



# The Church at Antioch

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

April - June 2023

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## Ascension Sunday, a Holy Ghost experience

Chapter 1 of Acts describes the moment when Jesus was taken up into Heaven.

That moment, known as his Ascension, was celebrated on May 21 at Antioch Baptist Church North and worldwide. It signifies the completion of Jesus's time on earth, celebrated ten days before the Feast of Pentecost - the coming of the Holy Spirit.

And so it seemed fitting that the sermon subject on that day was "Lived for Me, Died for Me, Resurrected for Me, and Ascended for Me."

To make it personal, the Rev. Kenneth Alexander suggested the congregation interchange the "me" for their names.

Because we tend to departmentalize the Bible, he said that there are certain parts of Jesus' life that we celebrate and others where we go silent.

"We celebrate when He was born," he said. "We celebrate Good Friday as the day he gave His life, we celebrate his resurrection, but we go quiet on the forty days after

*Continued on page 4*



*The Curry siblings - Jadon, Austin and Addison - pictured above and bottom right, were among 12 new members baptized by Dea. Willie Carter, the Rev. Darrell Arnold, and Pastor Kenneth Alexander on May 28 during the Pentecost Sunday service at Antioch Baptist Church North. In all, 17 new members received the right hand of fellowship. Ishaq Edwards, pictured bottom left, was baptized April 23, the first baptism held since the Covid 19 pandemic shutdown in 2020. Ishaq is the grandson of Dea. Benny and Sis. Bonita Williams. Bro. Fred and Sis. Jocelyn Curry are the Curry siblings' parents.*

## A Message From The Pastor



Antioch is off the chain!

We started the second quarter of the year on a high note with the Barbara J. Alexander Women's Transformation Brunch. It was a high time of fellowship as we (yes, I was blessed to be the only man) assembled and enjoyed a delicious meal prepared by our culinary staff. Dr. Royal Baxter lit our souls on fire as she challenged us to "Surrender the Cape." Admonishing us to stop trying to be superheroes and doing life by ourselves, she explained that we must depend on the Holy Ghost and reach out to each other as we fulfill the various roles in our lives.

Holy Week from Palm Sunday to Resurrection Sunday took us from reflection to rejoicing. The week's events, especially our pastoring sons preaching the "Seven Last Sayings of Jesus" on Good Friday, allowed us to contemplate the depth of Jesus's love for each of us as he sacrificed his life. Seeing and hearing our children give their speeches brought back precious memories of days gone by.

Our baptismal pool is again wet, and Antioch is growing in number and spirit. One of our online members from Kansas traveled to Antioch to receive the Right Hand of Fellowship in person. After weeks of preparation, our choirs again bless us in song accompanied by our phenomenal band. Rev. O. Jermaine Simmons preached Revival messages that still reverberate in our souls.

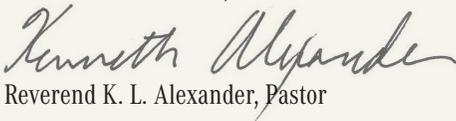
Some of our members have been able to participate in the GMBC Ushers and Health Professionals Conference, the Georgia Ministers' Wives and Ministers' Widows State Conference, the National Baptist Convention Women for All Seasons Conference and Congress of Christian Education, the Mt. Hermon Association Institute Retreat, and the Fifth District Congress and 5D Youth Conference. As our delegates have taken advantage of the training, we look forward to enriched teaching and service as they bring back all they have learned to us. Many of us were enlightened through our Vacation Bible School.

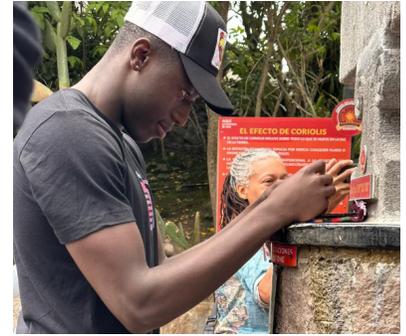
We have enjoyed celebrating the accomplishments of our members, from young to older. We celebrated our graduates from kindergarten through advanced degrees and thanked our Scholarship Committee for their hard work. We recognized our retirees on the last Sunday in June. Our members have a wealth of experience in a vast array of fields, and I hope that our youth will seek them out to gain wisdom from their journeys as they set out on the paths that God directs for each of them. Please encourage our young people by visiting the A Wall that salutes their accomplishments.

