



# The Church at Antioch

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

July - September 2023

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## Celebrating a milestone birthday...Pastor Kenny turns 60



Hundreds of Antioch Baptist Church North members and friends turned out on Aug. 5 to celebrate the Rev. Kenneth Alexander's birthday held at the 590 building. The celebration was marked by good food and fun as members took photos with the pastor and first lady Lisa, line danced to the sounds of DJ Macman, aka Jonathan Craig. Among the many gifts presented was a special portrait of the late Cameron Madison Alexander, Pastor Kenny's father, and Antioch's long-time pastor. The rendering was a surprise from Antioch member and artist Marcus Bishop.

## Prayer fundamental to a life of faith

Slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing."

It is an enduring truth the Rev. Otis Byrd Jr. shared during the opening moments of the preached word on Aug. 6.

Byrd, an assistant pastor at

the historic Alfred Street Baptist Church in Alexandria, Va., and former minister of music at Antioch Baptist Church North, was back in the house after bidding farewell to the congregation six months ago.

Celebratory greetings for Pastor Kenneth Alexander marked the Aug. 6 service though he let

it be known that this was not a birthday celebration but a worship service.

Byrd, a recent graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary, used the moment to teach lessons on prayer, pointing to a petition Isaac made on behalf of his wife Rebecca in Genesis 25.

Byrd noted that prayer is a fun-

damental ritual in the believer's life and is not restricted by faith and culture. Catholics pray, as do protestants. Some pray in English, while others might pray in Spanish, Latin, or even Ebonics.

Some prayers are whispered while others are uttered in groans. Some pray every day, while others

*Continued on page 2*

## A Message From The Pastor



The catchphrase of the day seemingly everywhere I turn is “level up”. I suppose it is a shortened version of “take it to the next level” from a few years ago. Long before those phrases came into the common lingo, however, Antioch has been leveling up.

When I look out into the congregation, I see members who have set the standard in business, in the community, in politics, and most certainly here at Antioch. Following the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they have excelled. From young Kyler Porch winning the oratorical contest at the GMBC Congress of Christian Education to Carlson Reid being drafted by the Pittsburgh Pirates, Antioch is leveling up and making her mark in a world that has often tried to keep us down.

When we hosted the Fifth District Annual Session, Antioch leveled up. Our pastoring sons, Rev. Walter Mobley and Rev. John Byrdsell delivered the lecture and the sermon at the Fifth District One-Night Revival. At the GMBC Congress, Antioch was vitally involved in every operation from the opening registration to the closing rallies. Antioch held leadership roles and taught courses at the GMBC Statewide Christian Education Conference held at Good Shepherd Baptist Church in Augusta, where our son, the Rev. Clarence Moore is pastor. At the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. Annual Session, Antioch led in every auxiliary. When we thought the kitchen was going to be shut down for two weeks, the staff leveled up, and we opened in just over a week. Thank you, Antioch for continually leveling up.

People often say our youth are our future, and while it is true that they will grow up to be our leaders, what we pour into them today is what makes the difference. Each of our young men who won the NBCUSA Laymen’s Scholarships, Julian Dudley, David Henderson, Nolan Shelton, and Cameron Woods, spoke about the importance of the spiritual foundation they received at home and at church and how that grounded them as they pursued postsecondary education in places where Christian values are being challenged. Our AUMI Youth Summit, planned by our young adults and Youth Mentoring Program, provided over 100 youth - and their parents - tools to navigate this increasingly chaotic world. We also distributed school supplies to over 100 youth to help them be successful academically from kindergarten to college.

We celebrated pastoral anniversaries with our sons Rev. Dr. Eddie L. Bright, Rev. Craig Johnson, Rev. Ken Jelks, and Rev. Sean Smith. As brothers trained by our late pastor, the Rev. Cameron M. Alexander, we are able to maintain the standard of keeping the church the church as we work cooperatively rather than competitively to impact our communities.

