

The Union Baptist Church Newsletter



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A DEVOTIONAL FOR MEN ON THE GO

The Best Role Model Who Ever Lived

"I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me."

Philippians 3:12 (NLT)

We have a perfect role model.

Christ is our example on how to treat other people.

Christ is our example on the influence we can and should have on those around us.

Christ is the classic and eternal example of the role model we are called to be.

No other role model even comes close to Him. A tour through Scripture reveals a Christ who was always finding people **where they were** and taking them **where they needed to be**. He was always seeking people who thought they were **nobodies** and making them into **somedbodies**.

In the verse above, Paul makes it clear that the goal we pursue – **here on earth and in the hereafter** – is **Jesus Himself**. He is the example we are to follow, the person we were meant to be like. We won't reach perfection until we see Him face-to-face, but we are called always to be moving in that direction. In His strength, we press on toward that goal one day at a time. He can make us who we need to be if we focus on Him and allow Him to work through us. The same Christ who went around making **somedbodies** out of **nobodies** is still at work in our lives.

God has a purpose in shaping us to be like Jesus. We become His influence – His hands and heart – for everyone around us. Wherever we find ourselves, we can influence people for His glory. That begins at **home in our families**, but it extends to every other area: **our friends, coworkers, neighbors, fellow church members, fellow students, teammates** – everyone we come in contact with. God doesn't just glorify Himself by sending Jesus into this world. **If we will let Him, He glorifies Himself by sending Jesus into this world through us.** Amen.

UNCOMMON KEY> *Today and every day, remember that you are a personal representative of Jesus Christ. Always strive for the perfection of Christ – for yourself and for those around you. Amen.*

*Uncommon Life-Daily Challenge
~~ Tony Dungy and Nathan Whitaker*

A MEDITATION FOR EVERY MARRIED COUPLE

Kingdom Couples Think On Good Things

"A successful marriage requires falling in love many times, always with the same person."

--Mignon McLaughlin, Atlantic (July 1965)

HOLLYWOOD COUPLES have been known to focus on the thrills of "attraction love" in which they love as long as they are physically attracted to each other. That message has been repeated often in music, in movies, in middle schools, in secular marriage vows. Unfortunately, the **stresses of marriage** influence all of us so that no two people are consistently attracted to each other. Ask any married couple how far that attraction love takes them when a spouse leaves the toilet seat up or grumbles after a long day at the office. There has to be **more to love** than simply attraction.

You cannot change the **way you feel** until you change the **way you think** because **what controls** the way you think will determine the way you feel. If you feel worried about your marriage it is because you are **thinking thoughts of worry** about your marriage. If you feel frustrated about your spouse, it is because you are **thinking thoughts of frustration** about your spouse. Your thoughts are focused on the wrong set of circumstances. **Paul reminds us that we are to think on the things that are lovely, good, excellent, pure, and worthy of praise.** (Philippians 4:8-9). **Feed your mind these thoughts about your marriage and you will receive the long-term benefit that God promises in verse 9: "the God of peace will be with you."** Amen.

APPLICATION

1. What kind of thoughts are weighing you down with worry?
2. Briefly describe how worry is making you feel.
3. Review Paul's list of "things to think on" and assign each adjective to an aspect of your marriage.

PRAYER

Lord, we choose to trade our worries for thoughts about things that are good and lovely. Amen.

*Kingdom Marriage Devotional
~~ Dr. Tony Evans*



DEVOTIONAL FOR SINGLES

TREASURES WORTH KEEPING

“They gathered it morning by morning, every man as much as he should eat; but when the sun grew hot, it would melt.”

Exodus 16:21 (NASB)

We have lost the art of *treasuring*. In a day when such abundance and prosperity abound, when every sort of gift and gadget can be ours with little more than a few clicks of online action, we no longer know what it means to truly value a keepsake. Things (even people) have become disposable, expendable, easily replaced with a different model if they happen to break or just don't work out like we wanted. Lose it, and we can always get another, probably with two-day delivery thrown in for free.

So we don't prize particular things or place significant worth on precious items, **not the way folks once did.** We're not as careful to protect, nurture, and preserve them, taking great care with their condition, **being sure we're tending to their regular upkeep.**

And while this may or may not be a tragic loss to our age in history, **it's certainly a grave issue whenever this same, lethargic posture leaks over into our relationship with God.**

Perhaps we're faithful in reading **His Word**. Perhaps we're prayerful in listening for **His voice**. But if we don't treasure the results of these exchanges with Him – **if we don't see our personal interactions as irreplaceable keepsakes to be held and pondered and handled with care** – we'll squander what He is so good to give us. If we aren't careful to note **the Spirit's personal conviction to us**, whether from our pastor's message or our **personal quiet time** – if we don't **carve out time and space** for keeping a record of the web of events where we can trace His handiwork in our lives – **the moments slip away forgotten.** Life covers them over. A month later, **we can't even remember.** The details that were so fresh one day are now forgotten treasure.

We've grown too casual with the holy.

I don't know exactly what Mary, the mother of Jesus, did to treasure the happenings in her son's life. But the original wording that comes down to us as **“treasured” in Luke 2:19** implies a defending, a preserving, a protecting of those memories. She was determined not to merely be awestruck and amazed by it all, the way others were, in general, when “all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them” (v. 18). Instead, she took it a step further, valiantly keeping and guarding the account. **These memories were worth tucking away, preserving, remembering.** They were worthy of safekeeping and appreciating. **There were, after all, about Jesus.**

Every instance in which we detect the **fingerprints of God orchestrating and intervening**, every time we hear the **weighty whisper of the Holy Spirit** echoing in our hearts, we ought to be quick to preserve those happenings so **they cannot be easily forgotten.**

Mary didn't treat something (Someone) of such value carelessly. These words and works of the **Son of God** were (and are) worth treasuring. **Amen.**

“The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.”

Isaiah 40:8 (NASB)

*Awaken
~~Priscilla Shirer*



TEEN'S CORNER

PULL ON THE ROPE

"Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."
Colossians 3:13 (NIV)

You may recognize the name **ten Boom**. As a teenager, I read **Corrie ten Boom's** famous autobiography, *The Hiding Place*. Corrie's family was instrumental in **hiding many Jews in their home during the Nazi invasion of the Netherlands**. But eventually she was **captured and imprisoned at the Ravensbrück concentration camp**, where she was forced to do **backbreaking labor**. Years later, after the end of the war and her release, she was greeted by one of her **prison guards** at the end of a public meeting. **With the love of Christ deeply rooted in her, she managed to forgive the guard**. She noted, however, that **sin** even though it is **erased by forgiveness**, still has **repercussions**. She compared it to **pulling on the rope** in a bell tower. **When you stop, the bell keeps ringing for a while**. That's like the momentum of your emotions when you have been wronged. Over time, **God can heal the raw wound**, but for a while, you must bear the reminder of it.

You've probably heard much about **God's forgiveness** – **how he sent his Son to die on the cross so that we can be forgiven for our sins**. We are fervent believers in receiving forgiveness. We are grateful that we have been forgiven.

But **many times, we have a hard time extending forgiveness to others**. A drunk driver crosses the median, slamming into the bus that was carrying your child. **Forgive him?**

But that's exactly the point of forgiveness. We're not meant to carry that burden. We're not meant to live imprisoned by our own desire to right the wrong. **Lack of forgiveness is that "bitter root" that "grows up to cause trouble and defile many" (Hebrews 12:15)**. I've seen it, and it's not pretty. Decades of pain and separation because of stubborn unforgiveness. **Families torn apart. Adult children who haven't talked to their fathers in years**.

But I've also seen the beauty and freedom that come when we forgive. **Marriages restored and even strengthened. Families reunited. Broken teenagers overwhelmed by the patient forgiveness of their loving parents**. Oh, you may still feel the effects of the original wrong. **You might still hear the bell ringing for a while**. But the freedom won by forgiveness is worth it. **So, go ahead: Give that rope a pull. Amen.**

Not a Fan Daily Devotional
~~Kyle Iddleman



DEVOTIONAL FOR SENIORS

New Beginnings

"You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence."

Acts 2:28 (NIV)

The new year often causes us to reflect on the previous year and to form resolutions for the upcoming year. Sometimes we determine we will set out on a new path in life such as a new job or possibly retirement. Maybe you are eagerly anticipating the birth of your first grandchild and your new role as a grandparent. Perhaps you are planning to take a long-anticipated trip with your family or spouse.

Whatever your circumstances may be in life, trust in the Lord and follow the path he sets before you. While our plans for the year may change, God's love for us is certain. As Christians, we know that our path will eventually lead home to our Heavenly Father.

Dear God, in an ever-changing world remind me that your love for me never changes. Amen.

Thank God for the blessings in your life.

*Hope-Full Living Devotions for Seniors
~~Betsy Becker, Niedringhaus Ballwin*

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"Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right." ~ Oprah Winfrey

"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream." ~ C.S. Lewis

"Your success and happiness lie in you. Resolve to keep happy, and your joy and you shall form an invincible host against difficulties." ~ Helen Keller

"If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude."
~ Maya Angelou

"Don't go into the new year holding a grudge from last year. Leave the hurts and disappointments behind." ~ Joel Osteen

"Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step."
~ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

HUMOR

DANIEL AND THE PIRATES

By Carol Bennett

Daniel and his sister were huddled in the hold of the British schooner *London Lady*, listening to the terrifying sounds above. They trembled at the boom of the cannon, the cracking of the mast, the screams of alarm and shouted orders. Their father's last words had been, "Stay here. *Whatever happens I want you to trust God. He'll be with you.* Remember that." Then he disappeared up the ladder to help in the battle.

The black pirate flag on the approaching ship had struck terror in the hearts of most of the passengers on board. Daniel wasn't too sure about trusting God but he did trust the captain and crew, who were strong and brave. When he heard the pounding of footsteps on the wooden stairs though, and the triumphant shouts of the pirates searching every cabin, he knew that the crew had not been successful. The boisterous men finally entered the hold, opening barrels and smashing crates.