Most importantly, Antioch continues to serve our community. We have seen poverty, food and housing insecurity, and homelessness rise in the past few months. Antioch continues her outreach through the Food Bank, Apparel Shoppe, and Senior Services.

The Health Fair and Food Giveaway, in partnership with Morehouse School of Medicine and other health providers, allowed attendees to get free medical testing that, even with insurance, would have cost upwards of \$400. Your giving and service enable us to continue implementing the sixfold ministries "unto the least of these" expressed in Matthew 25:34-40.

Yours in God's service,

  
Reverend K. L. Alexander, Pastor



Isaiah J. Brown

## Studying Spanish abroad

Isaiah J. Brown was one of five Atlanta students selected to participate in a two-week study abroad program in Quito, Ecuador, the South American country's capital, founded in 1534 by the Spanish.

Brown, the son of Phaedra Brown and the grandson of James and La Sandra T. Brown, is a 10th-grade A-B Honor Roll student at BEST Academy of Atlanta Public Schools, where he is a member of the debate team, Technology Student Association, and football and track teams.

Last year, Brown was the only freshman selected to participate in a hands-on after-school training program with Bikes and Wheels.

From March 27 to April 8, students honed their Spanish and learned about other countries and cultures. A local Ecuadorian family hosted Isaiah during his visit.

Brown said his mornings there were spent in the local school studying Spanish, followed by afternoons filled with adventure, including mountain hikes, climbing a volcano, and visiting other towns and communities.

"I stepped on both hemispheres simultaneously," he said. "I met new people, visited local schools, and even played a friendly basketball game."

Phaedra Brown said she is grateful for Antioch's continued support and every act of kindness and prayer uttered on her son's behalf.

"May you be blessed for it," she said.

APRIL

# Antioch son, Jermaine Simmons, leads revival

The Rev. O. Jermaine Simmons Sr., pastor of Jacob Chapel Baptist Church in Tallahassee, Fla., returned to Antioch Baptist Church North in April to lead its spring revival.

The three-night revival kicked off on April 24 and was held in-person and virtually. Below is a synopsis of each night's sermon:

## Monday, April 24, 2023

Scripture: Mark 9:14-24

Sermon Title: Help me believe

Sermon Notes: In this life, circumstances will come that are beyond our control. Our income, level of intellect, or relationship to the church doesn't matter. In this passage, Jesus finds the scribes are giving his disciples a hard time. A father in the crowd tells Jesus that a demon possesses his son and that when he brought him to the disciples, they couldn't help him. Jesus replied: "You unbelieving generations," and told them to get the boy to him.

Too often, we get so tied up in how people fail us we forget the last part of Verse 19: bring the boy to me. Whatever you're dealing with, Jesus says bring it to me.

The text reveals the closer we are to Jesus, the more the devil shows up. That's why all hell breaks loose. The devil tried to kill him, but that boy messed around and got to Jesus. The boy's father says if you can, please, have compassion. Jesus says it's not a matter of if I can. The issue is, do you believe?

The boy's father says yes, but help my unbelief. Is it possible in the life of a believer for faith and doubt to co-exist? I want to believe it, but I'm looking at a mess. God is a way maker even if your circumstances don't change or if he doesn't calm the storm. Faith is a



*Rev. O. Jermaine Simmons*

decision because I've decided to trust God.

## Tuesday, April 25, 2023

Scripture: 1 Samuel 17:32-37

Sermon Title: I've seen this before

Sermon Notes: A truth is announced and affirmed throughout the word of God. Unfortunately, in certain circles, it is ignored. The truth is God is on the side of the oppressed. We have a creator who confronted Cain about the murder of his brother. This was our first glimpse into a God who is insulted by injustice. If there is one thing God can't stand is a bully taking advantage of weaker people. When you read the Bible through a lens of liberation, you see a God who demands accountability.

ty. That's the issue David is raising in this passage.

