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# The Church at Antioch

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

October - December 2023

Volume 12, Issue 4

## 146th Church Anniversary



*Rev. James Hill was our anniversary guest speaker.*

## When we miss attending church

After the choirs had sung, after the steppers stepped and the Vessels of Praise had danced, there was little doubt why Antioch Baptist Church North is still about doing the work.

Every song and move was a reminder that "If God did it before He can do it again."

It is a fact shared by those careful not to miss church, a point driven home by the Rev. James Hill.

Hill, pastor of Pilgrim Baptist Church and a son of Antioch, was

the guest speaker on Nov. 12, the day set aside to celebrate Antioch's 146th anniversary.

He focused on four verses in the 20th chapter of John: Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

Thomas, Hill said, had missed church and remembered a time when attending church was mandatory.

*Continued on page 2*

## ABCNN evolves into global network

The 2020 Covid-19 pandemic was in full-swing when Pastor Kenneth Alexander and a newly organized team of health professionals made the hard decision to discontinue in-worship services at Antioch Baptist Church North.

It was better for members to stay home and avoid exposure to the deadly virus. By March of that year, Covid cases had begun increasing at alarming rates along with hospitalizations and deaths. The virus was declared a national emergency.

But God provided Antioch with a ram in the bush. With the expertise of IT professionals Ray and Maria Hunter, Antioch services could continue - online.

The husband and wife team swung into action, planning a virtual worship service that was engaging, comment-friendly, and interactive on Facebook Live.

In a far-reaching interview with the team recently, Bro. Ray Hunter remembered walking around the sanctuary, recording on his cell phone. Once virtual, the team set up a backdrop with Pastor Alexander sitting at a table with spiritual props for Bible study, etc. while Brother Hunter was off camera filming steadily from his cell phone creating one continuous broadcast.

Weeks later, however, they determined that using a cell phone to make recordings was no longer feasible. While still using Facebook as the only source of transmission, they began research to

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*Maria Alexander-Hunter*



*Ray Hunter*

## A Message From The Pastor



Antioch is finishing 2023 strong. We have not grown “weary in well doing” (Gal 6:9) but are continuing to “do the work” (2 Tim 4:5). AUMI continues to serve the community in a variety of ways both through your support and through partnerships. Our Choose Healthy Life program, in partnership with Morehouse School of Medicine and other health providers, held another health fair that provided free vaccinations and testing for diseases that plague our community at a higher rate than others. The Empty Stocking Fund provided toys for a wide community from our 590 building. The Apparel Shoppe held a coat giveaway, and many ministries and the congregation provided toys for our toy giveaway. We continued to provide food to over 4,500 families per month and hot meals on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Our 146th Anniversary commemoration was truly a celebration beyond compare. The team orchestrated unique events and traditional events uniquely. It was a time of high fellowship and grand remembrance, and we aren’t finished yet. Stay tuned for more events as we continue to celebrate. We honored our pioneers and future pioneers, those who have paved the way and are making new paths as we move forward. We dedicated a historic number of babies during our baby dedications, so we know we are growing. No one showed us how bright our future is than our youth on our Youth Emphasis Sundays in October when Bro. Ryan Bright challenged us to be our best, and our December Christmas play reminded us to not let the true meaning of Christmas get lost.

Revival with our own Rev. Otis Byrd reached a new level. Returning home from his ministry as Assistant to the Pastor for Online Ministry at Alfred Street Baptist Church in Alexandria, VA, pastored by the Rev. Dr. Howard-John Wesley, he led us on a journey deep in the Word and deeper into our souls.

I am always hesitant to congratulate individual members because I may miss someone, but I am so proud of their accomplishments that I have to give a shout-out.

Our Yellow Rose Society coordinator who honors those 80 and older was honored herself. She is storyteller extraordinaire Margaret Edinburgh and has now added author to her list of accomplishments. People had the opportunity to have her sign both of her children’s books, *Hooray for Uncle Bob* and *Tater Folks* at metro area locations.

What can I say about “Church Boy” Zebulon Ellis, Jr.? On November 3rd, his project “Church Boy Live” was recorded at Destiny World Church, William T. Purvis, III, pastor. Of course, Antioch packed out the venue with VIP tickets sold out. He has stayed true to his roots, lifting the name of Jesus in song.

