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*Congratulations
Rev. Kenny!*

*Connecting
People
to Christ*



The Church at Antioch

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

January-March 2019

Volume 9, Issue 1



Ministers envelop Rev. Alexander in prayer at the end of consecration service.

Antioch consecrates new pastor, the Rev. Kenneth Alexander

More than a month after Antioch Baptist Church North members voted overwhelmingly to name Rev. Kenneth Alexander its pastor, thousands turned out to honor and celebrate the new pastor.

The celebration, spread over two services on March 31, included the usual sermons and singing and congratulatory remarks from city and community leaders, including Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms and Westside Future Fund, Inc. President and CEO John Ahmann.

Rev. Kenny's ascension follows the



First Lady, Sis. Lisa Alexander

death of his father, the Rev. Cameron Madison Alexander in December and that of his mother, Barbara J. Alexander, who passed just days after Rev. Alexan-

der's burial.

Rev. Cameron Alexander was pastor of Antioch for nearly 50 years.

There was no mistaking his presence or Mrs. A's throughout both services.

"I know Pastor and Mrs. A are proud," Rev. Rodney Turner noted during the morning service.

Later in the day, the Rev. Johnny Flakes III would express similar sentiments, adding he was grateful that Antioch's late pastor made sure the church continued its legacy lifting up Jesus

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Continued from cover



Alexander Family

Christ and for the congregation continuing to exemplify a church that is Christ-centered Holy Spirit-led and mission bound.

Turner, pastor of Mount Vernon Baptist church and guest preacher at the 10 a.m. service, noted the call of a preacher is God's doing and said Antioch could press rewind and look back over time and see how Antioch has been blessed with capable leaders.

"You can see even now how God has allowed the legacy to continue," he said.

While Turner preached from 21st chapter of John in which Jesus admonishes Peter to feed his sheep, Flakes drew from the story of Joshua, who after the death of Moses, was elevated to leader of the children of Israel.

"Although he'd long been the designated successor, God's formal consecration hadn't been made," said Flakes, pastor of the Fourth Street Missionary Baptist Church.

He said the first time God admonished Joshua to have courage, He needed him to conquer the land. The second, He wanted Joshua to heed the law of Moses. And the third time, God's purpose was to



Rev. Rodney Turner



Rev. Johnny Flakes, III

ally Joshua's fears.

"He was succeeding a great servant leader," Flakes said. "Joshua saw how much his predecessor was admired, and Joshua himself regarded Moses as a father figure."

Because of that, he may have felt in-

capable of filling Moses' shoes. God assured him, however, that just as He was with Moses, He would be with him.

God also told Joshua the measures he could take to keep the people from mutiny, essential lessons in what Flakes called servant leadership 101.

*Be strong and very courageous.

*Be careful to observe all of the law Moses had given.

*Meditate on it day and night.

Flakes said that if the people adhere to God's law, they will not reject God's leader.

As the consecrated leader of Antioch, he said that Rev. Kenny had been set aside to teach and preach, to obey the law regardless of popular theology.

"You are consecrated to give instruction," he said. "You must teach and remind the congregation of their obligation to teach others."

Finally, he said, that the Rev. Kenny is consecrated to tell the same old story, that Jesus was slain on the cross and rose on the third day.

"You are commissioned, set aside to tell this same story," he said.

JANUARY



Antioch holds day of service honoring King

Some 50 Antioch Baptist Church North members and 40 youth mentees of the Rev. Lester Duncan and members of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity came together Jan. 21 for a day of service at Antioch's food and clothing banks.

Volunteers sorted food and clothing to make it easier for those needing help to find items they are seeking.

According to the Rev. Terry Hightower, executive director of Antioch Urban Ministries, Inc. which coordinates the programs, the number of those in need has increased exponentially in the last year.

"We had to re-structure so that we could serve the large numbers effectively and preserve their sense of dignity," he said.

Bro. Robert Maddox encouraged volunteers to come help sort food and clothing as often as possible.

"Every day, I keep Dr. King's words in mind that in order to be great, you have to serve others," he said, referring to the last sermon Dr. King delivered at Ebenezer Baptist Church on February 4, 1968.

King was assassinated on April 4 that year in Memphis, Tenn.



