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Happy
New
Year!

Connecting
People
to Christ



The Church at Antioch

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

July-December 2020

Volume 10, Issue 1

Rev. Alexander named man of influence



The Atlanta Business League named the Rev. Kenneth Alexander one of its Men of Influence for 2020.

Alexander, pastor of Antioch Baptist Church North, was one of 15 men selected by the ABL to receive the honor during an induction ceremony held in August.

"It is an honor to be among the company of such distinguished men," Pastor Alexander said. "Our legends are people I looked up to and my fellow men of influence are brothers I

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Antioch celebrates 143 years - virtually

In a year in which it has suffered unprecedented loss, Antioch Baptist Church North gathered online Nov. 8 to celebrate her 143rd birthday.

Pastor Kenneth Alexander called it an historical service on an historical weekend in an historical year.

"I'm thrilled and overjoyed by just how many people exercised their right to vote," he said, kicking off the service. "We praise the Lord today for 143 years of fellowship, 143 years of evangelism, 143 years of stewardship."

Rev. Alexander noted, too, that this is the year that we said "see you later" to civil rights icons C.T. Vivian, the Rev. Joseph Lowery, Cong. John Lewis, the year that Americans showed up in record-breaking numbers to vote, and elected the first woman vice president of the country.

That woman, Kamala Harris, happens to be Black, a graduate of Howard University, and a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority.

Alexander reminded us, however, not to get weary in well doing and turn out once more to decide the senate races between

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What's the significance of the sunflower?

The women's ministry at Antioch Baptist Church North has been called by different names over the years and yet its focus has remained: providing loving support, fellowship and prayers for the Antioch sisterhood.

The ministry has also been associated with different images, including adding the Cross into our signature. That changed at the home going celebration for Sis. Kathleen Alexan-



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A Message From The Pastor

My brothers and sisters,

Antioch is phenomenal. I am constantly surprised and delighted by the ingenuity, creativity, and expertise of our members. You have not let this pandemic and the resulting shifts we have had to make slow you down. You have turned lemons into lemonade by leaning and depending on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Our ministries have continued to operate, and in many cases have extended their outreach via the virtual presence. Our outreach through AUMI, Inc. and individuals has broadened in terms of assistance we are able to offer and the number of people we are able to serve. Through our partnership with Fulton County, AUMI, Inc. was able to dispense \$350,000 to assist with mortgage, rent, and utility payments to persons whose livelihood was reduced or ceased as a result of COVID-19. Through another partnership, Antioch Council of Entrepreneurs (ACE) was able to provide \$100,000 to small businesses who have been negatively impacted by COVID-19.

Thank you for celebrating my birthday in August and Lady Lisa's birthday in November. In true Antioch fashion, you showed up and showed out, showering us with so much love we were overwhelmed. The decorations and decorated vehicles as you did the drive-by for my birthday made it hard for me to not go beyond virtual hugs, and my wife and other members formed a barrier to keep me from leaning into cars. The Antioch Womanhood's virtual celebration of Lady Lisa's 55th Birthday was extraordinary. We felt that we were in the room with everyone as she received well wishes and tributes in music and poetry.

Likewise, the celebration of our Pioneers and 143rd Church Anniversary was very special. It is fitting that 72-year member Sis. Gerri Peek was the first one to pick up the Anniversary kit containing the program, Holy Communion supplies, the anniversary program, and an Antioch 143rd Anniversary commemorative mask—definitely a sign of these times.

We also had an exceptional, first-ever virtual Fall Revival. Our Antioch-to-Antioch revival was powerful as Rev. Dr. John R. Adolph, pastor of Antioch Missionary Baptist Church in Beaumont, TX, preached mightily for three nights.