Congratulations to our Director of Christian Education, DR. Princeanna Walker. She received her Doctor of Philosophy degree in educational psychology from Georgia State University on December 11.

Many of you found places to serve during our Added Members and Auxiliaries/Ministries Expo. We enjoyed renewed fellowship during our Birthmonth Meet and Greet. We charted where Antioch has been and where we are going at the State of the Church conference. With the new steps I learned at Lady Lisa’s Birthday Line Dance Extravaganza, I am ready, like David, to “dance before the Lord with all my might” (2 Sam 6:14) as we move into the new year.

It is with much sadness but understanding, that I bid adieu to our newsletter editor, Sis. Gracie Staples, and son of Antioch, Min. Jimmie Staples. They have added immeasurably to the mission of Antioch North, and they will both be missed more than I can express. We know that they will continue to serve in their new location, closer to family.

To God be the glory!

*Rev. Kenneth L. Alexander*  
Reverend K. L. Alexander, Pastor

*Continued from cover: 146th...*

Missing church, he said, was unimaginable.

“We understood Sunday was God’s day,” he said. Nowadays it seems roles have reversed and we’re satisfied with being spiritual rather than being saved.

Indeed a comprehensive report released in late March by the Pew Research Center, found that the share of U.S. adults typically attending religious services at least once a month dropped from 33% in 2019 to 30% in 2022. In addition, about 20% of Americans say they now attend in person less often than they did before the pandemic.

Hill said that in this 20th chapter of John that Jesus suddenly appears to his disciples on the first Sunday after his resurrection.

Thomas, however, is not there.

“The Bible does not tell us what Thomas was doing,” Hill said. “Maybe he took a self-care Sunday.”

Whatever the reason, Thomas missed church and Jesus’s offering of peace.

“When we miss church, we miss peace,” Hill said.

That peace isn’t the absence of conflict, he said, it is knowing that all things work together for good; and that no weapon formed against us shall prosper.

And when Jesus had said this, he breathed on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

So not only did Thomas miss receiving the peace of God, but he also missed receiving the Holy Ghost.

Every now and then, we need an intercessor, someone who can advocate for us, council and comfort us, or just keep us company, Hill said. That is the work of the Holy Ghost.

Finally, there was a third thing Thomas missed.

“When we miss church, we miss the revelation of God’s plan and purpose for our lives,” Hill said.

God wants us to have an impact beyond our jobs. God wants us to have an impact on where people will spend eternity.

“Don’t play church, be the church,” Hill said. “The Lord ain’t coming back for spiritual folk; the Lord is coming back for his church.”

OCTOBER



**Meet & Greet**

*New members (pictured above) from left, Shirley McQueen, from left, Gladys Tucker, Joseph Patterson, and Loretha Johnson pose for a photo at the “meet and greet” fellowship.*



*Sis. Stephany Walls (pictured left) of the Usher's Ministry, was among dozens of Antioch Baptist Church North leaders on hand Oct. 14 to welcome new members.*

**Overcoming spiritual sleepwalking**

Some of us have spiritually and morally fallen asleep.

That was the message delivered by the Rev. Aaron Parker during this year's final one-night revival sponsored by the Fifth District of the General Missionary Baptist Convention of Georgia.

In his message titled “A Radical Revival” based on John 11:21, 32, and 43, Parker, pastor of Zion Hill Baptist Church, told members gathered at Zion Hill Baptist Church that a great awakening is needed to overcome “spiritual sleepwalking.”

“We must be in God's divine presence, receive his divine power, and follow his divine protocol,” he said.

Held Oct. 26 under the leadership of the Rev. Eddie Bright, pastor of Mt. Zion Baptist Church and a son of Antioch North, the revival supports the General Missionary Baptist Convention's Land of Promise Second Chance Program in an effort to reduce recidivism and provide housing and services to those finishing prison sentences and transitioning back into society.



*Newly dedicated children*

**New arrivals mean a new ministry**

Baby dedications are a cherished tradition in the church. Not only are the ceremonies a celebration of new life, they also provide an opportunity for parents to pledge their commitment to nurture, guide, and instill religious values in their children.

Antioch Baptist Church North recently instituted the New Arrivals Ministry with a mission to guide and support families as their children age.

In a moving September service, the Rev. Kenneth Alexander dedicated nearly a dozen children, some of whom are now toddlers.

The dedication service was the first since the COVID-19 pandemic forced the church to cease holding in-person services and baby dedications became seemingly a thing of the past.