National Baptist Convention opens credit union

Biblically sound sermons and spirited singing and devotions marked the National Baptist Convention's Mid-Winter Board meeting held at the Jackson Convention Complex in Jackson, MS.

The session, held Jan. 14-17, easily fulfilled the NBC challenge - "Envisioning the Future Exceptionally through Our Commitment to Christian Stewardship" – with the launch of the NBC credit union.

President Jerry Young said the credit union would allow NBC "to help our own, getting rid of predatory lenders, payday lenders and food deserts."

"It is fitting that we open the Credit Union on the Rev. Dr. M.L. King's birthday," he said.

In a speech before his assassination, King lamented that there was nothing new about poverty. "What is new is that we now have the resources to get rid of poverty," he said

In other business, Women's Auxiliary President Cynthia Perkins Smith emphasized the biblical mandate in Gen 1: 28 to "replenish the earth."

Attorney Heather McTeer Toney, na-



tional field director of Moms Clean Air Force, stressed the need to be aware of climate change and the impact of air pollution on our health. She challenged members to take steps to make sure our children and grandchildren have a chance for a quality life, breath clean air and not be plagued by extreme weather events.

FEBRUARY



Antioch Choir



Rev. Otis Byrd and Adoration

Adult choir dazzles audience at GospelFest

The Antioch Baptist Church North Adult Choir was among the half dozen choirs featured during the inaugural “Atlanta GospelFest: Celebrating Atlanta’s Deep Gospel Roots” program held Feb. 23 at the Rialto Center for the Performing Arts in Atlanta.

The fest, which also featured Minister Otis Byrd and Adoration, Westlake High School Gospel Choir, and the University of Georgia African American Choral Ensemble, was sponsored by Georgia State University’s College of Arts Music Department.

Antioch and Adoration, under Min. Byrd’s direction, were clear favorites. Everyone in the house stood as each sang - in traditional Baptist church style - an A and B selection. The Combined Festival Chorus closed out the concert.

Preparation for a Combined Festival Chorus, comprised of GSU students, faculty and area high school students, began early in the morning and culminated in an evening concert.

Bishop Chantel Wright, pastor Of PNEUMA Ministries in Harlem, NY, and an internationally known choral clinician, was the guest conductor. Gospel singer Calesta “Callie” Day, known for her phenomenal range, also worked with the Festival Chorus.



Rev. C.M. Alexander given honor

Nearly a dozen Antioch Baptist Church North members were on hand in February to witness the presentation of a shadow box given in memory of the church’s late pastor, the Rev. Cameron Alexander.

Antioch’s new pastor, the Rev. Kenneth Alexander, accepted the box during Morehouse School of Religion’s 151st Founders Day banquet held at the Robert W. Woodruff Library on the Atlanta University Center campus.

The Rev. C.M. Alexander, who passed in December, had served on the school of religion’s board of directors.

Dr. Joseph Evans, dean of the school, recalled the late pastor’s firm commitment to alleviating poverty in the African-American community and noted Rev. Kenny, who worked alongside his father, is continuing that legacy.

The Rev. Jeffrey Haggray brilliantly unpacked the conference theme scripture, Psalm 41:1-2, as he encouraged everyone to move forward in faith.

“For Christians, there is something catalytic in the time of trouble that releases God’s provisions, protection and promises,” Haggray said. “God wants us to flourish and not just survive.”

On the final day event, the Rev. Clarence Moore, a son of Antioch and the newly-elected chairman of the MSR board of trustees, gave one of the C.D. Hubert lectures in which he cautioned the church is suffering from the curse of complacency.

“Most of us are living better than we ever have before, yet we fail to thank God, and we have gotten at ease,” Moore said. “We are not grieved because of the sickness in the world around us.”

Mission and evangelism focus of GMBC Adjourned Session

Heavy emphasis was placed on mission and evangelism through disaster relief during the General Missionary Baptist Convention of Georgia's three-day adjourned session held in February.

According to the Rev. Timothy French, home mission coordinator, the GMBC had "boots on the ground" in tornado-stricken Dawson and Cairo counties and around Tifton and Dougherty counties, still suffering from the ravages of Hurricane Michael. GMBC maintains needed supplies in a Macon warehouse and is often able to provide relief before other agencies, arriving as soon as authorities have deemed the site safe.