Antioch enjoys fellowshiping and gathering together to have fun, and we went over the top this quarter. The Divine Nine celebration featured good-natured competition and fantastic food. Our 19th Annual CMA Golf Classic, where our Sunday School Superintendent, Bro. Nevin Harton and his team won 1st place for the second year in a row, was more about fellowship for a good cause than golf prowess. My birthday celebration was a milestone of joy as we gathered in the 590 building on Saturday and spiritual uplift in worship on Sunday as Min. Otis Byrd, Jr. graced the pulpit. I am incredibly blessed to share a birth month with Mother Grace Brooks, who turned 101 years old, and Mother Annie Laurie Harris, who turned 107 years old.

To God be the glory!

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

*Continued from cover: Keep believing...*



*Minister Otis Byrd, Jr.*

only pray when they need God.

For many Christians, Byrd said, prayer is one of the first things our parents teach us. Indeed, we all pray in some fashion, whether it is the ritualistic, memorized prayers before bedtime, grace before mealtime, or the Lord’s Prayer, which Jesus taught to his disciples.

But consider the moments and seasons after we say Amen, he suggested. What are our expectations?

Byrd said we must learn to pray in all things and “strive to be like Isaac and pray for ourselves and intercede for others.”

Three truths, he said, are illustrated in this Genesis story.

The first is “answered prayer is the product of prayer.” After 20 years of marriage, Isaac and Rebecca could not produce children. Isaac prays faithfully to God and intercedes on behalf of his wife.

The second truth is “answered prayer does not preclude difficulties.” Although the Lord granted Isaac’s petition, Rebecca had trouble in her pregnancy, creating the need for more prayer.

“More challenges, more prayer,” Byrd said.



## JULY

## Teamwork makes for proud moment

Antioch Baptist Church North members were everywhere. Facilitating registration. Teaching. Directing the Children's Rally.

Watching them, Pastor Kenneth Alexander couldn't help but feel proud.

"Antioch makes me look good," he told Antioch delegates more than once during the Congress, held July 10-13 in Brunswick. "I knew our members were involved, but actually seeing everyone here together working is mind-blowing."

And so it was from the start of the 61st General Missionary Baptist Convention's Congress of Christian Education to the very end.

Dr. Brenda Eason and her staff, including Sis. Jean Jones, took care of the logistics, ensuring a smooth run of events. Sis. Bridget Hill and Princeanna Walker handled class registrations making sure they were accurate and attendees who completed their courses received the appropriate credit. Sisters Dorcas Ford Jones

and Tamara Ross did triple duty as teachers, chaperones and Children's Rally directors. Dr. Royal Baxter served as chaperone and Step Team director and Sis. Judi Rawls served as chaperone and vocal coach.

And, not surprising, Sis. Homerzelle Gentry wrote and directed the rally, "The In-Crowd."

Pastor Alexander did his part, too, sharing the history of the Land of Promise and presenting a check to President Corbett for the upcoming project on the Land, a place of healing for former prison inmates.

All Antioch delegates to the Congress were fully engaged, but the youth seemed to enjoy and benefit from the experience the most. In addition to attending classes, they developed friendships across the state and overcame their shyness to stand boldly to read the scripture, lead the Covenant, and recite the Articles of Faith in front of a packed audience.

Antioch and her sister church,  
*Continued from page 6 - Teamwork*



*After a day of food, fun, and fellowship, members of Antioch Baptist Church North's Divine Nine were celebrated during the July 9 Sunday worship service.*

*Sis. Myrna White, a member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, shared a brief history of each organization and their mission. The Divine Nine consists of the nine recognized Black Greek-letter organizations, which are members of the National Pan-Hellenic Council. Each group has different principles and missions but shares a common goal to educate and uplift the Black community, White said.*

*In addition to presenting a dashiki to Pastor Kenneth Alexander, a member of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, the organizations each made contributions to Antioch's scholarship ministry.*

## Fifth District a hallelujah, good time

What a time, what a time, what a time!