The new ministry will be led by Bro. Derek and Sis. Tabitha East and Bro. Geoffrey and Sis. Char Miller-King.



Ola Baker



Chelsea Speed

## Antioch members awarded scholarships

Antioch Baptist Church North's Ola Baker and Chelsea Speed were each awarded \$1,000 scholarships during the Mount Hermon Association's Annual Awards Banquet held Nov. 5 at Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church.

Although several awards are given during the banquet, the highlight is always the presentation of the scholarships to young men and women pursuing postsecondary education.

The association held its annual session in October at Springfield Missionary Baptist Church, where the Rev. Arthur Carson is pastor.

It is believed that Antioch's Rev. T. H. George was the inspiration for organizing the association, and it is recorded that he served as the first moderator.

In other action during the Annual Session, the Royal Court, consisting of queens from each member church, raised \$13,000 for The Homer E. Smith Scholarship Awards, named after a past moderator.

# 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 Bro. Reggie Tolbert at: [tolbertgraphics@gmail.com](mailto:tolbertgraphics@gmail.com)



*Continued from cover: ABCNN*

figure out how to live stream from the church's internet system.

They sought recommendations from other churches and purchased a microphone, camera, and flip charts "so we could emulate the best flow for our order of service using a combination of live stream, pre-recorded, and re-recorded sections," Maria Hunter said.

Meanwhile, Brother Eric Alexander was busy working with the choir director, Min. Otis Byrd, to determine how musical selections could be added to the Sunday online services. With some scheduling, they were able to record choir members individually and then synchronize their voices for a final collage for the screen.

Back-up batteries to restore power in the event of an outage were put in place.

After exploring YouTube as an option, the Hunters decided to switch to what they considered to be a more professional platform that would allow members to watch services via Antioch's website, Facebook, and YouTube while still being broadcast from the Hunters' home.

At that point, the Hunters said viewership was around 700 but soon extended its reach to more than 1,000.

As the viewership grew over the next years, so too, did the ABCN Network as it was affectionately named.

Volunteers came on board to assist the Hunters, working with revivalists, Sunday school staff, the Watch Night team, and other church ministries to seamlessly add additional services online.

With additional technology advances, the Hunters were able to incorporate videoconferencing and Zoom rooms allowing the congregation to not only participate in Sunday worship services but to also view noon-day service, morning service, Bible study and Easter speeches.

"The membership has been so appreciative, which allows us to keep going," the Hunters said. "We constantly receive cards, emails, and notes of thanks."

But they are hardly done, they said.

The couple is committed to increasing the reach and ministry of the ABCN Network for decades to come.

Indeed, the church is already witnessing the network's global reach, confirmed by the recent visit of a South African minister who told the church he decided to make an in-person visit after visiting Antioch for the first time virtually via YouTube.

Sela. My, my, my. What about that?

# 2023 Fall Revival

The Rev. Otis Byrd, former choir director of the Antioch Baptist Church North, was the guest evangelist for this year's fall revival held three nights in late October.

Byrd resigned as director of Antioch choirs in February to become director of Audio Visual Technology and Media at Alfred Street Baptist Church in Alexandria, Va.

Below is a summary of his preached word during the 2023 Fall Revival:



*Our Revivalist, Rev. Otis Byrd, Jr.*

## Monday, Oct. 23

**Scripture:** Psalm 3:1-3 **O Lord, how many are my foes! Many are rising against me; many are saying to me there is no help for you in God. Selah, But you O lord are a shield around me, my glory, and the one who lifts my head.**

**Subject:** The power of contradiction

**Sermon Notes:** Words are powerful, especially when grounded in truth. In the 3rd psalm, we see David impacted by the opposing words of others. Scholars believe David wrote this psalm while flee-

ing his son Absalom. As he flees, he encounters a man of the house of Saul, calling him a scoundrel and murderer. This madman was not speaking as God, but he wasn't lying either. These were not alternative facts. David was indeed a scoundrel and murderer. You know what it's like to be David in this moment. Your past is screaming at you, throwing rocks. David opens the psalm professing his problems. The lament validates our tough times and encourages us not to suppress our

bad feelings. David talks to God, the one who has the last word no matter the circumstances. David's foes were sure his destruction was at hand, but thanks be to God, our destiny is not up to people. It is up to God and God alone. Could this kind of hopeless judgment be found in the church, our community, or in our home? How many times have we been guilty of denying salvation to some? What family member, what enemy have we decided is beyond God's help? After professing his

problems, David pauses. He pivots to God's provisions in his life. Despite his failures and victories, God was God, a shield around him and a lifter of his head. Yes, I have a past, and yes, I'm guilty but you, O lord. No matter what your problems may be, no matter how many people or systems rise against you, no matter what you have done, what you may face, always remember your God and what he has done.