We want to congratulate our members who continue to excel in so many different ways. Sis. Janae Baker was the featured speaker on Sunday, September 20th, at St. Luke BC in Columbia, SC, where the pastor is Rev. Michael H. Baker. Bro. Lee Baker, President of AARP Georgia, was featured on WSB-TV "The Daily 2" urging people to vote early and vote safely. He was also recognized as one of the top financial advisors in 2020 by Investopedia. Dr. Royal Baxter has received the Racial Equity and Interfaith Cooperation Award from the Interfaith Youth Core, IFYC. Dr. Sha Gadson was interviewed by Channel 5 for her success in losing over 60 pounds. Her journey started right here at Antioch in the 40-Day Turnup program offered by Rev. Dr. Joseph Williams, pastor of Salem Bible Church. Through the Antioch Womanhood Ministry, she was advised to connect with Piedmont Healthcare Southside Women's Health and continue her change to better fitness and health. Our Sis. Bonita Williams, already a prolific author, launched her first children's book, *Just the Right Size*, and was recognized as a best-selling author on Amazon. I was honored to be recognized by the Atlanta Business League as one of the Men of Influence. There is no limit to what you can do when you trust in the Lord!

Yours in God's service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kenneth L. Alexander".

Reverend K. L. Alexander, Pastor

Continued from cover - Antioch 143rd Anniversary

incumbent Sen. Kelly Loeffler and the Rev. Raphael Warnock, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church and John Ossoff and incumbent Sen. David Perdue.

Antioch kicked off its anniversary with a drive-by celebration attended by members who decorated their cars and posted photos on their social media platforms.

They then gathered online to hear a word from guest speaker and Antioch son, the Rev. Sean B. Smith, who preached from the book of Hebrews and on the subject "Why I love church."

"I know we like to think we own (the church) but this theme - "Still standing on the solid rock" - is a reminder to us all that the church belongs



Rev. Sean Smith

to Christ," Smith said. "It is his idea and responsibility."

We too easily think we are to create church in our likeness, forgetting it is to be transformed into the image of Christ for the benefit of others.

It's not the place for us to shine or to launch business but rather to join together to be the legs and arms of Christ.

The church has its warts, Smith said, but I love it – its purpose, its people and its passion.

"The text says let us hold fast the profession of our faith," Smith said. "That's something to put you to sleep at night when your heart wants to be troubled. Remember to hold fast to our hope. God so loved the world that whosoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life."

The church's purpose, he said, is one that is always seeking to save, to demonstrate what it is to be fully

human and be a light in the world.

"The second reason I love church is Its people," he said.

He remembered the late Rudy Eason, Leo Walker, and Mother Mary who encouraged him and who were constant reminders "to consider one another in order to stir up love and good works."

"That's what fuels my other love for the church – passion," Smith said. "Love can only exist in relationship. In community we find empathy and sympathy."

For 143 years, Smith said that Antioch's outreach has been extensive and is indicative of the passion of Christ in her members and the collective commitment to seek and to save.

Continued from cover - Sunflower

der in 2017, when the sunflower commanded the ministry's special attention, said Sis. Johnnie Thomas, one of the ministry leaders.

In a tribute to Sis. Alexander's life, friends and family wore her favorite flower.

"As a church family, we were able to rejoice that day as we watched one person after the next, with sunflowers pinned to their chests, give

their lives to Christ," Thomas said. "This was a pivotal point for the Alexanders, Antioch and the Womanhood Ministry. As a ministry, we reignited our dedication to providing support for all women of Antioch and the surrounding community."

That is why, she said, the ministry hosts fellowships twice each month and sends weekly emails so that women

of Antioch can feel connected and know that they have a place where they can come for encouragement, prayer, nourishment for their bodies and spirits.

While the symbolism of the sunflower is important, she said the flower proved to be the perfect emblem for the ministry because of the real, practical and tangible ways that the Womanhood Minis-

try has grown in love, support and service as members seek to do God's will.

Like the sunflower, Thomas said, members endeavor "to pattern ourselves after the sunflower and always turn our face to the sun and the SON as we seek God's bounty and provision."

The sunflower's yellow color symbolizes vitality, intelligence, happiness and friendship. Sunflowers are also used to represent worship and faithfulness in various religions because of their resemblance to the sun.

As Helen Keller once said: "Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadows. It's what the sunflowers do."

Continued from cover - Man of Influence

reach out to as we seek to lift our community."

The ABL, headed by Sis. Leona Barr-Davenport, fosters the growth, creation and development of successful business enterprises

owned, operated and managed by African-Americans in metropolitan Atlanta.