When it comes to the Annual Session of the Fifth District of the General Missionary Baptist Convention of Georgia, Inc. those three little words say it all.

The session, hosted July 25-27 at Antioch Baptist Church North, drew members from Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton, and Rockdale, the four counties that comprise the district.

This theme, "Leading for the Fu-

ture", was based on Psalm 71:18.

From the start, attendees were encouraged to "have church" by setting their minds on worship and making a joyful noise. They quickly obliged, filling the sanctuary on Wednesday night with good-natured rivalry between the women who strutted and sashayed inside behind their church banners, hoping to have the most members present.

What followed was President's Night, when Antioch presented a

plaque to the district president and her son, the Rev. Eddie L. Bright, pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church.

In other action, Bright appointed Sis. Dorcas Ford Jones secretary of the Fifth District and presented the district's first scholarship to Jakaylah Roberts, a member of Greater Piney Grove Baptist Church, where the Rev. William Flippin is pastor. Bright thanked those who have served with him, saying they were not in

a position but rather on a God-given assignment.

"When we find ourselves in the will of God, we may not want to accept our assignment; we may exhibit the Moses Syndrome and find reasons why we shouldn't accept God's divine appointment," he said. "God is patient and forgiving, and he will look beyond the excuses and equip you to carry out his assignment."

## AUGUST



*Kyler Porch, 7, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA*

### Let God be your head coach

I know who I am. I am a child of God, and I know God loves me. The Bible tells me so in John 4:19: “We love Him because He first loved us.” When I think about God, it reminds me of my favorite sport, baseball. Here is my story.

With God, my foundation is solid. I see God as the best player ever and want to always play on his team. I start at home plate, where my fundamentals start; my Bible has all the instructions.

I’m ready to play ball and at the batter’s box; God is the head coach, no matter what ball comes my way. My coach has prepared me. He is in this game with me. The game has started.

I hit the ball in left field! I’m running to first base, and I made it; God guided my footsteps. The batter was up. I was running to second base; I stumbled and fell; God picked me up and started me on my way; I made it. Now I’m waiting at second base.

I waited patiently; God’s timing was perfect, and I reached third base! I kept believing and trusting in God that I would make it to home plate. We need one more run to win the game. I made it home safe, scored a run, and our team won!

I always feel like a winner because I have God on my team! God is my base, my Coach, my helmet, my bat, and my foundation. I believe and trust in God, I wait on Him, and I do not fear anything that comes my way; life is a home run when I let God guide me!

Thessalonians 5:11 reads, “Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up.”

Let’s play ball!

(Kyler is the son of Bro. Kentrell and Sis. Tina Dudley Porch)

## Youths capture four of seven Laymen’s scholarships

Antioch Baptist Church North heard from this year’s Laymen Oratorical scholarship winners during the Youth Emphasis Sunday Service held on July 30.

This year marked the fifth year the National Baptist Convention has awarded the scholarship.

According to Bro. Tom Jennings, who serves on the NBC scholarship committee, the competition opened to past winners in 2022 allowing them to reapply as long as they are enrolled in college.

Antioch has had winners since the scholarship’s inception but this year, Jennings said, was a banner year.

He said four Antioch members, including two who reapplied, were winners. They were Cameron Woods who took third place; Nolan Shelton, who won fifth; and David Henderson and Julian Dudley, who won first and second place respectively in a follow-up to wins in 2020 and 2022.

The speeches, edited for space, are below:

### Nolan Shelton

## How has evangelism shaped your world?

I follow God who has shaped and enriched my life. That’s my testimony.

It might not have happened had it not been for the teachings of my family and church. They gave me knowledge of who God is and how God affirms himself in the word to help me understand his grace.

