis. Chandra Wilson

December

Bro. Jesse and Sis. Lillian Andrews
Bro. Pleas and Sis. Joyce Berry
Bro. Danny and Sis. Dorothy Cameron
Bro. Eddie and Sis. Toni Clark
Bro. Jesse and Sis. Juanita Davis
Bro. Bryant and Sis. Jaquillia Garrott
Bro. James and Sis. Brenda Harp
Bro. Jerry and Sis. Linda Harper
Bro. William and Sis. Cheryl Huff
Bro. Sherod and Sis. Renita Hunt
Bro. Ray and Sis. Maria Hunter
Bro. Collum and Sis. Dawn Jaffar
Bro. Larry and Sis. Joan Park
Bro. Dwaine and Sis. Dana Price
Bro. Eddie and Sis. Emma Reedy
Bro. Fred and Sis. Essie Samuels
Rev. Jimmy and Sis. Gracie Staples
Bro. Ernest and Sis. Shirley Tolbert
Bro. Kelvin and Sis. Wylinda Woody

Celebrating 50 years with Rev. J. H. Flakes, Jr.

Antioch turned out en masse to celebrate and pay tribute to the Rev. J.H. Flakes, Jr., who celebrated his 50th anniversary Nov. 27 at Fourth Street Missionary Baptist Church in Columbus, GA.

Pastor and Mrs. Cameron Alexander and Dr. and Mrs. Flakes are long-time friends. Rev. J. H. Flakes, III, was an adopted son of Antioch while he studied at Morehouse School of Religion and served as pastor of Mt. Gilead Baptist Church in Southeast Atlanta before returning to Columbus as co-pastor of Fourth Street.

Pastor Alexander said that the friendship with Dr. Flakes "is long and deep." The two of them served in the GMBC Congress of Christian Education and when Alexander became resident of the organization, Flakes took the reins as presi-

dent of the Congress.

Alexander said he is glad God said, "whosoever will" because if people had been allowed to determine the requirements, Rev. Flakes, with his "shadowy background" of drugs and drink, would not have been allowed to join the church.

"A lot of people have forgotten that they have 'dirtiness' not even realizing that they aren't even made from dirt but from dust," he said. "It is God's church, and it is a mystery."

Alexander said that for 50 years members have been coming to Fourth Street and for 50 years Rev. Flakes has been delivering the same good news.

Pastor Alexander spoke of his admiration for Dr. Flakes because he didn't run, didn't flee, but stayed and preached the Word keeping hundreds of families together.

Christmas Tree Extravaganza

For eight years, Antioch Baptist Church North has been donating decorated Christmas trees to the needy.

This year, though, was a banner year.

"You should be proud of yourselves," said Pastor Cameron Alexander. "In the eight years we have been holding this event, this is the largest crowd and most trees we have ever had. We will be making the families who receive these trees very happy. For some of them, this is the only Christmas they will have."

He urged everyone to call,

write, email, or text staff member Sister Bonita Hammond whose brainchild the idea of decorating Christmas trees and donating them to needy families it was and who was unable to attend because of illness.

This year's winners were: Most Creative – Minister's Alliance, Most Festive – Matrons, Most Original - Ushers, Honorable Mention – B.T.W. Verse Speakers.

The Christmas Tree Extravaganza is held in conjunction with the December Birth-month.

Wallace resurrects engineering organization

For months after entering Savannah State University, Jeremy Wallace had been hearing about the positive impact the National Society of Black Engineers had on shaping the future of aspiring engineers.

And so when his class schedule finally permitted, joining was the first thing on Wallace's to-do list.

But by the second semester of his sophomore year, he said the organization had fallen on hard times and was in trouble of being discontinued.

"I couldn't let that happen," said Wallace, a long-



Bro. Jeremy Wallace

time member of Antioch Baptist Church North who graduated in 2009 from Douglass in the top 10 percent of his class.

He began plotting a course for revival beginning with ramping up the organization's membership roll.

Wallace, president of the Savannah State chapter, said that since taking over the organization members have represented the campus at the regional convention in Jackson, Ms., and is working with the U.S. Navy and Nissan Motor Company to host seminars in 2012.

NSBE is a non-profit association dedicated to the academic and professional success of African-American engineering students and professionals. It offers

members, among other things, leadership training, professional development, mentoring opportunities and career placement services. NSBE is comprised of 242 collegiate, 70 professional and 82 pre-college active chapters nationwide and overseas.

Wallace said as president of the organization he hopes to restore the organization to its original prestige and raise awareness about the need for more engineers.

"I see the opportunities this society has for up and coming African-American engineering majors," he said.

World day of prayer

On the first Saturday in November, Baptist women around the world came together to celebrate the Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer.

In Atlanta, the Fifth District of the GMBC, Inc., the New Era Missionary Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention gathered at Mount Zion Second Baptist Church.