## Tuesday, Oct. 24

**Scripture:** Jonah 4:1-5 **But this was very displeasing to Jonah and he was angry.**

**Subject:** I'm angry with God

**Sermon Notes:** Anger is an emotion characterized by antagonism toward someone you feel has deliberately done you wrong. It's a normal emotion, but when out of control, it can become dangerous. It can be righteous, and it can be evil, caused by internal and external issues, or by people and circumstances.

But have you ever been angry at God because he didn't answer

your prayers as you wanted? Is being angry allowed? Perhaps we might consider the question, how does God respond to us? Showing anger toward those in authority can be viewed as disrespect. But God's ego is not fragile. God doesn't care if we get mad, but he is concerned with the reason why. In our text, he demonstrates his capacity to handle our anger. You prayed for a loved one's healing and God does nothing to intervene. That can make you angry. You see everyone advancing and thriving and nothing about

your situation is changing. That can make you angry at God. What do we do? What is our response to God's response? For a possible answer, let's look at Jonah, who is angry because of God's compassion for Nineveh. God doesn't ask Jonah why he is angry. God asks if it is right for him to be angry.

The text suggests Jonah walks out without answering the question. So often we're like Jonah. We can see fault in others. We are experts at what others deserve, but God's ways and

thoughts are higher than ours. God tolerated Jonah's pestilence. God tested Jonah's perspective and lastly, God transformed his point of view. The Jonah narrative doesn't end with a question but ends with Jonah learning a valuable lesson. This is where I hope we land tonight. I pray for those who find themselves angry with God. I pray that the spirit moves you to relinquish your anger to God's will. It will allow you to have peace in your pain, joy in your suffering, and hope in your chaos.

### Wednesday, Oct. 25

**Scripture:** Luke 1:30

**Subject:** Fear Not

**Sermon Notes:** Everyone is scared of something. In our text, we have Luke's account of Mary as she learns of God's plan for her to birth the Christ child. Frankly, I think this news would've incited fear in most. This was a big assignment, and she reacted how most would. She was scared. She asked herself how will I accomplish this? As an unmarried woman, what will others think of me? Will my plans be altered?

But Mary had no reason to fear. The first reason Mary didn't have to fear was God had already prepared the provision. He will al-

ways give us exactly what we need to carry out what he has for us to do. That's why in divine providence Joseph was already in the picture. The union of Joseph and Mary was not random. Joseph was Mary's tailored provision. What God did for Mary, God will do for us. Some of us have received some tailored blessings that fit us just right. A friend or stranger who spoke the perfect words to lift your spirit. We've all been recipients of blessings that were just right for us. That job, that home, that nurse to see about you were tailored blessings. I'm grateful tonight that we serve a God that specializes in tailored blessings.

Not only did Maty have prepared provision but proper pedigree. The angel said she was highly favored and blessed among women. Mary had no reason to fear because her lineage was pure and strong, tracing back to King David. She also possessed a spiritual pedigree. She is highly favored and blessed among women. And yet, verse 29 says she was troubled by what the angel said. Why do we have such a hard time believing what God says about us? Why does it trouble us to see ourselves as God does? Low self-esteem is an incubator of fear. When you feel overwhelmed, remind yourself what God says about you. If God says

you're healed, believe it and walk in it. If God says you're delivered, believe it and walk in. Not only did Mary have provision and the proper pedigree, but she was also pregnant with promise and purpose. What God has put inside of us is so great it will change lives and even the world. Some assignments are bigger than us, but God will never assign you to anything that you can't carry full term. What promise are you carrying? Will you let fear kill your baby? Forfeit your assignment?

Or will you be like Mary and declare "Be it unto me" no matter how tough the assignment?