I learned, through reading my Bible, how God’s authority brings forth instructions and security in our lives and why witnessing is an essential part of my life.

When I was a peer leader during my senior year of high school, I connected with my classmates by telling them stories of how God helped me, through prayers and trusting in him, to overcome anxiety and peer pressure and show love and compassion for others.



*Nolan Shelton*

Receiving God’s love for me not only caused a positive change in my life, it opened my heart to love others.

I feel blessed and honored to exalt his name and share my story of how I see the world through witnessing.

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*Continued from page 4 - Nolan*

As a young African-American male, for instance, I don't have to fear what tomorrow will bring because I'm assured that despite any challenges God will see me through. Through Him, I can live free of the inequality and uncertainty plaguing our world.

I let nothing inhibit me from speaking the truth.

On Monday, I follow him and encourage others to have faith in him.

On Tuesday, I trust in him and tell others to believe in him. On Wednesday, I walk with him and

encourage others to meditate on his words. Thursday, I call on him and tell others to stay lifted in his name. Friday, I stretch my hands to him and encourage others to reach out to him. Saturday, I find peace in him and ask others to rest in him. Sunday: I praise and

ask others to worship him.

The ending to my story is this: I tell others, to trust in God for all their tomorrows and tell of God's good tidings, and live life with assurance.

*(Nolan is the son of the Rev. David Shelton and Sis. Kim Dudley Porter)*

## David Henderson

# Give no thought to tomorrow

My junior year in college was one of my best thus far. I joined more clubs, made more friends, hung out more, and allowed myself more opportunities to explore the world with no leash, per se. I developed a much better sense of self.

However, a few storms came my way, and for a while, it seemed like the rain would never stop. Two of my closest friends, a male, and a female, experienced indescribable pain, and I found myself in the middle of it.

I was napping one day last year when the vibration of my phone awakened me to a heartbreaking text message: my female friend's mother had died.

I was overcome with panic and shock.

Meanwhile, my male friend had been nursing his ill mother for about a year. Two weeks after his mother's birthday in March, his girlfriend called with the news. His mom had passed.

My heart dropped.

Her funeral service was beautiful as we all celebrated her precious life.

I began feeling "survivor's remorse," sprinkled with fear. Was I next? Was my mom or dad?

I prayed and asked God why I had these thoughts. After a while, he told me that it's because I am an empathetic person who feels deeply, and therefore, I tend to



*David Henderson*

put myself in the shoes of others.

I did my best to comfort my friends and encouraged them to lean on God to get through the grief.

Ultimately, their parents' deaths led me to truly appreciate ev-

ery interaction, conversation, or glance with my own parents. It also taught me how to "be a friend" to others. God showed me that being a friend doesn't always mean giving a motivating speech, going on hundreds of trips, or even talking all the time. Being a friend is simply being there for others, no matter the circumstances.

Through prayer and the choice to keep enjoying life, I've stopped worrying about "who's next" and have learned to cherish every day.

*(David is the son of Bro. Eric and Sis. Yvonnia Henderson.)*

## Julian Dudley

# In good and bad times, remain faithful

I like to refer to my first year of college as my Genesis because what a year it was. Even so, I had one crucial advantage - my faith.

Faith helped me to remain true to myself, to not get lost in the freedom bestowed upon me, and to fully embrace the transition to campus life.

No more pressing the snooze button. It was all about getting to class on time, a lot of studying, sleep deprivation, and making

the best decisions as I juggled networking, getting involved in organizations, maintaining a high GPA, and yes, doing my own laundry!

I eagerly embraced my biblical teachings and held onto my faith in good times and challenging moments, believing that God would illuminate my path and help me reach my goals. Above all, I devoted myself to strengthening my relationship with God.



*Julian Dudley*

My testimony? Remain faithful.

I will break it down in terms related to my major, Aerospace Engineering, which requires a cyclical process - development, design, testing, and review - to deliver a product.

