

January 2023, VOL 49 NO. 1

First Missionary Baptist Church Newsletter

# The Communicator

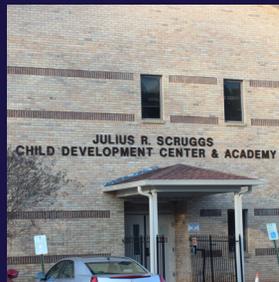


H A P P Y N E W Y E A R

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# A Pastoral Letter for the New Year



**G**reetings of the New Year, Beloved. I cannot express sufficiently how special it was to begin this year in worship with you. Despite being out of our sanctuary, a unifying spirit could be felt as we were assembled in solidarity with each other to listen for the sound of the genuine. My earnest prayer to God is for the spirit of unity to abide in our congregation for the work we must undertake this year.

As we tackle the tasks and put our hands to the plow, I wish to brief you on several items of special concern. First, I am pleased to welcome to our team Minister Joycelyn Lewis, the staff minister for discipleship and missions. Indeed, she exudes joy and desires it be enunciated in her name. She and her husband, Reverend Wendell Lewis, relocated to Huntsville from Lexington, Kentucky just prior to the onset of the pandemic in 2020. They joined us for worship via livestream for two years and were drawn to our

ministry. When the position opening was posted, she read the job description as though it was written just for her. Minister Lewis' gifts certainly match the position need. An alumna of Asbury Theological Seminary, she holds degrees in Christian leadership and spiritual formation; and has led workshops, retreats, and other training around spiritual formation, leadership development, and mentoring. When she begins her ministry with us on January 15, she will lead Christian education ministries, new disciple assimilation as well as share her gifts in teaching and preaching. I am excited about her coming and invite you to join me in welcoming her family into the life of our congregation.

Second, I offer a status update on the areas that were flooded during the Christmas holidays. Presently, the classrooms, office, and other areas in the Child Development Center that were affected have been cleaned and dried, with normal operations resuming as school has reopened. That's good news. As for the sanctuary, vestibule, and connecting hallways, all areas have been dried. Baseboards have been taken down as professionals have been testing water retention and assessing specific damage. We await word from the claims adjuster and assessment from

an industrial hygienist. While the process is occurring at a slower rate than I desire, we've been assured that given the number of businesses and homes that experienced water damage during the same period we experienced ours, we are not being deliberately delayed. In the meantime, we are preparing to configure and outfit the gymnasium for worship and other ministry activities. The pastor and people of Oakwood University Church have been extremely accommodating to us, and we are grateful for their hospitality and kindness.

Third, please join me for The Pastor's Moment on Tuesday, January 17, at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom. In this session, I will provide more information about the status of the campus and plans for its restoration. You will also be given opportunities to inquire about proposals that will come before the church for ratification at the church meeting on Wednesday, January 25. You can register via realm for this session.

Lastly, I express my appreciation for your prayerful support and partnership in this work. You remain gracious and understanding, and we are being knitted even closer together. Let us commit anew to God, each other, and the common work that binds us. God will see us through.

# Is New Year, New You True for You?

Minister Bridgett Bradley-Brown

**I**T is not a cliché for the Christian to say New Year, New You. The Word of God speaks this to be true.

- Lamentations 3:22-23, NIV Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
- 2 Corinthians 4:16, NIV Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, inwardly we are being renewed day by day.
- Romans 6:4, NIV We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

The new year is a time to reflect and think about what the past year has brought and what the new year could bring. It is a time to stop and analyze, to take stock of our priorities, values, pursuits, and goals. We need to ask questions like "Who am I, what am I doing with my life? What should I be doing as a Christian with my life and the stewardship God has given me?" After all, according to the Word of God, all of life is a stewardship--a stewardship of our time, talents, treasures, and God's truth.

BREATHE: INHALE- NEW YEAR  
EXHALE -NEW YOU

Can you follow through and become a better you? Will you do whatever God has prepared and planned for you? You stand on the threshold of a new year. Most people generally look at the new year as a fresh beginning, as an opportunity to kind of start over, to overcome a habit, or do a better job of something they see as important and that needs improvement. It may be parenting, being a better spouse, or losing weight. It may be developing different priorities, using our time better, or a whole host of things that people would like to change. Trust and believe that by God's will, you can; by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit of God, you will.