"God will take of us," Anna Marie said in the faintest of whispers. Daniel wasn't so sure about that. Then finally the barrel that hid them was shoved away.

"Well, well, well—what do we have here?" Rough hands yanked them out. "Two little varmints down here, Captain," a tall pirate with shaggy hair shouted. "Well, bring 'em up." On deck, smoke filled the air and fire blazed at the far end. The captain looked them over. "Let them live. I need a new cabin boy. And the girl can scrub floors." "No other captives, Captain," said a vicious-looking little man. "All the rest are drowned by now."

"Plenty of booty, though," said another. "Passengers had a goodly amount of gold, sir." Most of the buccaneers were working fast, getting their loot off the ship. Soon Daniel and Anna Marie were being forced down the ladder into a small boat below. As it moved out, they could see that the bow of the *London Lady* was nearly submerged. The fire was spreading rapidly, flames bursting up and consuming everything in its path.

On the pirate ship, the two were left to themselves for a moment. Daniel put his arm around his sister and they stood at the rail watching the wreck as the smoke billowed forth, darkening the sky. "We belong to the Kingsbury family of London—and we've come to this," he muttered bitterly.

"That's something I wouldn't be telling the likes of them," came a raspy voice beside them. Daniel jumped. He whirled around and saw an old man with long, stringy hair and tattered clothes. "Who are you? Get away from us!" "Shhh. I'm a captive just as you are. I'm not one of them. Come with me. Maybe they'll let you stay with me." "And why would we want to?" snapped Daniel. Anna Marie scowled at him and turned to the man. "Thank you, sir," she said, taking the lead in following him as he guided them down a ladder.



HUMOR Continued

"I'm telling you, boy, don't be saying who you are." "But our uncle is a colonel and he'll have the navy here as soon as he hears of this disgrace!" "These buccaneers aren't fools. They'll be away from here and in hiding before your uncle even gets word of it."

A deafening blast rent the air, causing them all to leap back startled. "There she goes. No one will ever know what happened here." Anna Marie put a hand over her mouth as tears streamed down her face. "Stop making her cry!" snapped Daniel angrily.

"No," his sister gulped. "Dan, I'm all right. Look, we've got someone to help us. God's taking care of us just as Papa said." Daniel turned on her furiously. "The last thing I want to hear about is God! *I'm* going to do something about this." But the man grabbed his arm. "It'll just go worse for you making a row, boy. Just lay low for now. Your time will come." "Yours hasn't—or so it appears," Daniel hissed angrily.

The man paused at the door to the galley. Finally, he said, "No, I haven't had my chance yet even after eight years. They watch me closely. But maybe we can help each other." Suddenly a voice came from the other end of the passageway. "What're doin' with them captives?" "Putting them to work if you want your dinner on time," the man yelled back. "Did you bring any food aboard? I suppose not. All you're interested in is booty and you expect me to cook meals out of nothing."

"Yeah, we brought food, old man. Come up and get it ye'self and then get to work! We're hungry!" The pirate disappeared up the steps. Daniel stared at him and finally said, "thank you, sir," to show he was sorry for not believing the old man. Their new friend smiled at him. "You'll be all right."

The two young people settled into their new life. Anna Marie helped with the cooking, something she knew nothing about since servants did all that at home. But she was quite willing to learn. They discovered that the elderly man who had befriended them was Mr. Robert Penningworth. He had been a professor in a large school back in England. He was also very religious.

Daniel did his chores for the captain stoically. He was careful to keep his hatred hidden, knowing that the time would be right someday and then he would extract revenge a hundredfold! "Bitterness never pays, boy," Robert told him and his sister seemed to agree.

But Daniel didn't listen. He couldn't abide them talking about God either. Every evening the man read aloud from a small battered Bible that he kept safe in a burlap bag. "Only thing they let me keep," the man had told them the first night, holding it as if it were priceless. "None of them wanted it." *Don't blame them. What good's it doing you?*

Robert pursed his lips. He seemed to know what Daniel was thinking but he just cheerfully continued reading and discussing the Scriptures with Anna Marie.

One night everything changed. Land had been sighted that day and a visitor came rowing toward the ship around sunset. The captain called on Daniel for food and drink as he welcomed the unsavory man into his cabin. While he was serving the food, Daniel paid close attention—and gained some very interesting information. The captain and the visitor had business some distance down the coast. The man had brought a huge chest of gold on board and apparently had more hidden in a cave at their destination. As Daniel passed, he couldn't help staring at the gleaming gold and jewels. Then he noticed the captain staring at *him* and he forced himself to tend to his work and return to his indifferent manner. But that night he and Robert and Anna Marie began making plans for escape.

HUMOR Continued

The evening they had been waiting for finally arrived. Since there was no moon, it was quite dark. The pirate ship entered a cove which was deep enough to anchor safely. And close enough for them to swim to shore. They had little of value to take with them except for Robert's precious Bible in a waterproof sack. Most of the men went ashore for an evening of drinking and gambling in the local village. The guard on duty was lazy. They knew he wouldn't bother watching once the captain was gone. He would probably fall asleep.

After the captain and his visitor left to go ashore, Daniel hurried to leave the cabin with his tray of dishes and meet Robert and Anna Marie. But he suddenly stopped short. The chest in the corner had been left unlatched! As he slowly put the tray down and went to the chest, lifting the lid, he realized for the first time that he didn't just despise the buccaneers, he was intensely jealous of their wealth. The sparkling treasure made him dizzy and he shook his head in awe...and excitement.

He knew he needed to hurry. Now might be their only chance to get away for *years* perhaps. But he couldn't stop staring at the mass of glittering jewels and coins. He grabbed up a pouch and filled it. The captain's big knife with the fancy gold handle was lying nearby, too.

Suddenly a voice behind him made him jump. "Boy, you don't want to do that." It was Robert, with Anna Marie, coming to find out what was taking him so long. He glared at them. "Are you going to be just like them, boy?" "I'm *nothing* like them!" hissed Daniel. He held onto the pouch. "We're going to need money to get back to London. And—this—is for protection." "No it isn't, Dan," said Anna Marie quietly. Daniel knew she was right. He longed for these things more than anything—except perhaps revenge.

"Come on," urged Robert. "We have to go—now." Daniel stared at the coins and the knife longingly. "Please, Dan....Papa wouldn't want you to steal," Anna Marie pleaded.

Finally he left both the pouch and the knife on the desk and turned away. It was the hardest thing he had ever done and it was only for his sister and the memory of his father, not because he wanted to. But Anna Marie rewarded him with a big smile and Robert slapped him on the back. They quickly climbed the ladder to the deck and Robert poked his head out cautiously. The pirate on duty was already dozing. Tiptoeing behind some barrels, the old man silently let the rope ladder down.

They slipped over the rail, climbed down, and dropped into the water. Helping Anna Marie, whose long dress hindered her, they swam the short distance. The trio stumbled up on the beach, dripping and weary. They were free!

One of the small boats was on the beach, near the opening to a cave, so they quickly ducked behind some rocks. They'd hidden just in time for they suddenly heard voices near the mouth of the cave. "There's the captain and the stranger. They've got more treasure," whispered Robert.

The three watched as another wooden chest was loaded onto the small boat. "They're going back out to the ship—without the rest of the crew," observed Robert. "And we don't know where *they* are," Anna Marie pointed out. "They might be coming back this way." "Their boat isn't here. They probably docked at the village." Robert led the way around the cliff, staying in the shadows. "We shouldn't be hiding," said Daniel. "We should be going for the magistrate."

"This is a coastal village. Most of the time the authorities are powerless. Pirates are vicious and the townspeople probably just lay low until they're gone." Robert told him. "Leave it to God, Daniel." Daniel hated advice like that. What could God do, anyway?

HUMOR Continued

"He brought us this far," Robert reminded him. "He kept you both from being killed or harmed. I know it's been hard these last few weeks but He's protected you in ways you can't know. Pirates can be ruthless. They'll hurt just for fun."

They were heading into the forest when a deafening BOOM split the air. Cannon fire! They whirled and looked out to sea. A ship! Flying the British flag! The British navy ship had apparently sailed into the cove while they were creeping 'round the cliff. They watched as the pirate ship was bombarded with cannon balls.

"God knew they were coming all the time!" shouted Robert, excitedly. Daniel was stunned. God did have it under control, after all. Perhaps he *should* believe the things he'd always been taught. Perhaps he should have faith in God. He'd have to think about it....

Suddenly there was a commotion coming from the village. It looked like the rest of the pirates were running for the beach—with a mob behind them. Then Anna Marie shouted, "Look! It's Papa!"

Reunited with their father once again, they discovered that he and several of the crew and passengers had not perished but had been picked up by the navy ship not long after the *London Lady* sank. The wounded had been brought here and the navy vessel had gone after the pirate ship. They had been there, out of sight, all the time. Just as they were ready to take the ship, they recognized the stranger as someone they had been searching for and decided to wait. And now they had captured them all and found the pirates' lair.

Daniel knew exactly what Robert was thinking as the old man grinned at him. He and Papa and Anna Marie had been right after all. And actually, Daniel didn't mind being wrong—this once. The End.

<http://www.shortkidstories.com/story/daniel-pirates/>

SLEEPING THROUGH THE SERMON

By William Webber

I was the pastor of a small church in a rural community. Wilbur and his wife, Leah, attended every Sunday morning. Wilbur was a farmer, and whenever he came into the house from the field and sat down, he would fall asleep. It was such a habit that when he came into church and sat in the pew he would also soon fall asleep. I discovered that some of the members of the church were taking bets to see how long I could keep Wilbur awake on Sunday mornings.

Wilbur's wife was embarrassed by to snore. She tried everything to keep complained to him that she was getting in the ribs in a futile attempt to keep the grocery store, she saw a small bought it and dropped it in her purse.

