

The Communicator



Celebrating 142 Years of Family and Service



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A Note from Pastor Butler

Greetings, Beloved. Happy 142nd Church Anniversary! This month, we celebrate another year of God's faithfulness to us as a congregation and our service to God's mission in the world. What an incredible legacy has been bequeathed us by our spiritual antecedents who settled here in Huntsville, Alabama, from Aberdeen, Mississippi, to establish this station of Zion! As we raise our Ebenezer to God in thanksgiving for keeping us together, we recommit ourselves to the work of staying together as the people of God.

As we celebrate this month, I wish to apprise the congregation of several matters pertaining to our church life. The first item is a follow-up to my announcement that security protocols were being considered for implementation. I now can advise that a new ministry is launched to respond to emergency and security needs that may arise at our campus. Brother Vendarryl Jenkins, a retired Special Agent with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), is bringing his years of professional expertise to bear in a volunteer capacity to lead this new ministry. He has made assessments of our security vulnerabilities and put forth plans to address those concerns. With the support of the Official Board and church staff, he has begun

recruitment of disciple-members who will volunteer for service and training in this area of church life. It should be made clear that these servants do not replace the law enforcement personnel who are contracted to provide professional services of protection for us, it is an additional layer of security. (Kindly read his article in the edition for further introduction.)

The second matter is an update to our Covid-19 protocols. The positivity rate of Madison County now exceeds thirty percent, and we are advised to encourage members to observe all physical distancing practices by sitting with members of your household, wearing masks, and refraining from the regular close in-person contact with which we are accustomed. Additionally, we will resume delivery of repast meals to the home of family members following burial or serve boxed lunches for carryout. Families will decide which option best suits their needs.

Closely related to the second matter is the third, the annual church picnic. In addition to concerns about the transmissibility of the new variant of the coronavirus, the high heat index is also a factor in scheduling this year's gathering. Thus, the committee will lead us in a carnival-themed celebration in the late afternoon/early evening of Saturday, August 27th. The team

has been planning for several months and is exciting about our return to this tradition in the safest possible way. This year, we will be intentional in inviting our neighbors from the surrounding community to join us for the festivities. Please lend support to this effort in whatever ways might be requested of you.

The fourth and final update is our new Sunday schedule. Beginning the first Sunday in August, we will observe Sunday School at 8:15 AM and celebrate Christian worship at 9:30 AM. Attendance and participation will be gauged over a few months to determine if we are meeting the needs of member families and follow-up updates will be made. The Christian Education Committee as led by the various Sunday School superintendents is leading us in returning to in-person classes and is exciting about the instruction we shall receive.

In all, I invite you join us in making these efforts a success to the glory of God. Where you can attend and participate, please do so; where you cannot, please pray for a meaningful experience nonetheless. For together we can do great things.

Shielding the Sanctuary

By Brother Vendarryl Jenkins

Early in my career as a Special Agent with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, I was given an assignment to leave Chicago to go down to Zachary, Louisiana to investigate a bombing at a Black church. The bomb went off at night, so no one was injured. However, the sanctuary had been desecrated and graffitied with racial slurs. Leaving Chicago for this assignment conjured up so many emotions from the Black experience in the south, ranging from the 1963 bombing at the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham AL, Emmett Till's murder in Mississippi, and the murders of freedom riders Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner. So, this assignment was personal, and professionally important. Southern Black churches were such an integral part of my childhood because I spent most of my summers in Marengo County, Alabama with my grandparents.

When I arrived in Louisiana, I was given a disparaging police report completed by the local police that detailed the lack of physical security measures in place, which left the church vulnerable to crime. The report stated that none of the cameras worked, there was no documentation on who had keys to the church, no forced entry had occurred, and the church alarm had not been turned on. In spite of these facts, the Pastor and Trustees insisted that this was a federal hate crime that had been ignored because it was a Black church. As I undertook the responsibility of finding the truth and began the federal investigation, I was given the list of the members of the church by age, another list of the Deacons and Trustees, and a final list of Pastors, Assistant Pastors, and Preachers. I mulled over the list of 300 members for two days before I put it together that Mrs. Gladys Williams, an 85-year-old woman, had the same last name as more than 40 members of the church who all lived within five miles of her address. The light bulb went off! I knew where to start the investigation—with the mother of the church and matriarch to the Williams' family.

When the Federal Government moves in to investigate a crime, we engage in a game of chess—we have predicted the movement of the opposition to the tertiary degree. I decided that it was a predictable move to start at the top with the Pastor, so I made the decision to start at the root with Mrs. Gladys and her connection to the members. I interviewed Mrs. Gladys for about two hours and found out that a great number of the choir, deacons, and church members were her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. For the next seven days, I was spoiled by Mrs. Gladys and her familial tree, eating homemade biscuits and strawberry preserves, catfish, and chicken while the Williams family gave me the pieces to put the puzzle together. While it was a tragedy that brought me to Zachary, Louisiana, I once again felt a feeling

of home being in the south surrounded by an adopted family from this southern Baptist church. I owed them justice.