In other business, the Rev. Ronald Toney, a son of Antioch and pastor of Lizzie Chapel Baptist Church in Macon, shared the needs of the convention's foreign mission site in Tapio, Haiti. Although a severe earthquake in October had made travel to Haiti risky, he said the convention had sent funds to aid with basic needs.



Rev. Charles Benton, social justice coordinator, reminded attendees that "our faith is a faith that came out of persecution, and we cannot be comfortable in the pews."

"It was the Black church where social justice movements were launched and supported," he said.

Then quoting late Dr. George Weaver, he added: "There ought to be some stones that remain stacked. We cannot develop a sense of amnesia; we must have a theology of action."

The session, held in Brunswick, also offered opportunities to enroll in the Certificate of Progress Program sponsored by the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. Students can begin classes during the Adjourned Session and finish during the Annual Session held in November.

As GMBC Northeast Region Coordinator, Princeanna Walker works with members of churches in three districts, including Antioch, who are seeking certification to teach.

Educating, equipping and empowering God's servants

The effective use of technology and developing strategies for church growth were among the pressing concerns addressed during the General Missionary Baptist Convention of Georgia's Moderator's and Minister's Conference held Feb. 5-7 in Macon.

Pastors were encouraged to use multiple modes of technology to reach more people for Christ and implement the vision given them by the Holy Spirit for the church.

"You have to do more than bleed for the vision; you have to hemorrhage for it," the Rev. Valerie Thomp-

son of Revelation Baptist Church told those gathered.

The panel on the effective use of technology was one of several presented during the three-day conference in keeping with its them to educate, equip and empower God's servants.

In another, the Rev. Stephen Samuel, pastor of St. John Baptist Church in Gainesville, suggested the church take a page out of McDonald's strategy book to maximize its impact.

The popular food chain, he said, had successfully revamped its image and brand by paying attention to the shift in the family and re-



sponding accordingly.

"Is McDonald's smarter than the church? Not at all," he said. "The church still has a better product; we have a man and a message that gives us the competitive advantage. But unless

the church realizes we are on the battlefield competing for people's time, talents and treasures, we will not be able to reach this troubled world with what people need."

Congratulations, Rev. Kenny, from the Church @ Antioch Staff



Betty Jo Cooke



Bennie McDonald



Maryann Morgan



Karen McKinney Holley



Jane Butler



Steven Thomas



Reggie Tolbert



Gracie Bonds Staples



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*?

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gstaples@ajc.com



MARCH

Ethan Drake writes, autographs his first book

John Ethan Drake signed copies of his book *Aoura* for fellow members of Antioch Baptist Church North in late March.

It's not surprising Drake would write a book at such an early age. The 8-year-old loves to read, taking in over a million words last year alone while participating in the Accelerated Reading program at his school, Fickett Elementary.

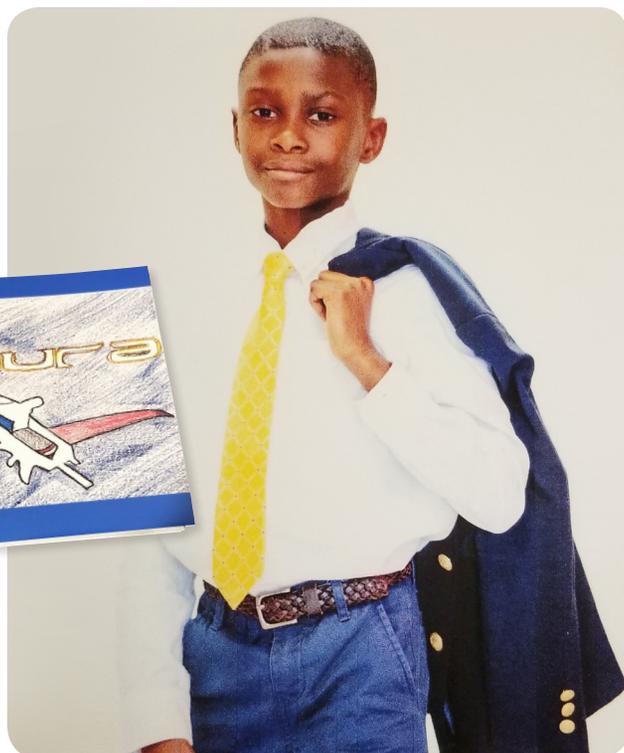
Because of his drive to excel, he was selected to participate in the Young Authors Creative Writing program at Fickett.