The next Sunday morning I had just to nod. When I finished the first point was losing him. As I started the third point, Wilbur began to snore. Quietly, Leah opened her purse, took out the bottle of Limburger cheese and held it under her husband's nose. It worked. Wilbur sat up straight and, in a voice that could be heard all over the church, said, "Leah, will you please keep your feet on your own side of the bed!"



his behavior, especially when he began her sleepy spouse awake. She calluses on her elbow from poking him him alert. One day while shopping in bottle of Limburger cheese. Leah

started the sermon when Wilbur began in my three-point sermon, I could see I

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~Jack Canfield et. al.
Chicken Soup for the Christian Family Soul

Don't Pay a Medical Bill Until You Do These 5 Things

By Caylin Harris

Up to 80 percent of medical bills may contain errors, experts say. Take these steps to check charges, lower costs, and avoid unhappy surprises.



1. Verify your information.

First check that the bill was in fact run through your insurance and that your insurance information is correct, says Adria Gross, a medical billing advocate and the founder of MedWise Insurance Advocacy. Occasionally, a billing company will mail a bill without running it through insurance. Or there might just be an error—even leaving one number off your insurance ID can make it seem like your policy is invalid.

2. Ask for an itemized list.

Providers should send a line-item breakdown that shows how they came up with the total. If your bill doesn't have one, ask for it. Then make sure everything on the bill is a test, medication, or service you received during your appointment or hospital stay, says Teresa Brown, senior director of the hospital division at Medlimal, a company that specializes in medical cost containment. "Check units and quantities," she says. "I was talking to somebody whose husband had a CT scan, and they billed her twice. We've seen a toothbrush billed for \$1,000. So look for extra zeros and other numbers."

3. Research billing codes.

Every medical procedure has a corresponding billing code, which your doctor's office enters to tell insurers what was done to help them process the claim, says Caitlin Donovan, Director of Outreach and Public Affairs at the National Patient Advocate Foundation. If you were denied coverage for a procedure, check out whether the wrong code was used. Type the code from your bill or insurance claim into a code search tool, like the one on findacode.com. If you notice a potential error, ask your doctor's office about it. They may be able to resubmit your claim with corrected coding. "I also recommend asking your insurer how a procedure needs to be coded to get covered," says Donovan.

4. Don't be afraid to negotiate.

Even if you've done your homework, triple-checked your bill for accuracy, and appealed, you may still end up owing more than you can afford. If that's the case, go to healthcarebluebook.com or

Practical Information . . . Continued

fairhealthconsumer.org to get a sense of what a reasonable charge for the service is; that will give you a negotiating starting point, says Donovan. People want to get paid, so if they see you're making an effort to tackle the bill, providers should be willing to set up a payment plan and work within your financial constraints. They may even offer a lower lump-sum cost.

5. Take care of it quickly.

Don't let that bill drift to the bottom of your to-do list. Call the billing office (or your insurance company, if it handles payment for you) as soon as you can if you think you've found an error. If you don't contact the billing office or pay the bill, the provider can send it to a collection agency. The agency can then notify credit bureaus about your debt. Medical debts that are less than six months past due don't show up on your credit report, so if you can, resolve the bill before it has a chance to appear there.

How to prevent problems:

A. Know your network.

One of the most common ways to rack up charges is by going to an out-of-network provider, since your insurance will usually cover a smaller portion of the cost, if anything. For any visit or procedure, check that the provider or lab is in-network. In case of emergency, know which hospital in your area is in-network (but be aware that some doctors working there may still not be on your plan). Discuss your policy with your benefits department or call your provider to get clarity.

B. Have a cost conversation.

Ask your doctor about cost-effective alternatives, suggests Donovan. If doctors know that budget is a concern, they may be able to opt for a more affordable treatment or a generic drug.

C. Be your own advocate.

Take notes at your appointments (and the appointments of anyone you care for) and ask if you can record the visit. Note what was done and any treatment directions so you have a reference if something strange appears on a bill.

<https://www.realsimple.com/work-life/money/spending/medical-billing-tips>

How to Protect Against Identity Theft

1. **Watch out for emails or social media posts** from retailers offering “special offers” that seem too good to be true. When in doubt, don’t click on links—they could take you to a fraudulent website that captures your personal information.
2. When shopping online, **avoid using public Wi-Fi** networks, which could put your data at risk.
3. **Use strong, complex passwords** that include a mix of upper and lowercase letters, numbers and symbols. Don’t use the same password for multiple website logins.
4. **Avoid giving your Social Security Number out** unless you absolutely have to. Ask if you can provide another form of identification.
5. **Keep your Social Security card in a safe place**; don’t carry it in your purse or wallet.
6. Before entering your payment information online, **make sure the website is secure** by looking for the lock symbol and “https” in the address bar.
7. **Stay alert** and aware of your surroundings when shopping in public places, especially during the busy holiday season. Keep your wallet or purse close to you at all times.
8. **Pay close attention to your bills and account statements** to look for charges or withdrawals you didn’t make. If you spot any suspicious activity, contact your financial institution right away.
9. **Review your credit report** to look for any mistakes, inaccuracies or fraudulent activity. You can get a free copy of your credit report every 12 months at [AnnualCreditReport.com](https://www.annualcreditreport.com).
10. If you think someone has stolen your identity, **act fast** by calling the companies where you know fraud occurred. Consider placing a credit freeze or a fraud alert on your credit report, and change your passwords to prevent fraud from continuing. Visit [IdentityTheft.gov](https://www.identitytheft.gov) for the next steps to take in reporting and recovering from identity theft.



https://www.wpcu.coop/stopfraud?utm_source=Email&utm_medium=Bulk&utm_campaign=eServicesNew

A Story to Warm Your Heart . . .

Annie Mae's Honor

“Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.” Romans 12:10



Can it really be thirty years since I received the last of the payments from Annie Mae? I find myself thinking about them more often as I approach my sixtieth birthday. Something about closing the chapters on six decades and opening the pages of a new one makes one reflect.

Annie Mae's life has deeply touched mine. I first met her at the home of my in-laws in 1959. I had moved with my husband and our one-year-old child to Tuscaloosa, Alabama, so my husband could complete his undergraduate work at the University of Alabama. My father-in-law was active in university and community affairs. I vividly recall entering their driveway and being overwhelmed by the size of their home, the beauty of the furnishings, the manicured grounds and the pecan orchard.

Annie Mae was my in-laws' maid. She prepared and served meals in her quiet, gentle way and then retired to the kitchen to read her Bible while we ate. She was a dedicated and devoted Christian. To me, she reflected the fruit of the Holy Spirit as found in Galatians 5:22-23. I found this increasingly true even though I came to know her more by observation than by conversation.

My husband and I visited his parents frequently, and I became increasingly taken with this gentle, remarkable lady. Often when I saw her eating alone, reading her Bible, I wanted to sit down with her and just talk. However, whites did not do that with African Americans in the South in those days, and I conformed to the local practice—though it conflicted with my Christian beliefs. I watched my son, Jimmy, play with her daughter, Jennifer Ann, who on occasion came to my in-laws' place with her mother. The two children laughed and frolicked amid the trees in the pecan orchard. It was so easy for them.

In 1965, my world was suddenly uprooted. I found myself alone with two young sons when my husband wanted a divorce. I was fortunate to receive a full scholarship to the University of Connecticut in the field of special education. I decided to sell the furniture and household items and return to my home state with just our clothes.

Annie Mae asked if she could buy the boys' beds. When I answered yes, she asked the price. “Thirty-five dollars,” I replied. Then, in her quiet way, she asked if I would sell them to her and trust her to send a little money each month. I admired her and knew her to be a woman of God, trustworthy and honest. The words of Proverbs 11 came to mind: “A good man (person) is guided . . . and directed by honesty . . . Be sure you know a person well before you vouch for his (or her) credit.” Annie Mae was honest, and I knew her well. So I said “Annie Mae, take them, they are yours.”

I returned to Connecticut with my two sons and found a chicken coop that had been converted into four apartments. My neighbors and I all became family as we struggled to earn our degrees. Faithfully each month, while my boys and I lived there, an envelope arrived from Annie Mae—two dollars, three dollars, five dollars, always in cash. That became the surprise money for my boys; I used it to get them something special—an ice

A Story to Warm Your Heart . . . Continued

cream, cookies, an outing. My sons were thrilled when Annie Mae's money came, for they knew that a surprise would be coming their way.

A year passed. I earned my Master of Arts degree in special education and accepted a position as a special education teacher for the state of Connecticut. I had learned my lessons well. However, I was about to learn an even greater lesson, and Annie Mae would be the teacher.

Annie Mae's last payment arrived about the time I completed my studies. Along with it came the following note:

Dear Mrs. Holladay,

I am sending you my last payment of three dollars to pay for the beds in full. I told my two sons that they could now go to the storage shed and put the beds together and sleep on them, for they are now paid for and rightfully ours. Thank you for your trust.

*Love in Jesus,
Annie Mae*

I could not believe my eyes. I read the note two or three times, my eyes filling with tears. Had I only known earlier, I would have said, "Use them now. Don't wait until you pay for them." Those would have been my thoughts, yet Annie Mae had other thoughts—thoughts the world could truly use. She sacrificed. She struggled. And finally, when the beds were truly hers, she let her sons, Paul and John, sleep in them. She was a living example of absolute honesty, the honesty that should characterize all who claim to be Christian.

This story has a postscript. After thirty years, I called directory assistance and found that Annie Mae still lived in Tuscaloosa. I called her, and later my second husband and I visited her, and I had that chat I never had thirty years ago. What a joy it was! Annie Mae had become a family and children's worker for the state of Alabama and retired in May of 1996.

Romans 13:8 says, "Pay all your debts except the debt of love for others, never finish paying that!" How Annie Mae reflects those words! Truly she is a remarkable woman, one whose life has been shaped by Bible principles.