In this chapter, God's people have been terrorized by the Philistines, known for coming into Israel's camp and taking what they wanted. An attack on vulnerable people is an attack on God himself. When David hears Goliath's threats, something in him stands up, and he says, I'll fight him. Saul offers David his armor and sword, but he rejects it, relying on past experiences when he slays a lion using his slingshot and a rock. David said the same God that brought him through that would get him through this. David takes his slingshot and stone, knocking Goliath down, then cutting his head off.

## Wednesday: April 26, 2023

Scripture: Mark 3:1-5

Sermon title: How to Win with a bad hand

Sermon notes: When we consider the words of this text, I'm reminded that the church is a hospital. The church is a body of believers who have been called out to do the work of the Lord. The church is a body, not a building; everybody who makes his way to this space has an issue.

In the text, the man's issue is a withered hand. Pharisees and law teachers are watching Jesus to see if Jesus will heal him on the Sabbath. Knowing what was in their heart, Jesus calls the man forth and asks when is it a good time to help someone.

We serve a God who can help with a bad hand, but he only heals what we're willing to reveal. So stop masking your mess, hiding your hurt, and burying your business.

When the man stretched out his hand, God healed it.

# MAY

*Continued from cover - Ascension Sunday*

the resurrection and the Ascension.”

Indeed, he said, we don’t even make the connection between his Ascension and Pentecost.

“We must celebrate Jesus’ whole story because it all meant something,” Alexander said.

He said there is even more for us to shout about. What was the purpose of the Ascension? Who took Him up? Where is He now? Why was He taken up?

Harkening back to the morning’s Sunday School lesson, Rev. Alexander said that when Jesus ascended, it is recorded in Luke that the crowd was charged to be witnesses and evangelists and to tarry in Jerusalem until they received the power.

Jesus, he said, then ascended unto Heaven to sit on the right hand of God, the place where all God’s sheep will be one day.

That’s not only worth remembering; it’s worth shouting about.

And yet, he said that while we must praise God for what he did 2000 years ago, Alexander reminded the congregation that we must praise him for what he is doing even today.

“Praise God for every one of your blessings



*The congregation dressed in red for Rev. K. L. Alexander’s Ascension Sunday sermon.*

without holding back,” he said.

Pentecost, the Sunday that followed, Antioch extended the right hand of fellowship to 17 souls, including 12 candidates for baptism.

Seven of those candidates were siblings from two families.

My, my, my! What about that.

# JUNE

## Hundreds attend Vacation Bible School

The excitement was evident as more than 500 people arrived early each day to fellowship at Antioch’s yearly vacation Bible School.

The week-long event, attended in-person and virtually, offers the church fun and creative methods of teaching Christ-like values and practical relationship-building skills.

Following the opening assembly, attendees were dismissed to join in the study of “Faith Builders: Restoration Work Ahead” based on the book of Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the wall in Jerusalem after the devastation by the Babylonians and the resulting cap-

tivity.

Classes for ages pre-school through adults addressed such themes as “It’s Okay to Cry (The Practice of Lament)” and “Dealing with Your Haters (The Practice of Self-Control and Perseverance).”

Each night, participants wore the colors of salvation to emphasize one of the primary purposes of VBS, bringing people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. The ever-popular VBS yell competition resulted in the women winning against the men on one night and the children and men winning against the women on another night.



# Notes from the National Baptist Convention

Antioch was well-represented at the 117th National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. Congress of Christian Education.

The primary educational session of the NBC, the Congress, offers a wide range of courses and experiences. Dr. Brenda Eason, President of the Ushers' and Professionals Auxiliary, taught an ushering class and provided instructors for the newest auxiliary, the Youth and Young Adult Auxiliary.

The YYA provided a revamped experience with more hands-on, active involvement for children, youth, young adults, and adult leaders. Sis. Wanda J. Harding provided a STEM experience for youth ages 6-17 and served as one of the motivational speakers for adult leaders.