THE DEVELOPMENT: The days became shorter and the nights became longer. While studying for one exam, boom, three more appeared. I felt exhausted but as

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*Continued from page 6 - Julian*

it reads in Galatians 6:9, I didn't grow weary of doing good, knowing that I'd reap a harvest in due season. I was able to move to the next level.

**THE DESIGN:** This process called for teamwork, reaching out to my peers to join me in the planning and coordination. Following

instructions is essential to following God's plan. We had to be on the same page for the maximum outcome to execute our design well.

**THE TEST:** The test was complex. But most importantly, I stayed the course through the developmental process and the

design. I didn't give up. I kept the faith.

**THE REVIEW:** As I embarked on my journey, challenges loomed. The devil sought to divert my attention by exploiting my passion for witnessing, counseling incoming students, starting mentor programs, and raising money for

scholarships. Despite the devil's efforts, I accomplished every objective and still made time to nourish my relationship with the Lord.

The outcome? I passed!  
*(Julian is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ontario Dudley)*

## Cameron Woods

# Using your gifts for the good of community

I caught myself recently letting my brain wander aimlessly and somehow understand why I avoid television, preferring to consume fiction like superhero movies instead. When I watch a Marvel movie, I know the characters can't hurt me, but I know that a simple act like going to the store could cause me hurt or worse. I always ask myself, "Why is no one acting on these real problems in a world that seems to be getting darker by the day?"

I never realized I was sitting on my answer until one day, instead of running from the news, I ran toward it. I sat with it, watching stories from immigration to the poverty crisis. Only in the final

two minutes of a thirty-minute period did a story of a 12-year-old boy helping the homeless during the holidays make me smile. Ideas began forming in my mind. I couldn't piece them together right then, but Proverbs 18:16 popped into my head. "Your gift will make room for you."

I was always asking God what my gift was, and here it seemed He was giving me my answer through what I was doing every day - making films for school, church, and personal projects. Filmmaking was my answer, specifically an entertainment outlet that makes complex stories easy to watch and digest.

I thought about the short film



Cameron Woods

I was making on political and economic views seen through the eyes of adolescents and how it could foster understanding and make the world feel safer. What about an outlet of entertainment that highlights the real-life heroes

in our world so that people can feel inspired to help and do more in their community? How about a film that tells harrowing stories in a way that allows viewers to empathize with the situations and characters?

If you can empathize with a recovering addict on screen, why not the real-life ones in your neighborhood? This alone could spark conversations and, through discussions, tangible change.

I thought I had to fly or be able to lift cars to help my community. It never occurred to me that I could use my gift of filmmaking to positively impact my community.  
*(Cameron is the son of Dea. Vernon and Sis. Laura Woods)*

*Continued from page 3 - Teamwork*

Mount Zion Baptist Church, pastored by Antioch son Rev. Eddie L. Bright, dominated the Oratorical Contest.

Kyler Porch, the 8-year-old son of Tina and Kentrell Porch and the youngest winner, stole the show. Using baseball as his backdrop and metaphor, he hit a home run, explaining that he is on God's team, and his coach has prepared him to win.

"God guided my steps, and when I stumbled, he picked me up, and I made it to second base, then third, and home," he said. "God is my base, my helmet, my bat, my foundation. Life is a home run when I let God guide me."

**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: [gracie.staples@gmail.com](mailto:gracie.staples@gmail.com)

SEPTEMBER

# Youth Summit, back to school event successful

Organizers say the 2023 AUMI Youth Summit was designed to educate, inspire, and motivate youth to commit to taking care of their mental health, explore Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math, and practice financial fitness.

All indications are both were hits.

The effort, led by the Rev. Lester Duncan, Bro. Evan Malborough, and Sisters Homerzelle Gentry and Brittani Price, provided Antioch youth with hands-on experience in three key areas and noted how each relates to scripture. They are as follows:

- **S.T.E.A.M.** - Participants were able to tie

science to God via scripture with living examples. They learned what STEAM was and its purpose. The youth reviewed the process used to start and complete an engineering project. Using practical mathematical concepts to help them solve any challenges, the students had to figure out how to make toy cars function with a few simple materials.