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## GMBC holds virtual institute

The General Missionary Baptist Convention of Georgia Virtual Christian Leadership Institute was held Nov. 8-10. The second half of courses offered during the Mid-Winter Board Session in February were offered during this period. Antioch members completed National Baptist Convention Certificate of Progress Program (COPP) courses including Organizing the Church for Christian Education, Christian Evangelism, and Introduction to Discipleship. Christian Education teachers are working toward COPP certification so that they can offer a Christian Leadership School at Antioch. Additional seminars included Basic Christian Beliefs, Building Health Churches, and A Christian View Toward Political Involvement.



## Malachi

Malachi is a mentoring program that provides life skill training for youth 8-17 years of age. Since its inception in 2001, Malachi adopts a hands-on approach in serving young men and women. Youth are exposed to innovative ideas and new experiences. Additionally, Malachi interacts with community leaders and professionals who share their unique perspectives with our youth.

The primary areas of service include English Avenue, Joseph E. Boone Boulevard, and Hollowell Parkway in Atlanta, but not limited to those areas. The program offers a rewarding path to effective and manageable service to all youth, providing vital skills that they can use for a lifetime.



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## Land of Promise to re-open, accept clients

The C.M. Alexander Land of Promise will soon start accepting clients into its Second Chance Re-entry Program thanks to a partnership with the State of Georgia.

According to the Rev. Anthony Q. Corbett, GMBC president, the Rebuilding Walls Ministry Re-entry Program will accept 36 to 40 clients being released from incarceration to help them successfully transition back into society.

The Rev. Craig Johnson, pastor of Calvary Hill Missionary Baptist Church and a son of Antioch, will serve as the Assistant Director of the program. The GMBC

has been working since last year, renovating the LOP, which was decimated by weather events and vandalism. A ribbon cutting was held Dec. 19 in Culloden to mark the Land's re-opening.

Corbett gave an update on the Land during the GMBC's Annual Session held Nov. 12-16 at the Marriott Convention Center in Augusta.

In his closing remarks at the convention, he is focused on the message of dry bones Ezekiel 37, saying "God will sometimes put you in desolate places around desolate people in order to accomplish his divine purpose."

Corbett cautioned delegates, however, not to be distracted by circumstances but propelled by destiny.

"Everybody deserves an opportunity to come up and come out," he said. "Too many of our families are in a valley. Don't write people off because they made a mistake, because they messed up, for 'all have sinned.' There is something special about that land; lives have been changed; whatever is deserted was once occupied, and the divine purpose is coming together there to lead to renewed lives."

In other convention business,

workshops were held on mental health, ministry innovation, effective church management, insurance, and frauds and scams. President Corbett and past presidents Rev. K. B. Martin and Rev. Clarence Moore were honored during the President's Gala.

Antioch members, including Dr. Brenda Eason, Director of Operations and Convention Planning, Sisters. Jean Jones, Dorcas Ford, Karen McKinney Holley, and the Rev. Eddie Bright, pastor of the Mt. Zion BC Pastor, were busy doing the Lord's work.

# Reaping the benefits of ancestral prayers

Verses 11 through 13 in the first chapter of Luke recount Zechariah’s encounter with an angel who tells him that his wife will bear a son.

“Luke decided to write the history so that it wouldn’t be lost,” the Rev. Kenneth Alexander told those gathered on Dec. 10 to celebrate the 246th anniversary of the historic First African Baptist Church in Savannah. “Some things we ought to know for certain. We don’t have to wonder how we made it.”

Rev. Alexander, noting Zacharias and Elizabeth’s long-awaited answer to their prayer for a child,



*Rev. K. L. Alexander*

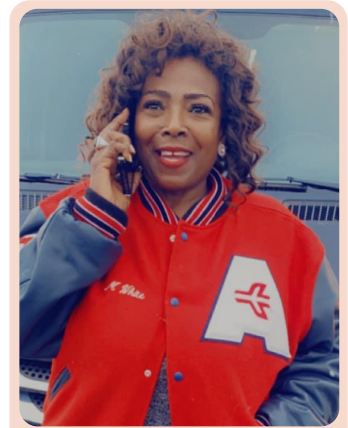
said, “Our ancestors didn’t give up on prayers.”

We’re enjoying freedom now, 246 years later, because of their

answered prayers, he said. “Some old prayers got us through slavery and Jim Crow and into educational opportunities. We must understand that delayed prayers are not denied prayers, so keep praying.”