BREATHE: POSTURE YOUR HEART  
FOR PRAYER AND MEDIATION

Thank God as you breathe in slowly knowing this work of God's Spirit is hidden. It is not something we always feel, but it is real. As we seek, submit, and surrender to God's will. Visualize and imagine by faith doing those things purposed in your heart and overcoming those things that are obstacles in your path. Say to the Lord, thank you for giving me another day and another new year to be here. Pray that the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with every good thing to do His will. And may God accomplish in you this year what is pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.

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**KEEP**  
**CA**  
**LEM**  
**•AND•**  
**PRAY**  
— —



# JRS CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER AND ACADEMY

by Dr. Tammy Alexander, Interim Head of School



**A**s we step into a new year, we often take time to reflect on the previous one. We entered the 2022-23 school year with the idea that we would get into “good trouble”. Our first semester was filled with promise and possibilities and yes good trouble.

We began the year with new staff who joined our JRS CDCA family. Our first quarter was filled with Fall MAP testing, the annual PTO cookie dough fundraiser, and a celebration with our grandparents. As we moved to our second quarter, we were able to take a field trip (the first since the Pandemic), enjoy our Faith Over Fear Fest, school-wide spelling bee, and celebrate Christ during our annual Christmas presentation. This year, Ms. Stokes, our second-grade teacher, led the production. If you missed it live, don't worry, check it out on our website. We also took our second round of MAP testing. The results

are in and many of our scholars are found to be above the national average in reading and math. Our scholars continue to excel as we develop the whole child. For the first time, we have an all-male class (including the teacher). It's exciting to see how those young men have grown in just one semester. We began “Shop Talk”, a take on barbershop conversations. Even though I'm not allowed to attend, the topics of discussion were engaging (at least that is what they tell me). The group attended a basketball game on the campus of Alabama A & M University. We are learning in and out of the classroom.

A new year is also the time to look forward. Did you see our spotlight on TN Valley Living? We are partnering with a local television station to showcase the great things at our school. Our Brilliant Ambassador President, Camille

Stokes, said it best “my teachers know me really well - they care”. We are building brilliant scholars, one relationship at a time. As we step into the spring semester, we have several activities planned. Founder's Day, JRS CDCA Day at FMBC, our 2nd Annual Daddy/Like a Daddy/Daughter Dance, Paint 'N' Punch (a mother/son event) and our National Day of Prayer. As we reflect on the first semester, and look forward to the second semester one thing is sure, we have been blessed by God to serve black and brown children in Huntsville. For nearly forty-one years we have been privileged to serve scholars academically, spiritually, and socially. What does God have on the horizon for us? Big and bold plans and no doubt more opportunities to get into “good trouble”.

# Pandemic Update Changes, Guidelines, and New Strains

by Sister Roslyn Richardson

As we enter the winter season, the leaves are changing, the temperature is dropping, and unfortunately, we seem to have entered a Tripledemic: COVID, Flu, and RSV. RSV is surging in children and immunocompromised adults; Flu cases are climbing; and COVID simmers in the background.

## What is happening with COVID-19?

The newest COVID-19 variants, with their various letters and numbers, may be difficult to keep straight. But it's encouraging to know that, so far, none of them seem to increase hospitalizations. The most concerning variants are both offshoots of the Omicron variant. The good news is that if you get the bivalent booster, you should still have that added spike in protection. The best prevention of COVID is staying up to date with vaccinations, wearing a face covering when in large crowds, and avoiding sick persons.

## How can we return to our activities of daily living safely?

First and foremost, now is the time to get your flu shot and ensure you are up to date on your COVID-19 vaccination, including the new bivalent booster. If you return to work, church, or public gatherings, take extra precautions by ensuring you do not have any Flu-like symptoms, wear a tight-fitting face cover, and wash your hands often. To prevent all three illnesses, avoid others who are sick.