- **Mental Health** - Youth participated in the "One Word Challenge". Rather than focus on many different priorities during the year, they focused on one thing in order to do it well. The youth created projects for this workshop and participated in discussions about social media.

- **Financial Fitness** - Youth learned about credit - what is a credit report and a credit score, the difference between the two, the importance of maintaining a good credit score, and how to accomplish that goal. They learned about credit utilization and why it is important to one's overall credit score. They also discussed the number of times that money is discussed in the Bible and for what purposes.

The summit was held in collaboration with this year's back-to-school effort on July 29. More than 200 book bags stuffed with school supplies were distributed.



Youth engaged in S.T.E.A.M., Mental Health, and Financial fitness during the Youth Summit.



Rev. Eddie Bright



Rev. Ken Jelks

*Celebrating 10 years of ministry: The Rev. Eddie Bright and the Rev. Ken Jelks, both sons of Antioch Baptist Church North, celebrated their pastoral anniversaries on Sept. 10. Rev. Bright is the pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church in Atlanta. Rev. Jelks is pastor of Mt. Tabor Baptist Church of Columbus, GA. The Rev. Kenneth Alexander, pastor of Antioch, was the featured speaker at Mt. Tabor's Sept. 9 Prayer Breakfast at Callaway Gardens and at Mount Zion's celebration on Sept. 10.*

## MALACHI MENTORING MINISTRIES

Antioch Urban Ministries, Inc. • [www.antiochurban.org](http://www.antiochurban.org)

**Attention all youth ages 9-17!**





# Carlson Reed signs with Pittsburgh Pirates

Carlson Reed was just 10 years old when he realized that he wanted to play baseball even if it meant failing at the sport first.

Failing, he said recently, only made him want to succeed more. Failing made him realize he needed more than his family to improve his game.

At Champion Performance Training in Powder Springs, GA, he found Coach Michael Butler.

His advice?

Stop worrying about the things you can't control. Focus, instead, on the things you can.

Reed, the son of Carl and Carol Reed, understood.

He'd been dedicated and baptized at Antioch Baptist Church North where he served faithfully as a saxophone player for six years in the youth orchestra. He lived Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me" both in the classroom and on the baseball diamond, garnering the Barack Obama Presidential Award, Academic Letter Award, Scholar Athletic Award, and a long list of other accolades.

Still, when he graduated from Marietta High School in 2020 and headed to West Virginia University on a baseball scholarship, he never imagined he'd make such a rapid ascent up MLB draft boards.

He'd barely finished his junior year there when the Pittsburgh Pirates came calling back in July.



*Carlson Reed signs with Pirates*

The team had selected Reed in the third round of the 2023 MLB Draft.

Considered one of the best relief pitchers in the Big 12 Conference this season, Reed successfully transitioned from being a starting pitcher to a closer and became a dominant force for the West Virginia University Mountaineers. He went 2-1 with seven saves and a 2.61 earned run average this season. His ERA was even better in Big 12 play, an impressive 1.76.

Across 38.0 innings on the mound, he struck out 60 batters and held Big 12 hitters to a minuscule .167 batting average.

Reed, 20, earned multiple post-season accolades this year as well for his efforts. He was named to both the ABCA All-East Region



*Reed throws a pitch*

Second Team and the All-Big 12 First Team. In June, he was listed among the top MLB Draft prospects by MLB.com. Shortly after those rankings were released, he went to the MLB Draft Combine, where he topped the RPM leaderboards.

He was watching the draft with his family when the Pirates called.

Asked if he was ready to be taken off the board, Reed answered "Yes, sir."

That moment was a dream come true, he said. But it was also the start of something bigger.



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