According to its church history, First African Baptist Church, pastored by Rev. Thurmond Tillman, dates back to 1773, three years before even the start of the United States. A national landmark, the Rev. Andrew C. Marshall, changed the church’s name from “First Colored Baptist” to “First African Baptist.”

Marshall was the church’s third pastor.



A marker honoring Sis. Myrna White was cemented on the grounds of the Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport in October for 32 years of exemplary service. As the marker states, she helped clear the path to construct a fifth runway. White served as the airport’s first assistant general manager for the Office of Public and International Affairs.

## A willing worker

# Wilborn recounts six decades in the vineyard

It has been over 60 years since Mother Ellen Magby Wilborn joined Antioch Baptist Church North.

The Rev. D.T. George was pastor that summer followed by the Rev. Marcus Williams and Cameron M. Alexander, she remembered recently.

All have gone on to be with the Lord, but Wilborn remains.

You can find her on any given Sunday seated with the church mothers dressed in their signature white and hats.

The passing of so many years and so many changes has left Wilborn in a particularly reflective mood.

After giving the pastor her hand, she was appointed to the Fisherman’s Club and taught the Sunbeam Sunday school class before the class was dissolved.

Under the Rev. Williams, Wilborn served as night secretary,

responsible for recording the Sunday offerings, producing the Sunday bulletins and answering the phone.

Williams resigned, and a search committee was formed to find his successor.

After listening to about seven candidates, it was time for a vote, Wilborn recalled.

“I kept record of the candidates,” she said.

To everyone’s surprise, Wilborn said, Rev. Alexander, who was the last to preach, had become a write-in candidate.

“The late Deacon Clinton Robinson and I counted the votes,” she remembered. “The vote for Rev. Alexander was unanimous. He was named pastor of Antioch.”

Under his leadership, Wilborn remained secretary until the new church staff was named and Alexander appointed her church clerk.

It was the first of nearly a half



*Mother Ellen Magby Wilborn*

dozen leadership positions Wilborn would fill.

In addition to serving as the church clerk for more than four decades, she was the first president of the September Birth Month Club, coordinator of the bereavement committee, three times chairman for the pastoral anniversary.

For Rev. Alexander’s fifth an-

niversary, it was Wilborn who arranged for the pastor and his wife Barbara Alexander to be flown to Stone Mountain for a church picnic.

Wilborn is also credited with, among other things, designing the church logo, serving on the building committee for the new sanctuary, signing ministers’ licenses to preach, writing members obituaries and helping the bereaved find funeral homes.

She sang in three choirs: The A’Cappella Choir, the W. Marcus Williams Choir and the Adult Choir. It was Wilborn who gave the necrology at every church anniversary.

“This is just some of the work I’ve done at Antioch, and it’s not complete,” she said, looking back. “Thanks be to God for the work I have done.”

Amen!



DECEMBER

# Antioch/AUMI 2023 Toy Drive



## NOVEMBER

# Vessels of Praise make a joyful return

More than three years had passed since the Vessels of Praise danced during Antioch Baptist Church North's morning worship service.

Like many other Antioch ministries, the dance ministry had been on hiatus since the COVID-19 pandemic forced a shutdown and churches across the country began worshipping virtually.

And so, you might imagine the excitement when the women entered the sanctuary on Nov. 12, praising God to Tye Tribbett's "If He Did It Before" along with the church Steppers.

They followed it up minutes later with a solo performance, dancing to Kirk Franklin's "Our World Needs You."

They had been sorely missed.

Sis. Yvonne Phillips, choreographer and director of the dance ministry, could not have picked a better Sunday to return.

The congregation had gathered to celebrate Antioch's 146 anniversary. The church was filled to near capacity, the spirit was high and the Vessels of Praise, not surprisingly, were at peak performance.

Formed by 10 women with a love of dance in 2010, Phillips said that the "ministry's goal is to connect scripture to song and weave the



selection into the performance."

"It is our hope that the dance ministry is used as a vessel for this purpose," she said.

During their performances, Phillips said, the dancers give witness to happiness and joy, love and heartbreak, struggle, triumph, and victory.

"We also witness where we are in our journey", she said. "During our dances, we can feel the emotions from the congregation's participation, which exalt our delivery of praise and worship."

The Vessels of Praise return was followed weeks later by Antioch's Women's Inspirational Senior Ensemble or WISE Ministry. An-

icipation is high for the return of the youth dancers.