Other honorees included Kenny Leon, Artistic Director Emeritus and Co-founder of True Colors Theater, who

was inducted into the Legends Hall of Fame, and Congressman John Lewis, Rev. Dr. Joseph Lowery, and Rev. Dr. C.T. Vivian, this year's Legacy Honorees.

AUMI still serving the least of these

Not even the COVID-19 pandemic has kept Antioch Urban Ministries from its mission to serve “the least, the lost, and the less.”

Indeed, the ministry has stepped up its efforts, providing food to well over 900 families a week. Cooked meals are also provided for people living in our residences, Sheltering Arms, and in Drive-thru service for dinner on Wednesday nights and lunch Mondays through Fridays.

In addition to food distribution, some 50 families each week receive clothing donations.

AUMI also continues to mentor community youth, providing tutoring and workshops that encourage them to look toward the future, and expand their vi-

sion for education and job opportunities.

Perhaps most helpful have been the sessions led by Rev. Lester Duncan in which they are encouraged to share their experiences, problems, and aspirations. Role playing to assist them in knowing how to respond to being stopped by the police, being called a negative name, or being accused of something they did not do gives them strategies to cope.

The residential units continue to house people affected with HIV-AIDS and those recovering from substance abuse. A robust program for substance abuse recovery has seen many graduate to independent living, restored to their families, and gainfully employed.

Four participants - David Cofield, Ruby

Hayes, Julian Moss (better known as Catfish), and Don Richardson - completed the program in October.

A grant through Fulton County has enabled AUMI to provide emergency assistance for rent, mortgage, and utilities for those adversely affected economically by COVID-19. The CARES Act funding assists residents of Fulton County, and AUMI staff guide applicants through the process from application to funding.

AUMI, in partnership with the Community Organized Relief Effort or CORE, has been providing free COVID -19 testing every Tuesday and Thursday. More than 300 people are tested each week and receive results in about 72 hours.



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you shop. antiochurban.org



Royal Baxter recognized for faith work

Dr. Royal Baxter was presented with the Racial Equity and Interfaith Cooperation Award recently from the Interfaith Youth Core.

IFYC, a national nonprofit founded by Dr. Eboo Patel, the interfaith advisor to former President Barack Obama, works to equip people with the knowledge and skills needed for leadership

in a religiously diverse world.

Dr. Baxter received the award and funds to create A Royal Change, an Institute of Social Justice and Interfaith Leadership designed to support interfaith leaders to explore the connections between interfaith cooperation and the historic movement for civil rights.

Ideal for participants look-

ing to leverage their interfaith leadership to contribute to contemporary racial justice efforts, the institute asks participants to reflect on the role they wish to play in this work.

Dr. Baxter received her doctorate in Education from Georgia Southern University. She serves in the Christian Education Ministry and



Dr. Royal Baxter

works with the youth at Antioch Baptist Church North.

ANTIOCH FAMILY!

Proud of the job you do or want to nominate your sibling in Christ to be featured in an upcoming issue of *Church At Antioch*?

E-mail your story idea to Sis. Gracie Staples at:
gracie.staples@gmail.com



Antioch members making headlines

Bill Clement

Bill Clement, a long-time member of Antioch Baptist Church North, joined Apex Financial Services in August as the firm non-executive chair.

Clement is a former President and CEO of the Atlanta Life Insurance Company. Before joining Atlanta Life, he served as the Co-Founder, Chairman and CEO of Dobbs,

Ram & Company, a FinTech company, which was a subcontractor engaged by the Internal Revenue Service to develop and maintain the IRS "E-Filing" system.

Lee Baker, president of Apex, said Clement's comprehensive knowledge of the industry makes him an invaluable asset to the firm.

"Bill's specialized talent allows him to understand clients' complex financial matters to assist them in reaching their financial goals," Baker said. "Also, his robust background in insurance and financial audits enables him to help clients understand the importance of planning for their financial futures."



Bill Clement

Gracie Bonds Staples

Gracie Staples, author of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution's* This Life column and wife of the Rev. Jimmy Staples, was named one of the Atlanta Business League's "Top 100 Black Women of Influence" for 2020.

The league has published the list since 1994 to recognize black women in metro Atlanta who have reached

senior level positions within their profession, are leading entrepreneurs in their industry or use their platforms to influence large public and government policy.