Sis. Dorcas Ford Jones led youth aged 13-17 in a Rites of Passage experience, which will continue throughout the year virtually. Sis. Karen McKinney Holley was responsible for the Christian Arts, including the Children's Rally, Youth Rally, and iRock,



Sis. Wanda Harding, along with other attendees, prepare for the convention.

all available for viewing online on NBC social media.

Christian Education Director Sis. Brigette Hill, Son of Antioch Rev. Ed London, and members Helen Burgess, Kay Carter, and Felecia Martin attended COPP classes as they worked toward teaching certification, allowing Antioch to establish a certified school.

Bro. Tom Jennings, serving in the Laymen's Department on the Scholarship Committee, has been instrumental in identifying scholarship entrants from Antioch.

Held in Louisville, KY, the week of June 19th-23rd, the opening concert featured Georgia's Wardlaw Brothers and Dottie Peoples.

## Join us each week!



**Sunday School**  
Sundays  
9:00 am  
via Zoom  
[www.antiochnorth.org](http://www.antiochnorth.org)

**Wednesday Night Bible Study**  
Starting at 7:00 pm

Facebook: [facebook.com/antiochbaptistchurchnorth](https://facebook.com/antiochbaptistchurchnorth)  
YouTube: [youtube.com/antiochbaptist](https://youtube.com/antiochbaptist)



**Sunday Worship**  
10:00 am  
In-Person & Virtual  
[www.antiochnorth.org](http://www.antiochnorth.org)  
[facebook.com/antiochbaptistchurchnorth](https://facebook.com/antiochbaptistchurchnorth)  
[youtube.com/antiochbaptist](https://youtube.com/antiochbaptist)



**Bible Study**  
Join us!  
Thursdays | 7:00 pm  
Connect to Zoom via [www.antiochnorth.org](http://www.antiochnorth.org)

## Congratulations, 2023 retirees



**Karyl Clayton**  
13 years with the City of Atlanta



**Constance Finch**  
36 years with the Atlanta Public Schools



**Willie Franklin**  
40 years, assistant airport manager, Fulton County, MARTA and the state of Alabama



**Eugene Hardison**  
35 years senior flight support, GSE mechanic



**Tangi Herring**  
28.5 years educator with Atlanta Public Schools



**Les Moore**  
34 years, AT&T engineer



**Mary Pitts**  
60 years owner and hairstylist at Mary's Beauty Salon



**Lenora Williams**  
40 years of service as secretary at Antioch Baptist Church North

# Dr. Staples completes residency training

Dr. Jamila Staples, along with five cohorts, recently graduated from pediatric residency training.

Staples, daughter of Rev. Jimmy Staples and Sis. Gracie Bonds Staples, began her training in 2020 at Navicent Health, Mercer University School of Medicine.

A graduate of the University of Georgia, she received her Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Medicine and Health Sciences in St. Kitts.

Staples, who married Dr. Benjamin Pickard in September 2022, will join him in Lafayette, La., where he is training in family medicine and where she will practice pediatrics.



*Dr. Jamila Felder Staples*



*Dr. Jamila Staples, center, pictured with cohorts from left to right: Dr. Joseph Roberts, Dr. Hanna Lee, Dr. Hannah Batten, Dr. Natali Berger, and Dr. Rachel Burke.*

## MALACHI MENTORING MINISTRIES

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

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



# Antioch salutes 2023 graduates

More than 40 Antioch Baptist Church North members graduated in May. The congregation celebrated their accomplishments during the June 4 service. The honorees are listed below:

## KINDERGARTEN

Rylan Branch  
Alonzo Cochran  
Mason Smith

## ELEMENTARY

Christian Bradford  
John Callaway  
Jadon Curry  
Dylan Smith

## MIDDLE SCHOOL

Morgan Baxter  
Jaylah Benson  
Tiffany Burton  
Landyn Byrd  
Zoe Cannon  
John Ethan Drake

Suri Gladney  
Matthew Lazarus  
Alisanne Ponder  
McKinley Porter  
E'Mirah Wallace

## HIGH SCHOOL

Lauryn Baker  
Olaleye Baker  
Zion Byrd  
Michael Clark  
Gabrielle Dudley  
Gerrell Gaillard  
Lailah Hunter  
Elijah Lewis  
Nahri Marks