It was during this program that Ethan conceived and wrote *Aoura*, a fictional account of a space adventure in which the characters meet and overcome many adversities.

Ethan hopes to turn *Aoura* into a series.

In addition to writing, Ethan loves art. He recently placed second in the PTA-sponsored art competition for the Atlanta Public Schools and is president of his fourth-grade class, a member of Fickett's math and robotics clubs and the Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl.

Ethan, son of Bro. Sean and Sis. Erika Drake, is the proud brother of Tyler and Simon.



Atlanta Metropolitan College Certificate in Biblical Studies

Nearly two dozen members of Antioch Baptist Church North attended the first class of The Certificate of Biblical Studies offered by Atlanta Metropolitan State College. The class, held March 4 in the AUMI Building, was arranged by Min. Bryan O. Mitchell, a son of Antioch and

Interim Dean and Associate Professor at AMSC. The first course, New Testament Literature Overview, is being taught by Min. Oscar Scott, also a Son of Antioch and middle school teacher. The course runs for eight weeks and will be repeated beginning in May. Anyone interested

in taking the course can go to the AMSC website (<http://atlm.edu>) and fill out an application or contact Sis. Brigitte Hill, Sis. Princeanna Walker or Min. Mitchell. Georgia residents aged 62 and above can attend tuition free.



The Alexander Family



Rev. Kenneth & Lisa Alexander

Upcoming Events

ANTI OCH'S
GRADUATES/RETIREEES
R E C O G N I T I O N



CELEBRATION

MAY 26, 2019

Antioch Baptist Church North



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL!

The Antioch Vacation Bible School, under the auspices of the Antioch Christian Education Ministry, invites all members to a week of fellowship and learning more about Christ. Our theme for the year is "Be a Steward 4 God!" (Psalm 24:1) Come out and fellowship, and learn more about Christ with us from Monday, June 3 through Friday, June 7, 2019. There will be something special for all ages to enjoy. For additional information, please contact Sis. Homerzelle Gentry and Dea. Jerome Trimble through the church office at 404-688-5679.

June 3-7, 2019 • Fellowship Hall

Dinner - 5:15PM-6:15PM

Devotion and Opening - 6:15PM-6:30PM

Classes - 6:30PM- 8:15PM

Review and Dismissal - 8:15PM-8:30PM



AUMI receives “beloved community” award

Antioch Urban Ministries Inc. was one of nearly a dozen metro-Atlanta non-profits recognized as Community Beacons March 21 at the inaugural “Beloved Benefit” held at the Mercedes Benz Stadium.

The event, sponsored by the Chick-fil-A Foundation and inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Beloved Community, raised some \$5 million dollars while shining a spotlight on the ongoing revitalization of Atlanta’s historic Westside. A hundred percent of the proceeds will go to organizations like AUMI serving the Westside community and those who live there.

King envisioned the Beloved Community as a society that embraced justice, equal opportunity, and love of

one’s fellow human beings.

Antioch Baptist Church North Pastor Kenneth Alexander, his wife Lisa, and a half dozen other church members, including deacon Gary Mott and wife Sharon, Sisters Evelyn Roberts and Leona Barrett were among the special guests.

“What a blessing to be among so many organizations that serve the least of these,” Rev. Alexander would say later. “The night was so awesome that Dan Cathy even served beef.”

Cathy, chairman and CEO of Chick-fil-A, Inc., served as co-chair of the event alongside Ambassador Andrew Young and Atlanta Falcons owner Arthur M. Blank.

Women encouraged to stand firm in

How can women stay anchored in the Lord?

Those in attendance at the annual Barbara J. Alexander Women's Transformation Conference in March left with a sure answer to that question and a whole lot more.

Chief among the ways to remain steadfast is through prayer, Sis. Margaret Weaver told those gathered.

In addition, she said, women need to stay in the scripture, reading, studying and memorizing it. They need to remain thankful and stay in worship and praise.

Weaver said that while thanksgiving honors God, it is good for us, too.



Dr. Margaret O. Weaver

Thank him for what he's going to do. He has promised to lead us safely to the blessed place he has prepared for us, she said.