### Reference-

<https://www.goodrx.com/conditions/covid-19/covid-vs-flu-vs-rsv>



## Symptoms of COVID-19, RSV and Flu

	COVID-19	RSV	Influenza
Onset of symptoms	Gradual	Gradual	Sudden
Cough	Common	Common	Common
Diarrhea	Sometimes	Rare	Sometimes*
Fatigue or tiredness	Common	Sometimes	Common
Fever	Common	Common	Common
Headache	Sometimes	Common	Common
Loss of taste and smell	Common	Rare	Rare
Muscle or body aches	Sometimes	Rare	Common
Runny or congested nose	Common	Common	Common
Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	Common	Sometimes	Rare
Sneezing	Common	Common	Common
Sore throat	Common	Common	Common
Vomiting	Sometimes	Rare	Sometimes*
Wheezing	Rare	Sometimes*	Rare

Experts say the only way to confirm a diagnosis is with testing. No matter the symptoms, people should stay home when sick and seek medical help if they experience any trouble breathing.

\*MORE COMMON IN CHILDREN

SOURCE: CDC, MAYO CLINIC

NEWS

# Expressions of Care and Appreciation

The Pastoral Care ministry provided expressions of care and appreciation for our sick and shut-in members during the Christmas Holiday. Ministry members visited, shared gestures of support, and assisted with holiday shopping as needed to convey the love and support of the congregation for them.



FIRST MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

# 2023 CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING

**JANUARY 25TH | 6:00PM**

## WHY CHURCH MEETINGS ARE IMPORTANT

A church business meeting is one way that a church can follow Scripture's directive that "everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way" (1 Corinthians 14:40).

Attending a church meeting also gives you, as a member, the opportunity to see the church's financial status, growth numbers, and ministry updates. Major decisions regarding the direction of the church are made at business meetings, and they help establish the overall direction and vision for the congregation.

# FMBC MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

*Sister Elaine F. Duncan, 2022 Rosa Parks Trail Blazer Award Recipient*



**M**rs. Elaine Flowers Duncan, native of Montgomery Alabama, is a Supervisory Aerospace Systems Engineer serving over 42 years with NASA. She received a B.S. Degree in Mathematics/Computer Science from Alabama State University, and a Master of Science in

Urban Systems Engineering (Summa Cum Laude) from Howard University, Washington D.C.

In memory of the 67th anniversary of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Mrs. Duncan was presented with a Rosa Parks Trailblazer Award by the Southern Youth Leadership Institute, in Montgomery on December 3, 2022. Mrs. Duncan was presented the award for her continuous services to underserved communities, including STEM outreach to HBCUs.

Mrs. Duncan presently serves as a Branch Chief in the Engineering Directorate, Spacecraft and Vehicle Systems Department, in support of the design, development, test, evaluation, system engineering and integration of the Space Launch System (SLS), the Human Landing System programs and the Mars Ascent Vehicle project; in support of returning humans (including the first person of

color) to the Moon and onward to Mars.

Mrs. Duncan mentors students interested in STEM areas, has served as a Girl Scout Leader, and serves as Board Member on nonprofit At Risk Student organizations. Most of her spare time prior to the COVID-19 pandemic was spent serving as a volunteer member of the Madison County Juvenile Conference Committee (JCC), which is a program designed to divert juveniles charged with first- or second-time minor offenses and acts as a community-based arm of the Family Court. She is also an active member of the Redstone Rocket City Chapter Alabama State University Alumni Association. She is also an active member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. She is married to Donald Duncan a retired Defense Aerospace Systems Engineer and they have two adult children, Wesley and Jasmine.

## FMBC WELCOMES

Minister Joycelyn Lewis, Staff Minister for Discipleship and Missions



**M**inister Joycelyn Lewis is a native of Lexington, Kentucky and is married to Rev. Wendell L. Lewis who is a former Pastor of eight years. She and her husband have two children a daughter, Dominae and son, Darius. She and her husband currently have the privilege of raising their two grandchildren, Josiah, and Shiloh. They are also the godparents of 8 God daughters.

Joycelyn publicly acknowledged her call into the ministry on January 1, 2011 and received her ordination credentials thru Christian Global Outreach Ministries. Joycelyn is a Leadership Coach, Church Growth Consultant & Spiritual Director. She

graduated from Eastern Kentucky University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Communication Disorders. She is a graduate of Asbury Theological Seminary where she received her MA Degree in Spiritual Formation and a MA in Christian Leadership. Joycelyn is also certified in Formative Spirituality.