Jamison Moultrie  
Karsten Nisbett  
Olivia Richardson  
John Seay-Oliver  
Chase Shannon  
Nolan Shelton  
Chelsea Speed  
Cameron Woods

## COLLEGE

Nia Bosley  
Kennesaw State University  
Psychology, BS

Makailah Gause  
Howard University  
Journalism, BA, SummaCumLaude

Kare Greene  
Hampton University  
Strategic Communications, BA

Jayden Kimbro  
Georgia Institute of Technology  
Biology, BA

Rachel Henderson  
University of Missouri  
Broadcast Journalism, BA

Kaylon Hood  
Kennesaw State University  
Asian Studies, BA

## POST GRADUATE

Lauren Briggs  
John Marshall Law School  
Law, Juris Doctorate

Asley Daniels  
Baylor University  
Athletic Training, MA  
*Summa Cum Laude*

Mark Lee  
University of Kentucky  
Law, Juris Doctorate

Christopher Harden  
Drexel University  
Education, Doctorate of Ed.

Gabrielle Jack  
Walton University  
Public Admin, Doctorate

Stephanie Malone  
Georgia State University  
Business Admin, Doctorate

Andrea Trimble  
Liberty University  
Elementary Ed, MAT - Teaching

**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)

# Meet Marsha McCracken and Kathleen Corley

## The women behind Antioch's beautiful spaces

For as long as they can remember, few things engendered feelings of joy and happiness in Marsha McCracken and Kathleen Corley the same way as breaking out the Christmas decorations.

And so as the yuletide season fast approached in 2015, it hit them that their beloved Antioch Baptist Church North could use some sparkle.

That year, with Pastor Cameron Madison Alexander's approval, they decked the church sanctuary with Christmas trees, wreaths adorned with boughs of holly, and poinsettias.

The result was magical, quickly stirring the congregation's emotions.

That first year, they said, they just wanted Christmas to be seen and felt in every corner of the sanctuary while keeping it simple and elegant.

By the time Easter rolled around in 2016, McCracken and Corley, who met in the church's BWT Verse Speaking choir, were thinking of ways to bring to Antioch the beautiful crosses they'd seen at other churches they'd visited.

Again they talked with the late Pastor.

Don't make the cross "too pretty," they recalled him saying.

"It was important to him that the cross still reflect the look of the old rugged cross," McCracken said. "We honored his wishes."

What followed, they said, still takes them by surprise.

At Antioch's Church Conference that fall,



*Kathleen Corley (l) and Marsha McCracken (r)*

McCracken's and Corley's names were listed along with other members of the congregation's Hospitality Committee.

"Rev. Alexander did not ask us," Corley remembered. "We were 'voluntold.'"

Thus began their new ministry of service to Antioch, which has continued under the leadership of Antioch's current Pastor, the Rev. Kenneth L. Alexander.

Although other members, including Sisters Scarlett Smith, Bonita Williams, Elvetra Cossie, Larry Brewster, and Jacque Dodson, have helped on occasion, Corley and McCracken have remained steadfast in the work, often on some tight deadlines.

McCracken said that because timing is extremely important, members should notify

them of upcoming events far enough in advance that they are able to produce their best work.

"We need time to plan, make purchases, request and schedule external vendors for services and then execute a design idea," she said.

Their work often extends beyond the holidays to the Pastor's birthday, church anniversary, retiree celebrations, and graduation.

They don't have a particular style, but Kathleen is more minimalist, while Marsha prefers to take things "to the next level, adding a little more."

That means finding a way to compromise and meet in the middle where they both find satisfaction.

Surprisingly, neither of them is a professional decorator. Corley, a member of Antioch since 2008, is a retired diamond appraiser and designer. And McCracken, a member since 1982, is an executive with the Fulton County Government.

Asked if they were surprised this has turned into nearly a decade-long ministry, they said yes and no.

Yes, they are surprised the years have flown by so quickly. No, because they enjoy the work so much.

So, too, have Antioch members, who say the decorations, no matter the season, fill them with joy and serve as backdrops for special photo sessions.

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