In addition to professional accomplishments, the "100 Black Women of Influence" have demonstrated their commitment to the citizens of metro Atlanta by maintaining

significant involvement and participation in community and civic activities.

Staples work at the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* was recognized recently by both the Atlanta Press Club and the National Association of Black Journalists, both of which awarded her first-place awards for a five-part series on race and religion.



Gracie Bonds Staples



Congratulations!

Tameka West, pictured far left, has been appointed to the Clayton County Magistrate Court. West, a member of Antioch's Visitor's Ministry, has practiced law since 2000 specializing in labor and employment law.

M.A.N. Prayer Breakfast

What you need to know before you retire

Financial security in retirement doesn't just happen. It takes planning and commitment. That was the message delivered during Antioch Baptist Church North's Men's Prayer Breakfast.

The session, held virtually Oct. 3, was attended by more than 65 men and a few of their spouses.

Lee Baker, a member of Antioch and a certified Financial Planner, provided tips to help guide those considering retirement.

Before making the leap, he said, make sure you take these steps first:

- Determine when the time is right to retire. Determining when you want to retire is critical to answering questions about what your life will look like in retirement. Access to healthcare and sources of income in retirement are two major drivers for most people.
- Take aim at your retirement target. Determine how much you will need in

retirement. This means having a budget so that you can recognize whether or not your sources of income are enough to live on.

- Maximize your nest egg. Take advantage of opportunities to increasing your savings as you approach retirement. One example, is to use catch-up provisions in employer retirement plans and IRA accounts. This allows you to make up for some lost time.

- Get a portfolio check up. You go to the doctor every year and the dentist twice a year. Shouldn't you take the time to get your portfolio examined? Make sure that your portfolio is properly positioned for your situation. As an example, being completely invested in stocks just before retirement probably isn't the best idea.

- Create a social security strategy. Social security is the primary source of income for many retirees. Realize that opting to take benefits early results in a permanent



Lee Baker was the featured speaker at the Men's Prayer Breakfast.

decrease in benefits.

- Build a retirement income stream. Most people will need a combination of income from Social Security and other sources. Look at how you can turn savings, 401(k) plans and IRAs into income.

- Look beyond the money. Money is not the goal but rather a tool. When used wisely, money allows us to focus on the things that are truly important like faith, family, friends and health.

Happy 99th birthday



Antioch showed up in large numbers Aug. 24 for a drive-by celebration of Mother Frances E. Miles' birthday. The Mardi Gras Extravaganza theme was enhanced by a jazz trio and Mardi Gras-themed gift bags and beads for the participants. Members blew their horns and shouted well wishes from their cars as neighbors joined in, waving at the parade of cars passing by. Sadly, Mother Miles passed in January 2021.

UCAN goes virtual, too

Instead of summoning couples to the front of the congregation, representatives of the United Couples of Antioch North shifted gears months ago and began collecting photos instead.

This new way of marking wedding anniversaries is, of course, part and parcel of our new COVID-19 reality.

It is also proof Antioch has no intention of allowing the coronavirus to change the way she ministers to and celebrates her members.

And so as UCAN has done for years, the ministry continues to recognize couples during the first Sunday of each month. The only thing that has changed is how the ministry does it.

Instead of each couple standing to be recognized, photos of couples scroll our collective computer screens.

The ministry also held its first virtual Prayer Breakfast in November via Zoom.

"Love on Lockdown," based on Romans 12:9-13 and presented by the Rev. Willie Rockward, covered God as the source of love, safety through one's commitment to God, concern for one's mate, care for oneself, service to each other, growing through storms, and sharing.

The key to a happy marriage, he said, is to "remember to laugh; laughter is the best medicine."

Youth-In-Action Sunday

Antioch Baptist Church North celebrated Youth-In-Action day in September. In keeping with the theme – Rise Up, Be The Key – speakers paid special tribute to the late Cong. John Lewis and shared their views on what it means to be a change agent.

Below is synopsis of each of their speeches, edited for clarity and space:

Lauryn Baker: “We are the key”

Keys can be used for many different reasons. Some are used to unlock or connect things. When I’m playing the saxophone, keys indicate when a major change is coming. Bridges are used as a form of support and connection. The Lord uses us in all of these ways to lead.