By Carol Hollady Treiber

~Jack Canfield, et. al.
Chicken Soup for the Christian Family Soul

Scriptures on Honesty:

Proverbs 12:22 ESV

"Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who act faithfully are his delight."

Proverbs 19:1 ESV

"Better is a poor person who walks in his integrity than one who is crooked in speech and is a fool."

John 8:32

"And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

2 Corinthians 8:21 ESV

"For we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of man."

Inspirational Story on Positive Thinking . . .

I FEEL LIKE CRAP TODAY

“Just because you’re miserable doesn’t mean you can’t enjoy your life.” ~Annette Goodheart



Positive attitude? Yeah, right. You’ve got to be kidding, I thought, as my brother recounted his tale of this fabulous guy – who shall be referred to as Oliver Optimist from this point forward – who had multiple sclerosis and a sunny view of the world.

You’d never even know he had it,” my brother said. “He has the best attitude, exercises, works hard and is really doing great. MS can be manageable.”

My jaw dropped, not literally, but in my mind. My brother must have been the one with the lesions on the brain, to suggest such craziness – this Oliver Optimist as a potential source of inspiration for me.

Just diagnosed with MS, fresh off the precipitous decline from exercising first thing every day, carrying two toddlers around at once, and part-time work at the University of Pittsburg. In just two weeks, I’ve had to slide down the stairs with my kids on my lap so I wouldn’t fall, with a body so numb I couldn’t feel the keyboard to type or tell you if my hand was resting on my leg or the arm of the chair unless I looked. I was not thrilled with my brother’s tales of disease contentment.

I was angry at what was happening to me. My sweet brother was only trying to help me see the bright side. He wasn’t the only one. As days went by I was introduced to other MS sufferers – everyone knew someone who had MS and every one of them had chipper stories of the way these people dealt with the disease as gracefully as saints, angels, or pixie fairies.

And when I’d hobble home after hearing one of these tales of ease in the face of man-eating myelin sheath, I was left wondering why I could not see lightness, joy or any of that upbeat gratification in my own life. Frankly, it was nauseating.

Then there were the situations where I met and spent time with people worse off than me. You’d think based on my repulsion at the mere mention of Polly Positive or Oliver Optimism that I might find a surge of happiness in the presence of people who had negative viewpoints or were severely incapacitated.

But those situations left me petrified beyond words and ashamed that the sight of these people did not evoke compassion in my heart, but instead, thoughts like “I’ll never be able to live like that if I’m like her.” I wanted to live my life as I had for three decades, on my own terms. But I couldn’t sleep due to the discomfort of my limbs, which alternated between prickly numbness and intense pain so bad that merely wearing socks felt like walking on needles. I had anxiety and two small children who never slept through the night and never managed to waken at the same time in the night. I think I went six years with only forty-eight hours of accumulated REM sleep.

“The best thing you can do for yourself is get a good deal of rest,” my neurologist said. I think I cackled, looking unstable I’m sure. “That’s it? That’s my treatment? Drugs that give me flu-like symptoms and rest? Please, my good doctor, let me explain to you exactly what my life looks like.” So, I went on, in excruciating detail, about how rest would not be a visitor in my home any time soon.

Then I waited. I waited for him to pull out a fat file, full of stories of others (Oliver Optimism and Polly Positive were patients of his) that were living grand lives with MS. I waited for him to delineate the ways I was lucky to have the degree of symptoms I did, that I should recognize how bad it could actually be.

But he yanked a box out of a drawer and plucked a Kleenex from it then another and handed them over to me. He leaned on his arms toward me, as though he were a friend who asked me over for coffee. And, with the most sincere look on his face, he said, “This really stinks, doesn’t it. It’s the worst think I can imagine. I can see how hard all this has been, that your life has been completely upended. I can’t pretend to know how awful that is, but I can tell you there’s so much that can be done. We’ll try everything until you manage the life you want. But yes, for now, it just stinks.”

Inspirational Story. . . Continued

It was the first time someone didn't try to talk me into either seeing how selfish I was for not appreciating that I could be much worse off. He was the first person who didn't tell me glorious stories of people who walk through life with MS as though they don't even have it.

I know how bad all that sounds, how awful of a person I was at that time, but the doctor's words released me from the argument I was having with myself and with others about how to live with this disease. I realized that although I rolled my eyes at yarns spun à la Oliver Optimist, I was indeed an optimistic person. I may have moved slower than other people, my body changed for the worse, and some days all I could manage was to feed my children and lie on the floor and read with them. I couldn't show up for all the neighborhood mom activities because sometimes I couldn't manage anything except taking care of the kids. But every day that this didn't happen, I reshaped what I thought of as "everything I want to do."

I stopped hiding the fact that I felt awful. If someone asked me how I felt I'd say, "I feel like crap." And they'd look away, that split second revealing their discomfort with my crappiness. And I'd add, "But I'm good. I'm getting used to feeling that way. We went to the grocery store and we played at home. That's it. And, that is a good day."

And even though in my mind I knew those were not raving accomplishments, I meant it. I began to understand Oliver Optimist and Polly Positive. Being a positive person isn't shaped by the words that come from a person's mouth, but how they approach their life. By admitting things stink, a person can then control his or her reaction. Being optimistic or hopeful, or happy in the face of something bad requires a deep immersion in the badness; it requires naming the stinkiness, to expose the awfulness of it, so that you can truly rise above it.

By Kathleen Shoop

~~Jack Canfield
Chicken Soup for the Soul – Think Positive

Belief

Lord, in a world where we've learned to rely only on what we can perceive with our five senses, sometimes we can't help but be filled with doubts. After all, we can't see Your face or hear Your voice or touch Your hand. And meanwhile, the world bombards us with messages that contradict our belief in You and Your kingdom. Despite all that, though, Father, give us the strength to believe. Amen.

God's Faithfulness

Father, I am so glad that Your faithfulness is complete and eternal. Help me to always rely on You, rather than on human beings or the material world. I know You will never fail me. Amen.

~Barbour Publishing
Light For My Path

A New Year; a New Way; the Same God!

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you." Psalm 32:8

When we reflect on the future, we often allow the events of the past – problems and disappointments – to cloud our vision.

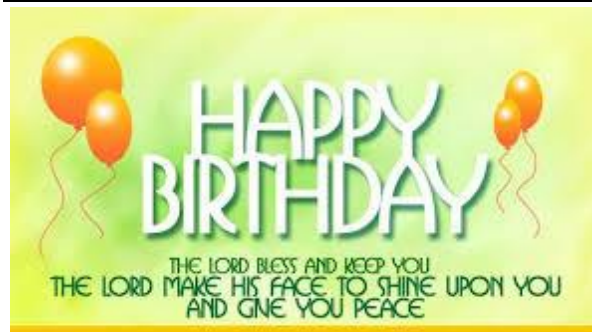
Today, more so than ever before, the moment has come to place your unwavering trust in the omniscience of God. He truly cares about you and loves you deeply.

Everyone has a need for love: true, profound, sincere love. So rediscover that, in this seemingly loveless world, there is Somebody who has a special interest in You: a God in heaven who is Love and who loves you dearly.

You are truly a God of love! Thank You for sending Your only Son to bring about my salvation too. Amen.

~~Christian Art Gifts
Grace for Today.

**INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR
SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020**



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY WISHES TO
EVERYONE BORN IN THE MONTHS OF
JANUARY AND FEBRUARY**

UBC COMMUNICATION CARDS: For those “making a decision for Christ” by using one of the UBC Communication Cards found in the pocket of the pews, **REVEREND ALVIN L. WYATT, Minister of Christian Life and Witness**, will contact you. Please clearly print your name and phone number on the card and the hours you may be reached. **You will receive further information from Rev. Wyatt.** GOD BLESS YOU.

PRAYER BAND MINISTRY: A Prayer Request receptacle is located in the vestibule leading into the sanctuary. Please feel free to place your prayer request(s) there at any time. Our prayer partners stand ready to pray with you and for you. **You are invited to join us for prayer and meditation on Tuesdays at 6:30 a.m. Set your alarms and start your day off the right way! The Prayer Line is (515) 604-9520 – Code 356781.** ~~Prayer Band Ministry

REPORTING ILLNESSES, SURGERIES AND BEREAVEMENT INFORMATION: Please contact the church office if you or a loved one is sick or entering the hospital so that your Family Ward Deacon and Pastor may be notified. Please also contact the office if you or a loved one is being released from the hospital or if there is bereavement in your family. The phone number is (513) 381-3858. ~~ Church Office Staff

NEED A RIDE TO SUNDAY SCHOOL OR 10:00 A.M. WORSHIP SERVICE? If you are in need of a ride to Church, please call (513) 381-3858 and leave your name and your telephone number. GOD BLESS YOU.

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY AND FELLOWSHIP WILL RESUME ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2020 AT 7:00 P.M. The title of the new Bible Study series is forthcoming. The class will be led by Pastor Yates and will be held in the church sanctuary. Come grow and fellowship with us for the lift of your life!

WEDNESDAY NOON DAY BIBLE STUDY WILL RESUME ON JANUARY 22, 2020 AT 12 P.M. We will continue with the series, “*Praying at the Crossroads*,” by Ken Coley. You are invited to attend this dynamic group study on prayer which is led by Pastor Yates in the church sanctuary. **Lunch is served after class.**

WEDNESDAY EVENING CHURCH-WIDE PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY WILL RESUME ON JANUARY 22, 2020 AT 7:00 P.M. We will also study “*Praying at the Crossroads*” by Ken Coley in the evening class which is led by Pastor Yates in the sanctuary.