Joycelyn's is the founder of S.I.S.T.E.R.S. (Sisters Inspiring, Supporting, Teaching Encouraging and Relating to Sisters). She served as a committee member for the Youth Ministry Team for Festival 2000 with Franklin Graham. In 2001 she was the Kentucky Conference Coordinator for TimeOut for Women and in 2002 she served on the planning team and as one of the Chairpersons for the Just Give Me Jesus (Anne Graham Lotz) Lexington. Joycelyn has also served as an Assistant Class Administrator and Group Leader for Bible Study Fellowship (BSF) International. She has served as a member of The National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) and served as a NAMI volunteer/advocate on the Advisory Council for the Sharing Hope

Program for NAMI Lexington. Joycelyn is trained as a Gatekeeper for Suicide Prevention and served as Chair of the Board of Directors and Executive Director for a nonprofit organization called Equipping Lydia.

Joycelyn's passion for spreading the gospel led her to travel with Athletes in Action to Salisbury England in 2001 and Acarigua Venezuela in 2007. Her gift for proclaiming the gospel, teaching the Bible, creating, and facilitating spiritual retreats has provided her with numerous opportunities to speak at churches, retreats, and conferences. Joycelyn is the author of the book Clipped Wings, a Devotional Series called "It's Personal" as well as three praise and worship songs that she had put to music. One of Joycelyn's favorite passages of scripture is taken from Psalm 46:10, "Be still and know that I am God". She believes that stepping away from the busyness of life and "becoming still" in worship, prayer, reading scripture, and spending time in community with other believers are ways that the Holy Spirit forms us into Christ's image.

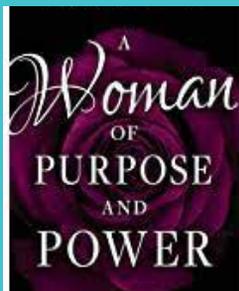
# TOP 5 POPULAR READS FOR 2022



## "Take My Hand Hardcover"

by **Dolen Perkins-Valdez**

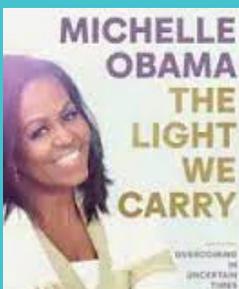
Montgomery, Alabama, 1973. Fresh out of nursing school, Civil Townsend intends to make a difference, especially in her African American community. At the Montgomery Family Planning Clinic, she hopes to help women shape their destinies, to make their own choices for their lives and bodies.



## "A Woman of Purpose and Power: A 90-Day Devotional Paperback"

by **Myles Munroe**

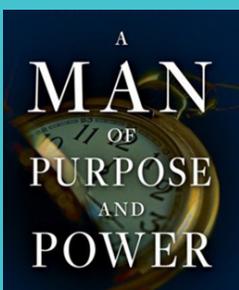
Best-selling author Dr. Myles Munroe offers daily practical and biblical advice for women. Based on two of his most popular books, Understanding the Purpose and Power of Women and Understanding the Purpose and Power of Men, this 90-day devotional will help you truly understand your God-given purpose and power as a woman.



## "The Light We Carry: Overcoming in Uncertain Times"

by **Michelle Obama**

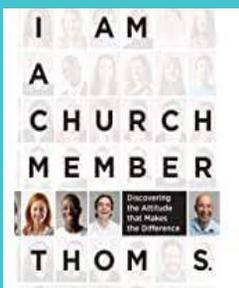
In an inspiring follow-up to her critically acclaimed, #1 bestselling memoir Becoming, former First Lady Michelle Obama shares practical wisdom and powerful strategies for staying hopeful and balanced in today's highly uncertain world.



## "A Man of Purpose and Power: A 90 Day Devotional"

by **Myles Munroe**

Understand your God-given objectives and capabilities as a man! In this 90-day devotional, Munroe explores what makes men uniquely different from women, our roles as husbands and fathers, the biblical perspective of manhood, and more. Each entry includes a brief reading, Old and New Testament Scriptures, and a thought for the day.