Joshua is a good example of this. At about age 35, he was appointed by the Lord to succeed Moses. He then went on to lead the Israelites to Canaan and allocate the land to them.

In a fashion similar to Joshua, Esther was also a key. She was the key to the survival of her people. Esther was a teenage orphan who became queen. When she heard about the news of the

king’s decree to destroy the Jews, she hatched a plan for the Jews and the king’s staff to fast for three days and invite everyone to a feast. At the supper, she accused Haman of plotting against the king and begged for her own life and the lives of her people. She was the bridge between the Jewish people and the king, which led to them being saved.

Someone who is very near and dear to Antioch used his bridge in a different way. In 1965, a 26-year old John Lewis led one of three Selma-to-Montgomery



marches and was met with brutal police force on the Edmund Pettus Bridge. Lewis would go on to become a congressman in the U.S. House of Representative serving for 17 terms. He played a key role in the civil rights movement that allows us to have opportunities that we as a race had been denied.

These people have shown me no matter your age or gender or what obstacles you face, you can be the bridge for change. (Daughter of Lee and Veronica Baker)

Morgan Baxter: ‘Be willing to do what others are not willing to do’

Things may look a little different and we are worshipping a little differently, but God never changes. He is still God even in this pandemic.

When I consider our theme, I think of how keys change things. A car key changes the car from off to on and a door key changes the door from locked to unlocked. Being the key means being the change you wish to see and rise up means don’t just talk the talk but walk the walk.

The parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke is a good example of someone who rose up to be the key. Told by Jesus, it is about a Jewish man, traveling between Jerusalem and Jericho, who was attacked by some thieves who robbed him, beat him, and left him half dead on the side of the road.

First, a Jewish priest comes by but does nothing and then a Levite who does nothing. Finally, a Samaritan, who was

an enemy of the Jews, comes upon the man. Unlike the Jewish priest and the Levite, he stops to help. He cleans the man up, bandages his wounds and then takes him to a safe place where he pays the host to take care of the man. He even tells the host that he will pay the balance when he returns.

There are many reasons why the Good Samaritan was being a key, but today I want to offer just one: He was willing to do what others were not.

When I think about this, I think about the thousands of people who refused for 381 days to ride public transportation during the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Who would be willing to do that now? I think about the late Congressman John Lewis who led 600 marchers across the



Edmond Pettus Bridge in Selma and who suffered violent attacks by state troopers in his quest for voting rights. Who would be willing to do that now? I think about NFL stars Colin Kaepernick and Eric Reed, who took a knee to shed light on police brutality against black people. Who would be willing to do that now?

I am. I am willing to be the key. I am willing to be the change. Romans 8:28 says, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” I love God and I am called according to his purpose. I am called to be the change I wish to see. I am called to Rise up and Be the Key. (Daughter of Maurice and Royal Baxter)

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Nigel Cochran: Be strong and of a good courage

If you think of the phrase rise-up and you live in Atlanta, you think of the Falcons. As believers, we think of Proverbs 31:28 which says, "Her children Rise Up and call her blessed, her husband also, and he praises her."

If you look at the phrase "Be the Key" from our theme, you think of an instrument to unlock a door or start a car. As believers, we see the key as one the Lord promised to give us to the kingdom of heaven. It does not matter how old or young you are, we all have a purpose for being on this earth.

Let's take a look at a few young black leaders who are making a difference:

Nyeeam Hudson, 12, travels the world as a motivational speaker, spreading positive messages of love and confidence to other kids.

Mari Copeny, 10, is an activist known as Little Miss Flint. She wrote to President Obama to discuss the water crisis in her Michigan hometown.

Closer to home, Evan Marlboro, a



Georgia State College graduate, is credited with encouraging young adults to work the voting polls for the 2020 election.

And I, Nigel Cochran, Jr., 12, am a servant of God. I will be strong and of good courage. I will not be afraid or discouraged for the Lord

our God will be with me wherever I go. (Nigel is the son of Nigel Cochran Sr. and Darnesha Hussey)

Jonah Hildreth: Rise up Gen Z and be the key

When first asked to speak, I thought to myself: "Why would I want to talk to a screen? That's what I do all day."