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY CONFERENCE CALL RESUMES ON THURSDAYS BEGINNING JANUARY 9, 2020, 7:30-8:30 P.M. Rev. Shawn Pate [Pastor-Elect of Mt. Ararat Baptist Church of Rutherford, New Jersey and UBC member] will lead a new series, “*Understanding The Purpose and Power of Prayer*,” by Dr. Myles Munro. The e-book version can be purchased at Christianbook.com and paperback on Amazon, etc. If interested, email Rev. Pate at unioncinnati@gmail.com for the phone number and access code. Deacon Jeff Blanchard of Georgia is the coordinator.

INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020

EARLY MORNING WORSHIP CELEBRATION RESUMES ON JANUARY 12, 2020 AT 8 A.M.

DEACONS MINISTRY MEETINGS: The Deacons Ministry will have a meeting on **Monday, January 27, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.** and on **Monday, February 3, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.** in the sanctuary (lower balcony). **Please have your monthly Family Ward Reports.** ~~Pastor Yates

PRE-MLK DAY EVENT FOR YOUTH (AGES 8-18) ON JANUARY 19th AT 7:00 P.M.: All youth of Union are invited to an **overnight sleepover** featuring fun, fellowship and food. The next morning will involve preparation for the Martin Luther King Day activities. Each youth will need a sleeping bag, change of clothes (casual and warm), wash cloth and toiletries (soap, tooth paste, tooth brush, comb/brush, deodorant and lotion). **If you would like for your child to participate, please see Sis. Denise Harris, Sis. Portia Fuller or Sis. Gwen Hall for additional information.**

THE DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. LEGACY AWARDS BREAKFAST WILL BE HELD ON JANUARY 20, 2020: The **annual King Breakfast** will be held at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center. The door to this event will open at 7:30 a.m. and the **breakfast at 8:00 a.m.** Union Baptist Church has reserved a table and **tickets are \$40 for adults and \$25 for children (ages 18 and under).** The keynote speaker will be Betty Daniels Rosemond, Freedom Rider and Business Woman.

Following breakfast, the **Annual March will begin at 10:30 a.m.** from the Freedom Center to Fountain Square for an Interfaith Prayer Service. The March will later continue to Music Hall where the **MLK Commemoration program will begin at 12 noon.** All events are FREE except for the BREAKFAST. **Please contact Sis. Portia Fuller for information.**

UBC FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITY-CLASSICAL ROOTS CONCERT ON MARCH 6, 2020: Please come out and support the Union Baptist Church members that will be participating in the annual Classical Roots Community Mass Choir. Please see page 28 for additional information regarding the fundraising opportunity for Union Baptist Church **when you purchase a ticket for this event and use code 11075.**

CLASSICAL ROOTS

Tickets on Sale Now!
MUSIC HALL
FRI MAR 6, 2020

513.381.3300
cincinnatisymphony.org

CSO CINCINNATI
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA
Louis Langrée, Music Director



Group ticket fundraising opportunities available!

Buy tickets with this **promo code**
to help raise funds for your church:

INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020

IMPORTANT NOTICE: No one should be in the church building between the hours of 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. due to security reasons. *Any necessary exceptions should be coordinated and approved by the Chairman of Property and Space, Sis. Portia Fuller, at least one week in advance.* Also, this is a reminder: **Please do not park in the Pastor's parking space at any time.** God Bless you! ~~Sis. Angelita Jones, Trustee Board Ministry Leader

UNION BAPTIST'S EMAIL ADDRESS: The church has an email address for all ministry announcements. Please send all forms of communications (church announcements, flyers, upcoming events, etc.) to unioncincinnati@gmail.com. Thank you!

DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER ANNOUNCEMENTS: The deadline for church announcements for the **March - April 2020** newsletter is **February 17, 2020**. All requests for newsletter announcements should be **e-mailed** to **Sis. Shirley Norman, Public Relations Ministry Leader**, at unioncincinnatiapr@gmail.com.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE NEWSLETTER: If you were unable to obtain a copy of the bimonthly newsletter, please contact the church office. **UBC's Newsletter is also posted on the website in color. Share with others.**

UNION BAPTIST CHURCH OF CINCINNATI WEBSITE: Please visit our website (www.union-baptist.net) which is both informative and interactive for those who are seeking the Will of God in their lives. **On our website, you will see upcoming events; evangelistic mission information for men, women and children;** discipleship opportunities for building God's kingdom; exploratory devotional links for personal spiritual growth; and, community connections that demonstrate, the **POWER OF GOD** throughout the Greater Cincinnati area and beyond.

UNION BAPTIST CHURCH RADIO BROADCASTS: You can listen to the Union Baptist broadcast on WCVG 1320 every Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. through live stream radio by connecting to the Union Baptist Church website at www.union-baptist.net.

UNION BAPTIST CHURCH IS ON FACEBOOK: The official Union Baptist Facebook is also linked to the Union Baptist Church of Cincinnati website at www.union-baptist.net.

UNION BAPTIST WI-FI SETTINGS: Please contact Sis. Brenda Neal, Executive Assistant to the Senior Pastor, to obtain the settings for the wireless router (Wi-Fi). Thank you.

CONNECTING TO CHURCH MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES: Visit our website at www.union-baptist.net for a list of ministries for more information. Click on the tab "*Church Ministries*."

UBC MEMBERSHIP DATA FORM: All members who have not completed their updated UBC Membership Form, are urged to complete and provide your updated information, including, any name change; your current home address; your home, cell and work telephone numbers; a number where you may be reached in case of an emergency; and, an emergency contact person, etc. Membership Data Forms are available in the wall receptacle near the church office. You may also use the UBC Communication Card (found in the pocket of the pew) to provide updated information. When you have completed your form, please give it to Sis. Brenda Neal in the church office, or after office hours, place it in the Pastor's drop box on his study door. Thank You.

INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020

UBC WEBSITE - GIVING: *There are two new methods of giving on the website: Tithely and Givelify. Please visit the website and click on the "Give" tab for more information and check out the video. Thank you.*

THE CITY GOSPEL MISSION OUTREACH MINISTRY: The schedule of the longstanding participation of Union Baptist Church Ministers that began with Reverend Shawn D. Pate, is as follows:

January 25, 2020	Reverend Barry Hixon, Jr.	Preaching at 7:30 p.m.
February 22, 2020	Reverend Emanuel Marshall	Preaching at 7:30 p.m.
March 28, 2020	Reverend Alvin Wyatt	Preaching at 7:30 p.m.

Union is asked to pray for and support, in every way possible, **our Associate Ministers** as they serve at City Gospel Mission. The City Gospel Mission is located at 1805 Dalton St., 45215.
Thank You. ~~Pastor Yates

TRUTHSEEKERS SMALL CARE GROUP

The members of the Small Care Group TruthSeekers" **meet every Monday from 6:00 – 7:15 p.m. at the Avondale Branch Public Library** to study God's word and grow through the five purposes of the church, worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry and evangelism. Please feel free to join us as we learn about God's Word and how to become more Christ like.



For more information, please contact Rev. Shawn Pate, Small Care Group Ministry Leader at Email: unioncincinnati@gmail.com.

American Heart Association®



PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR GO RED SUNDAY!

All men, women, youth and children of Union are encouraged to **WEAR RED** on **Sunday, February 9, 2020** in support of the American Heart Association's national movement to end heart disease and stroke in women. Heart disease is America's leading killer of women and men.

**INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR
SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020 (Continued)**

**JANUARY IS "WORSHIPPING JESUS CHRIST ONLY,
ALWAYS" MONTH**

IMPORTANT DATES FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY



January 13, 2020: First Quarterly Church Leadership Council Meeting at 7:00 P.M.

January 19, 2020: Special Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during 10:00 A.M. Worship Service

January 20, 2020: City Wide Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Observance (Church Office Closed)

January 27, 2020: Deacons Ministry Meeting at 6:00 P.M.
Trustee Board Ministry Meeting at 6:00 P.M.
First Quarter Official Board Meeting at 7:00 P.M.

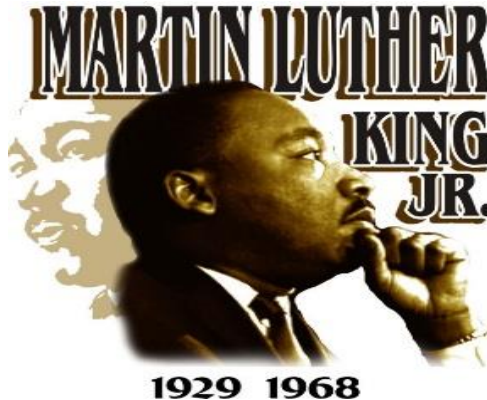
January 31, 2020: First Quarter Church Conference at 7:00 P.M.

To Be Announced: Union Foundation Meeting at 6:30 P.M.

Why Do We Celebrate Martin Luther King Day?

Martin Luther King Day was designed to honor the activist and minister assassinated in 1968, whose accomplishments have continued to inspire generations of Americans.

The campaign for a federal holiday in Dr. King's honor began soon after his assassination in 1968. John Conyers, a Democratic Congressman from Michigan, took to the floor of Congress to insist on a federal holiday in Dr. King's honor. On Nov. 2, 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed a bill making Martin Luther King Day a federal holiday, effective Jan. 20, 1986. The holiday is observed by all 50 states.



**INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR
SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2019 (Continued)**

FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY OBSERVANCE MONTH

IMPORTANT DATES FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY

February 2-23, 2020: A Black History Tribute by The Mahala Saunders Library Ministry will occur during each Sunday 10:00 A.M. Worship Service.

February 3, 2020: Deacons Ministry Meeting at 7:00 P.M.

February 17, 2020: President's Day (Church Office Closed)
Trustee Board Meeting at 6:00 P.M.

February 23, 2020: UBC African Heritage Observance
(Wear African Apparel)

February 24, 2020: Union Foundation Meeting at 6:30 P.M.



Why Do We Celebrate Black History Month?

Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans and a time for recognizing the central role of blacks in U.S. history. Also known as African American History Month, the event grew out of "Negro History Week," the brainchild of noted historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African Americans.