## "I Am a Church Member: Discovering the Attitude that Makes the Difference"

by **Thom R. Rainer**

Best-selling author and ministry leader Thom S. Rainer drew an exceptional response when he posted a 500-word declaration about church membership to his daily blog. I Am a Church Member started a conversation about the attitudes and responsibilities of church members - rather than the functional and theological issues - that previous new member primers all but ignored.

# BETTER KNOW A MEMBER

## Brother Victor Harmon and Sister Karla Harmon



Brother Victor Harmon is an Army Veteran, retiring after 30 years serving with numerous deployments and experience in critical staff and command positions. He is currently a senior manager in logistics and supply chain management at Redstone Arsenal and is an active member of Huntsville Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated. He enjoys spending time with family, traveling, reading, and keeping fit. He is also an avid and lifelong Philadelphia Eagles fan!

Brother Harmon and his wife, Sister Karla Harmon are both "From West Philadelphia born and raised..." Both Howard University graduates, they met at "The Mecca" and have been married for 34 years. They have been blessed with 4 wonderful children.

After moving 18 times in 34 years, the Harmons have developed a set of criteria that has always led them to the right place of worship. Two of the most critical questions are: does the Pastor preach the word and is the congregation welcoming and loving? FMBC is a clear and resounding "yes" to both!



*Happy Birthday*

**PASTOR BUTLER**

**JANUARY 22, 2023**

# FMBC RECIPES

## Banana Cheesecake

Submitted By Sister Dion Lucas

- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup finely chopped pecans
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- tap here
- 1-1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 6 tablespoons butter, melted
- filling:
- 1 cup mashed ripe bananas
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 packages (8 ounces each) cream cheese, softened
- 1-1/4 cups sugar
- 1 cup sour cream
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1-1/4 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 3 large eggs, lightly beaten
- topping:
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup assorted fresh fruit

### Directions

- Combine the first five ingredients; stir in butter. Press onto the bottom of a greased 9-in. springform pan; place on a baking sheet. Bake at 350° for 10 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool on a wire rack.
- Combine bananas and lemon juice; set aside. In a large bowl, beat cream cheese and sugar until smooth. Beat in the sour cream, cornstarch, vanilla and salt. Add eggs; beat on low speed just until combined. Fold in banana mixture. Pour into crust. Place pan on a baking sheet.
- Bake at 350° for 50-60 minutes or until center is almost set. Let stand for 5 minutes. Combine sour cream, sugar and vanilla; spread over top of cheesecake. Bake 5 minutes longer.
- Cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Carefully run a knife around edge of pan; cool 1 hour longer. Refrigerate overnight. Garnish with fruit.

### Nutrition Facts

- 1 slice: 380 calories, 22g fat (11g saturated fat), 99mg cholesterol, 151mg sodium, 40g carbohydrate (31g sugars, 1g fiber), 5g protein.



## THE ANGEL TREE MINISTRY

would like to thank you for your continuous support and donations. With your donations, we blessed 143 children with gift cards, bibles, and goody bags.

May God bless and keep each of you!



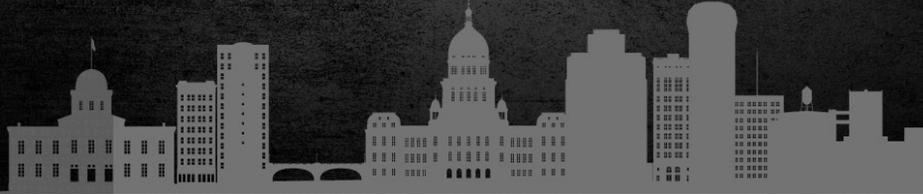


**FMBC OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED  
MONDAY JANUARY 16, 2023**

IN OBSERVANCE OF

**MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY**

NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS WILL RESUME JANUARY 17, 2023



FIRST MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

**PASTOR'S**

*Moment*

AN INFORMAL CONVERSATION BETWEEN  
PASTOR AND DISCIPLE-MEMBERS

**Tuesday, January 17, 2023**

**5:30 PM**

**REGISTER VIA REALM**



PASTOR DON DARIUS BUTLER