Then I thought better of it. This was an opportunity to share what I believe God wants of us.

Looking at the world through our eyes, the future seems uncertain. Our world is plagued not only by the COVID-19 pandemic, but by wars, inequality, and injustice. Our future, though, rests in the hands of God. He knew about 2020 long before we were born. Remember, this is the same God that parted the Red Sea. This is the same God who birthed the 10 Commandments. He provided all the blessings that we read about in the Bible

and he STILL works through us.

If we want to prosper after the virus is wiped out, now is the time to rise up and be the key. Almost any locked door can be lockpicked by the finest of con artists, but the door to the future can only be opened by YOU being the key.

Therefore, I talk to this screen not just to spread the word of God to my Antioch family, but to the world.

Let us look at the Bible to see how God has used young people to take care of his people. Joseph was not much older than me when he was sold into slavery.



The book of Genesis says that Joseph became an Egyptian leader and saved the people from famine. The story of Daniel demonstrates that he had wisdom and intelligence, which allowed him to stand up to a would-be king. Let us not forget the youngest example who was born to save

the world, the little baby born in Bethlehem, who died on Calvary's cross and rose the third day with ALL power.

If we want change in this country, it is time for Gen Z to Rise up and be the key. (Jonah is the son of Randell and Jan Hildreth)

Michael Williams: Are you ready to use your key, Antioch?

The words "rise up, be the key and be the change" reminds me of the story of David and Goliath.

When David's father, Jesse, sent him to the war zone to deliver food to his brothers, he arrived to find them and the rest of the Israeli army cowering in fear from Goliath's taunts. But David trusted in God to help him fight Goliath. David gathered five smooth stones from the river and pocketed four of them. He put the fifth one into his sling and let it fly. The stone hit the giant between the eyes, sinking

into his forehead as both armies watched.

Through faith, David's actions changed the course of history. The same can be said for the Black Lives Matter movement, which used its key to fight against racism and police brutality, and Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks, who led the civil rights movement and sparked the bus boycott. I think, too, of myself, Langston Williams. I



used my key to inform people of the struggles and blessings of being a black man while also leading a black club at school where we can express our feelings about the black struggle.

I ask you today Antioch, are you ready to put your key into your door and change the future? (Michael is the son of Michael and Lisa Williams)

Antioch Baptist Church North Toy Drive



Antioch Baptist Church North made sure Christmas 2020 was merry and bright for hundreds of children, thanks again to the generosity of her members.

Care and Comfort Ministry is as busy as ever

The Care and Comfort Ministry, led by Rev. Scott Copeland and Sis. Redell Doyle, is the umbrella for the mission outreach ministries at Antioch and continues to meet once a month via zoom.

Although the Prayer Call Ministry did not have to shift its outreach method, those requesting special prayer have increased, and calls are made weekly. There has also been an increase in numbers for the Bereavement Aftercare Ministry, which sends cards to the families of members in bereavement.

Rev. Copeland and Sis. Lenora Williams meet virtually with families to offer comfort and plan home going services.

Holiday cards are being sent to members in long-term care facilities. The DVD Ministry continues to mail out DVDs of our worship services.

The Women's Mission has held conference call meetings and continues in its outreach in prayer for and sending cards to those who are sick and bereaved as well as joyful occasions such as births and weddings.

The Thursday Prayer Warriors have shifted from visitation to weekly Zoom meetings during which they pray for everyone on the sick and shut-in list as well as members in bereavement and any special prayer requests made known by the

congregation.

The Monday Night Visitation Ministry had ceased visitations, but at Pastor Alexander's suggestion, have resumed limited, socially distanced visitations on Saturdays where the member sits in his or her front door as a small visitation committee stands socially distanced and sings, reads a scripture, and prays.

Following the Ministry's guiding scriptures, 1 Peter 5:7 and 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, the members make every effort to ensure that members who are sick, bereaved, or in need of special prayer are touched by Antioch's concern and love.

In GriefShare, you're never alone

Even prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, the stats about mental health in this country were alarming: 1 in 5 Americans experience mental illness and some 40 million adults in the U.S. live with an anxiety disorder.