Woodson believed that his role was to use black history and culture as a weapon in the struggle for racial uplift. By 1916, Woodson had moved to DC and established the "Association for the Study of Negro Life and Culture," an organization whose goal was to make black history accessible to a wider audience.

Black History Month is celebrated across the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Germany and Netherlands, and from school systems to television networks, many organizations recognize the month by building Black history into their programming during the month of February.



**INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR
SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020 (Continued)**

THANK YOU!

Dear Union:

"O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever." Psalms 136:1 (KJV)

Thank you so much for your gifts, your encouraging words and your prayers for my family during the holiday season and always. "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you." Philippians 1:3 (KJV)

As we enter this New Year and new decade, I pray that you will have Christ's peace, love and abundance in 2020 and beyond. Thank God for this new beginning and be ready to face it with your heads up and your eyes on the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus. Learn from the past and use it as a stepping stone to the future. With Christ as your leader, "...you are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Romans 8:37 (KJV)

Meditate on God's Word!

- "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." 2 Corinthians 5:17
- "And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." Revelation. 21:5
- "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." Lamentation 3:22-23
- "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." Isaiah 43:18-19

In His Service I Remain,
Pastor O. B. Yates

To Bro. Richard Johnson,

On behalf of the Sunday School Ministry, we want to thank Bro. Richard Johnson, for his faithful service to the Sunday School Ministry. Bro. Johnson has decided this past fall, he would no longer continue teaching his Co-Ed Adult class. I know Bro. Johnson's students will miss being in his class. Bro. Johnson could always be counted on to be present each Sunday. He will be truly missed.

Again Bro. Johnson, we say thank you for your faithful service.

Deacon Ernest Norman, Superintendent

Deacon Donald Darby, Assist. Superintendent

Rev. Dr. O. B. Yates, Senior Pastor

**INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR
SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020 (Continued)**

THANK YOU! (Continued)

To Pastor Yates and Union Baptist Church Family,

Thank you for your prayers and the Resolution for our loved one, Larry Harris. Your kind expressions of sympathy were a comfort during this difficult time and will always be remembered.

Harris and Norman Families

Message from India

Dear Pastor Dr. Yates,

I am Jannu Kranthi. I attended your church service on November 17, 2019. I am a traveler from India. My country has three core Gods. Ninety percent of the population are idol worshippers.

I was blessed by your words that suffering purifies. You have encouraged me to be firm and strong.

I felt homely with your warm welcome. You have a great choir singing praises unto the LORD.

Pastor, please thank Sis. LaJoyce Greenlee for her warm welcome gift. I was so happy to be part of your church and glad God has led me to a spirit-filled church.

Kindly, pray for my country. Pray that me and my family will be led by the Spirit of God to win souls for His Kingdom. Pray for our spiritual growth.

Warmest Regards,

Kranthi Jannu

WELCOME TO UNION BAPTIST CHURCH!!

Please give a warm welcome to **Sis. Brenda Neal** who recently joined the staff of Union Baptist Church. Sis. Neal is the new Executive Assistant to the Senior Pastor. She currently works part-time, Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. She will start working full-time in February 2020. She can be reached at the church office at 513-381-3858.

Sis. Neal's favorite scripture is "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take." (Proverbs 3:5 – 6 NLT)



INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020 (Continued)

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Congratulations are in order for **Sis. Laura E. Thompson** for being nominated by Mercy Health Jewish Hospital to receive an **Outstanding Caregiver Award 2019** for her 22 years of faithful service.

Sis. Thompson was honored on November, 17, 2019 at the Cathedral of Peter in Chains during their Celebration of the White Mass. This Mass takes place each year to recognize excellence for individuals providing services in healthcare. Sis. Thompson was nominated to acknowledge the services she provides to the sick, disabled and elderly. She was recognized as being an outstanding representative of the mission of Jewish Hospital.

Sis. Thompson was described as an individual/volunteer who clearly represents compassion and dedication to her responsibilities. She was further noted to have a caring and giving heart, and being a faithful and conscientious worker. She is rarely late, helps cover shifts for other volunteers and always greets her patients and other staff with a warm smile.

Sis. Thompson received a white sash, certificate and rose as a part of the service. She was joined by friends and family who wanted to share in this momentous occasion.

Please join us in congratulating Sis. Thompson for receiving this great honor.

Congratulations Sis. Thompson and God Bless!!!



Sis. Laura Thompson



Sis. Thompson with Sis. Vickie Frey, Sis. Carol Cargile, Brooklyn and Dea. Kevin Thompson



Sis. Thompson with Sis. Elaine Thompson, Brooklyn and Dea. Kevin Thompson



Sis. Thompson with Sis. Vickie Frey and Sis. Tristan Cargile

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS (CONTINUED)

Let's Talk Entertainment



Terra Strong Lyons

Daughter of Sister Carolyn Turner

Terra, a member of Union Baptist Church, is an American actor, dancer and singer based in Los Angeles, CA. She was born in Milwaukee, WI July 8, 1990.

Terra attended The School for Creative and Performing Arts in Cincinnati, Ohio and was very active in music and drama productions in Cincinnati including many by the Cincinnati Theatre Company. Upon college she moved to Nashville, TN and began touring internationally as a headline singer and dancer with a renowned show band from 2010-2015. In 2016, Terra

moved to Los Angeles to continue her career in entertainment. By 2019, Terra starred in the feature film (Zombies 2), guest starred on an 8X Emmy-nominated Web series (Conversations in LA), and was nominated for Best Guest Actress at the 2019 Indie Series Awards.

In addition to the above accomplishments, her proud mom, Sis. Carolyn Turner, reported that Terra recently starred in a 2019 Lifetime Network movie entitled, "The Twisted Nanny." Terra plays the character Martha. Although this is a small role, it is a great opportunity to be chosen for a Lifetime movie. Terra's scene is at the very beginning of the movie. **Check it out on You-Tube.** Search by title.



*"But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible,
but with God all things are possible."*

Matthew 19:26 (NKJV)

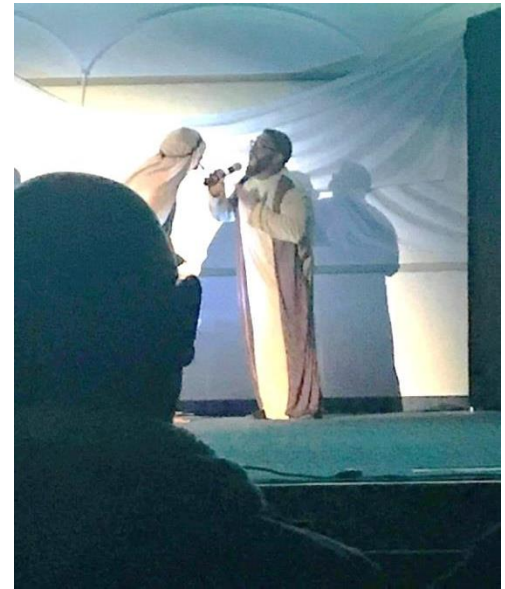
SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS (CONTINUED)

Let's Talk Entertainment Continued

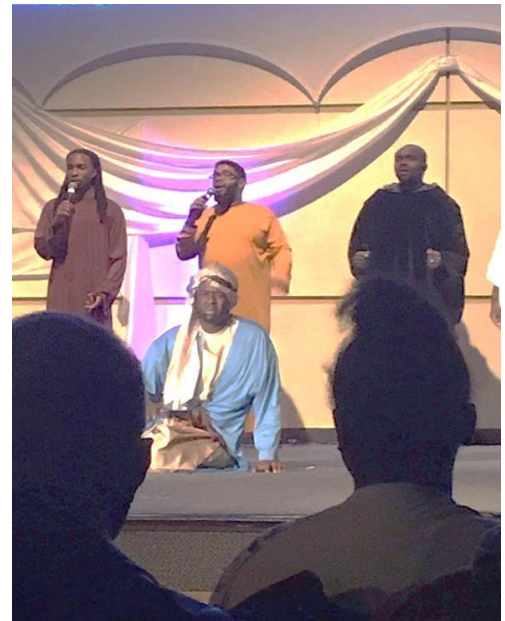
2019 Black Nativity - The Musical

Bro. Jeremy Yates, son of Pastor and Sis. Yates, participated in Cincinnati Theatre Groups' Musical entitled the "Black Nativity" in December 2019. The performances were held at the Word of Deliverance Church in Forest Park, Ohio. Jeremy acted as the inn keeper, sung with the choir and also sung a solo part in the opening selection.

Jeremy's motto is Ephesians 2:10 (ESV): *"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."* He sung his first solo at Thankful Baptist Church, Rome, Georgia at age four and has been praising God ever since. He loves using his gifts for the glory of God. In addition to the Black Nativity production, he sings with various groups in Cincinnati, Columbus and Atlanta, Georgia.



The Black Nativity originated in 1961 and was performed Off-Broadway by Langston Hughes. The modified celebration of the birth of Jesus exhibits more than just another Christmas production. The spirited performance is presented with a taste of African American flavor. "Black Nativity" articulates not only the story of Jesus' birth, but also the splendiferous sound of Gospel music! The "Black Nativity" is a recurring favorite and CBTC is elated to feature a new exhilarating and diverse show each and every year. The production this year was filled with impactful sounds of music, praise and worship, song and dance, bursts of energetic, astounding costuming, and prophetic storytelling! What a grand experience it was. CBTC brought the true meaning of Christmas to light with inspirational music and dance!



http://events.cincinnati.com/cincinnati_oh/events/2019-black-nativity-musical-/E0-001-132210021-3

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS (CONTINUED)

**SIS. LOUISE STEVENSON IS BEING
HONORED FOR HER SERVICE TO YOUTH**

Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc. (TLOD) will be pleased to honor **Sis. Louise Stevenson** with the **2020 Service to Youth Award on Saturday, February 8, 2020!** This award will take place during the 19th Annual Five Start Community Sweetheart Gala, at the Cincinnati Marriott North on Mulhauser Road in West Chester from 5:30 p.m. until 10:00 p.m.