The Day of Prayer began in 1948 following World War II and continues as a means to unite Baptist women across continents with "spiritual lifelines that strengthen and give hope" to many women who are still suffering the violence of war and others who fear for their safety and wellbe-

ing daily.

The program, prepared by the Caribbean Baptist Women's Union, included an exposition of the scripture, "Through the Fruit of the Spirit, Kindness." Those assembled were then assigned to continental groups, including Africa, Asia, and Latin America, to learn about and pray for the specific needs of each area.

"We often forget how privileged we are in United States," said Sis. Gwen Jones West. "I drove here today, but there are women who had to walk over mountains or through rivers and even have had to risk their lives to gather for prayer, but they do it because they believe in the power of prayer."

Sick and shut-in visited during Sunday blitz

As part of the 134th Church Anniversary celebration, auxiliary leaders, and members divided up into teams with ministers and deacons and fanned out across metropolitan Atlanta to let our sick and shut-in members know that we are not just praying for and thinking about them, but letting them know that their presence is missed.

Anyone who was able to receive visitors, whether in the hospital, nursing home, rehabilitation center, or at home learned that the church is not the physical facility on the

corner of Cameron M. Alexander Blvd. and Northside Drive, but a body of individual believers who care for one another.

And so on Dec. 4, no one was too far away for a visit.

Following Jesus' example, Antioch teams traveled to Alpharetta, McDonough, Lithonia and points in between to bring a word of cheer to those who have been unable to attend church services.

Members sang hymns, read scripture, prayed and spread the love of Christ during each visit.

ADDED MEMBERS

OCTOBER BAPTISM NAMES
NAME/BIRTH MONTH

Michelin Dowell, June
L'Oreal Ray, April

OCTOBER CHRISTEN EXPERIENCE

Julia Orange, July
Total 3 fellowshipped in October

THERE WAS NO BAPTISM IN THE
MONTH OF NOVEMBER

DECEMBER BAPTISM NAMES
NAME/BIRTH MONTH

Reese Felton, July
Ryan Hill, March
Tamara Hill, November
William Darnell Evans, Jr., January
Zion Byrd, March
Camden F. Dukes, February
Kameron Lee, November
Jonah Hildreth, April
Joseph Malone, September

DECEMBER CHRISTEN
EXPERIENCE
NAME/BIRTH MONTH

Ebony Brown, November
Trudye Young, April
Tonya Waters-Coles, June
Darlene Jackson, October
Jeff Byrd, January

TOTAL OF 14 FELLOWSHIPED
IN DECEMBER

Source: Sis. Bonita Hammond

Pioneers honored

Their memories have dimmed now but Antioch Baptist Church North pioneers are still eager to talk about the congregation's "good ole" days.

As members gathered in the 590 Building on Nov. 12 to pay tribute to them, some, including Sis. Ethel Parrish, sat down to share some of their fondest memories growing up at the church and some of the challenges they faced.

Sis. Parrish, a deaconess who has been a member Antioch for more than 60 years, remembered time spent in the church basement, attending Sunday School, BTU and the Tom Thumb Weddings. She vividly recalled her mother, Montee Roberts, participating in some of the church auxiliaries, the choir, BTU, and the famous ringing of the bell.

Although Sis. Parrish refused to divulge her age, she is considered an Antioch trailblazer and on any given Sunday, she is surrounded by her daughters.

"No matter how old you get Mama is still in charge," they will tell you.

Sis. Parrish and Mothers Willie Mae James and Ella Mae Merritt, a member for 71 years, are among the many long-time Antioch members who are credited with keeping the traditions of the church alive, including their dedication to building strong families.

"We have been through some good days and some bad, but the Lord brought us through," Mother James said.

She has been a member of Antioch for 81 years and credits the Lord with taking care of her all these years.

Hundreds of Bibles, Hymnals dedicated

As many as 500 hymnals and 400 Bibles were purchased by Antioch Baptist Church North members and dedicated in November.

Dea. Jerome Trimble made the announcement in November during the church's 134th anniversary celebration.

"This is just another way of passing God's word from

one generation to another," he said. "We don't know all the authors and writers of the lyrics of each hymnal but we do know who they wrote about."

Trimble thanked God for his word and for the inscribed names of those loved ones who will never be forgotten.

DECEMBER

Christmas Day at Antioch



ANTIOCH FAMILY!

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.



Homecoming Celebration



Youth basketball set to begin

Antioch Baptist Church North's Sports Ministry is gearing up for another youth basketball season.

Meetings for students interested either in playing basketball or cheerleading are held at 6:30 p.m. on Mondays and Thursday in the church's 590 Building on North Avenue.

Students may join one of three teams: 8 and under (ages 5-8), 12 and under (ages 9-12), and 16 and under (ages 13-16).

Although participants are not required to be members of Antioch, they must agree to attend Sunday School, a requirement for being apart of the Sports Min-

istry.