With the increased stress, anxiety and even PTSD created by the COVID-19 pandemic, those numbers have only gotten worse. Indeed, research shows high rates of mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, insomnia, and distress.

At Antioch, the GriefShare Ministry has been standing in the gap and over the past months has held two 13-week sessions.

The sessions, held virtu-

ally and coordinated by Sis. Pamela Alexander and Sis. Maria Hunter, have included participants from all over the country.

Although the program is 13 weeks, people can join at any time and can go through the program as many times as they choose.

GriefShare is a support program for people grieving the death of a family member or friend. As its name suggests, people are able to share their experiences as they grieve and move toward hope and healing.

Each week, a video offers perspectives from those who are experiencing grief and experts on a specific topic that grieving people experience,



Pamela Alexander (l) and Maria Hunter (r)

such as guilt and anger.

The group facilitators, who have all gone through the program, use the questions in the accompanying workbook, subtitled "Your Journey from Mourning to Joy," to guide the discussion.

Exercises include a personal checkup, a personal

story, scriptural references and questions related to the scriptures and the topic of the previous week's video.

Perhaps the most significant impact of the program is that people understand that although each person has a unique grief experience, no one is alone in his or her grief.

NBC following the science on in-person worship

The president of the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. says he will continue to seek the Lord before advising churches and the convention to resume in-person worship.

The Rev. Jerry B. Young spoke at length about how the pandemic has impacted low-

income and minority communities.

"Our communities, our people have been hit more than it they should have been," he said.

Although some say that not returning portrays a lack of faith, Young said, "I would argue the contrary...it does

not reflect on the quality of our faith. There is a deeper commitment here to protect the parishioners we serve, our communities, for we are our brothers and sisters' keepers."

In other business, the Congress of Christian Education, normally held in June, was

postponed until September and combined with the Annual Session attended by several Antioch members.

In addition to classes and auxiliary meetings, seminars on criminal justice, social justice, and a special series on COVID-19 were held.

Fifth District offer prayers and voter support

The Fifth District of the General Missionary Baptist Convention of Georgia, Inc. wasted no time in going into corporate prayer when the pandemic canceled its monthly meetings and annual session.

President W.J. Lawson, taking 2 Chronicles 7:14 as the

mandate for all Christians to go into earnest prayer and seek the face and compassion of God, led district officers via monthly conference calls.

In a socially distanced meeting on Oct. 13, the Rev. Eddie Jones, pastor of First Corinth Baptist Church, and

First Vice President Eddie Bright, pastor of Mt. Zion Baptist Church, laid out the plans for the district-wide Get-Out-to-Vote initiative.

In addition to urging each pastor to emphasize the right and the need for all members to vote, churches in the district provided vans to pick up

people who needed transportation to the polls.

On the heaviest days of early voting and on the Nov. 3 Election Day, people were not only transported to the polls, volunteers provided them with water and snacks to help endure long lines.

Rev. Alexander's drive-thru birthday



Antioch's school supply distribution



Despite COVID, the work of the GMBC continues

The General Missionary Baptist Convention of Georgia, Inc. held its first-ever virtual Annual Session in November to mark its 150th anniversary.

The commemoration service was coordinated by Sis. Karen McKinney Holley and Sis. Lawanna Tillman, with Sis. Peggy Cooper giving the welcome message. Pastors with 50 or more years of pastoring were recognized, and Rev. Matthew Southall Brown, Sr.,

pastor emeritus of St. John Baptist Church in Savannah, delivered the sermon.

The Rev. Anthony Corbett, pastor of Macon's Lundy Chapel Baptist Church and coordinator of the Moderators/Ministers Department, emerged as president-elect. The Rev. Corey J. Neal, pastor of Greater Peace Baptist Church in Columbus, was voted vice president-elect. They will take office in January 2021.

President Kenneth B. Martin closed out the session, admonishing the GMBC to remember that God is still in charge through the pandemic and to continue to be his servants, reaching out to others, with special efforts to stay in contact with and serve our senior citizens and those in need.

Martin discontinued all in-person GMBC gatherings in March until further notice. The work of the GMBC, however, will continue, he said.



*Antioch Baptist Church North
showed up to wish its first lady –
Lisa Alexander – a happy birthday.
Love you, Lady Lisa!*

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