Sis. Stevenson has been a member of Union Baptist Church for over 60 years and has held several leadership roles as a ministry leader, including Youth Director. Currently, she holds leadership positions in the following ministries: Women's Ministry, Scholarship Ministry, Union Foundation's Grant Writing Team, and serves as Assistant Treasurer for the Trustee Board.



Sis. Louise Stevenson

An author of three books, Sis. Stevenson is a graduate of the Ohio State University and Xavier University. She is a retired Principal from Cincinnati Public Schools and a retired Dean from Orion Academy. She has over 40 years of service. In the past, she has been recognized with the James Jacobs Teacher Award for Excellence, Black Achiever's Award, and the Jennie D. Porter Educational Achievement and Reformer Award.

Sis. Stevenson, a proud mother of Amber Rose, a caregiver to her brother Gregory and the matriarch and family historian, is also a prayer warrior, explorer, and world traveler. Her travels have taken her to China, Singapore, South Africa, Africa, Aruba, Thailand, Vietnam, Mexico and the Caribbean. Next stop for Sis. Stevenson? Brazil!

Sis. Stevenson is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and has worked with numerous organizations on a variety of community initiatives. However, working with children and teens at Union Baptist and in the community is her real passion. She is an advocate, counselor, and mentor who writes letters, introduces students to college, and assists with the missteps that sometimes occur in children's lives.

Congratulations Sis. Louise Stevenson!!!

Please, **see Sis. Stevenson or Sis. Angelita M. Jones to purchase a ticket or a table or two**, in support, as she receives this prestigious award!

ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2019 (Continued)

Dear Partner Church,

The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra is pleased to offer your church a unique fundraising opportunity for **Classical Roots on Friday March 6, 2020 at 7:30 PM at Music Hall**. This annual concert featuring the Classical Roots Community Mass Choir will be an inspirational and uplifting event for the entire community.

This year's concert features legendary gospel artist CeCe Winans. CeCe is the best-selling and most-awarded female gospel artist of all-time. Combined with the over 150 voices of the Classical Roots Community Mass Choir, Music Hall will be filled with glorious, powerful sound.

As a Classical Roots Church Partner, your church has received a promotion code to distribute to your congregation. ***Please use promo code (11075).*** Each partner church receives a portion of the proceeds for every ticket sold to someone using their church's promotion code. Your church earns from \$2 to \$11 per ticket, depending on the sale price of the ticket.

The chart below shows an example of how quickly the fundraising benefits can add up!

	Ticket Price*	Church receives per ticket sold:
Premium	\$60.03	\$11.60
Adult A	\$49.68	\$9.60
Adult B	\$39.33	\$7.60
Adult C & D	\$25.88	\$5
Partial view A	\$25.88	\$5
Partial view B	\$14.49	\$2
Student	\$10.35	\$2

**Ticket prices include a 3.5% Music Hall facility fee. Partial view seats have a column in the sight-line or an extreme side-view of the stage.*

After the event, the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra will issue a check for the proceeds to each partner church, based on the number of tickets sold.

This church partner offer is open to any church and is only available through the CSO Group Sales Department. All orders will come directly to the CSO via phone or the website, so there is no need for you to handle money or collect order forms. It is important that your congregants identify themselves as members of your church so that your church gets credit for the sale!

We are happy to provide the following materials to help promote the concert:

- Text and photos for your church bulletin or newsletter
- Materials to include in your church bulletin, newsletter or Sunday programs
- Posters and seat flyers

If your church is not currently signed up for the Church Partner Program or your church has participated in the past, but is not listed here, please contact Michelle Lewandowski at 513.744.4023. Digital images, links and concert description are also available upon request.

Best Regards,



Michelle Lewandowski | Group Sales Manager

**INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR
SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020 (Continued)**

MESSAGE FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

Greetings Union:

As we close another year, I want to thank everyone for your support of the Sunday School Ministry. Our recent combined Christmas program with the Children's Church Ministry and PDYM was wonderful. I want to thank all of our parents and grandparents for getting the children to rehearsals to prepare for the program.



As I stated during my previous remarks, we need for our children to be a part of the Sunday School and the Children's Church Ministry. There is so much more our children need to know about why we follow Jesus Christ and God's Word. I urge you to make a commitment to bring your children to Sunday School this coming year. I'm also asking adults to attend classes as well.

In closing, I want to thank my teachers for your faithfulness each Sunday. A special thank you to Rev. Marshall, the Children's Church Ministry, the Sunday School staff, Rev. Wyatt and the PDYM staff for a wonderful Christmas program. I pray that we will continue with our efforts to teach our children and adults why knowing about Jesus Christ is so important in these troubling times.

May God's peace and blessings be with you all as we start this New Year.

Deacon Ernest Norman, Superintendent



The Substance Abuse Recovery and Prevention Ministry would like to invite anyone who is interested in joining the Ministry to contact Sis. Phyllis Matthews at 513-383-7008. We will have our **first meeting on January 8, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. by conference call.** We will be making plans for the year.

I would like to thank everyone for your thoughts and prayers, in my absence, during my recovery from surgery. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Sis. Phyllis Matthews, Ministry Leader



Matthew 25 Ministries

Our Matthew 25 Ministries volunteer opportunity will re-start on **Saturday, January 18, 2020, from the hours of 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.** Volunteers play an essential role in the work of Matthew 25. The donated goods they receive must be sorted, counted, packaged, and put on pallets ready for shipment to various parts of the world when needs arise. **This is a great mission outreach project.** There is a job for everyone!

Future Ministry Dates for 2020

May 9, 2020
July 11, 2020
September 19, 2020
November 14, 2020

“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” Matthew 25:40

INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020 (Continued)

Women's Ministry (Continued)

Thank You

The UBC Women's Ministry would like to thank all of those who heeded the call of our First Lady, Sis. Margie Yates, and made a donation to the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

A donation was made to the hospital in the amount of \$205.00.

To God be the glory for the blessing that UBC was able to pass on to the patients at St. Jude!



Our Mission Statement:

The mission of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital is to advance cures, and means of prevention, for pediatric catastrophic diseases through research and treatment. Consistent with the vision of our founder Danny Thomas, no child is denied treatment based on race, religion or a family's ability to pay.

The Vessels of Praise Dance Ministry

The Vessels of Praise Dance Ministry ministered twice during the month of December 2019.

Annual Christmas Day Program:

The Dance Ministry brought glory and honor to Jesus Christ via dance at our Annual Christmas Worship Service on December 15th. We salute Sis. Darlene Parker, Sis. Kim Wyatt and Sis. Tristan Cargile for leading this effort.



INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020 (Continued)

Women's Ministry (Continued)

Nursing Home Outreach 2019:

This year the UBC Women's Ministry performed community outreach at Lincoln Crawford Nursing Home and Oak Pavilion on December 14th. We were joined by Sis. Tristan Cargile of the Proverbs 31 Vessels of Praise Dance Ministry. **Through the donations of our beloved church members we were able to provide more than 250 pairs of socks to the residents.**



Sis. Tristin Cargile



2019 Caroling Team



The Caroling Team and Soloist - Sis. Ke'Andra Warren

**INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR
SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020 (Continued)**

Women's Ministry (Continued)

UNION BAPTIST FOOD PANTRY

Have you ever visited the Union Baptist Church Food Pantry?

Do you have questions on how you can help with the Food Pantry Ministry?

Now you have the opportunity to come out to tour the Food Pantry and have all of your questions answered.

WHEN: January 11, 2020
TIME: 9:30 A.M.
WHERE: HAYS HALL

FOOD PANTRY REPORT

The Food Pantry Ministry was blessed to distribute Thanksgiving bags of food to **87 families** and **16** Thanksgiving bags to the Gospel Mission during November. The Food Pantry Ministry was also blessed to serve **35 families** in December. ~~**Sis. Monica Ray**, Food Pantry Ministry Leader



**Feeding the
Community**

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in." Matthew 25:35 (NIV)

INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020 (Continued)

New Co-Manager of "The Shop at Union"

Bro. Jaden Richardson, a life-long member of Union Baptist Church, is one of two new Co-Managers of The Shop at Union, the retail store in the vestibule of the church. Bro. Richardson, a 16-year-old student attending Shroder High School, has been working at the store for close to two years.



Bro. Jaden Richardson

Interviewer: Jaden, how do you feel about working at The Shop?

Jaden: I love it.

Interviewer: Why?

Jaden: I get to talk to everyone more than I used to.

Interviewer: What purpose do you feel The Shop provides?

Jaden: It is good for young people. It gives young people something to do, especially if they aren't involved in anything else. It gives us a sense of responsibility.

Interviewer: Jaden, is there anything you would change about The Shop?

Jaden: No, not yet.

Interviewer: Sometimes, last summer, you weren't able to work at The Shop as often. Why is that?

Jaden: I sometimes worked at Kings Island, but mostly I volunteered at Red Youth Academy.

Interviewer: What did you do at Red Youth Academy?

Jaden: I worked coaching kids on the techniques of baseball. I tried to teach them their responsibility and the integrity of the game.

Interviewer: You play an instrument, right? What is it you play and how long have you played?

Jaden: Yes, ma'am. I play the flute. I've been playing it for four years.

Interviewer: Is there anything you would like readers of this article to know about you?

Jaden: There is not much that everybody doesn't already know.

Please congratulate Jaden in his new position. He currently co-manages the church store with Bro. Alonzo (AJ) Montgomery, featured earlier in an article in the October 2019 edition of this newsletter.

THE SHOP AT UNION

VISA, MASTERCARD, AND AMERICAN EXPRESS!!