Providing healthful fun while teaching the Word of God has been a cornerstone of the ministry for years, organizers said.

"Before starting and ending any practice or games we have prayer," said Tammelia Barkley, assistant cheerleading coach.

In addition to Bible teaching, youths are encouraged to live out their faith at school, at home and at church, where they are involved in a range of activities, including the MADD for Christ Choir, dance, verse speaking and hand bell ministries, Barkley said.

Ministers' wives decorate Madison House

In what has become a semi-annual outreach, the Minister's Wives of Antioch Baptist Church North cleaned and decorated the Madison House.

In one gloved hand they had brooms and mops, and in the other garlands and ornaments.

The 12-story Madison House is a beacon of light in an area of prime real estate in downtown Atlanta. Unlike the luxury hotels, upscale restaurants, and pricey condos and apartments surrounding it, the 128-unit apartment building provides affordable housing for the working homeless and persons with noninfectious tuberculosis.

"I guess we know we're there performing a service for our own as Min. Carlton Williams, presiding minister holds worship services and offers encouragement to 'the least, the less, and the lost,' but we have so much fun, that it just seems like fellowship," said Sis. Jean Byrdsell, president of the ministry.

By the end of the Dec. 9 effort, not only was Madison House spic and span when they left, the beauty of the decorations adorning the sanctuary was an encouraging reminder to all who entered that Christmas is a season of hope.

FEBRUARY Upcoming Events

1, 7pm	Mid-Week Worship
6-9	GMBC Statewide Ministers Conference
5, 7:45/11am	Morning Worship
8, 7pm	Mid-Week Worship
14	A.S.K. Valentine Recognition for Seniors
10, 7pm	Pastor's Birthday Fellowship
12	Morning Worship & Pastor's Birthday
14	Valentine's Day
15, 7pm	Mid-Week Worship/Baptism RHF
18, 8am	Women's Conference
19, 7:45/11am	Morning Worship/Communion
20-20	GMBC Board Meeting and Adjourned Session
22, 7pm	Mid-Week Worship
24, 7pm	Birth Month Club Fellowship
25	Youth Ministry/Black Heritage Festival
26, 7:45/11am	Morning Worship/NDI Banyani Celebration
27-28, 6:30pm	Family Tune-Up Workshops
29, 7pm	Mid-Week Worship

Antioch's Harding gives Mars Mission a "Go"

When NASA launched its Mars Science Laboratory spacecraft on Nov. 26, Antioch's Wanda Harding was part of the five-member team that approved the lift-off from Cape Canaveral.

Harding, daughter of Sis. Wendy and the late Dea. Bill Harding, served as the Senior Mission Manager of launch services, an assignment she received in June 2008, just prior to her father's death.

After the launch, Harding was presented a NASA Administrator Medallion for outstanding contribution to the mission, the first since the 1970s to directly tackle the age-old question of whether there is life beyond Earth

"The special part was that the medallion, which was flown on one of the last three Space Shuttle missions, was for the mission that launched on February 24, 2011," she said. "That was dad's birthday."

Recently Harding took questions from Church at Antioch staff writer Betty Jo Cooke about her role in the mission. Here's what she had



Sis. Wanda Harding

to say about the experience:

Q: You grew up at Antioch. Looking back, how would you say that contributed to who you are today?

A: It was not until I moved to Florida that I began to appreciate the impact of growing up in such a loving and nurturing church. Not only did Antioch contribute to my spiritual foundation, it remains part of some of my best memories. So many people offered encouragement, guidance, and served as positive, godly role models and now have the privilege of continuing that legacy to benefit the next generation.

Q: You moved to Florida in

1994 to begin working at NASA/Kennedy Space Center. What have been some of the highlights?

A: It was never my intent to work for NASA and I left Atlanta with every intention of returning. But the warm winters and delicious oranges were a nice tradeoff for hurricane season. I've worked with engineers on the International Space Station in Italy, spent a year lecturing at Spelman College and three times have served on launch management teams. As I look back, I'm thankful that God's plan worked out much better than mine.

Q: You played a major role in the recent mission to Mars. Can you offer any details?

A: As mission manager, my day-to-day responsibilities included any and everything to do with the mission - launch site support, budget, safety and managing a team of senior level engineers and business management personnel. Launch day is like the

great reward for all the hard work, as MSL was one of the most complex missions I have worked to date.

Q: What advice would you give to a young person interested in a career in space?

A: For a career in space or anywhere, trust God and treat each experience as preparation for the next assignment. Take advantage of opportunities and remember that your real boss is, and should always be, the Lord Christ Jesus (Col 3:17). And finally, use your blessings to be a blessing to others.

Q: Any final thoughts?

A: Speaking with a friend recently I was reminded of how close I am on a daily basis to peering into the vast universe that God created. She asked if exposure to all of the theories and findings changed what I believed about God. I admitted it has only made me grow to be more in awe of Him. We serve an absolutely amazing God.

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