"Do not worry about anything," Weaver said. "When you worry, you are questioning God's character saying, 'He does not speak the truth.'"

When worry comes, she said, we should speak God's promises, noting that every time Satan confronted Jesus, he spoke, "it is written."

Other speakers included Dr. Shatavia Alexander, Sis. Bonita Williams and Sis. Brandis Rencher, who led the youth session in "real" talk about how life's storms turn into opportunities when one's life is moored to Christ.

Dr. Alexander, in "Finding Peace in the Storm," explained what NOT to do related to the storms of life. Don't be an anxious storm anticipator, a cheeky storm chaser or a stubborn storm stayer, she said.

Although many people think that once they become Christians life will be smooth sailing, Sis. Williams said, it's important to trust God even in uncharted waters.

"God promises to be with you when you experience trials and tribulations,



Mother Myrtle Dansby and Sis. Leona Barr-Davenport were presented this year's Servant's Heart Award at the annual Barbara J. Alexander Women's Transformation Conference held March 16. The theme was "Anchored In Christ."



Christ at transformation conference

for they will come,” she said. “We must put our complete trust in God, seeking Him first in every aspect of life.”

The annual *Barbara J. Alexander Women’s Transformation Conference* was held on Saturday morning, March 16, at Antioch Baptist Church North. The 2019 theme was “Anchored In Christ.”

Sister Olivia Rencher presided over the morning’s opening session. Highlights included Worship in Song provided by Minister Otis Byrd, Jr. and his group, *Adoration*. Also featured was the awarding of the *2019 Servant’s Heart Awards* to Mother Myrtle Dan-sby, Sister Leona Barr-Davenport, and Sister Gracie Bonds Staples.

After adjournment, attendees broke out into Concurrent Transformation Sessions moderated by Sister Bonita Williams and Dr. Shatavia Thomas. The Youth Session was facilitated by Sister Brandis Rencher.

The day’s highlight was the Midday Session anchored by featured speaker Dr. Margaret Weaver, whose rousing interpretation of the conference theme imparted the Holy Spirit in a mighty way. The Pastor’s wife, Sister Lisa Alexander, gave closing remarks, and Pastor Kenneth Alexander provided remarks, closing prayer, and benediction. A delicious lunch was served up by the Men of Antioch, and the Women of Antioch departed bathed in a spirit of transformation.



Dr. Shatavia Thomas



Sis. Bonita Williams



Rev. Otis Byrd and Adoration



Rev. Kenny and Lisa



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



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‘Dignity’ stresses importance of facing mental health issues with grace

Playwright Towonda Kilpatrick’s *Dignity* held particular significance for the Rev. Kenneth Alexander and his wife Lisa.

Like the women featured in the 90-minute production, the Alexanders have faced the devastating loss and after-effects of suicide. Their daughter Kathleen died by suicide in 2017.

And so when the show opened March 30 at Morehouse College, the Alexanders were there to show their support and to encourage others to seek help and share their stories, too.

“It’s so important to listen,” Rev. Kenny told the audience before the start of the production.

Antioch Baptist Church North will host its second annual Mental Health conference Sept. 7.

According to the De-

partment of Health and Human Services, African-Americans are 20 percent more likely to experience a major mental illness than their white counterparts.

What’s particularly alarming is the growing suicide rates among African-American youth.

A study published last year in the journal *JAMA Pediatrics* found that while suicide rates in the United States have traditionally been higher among white than black individuals across all age groups, the rate among those younger than 13 years is approximately 2 times higher for black children compared with white children.

Experts say multiple factors are usually involved when a person decides to take his or her own life, including issues like bipolar disorder, profound social



Rev. Kenny and First Lady, Lisa Alexander

isolation or a deep sense of loss. Often present, too, is easy access to a means of death, such as guns or potent drugs.

Dignity tells the stories of women Kilpatrick met at her local Starbucks coffee shop. The production not only showed how common mental illness is but explored the stigma and judgement that are associated with mental illness, which too often prevents

many in the African-American community from seeking treatment.

Antioch members Dianna Smith and Bonita Williams found the play’s power in its realistic portrayal of various types of mental illness.

“It makes you realize that someone you may be talking to is struggling and may not know how to reach out for help,” Williams said.

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