Yes, that's right! Your church store now accepts Visa, Mastercard and American Express. We also accept your bank cards with a pin. So, no excuses!

Stop By And Shop With Us Today!!

Bro. Christopher Price, Store Manager

Bro. Alonzo Montgomery, Assistant Store Manager

Bro. Jaden Richardson, Assistant Store Manager

Sis. Angelita Moreno-Jones, Ministry Leader

**INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR
SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020 (Continued)**

Union Baptist Church, Health and Wellness Ministry

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? (1 Corinthians 6:19)

FREE Blood Pressure Check



WHEN: Every Second Sunday of the Month

WHERE: Union Baptist Church, Main Vestibule, 405 W. 7th Street,
Cincinnati, OH 45203

TIME: After 10 am Morning Worship Celebration

Do You Know Your Numbers? Do you Know Your Goal?



Pastor: Dr. Orlando B. Yates
Leader: Annette I. Bell, R.D., L.D.
Co-Leaders: Dr. Raven Spratley & Renita Foster

Phone: 513-381-3858
Fax: 513-381-1605
website: www.union-baptist.net

Sign up Today! Health & Wellness Ministry Sunday Gospel Aerobics

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
THE UBC MUSIC AND
DANCE MINISTRIES

Join us for 15 – 30 minutes of Gospel Aerobics immediately after 10 am Worship
Celebration Service in the Sanctuary, at Union Baptist Church.
405 West 7th Street, Cincinnati, OH 45207

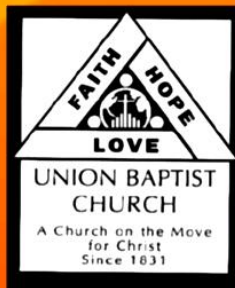
*"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?
You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body."
(1 Corinthians 6:19-20, NIV)*



Join us on the 3rd and 5th Sundays of the Month

After 10 am Service

Please see Sis. Annette Bell to sign-up!



INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020 (Continued)




Union Baptist Church
Health and Wellness Ministry



In Existence Since June 23, 1996

**INTERESTED IN JOINING
THE MINISTRY?**

CALL US!



Mission:

1. To promote health and wellness to the church congregation and the community.
2. During the church services:
 - a. To give urgently proper care, via CPR, and/or first aid, to a member or visitor who becomes sick or injured.
 - b. To serve the Pastor, Ministers and Guest Speakers with juice or water.
3. To provide, promote, and encourage a positive life style change as it relates to the entire being in spirit, mind, body, and relationships; first giving honor to God.

Vision:

To be known as a ministry who increases awareness of health related issues by providing opportunities for the church congregation and community to receive the necessary tools for improving/maintaining their overall wellness spiritually, mentally, physically, and socially.



Scriptures Ministry is based on:

1. "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body."
(1 Corinthians 6:19-20, NW)
2. "Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well."
(3 John 2, NIV)

Who May Become a Member?

1. Any dedicated church member.
2. Medical professionals, other professionals, high-school students, or any dedicated person.
3. Male or female over sixteen years of age.
4. Any member who has completed First Aid, CPR, and Blood Pressure certification training is a plus.

Who do you Contact if Interested in Being a Part of the Ministry or have questions?

Sister Annette I. Bell, R.D., L.D., at 513-221-7472

WHEN I AM ATTACKED BY THE ENEMY

“Submit to God... Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” James 4:7



King Jehoshaphat - 2 Chronicles 20:1-30

You have an enemy. And the sooner you realize it, the better off you will be. You may be thinking to yourself, *Oh, I know I have an enemy. He's my evil landlord. My angry spouse. My cruel boss. My mean coworker. My perverted uncle. My crazy neighbor. The drug dealer across the street. The gang members across town.*

Actually, it isn't any of those people. It isn't a person at all. It's the devil. He is real. Jesus spoke of him, contended with him, let him think he was winning, and then defeated him for us. If he wasn't real, why did Jesus go to all that trouble?

The devil hates it when we worship the Lord. It repels him and makes him miserable. It confuses him and makes him weak. It reminds him that he used to be the worship leader in heaven and he blew it. That's why he will do anything to divert our attention away from worshiping and praising God.

One of the best examples of the power of praising God when the enemy comes against us was when King Jehoshaphat found that there was an enormous multitude of enemy soldiers gathered against him.

Here is his story: Jehoshaphat, the fourth king of Judah, became one of the country's most successful rulers for one simple reason: He followed the commands of God. At age 35, Jehoshaphat succeeded his father, Asa, who was the first good king over Judah. He also did what was right in God's eyes and led Judah in a series of religious reforms.

When Jehoshaphat took office, about 873 BC, he immediately began to abolish the idol worship that had consumed the land. He drove out the male cult prostitutes and destroyed the Asherah poles where the people had worshiped false gods. To solidify devotion to God, Jehoshaphat sent prophets, priests, and Levites throughout the country to teach people God's laws. God looked with favor on Jehoshaphat, strengthening his kingdom and making him wealthy. Neighboring kings paid tribute to him because they feared his power.

But Jehoshaphat also made some bad decisions. He allied himself with Israel by marrying his son Jehoram to King Ahab's daughter Athaliah. Ahab and his wife, Queen Jezebel, had well-deserved reputations for wickedness. At first, the alliance worked, but Ahab drew Jehoshaphat into a war that was against God's will. The great battle at Ramoth Gilead was a catastrophe. Only through the intervention of God did Jehoshaphat escape. Ahab was killed by an enemy arrow.

Following that disaster, Jehoshaphat appointed judges throughout Judah to deal fairly with the people's disputes. That brought further stability to his kingdom.

In another time of crisis, Jehoshaphat's obedience to God saved the country. An enormous army of Moabites, Ammonites, and Meunites gathered at En Gedi, near the Dead Sea. Jehoshaphat was not hopeless, but instead prayed to God, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel, the priest, who prophesied that the battle was the Lord's.

Bible Study Series . . . Continued

When Jehoshaphat led the people out to meet the invaders, he ordered men to sing, praising God for his holiness. He was afraid, but he sought God and called his people to a fast. He said to God, "In Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?" (2 Chronicles 20:12). And the Lord spoke to Jehoshaphat one of the greatest promises of the Bible: "Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's... You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you... Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you." And they bowed before God and worshiped Him (2 Chronicles 20:15-18).

Jehoshaphat, whose name means "Jehovah has judged," was 35 years old when he began his reign and was king for 25 years. He was buried at age 60 in the City of David in Jerusalem. According to tradition, Jehoshaphat was buried in a magnificent manner to mimic the actions of King David. So what can we learn from Jehoshaphat's battle experience?

Ten Things to Do When You're in a Battle

1. Stop everything and worship God.
2. Praise Him for already defeating your enemy.
3. Thank Him for fighting the battle for you.
4. Ask God if there is anything He wants you to do that you are not doing.
5. Fast and pray.
6. Declare your dependence upon Him.
7. Recognize that the battle is not yours, but the Lord's.
8. Position yourself in the right place before God.
9. Refuse to have fear.
10. Quiet your soul in worship and watch God save you.

The Lord instructs us to put on the whole armor of God and "having done all," to stand strong (Ephesians 6:13). We stand strong against the forces opposing us every time we worship God. We can say, "Lord, I worship You in the midst of this battle. You are all-powerful. You are the one who saves me and defeats my enemies. It is You who enables me by Your power to trample the enemy who rises up against me."

Jehoshaphat knew the importance of worship, so he strategically positioned the worshipers ahead of his army. "He appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: "Praise the Lord, for His mercy endures forever" (2 Chronicles 20:21).

When we worship God, we open the channel through which God works most powerfully to defeat the enemy on our behalf. We confuse the enemy and weaken him to the point where he has to flee. That is the hidden power of praising God.

I Give God My Praise

Lord, I worship You as Lord over everything. I praise You as my Almighty, all-powerful King. You are the ruler of my life and the rock upon which I stand. Because of You I cannot be shaken. Thank You that "by You I can run against a troop. By my God I can leap over a wall." As for You, Lord, You are "a shield to all who trust" in You (Psalm 18:28-30). You deliver me from the enemy who is too strong for me (Psalm 18:17). **I will "not be afraid nor dismayed" because of the force of evil that comes against me for I know that the battle is not mine, but it is Yours. I know that I will not need to fight this battle alone.**

Lord I praise You as my Deliverer and thank You that You will deliver me from my enemies. I know that "we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rules of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12). And when the battle is over I will be able to say that "this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in my eyes" (Psalms 118:23).

~Stormie Omartian
The Prayer that Changes Everything

A Closing Thought



"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

On the first day of a new year many of us wish each other a "Happy New Year!" But as we begin this new year, we need more than a hopeful greeting from the people around us. We need to listen to what God told Joshua about 3,400 years ago.

As Joshua was about to lead God's people into the promised land, he had reason to be afraid. He had an enormous task ahead of him, and he was well aware of the dangers that he and the people would soon be facing. He needed God's encouragement and God did not let him down.

A new year brings lots of questions: Will our health hold? Will our marriage last? Will I be able to hang on to my job? Will I get into the right school? Will I live to see the end of this year? Will the economy improve? Will there be a terrorist attack or some natural disaster that takes me or my loved ones? Who will be elected in 2020?

The Creator of the universe comes to us and says, "Don't be afraid; don't be discouraged." What happens in this new year is not left to chance. Remember that God is in charge, and He promises to stay close: **"The LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."** The Lord Jesus also says in Matthew 28:20, "I am with you always." And that, brothers and sisters, is the reason why we are hopeful and can wish each other a "Happy New Year!"



Father in heaven,

Thank You for the gift of a new year, a new beginning, and for your promise to stay with each of us. This is the dawning of a new opportunity to walk into your destiny. We ask for your guidance and wisdom each day. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

~Arthur Schoonveld

<https://today.reframemedia.com/devotions/encouragement-for-a-new-year-2006-01-01>