"We are a close-knit, kind, caring group who takes this ministry very seriously and have supported each other throughout various life events and challenges," Phillips said. "While our short-term goal is sustainability, our long-term goal is that dance, which we love, continues to be a vital part of each worship service.

"No matter who is 'on the floor', we hope the dance ministry leads with the Spirit and continues to spread the mission of Antioch Baptist Church North."

No doubt, the Vessels of Praise are doing just that.

# Souls saved at Thanksgiving Day outreach

Seven souls gave their lives to Christ during Antioch Baptist Church North's 20th Salvation Army Thanksgiving Day Outreach held.

As is customary, the call to salvation came after the preached word, delivered by the Rev. Fredrick Robinson, pastor of Mt. Gilead Baptist Church and a son of Antioch.

Robinson, in a message titled "Don't Forget to Say Thank You," said that even in our darkest moments, deliverance is possible because "troubles don't last always."

"There is treasure in your tribulation, healing in your hurting, and power in your predicaments," he said.

Robinson, preaching from Luke 17:11-18, admonished all not to let the world define you by what you are going through because Jesus sees you.

"He gave the 10 men a prescription that didn't seem to make any sense, but he wanted them to exercise their faith," Robinson said. "There are some things you will not receive until you activate your faith. When you have been delivered, remember

to say, 'Thank you,' praising God for his blessing."

The outreach ministry began when the Antioch Ministers' Alliance began preaching and ministering to the residents at the Salvation Army on Marietta Street. That was 30 years ago. Since then, both Antioch's Single Christians of Antioch North and Male Chorus have joined the effort.

SCAN provides residents with needed items while choir members prepare a traditional Thanksgiving meal.

Bro. Lemon Sargeant, home-

less for 16 years, offered a stirring testimony of his call to salvation, saying he used to panhandle at Antioch North.

When he asked Rev. Kenny Alexander for some money, he and Sis. Lisa took him to a motel and paid for him to stay for a week. He admitted having used the money they gave him for drugs but said he has since realized that sometimes you have to go through difficult times - even those that are a result of your poor choices - to get you to where you need to be in Christ.

# What happens when we let God lead

When it comes to Char Miller-King, the phrase ‘never judge a book by its cover’ couldn’t be more true.

For one thing, Miller-King is a woman. She’s African-American and lives right here in Atlanta.

If those things seem obvious, they are hardly ordinary when it comes to woodworker demographics.

According to experts, there are over 3,692 woodworkers currently employed in the United States. Of those, only 8 percent are women, 6.2 percent are African-American, and they are most in demand in Portland, OR.

After 12 years planning events for corporations and non-profits, Miller-King gave it all up to pursue her passion as a full-time woodworker, a field dominated by white men.

And yet in just a few short years, she has made some impressive strides, dominating the airwaves as she hones her craft, creating furniture and sharing her knowledge and skills on popular television shows like *This Old House* and *Play it Forward* with the Harlem Globetrotters. In December, she was featured on *The Woodsmith Shop*, becoming the first person of color to make an appearance in the show’s 18-season history.

Miller-King, who graduated from Clark Atlanta University with a degree in public relations in 2003, said looking back, her journey began when she needed a bed but couldn’t afford to buy one.

“It didn’t look that hard to make,” she said, so she sent a pic-

ture of the bed to her uncle and asked him how to make a duplicate.

Following her uncle’s instructions, it would take her three months to complete the bed, but Miller-King’s passion for woodworking was sealed.

“It never went away,” she said. “I felt an itch and started making random things for the house - a wall-mounted pull-down desk, twin beds, a bookcase.”

It was all Miller-King wanted to do, but she didn’t know how to turn her passion into a career, and it didn’t make sense to quit her job.

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*“I believe that God gives everybody a gift and sometimes you have to go through a lot to recognize it,” Miller-King said. “This is what’s possible when you listen to God.”*

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At the time, she and her husband, Geoff, had two kids, two car payments, and a mortgage.

With encouragement from her children and husband and a push from God, she decided in 2015 to leave corporate America, and after joining Decatur Makers, a community of artists, teachers, and other creatives, she began perfecting her craft and teaching woodshop, which she now considers her true calling.



*Char Miller-King, a long-time member of Antioch, is taking the woodworking industry by storm.*

In 2017, she launched an Instagram page called the Wooden Maven, where she shares her passion, travels, and best tips for working with wood and tools. The more she taught and shared on social media, the more people she found willing to help her.

In a word, God showed her favor and Miller-King would soon become a sought-after instructor, traveling across the country to craft schools such as Penland in Baskerville, NC, and wood studio Hatchspace in Battleboro, VT, teaching adults how to use power tools and create furniture.

In addition to television appearances, Miller-King has accepted brand partnerships with The Home Depot, The Georgia Aquarium, and Carhartt, and has been featured in several top woodworking magazines, including *Popular Woodworking* and *Woodworkers Journal*. You may have seen her in the TV One commercial for GMC. Next Spring, look for her in the



first-ever commercial for Studio 6, a subsidiary of Motel 6.

If you’re interested in learning how to use power tools or explore other creative opportunities such as 3D printing, welding, or laser printing, reach out to Miller-King at [thewoodenmaven@gmail.com](mailto:thewoodenmaven@gmail.com). She welcomes the chance to share her gift to empower others and help increase women of color in woodworking.

# So long, Antioch, and thanks for loving us

When asked more than 15 years ago to create this newsletter, my charge was just that simple. I had no roadmap and no general instructions except that we'd publish once a month.

By then, I'd been writing for daily newspapers for more than two decades, and so I set out initially to just create an extra small version of that.

If a good newspaper covers local news, national news, some world news, appeals to many generations, and tells stories that can hold readers' interest, I figured a good church newsletter should feature church news, ministry news, member news, and also tell stories that held readers' interests. More than anything, I hoped it would connect people to Christ, inspire them to become better versions of themselves, and give them hope.

With help from Penny Jones, who provided photos, the late Linda Harper, Reggie Tolbert, and about a half dozen others, I went about gathering Antioch Baptist Church North news.

Months later, *The Church at Antioch* published to rave reviews with stories about the church ushers, the annual red and white gala, and a church-wide prayer breakfast featuring Sis. Margaret Weaver as guest speaker.

I still remember getting a call from Mrs. Barbara Alexander, whose idea it was to "revitalize" the newsletter, and who tapped me to head up the effort.

"Gracie, you did it," she told me with a smile in her voice. "I don't know what I expected, but this was far beyond anything I could've imagined."

It was as if I'd won a coveted "best newspaper" award, only better.



*Gracie Bonds Staples pictured with her husband, the Rev. Jimmie Staples, moved to Spanish Fort, Ala., in January to be closer to family.*

That was in March 2008. All these years later, I still feel that way but with a bit of sadness.

You see, this edition of *The Church at Antioch* is my last.

In case you missed it, my husband Jimmie and I made the hard decision early this year to move closer to our daughters, Jamila and Asha, and my two siblings in Mississippi. That meant selling our Johns Creek home (in a record 12 hours) and buying in Spanish Fort, AL, a small town on the eastern shore of Mobile Bay, a hop, skip, and a jump from where Asha has spent the last five years.

Because both are finishing residency, we're not sure where Jamila and her husband Ben will eventually end up, but we're praying their medical careers don't take them too far away from their current base in Lafayette, LA.

This move marks the third in nearly 40 years

for Jimmie and me, but this one has been the hardest of them all.

Atlanta has been kind to us. You have been kinder. From day one, you have made us feel welcomed and always loved.

It didn't take us long to realize that both were kindnesses you learned from our late Pastor Cameron Alexander who modeled better than anyone I've ever met how to live that great commandment to love God and to love others better.

As I write this, my mind is full of countless memories. Singing with the adult choir, enjoying worship services, and gathering string for this newsletter, first every month, and more recently every quarter, will remain among my greatest joys.

I've had a lot of help over the years, more recently from Maryann Morgan, Betty Jo Cooke, Karen McKinney-Holley, and since the beginning, Reggie Tolbert. Besides my Sunday School class and my fellow sopranos and eating partners Eva Manning and Vivian Edwards, I'm sure I will miss the four of you the most.

You hung in there with me the longest, you worked hard, you didn't seem to mind my constant prodding too much. Two of you simply ignored it. Through it all, you completed each assignment with grace.

Not that you're done. I know you'll continue to do the work if for no other reason than you love this ministry as much as I have.

Now in the words of my favorite writer, "Every goodbye ain't gone."

You and Antioch - you who made this journey worth remembering - will live in new sweet home Alabama hearts - both mine and Jimmie's. Forever.

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