Without belaboring the details of the investigation and the techniques used, we were stunned to find that the bombing was an inside crime committed by an assistant pastor who had been passed over for the job of Senior Pastor in favor of an outside preacher. More startling was the fact that the leadership of the church tried to cover up the crime so that the long-time member did not go to jail. Instead, everyone in leadership decided to feign ignorance and pretend that an outsider had committed a hate crime. In making that choice, I saw a betrayal of the trust that many members had placed in their leadership. Innocent people could have gone to jail. The credibility of southern Black churches with the federal government was diminished. The faith of members of the congregation was strongly tested. In the end, justice exacted its heavy toll, lives were ruined, and people went to jail. I found no joy in that outcome. Before I left, I wanted to help the real victims, the congregation who were let down by the leaders. I wrote down some things that would deter acts of violence, property damage and physical security breaches. We introduced strategies for risk assessments, command, and control lists for those who had access to the church, uniformed police and clandestine security presence, and emergency management planning for medical emergencies, bomb threats, fire alarms, and active shooter incidents. In that fact, I can be, and always will be, proud.

Those threats were real then, and they are even greater today. Churches are under attack by way of violent crime, arson, bombing and a great many other threats. We have the responsibility to this sacred space and to our church family to use all the tools and talents available to us to ensure no harm befalls them. It is with this in mind that we have established the Shephard Shield Ministry at First Missionary Baptist Church. You will soon see security members positioned in the sanctuary as a deterrence for violence, assisting with dignitaries and guest preachers, and working as one unit with uniformed Huntsville Police Officers posted outside the church. Additionally, security members will be behind-the-scenes improving policies and procedures for security measures like emergency management drills and training, physical security assessments for the church and school, security for offering, and a liaison with police on threats, thefts or crimes at the church. This ministry will be a great value to the church, and I invite you to be a part of this sacred mission.

Please contact the Church Administrator, Reverend Kim Carrington for information to help in the many facets for this dynamic security ministry.

FMBC READER'S CORNER

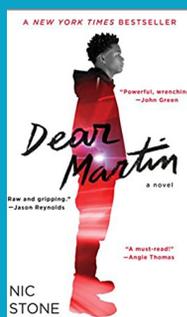
RECOMMENDED YOUNG ADULT BOOK READS FOR TEENS

Reviewed by Deaconess LaDonna McCann

The summer is ending and it is about that time for students to return to school and get back into learning mode. Even after a hard day of learning and study, you can pull out your electronic device and download a selection of reads for your enjoyment. But we have a few recommendations that you can check out at your leisure.

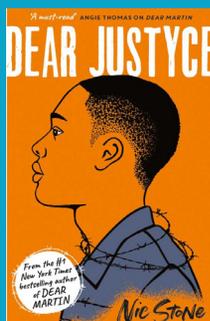
Dear Martin by Nic Stone

After a traffic stop turns violent at the hands of the police, a young Black teen grapples with racism—and what it means for his future. Critically acclaimed author Nic Stone boldly tackles America's troubled history with race relations in her gripping debut novel.



Dear Justyce by Nic Stone

An incarcerated teen writes letters to his best friend about his experiences in the American juvenile justice system.

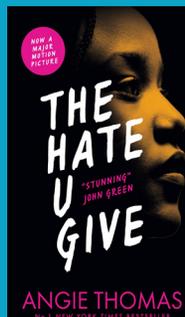


Vernell LaQuan Banks and Justyce McAllister grew up a block apart in the Southwest Atlanta neighborhood of Wynwood Heights.

Through a series of flashbacks, vignettes, and letters to Justyce - the protagonist of Dear Martin - Quan's story takes form. Troubles at home and misunderstandings at school give rise to police encounters and tough decisions.

The Hate You Give by Angie Thomas

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed.



What everyone wants to know is: what really went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr.

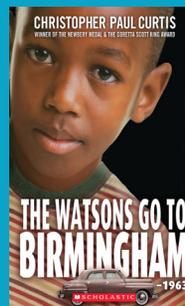
Concrete Rose by Angie Thomas

If there's one thing seventeen-year-old Maverick Carter knows, it's that a real man takes care of his family. As the son of a former gang legend, Mav does that the only way he knows how: dealing for the King Lords. With this money he can help his mom, who works two jobs while his dad's in prison.



The Watsons Go to Birmingham by Christopher Paul Curtis

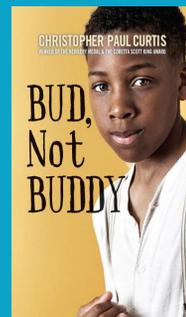
When the Watson family—ten-year-old Kenny, Momma, Dad, little sister Joetta, and brother Byron—sets out on a trip south to visit Grandma in Birmingham, Alabama, they don't



realize that they're heading toward one of the darkest moments in America's history. The Watsons' journey reminds us that even in the hardest times, laughter and family can help us get through anything.

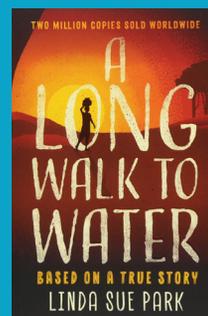
Bud Not Buddy by Christopher Paul Curtis

It's 1936, in Flint Michigan. Times may be hard, and 10-year-old Bud may be a motherless boy on the run, but Bud's got a few things going for him: He has his own suitcase full of special things, He's the author of Bud Caldwell's Rules and Things for Having a Funner Life and Making a Better Liar Out of Yourself and his momma never told him who his father was, but she left a clue: flyers advertising Herman E. Calloway and his famous band, the Dusky Devastators of the Depression!!!!!! Once he decides to hit the road to find this mystery man, nothing can stop him.



A Long Walk to the Water by Linda Sue Park

A Long Walk to Water begins as two stories, told in alternating sections, about two eleven-year-olds in Sudan, a girl in 2008 and a boy in 1985. The girl, Nya, is fetching water from a pond that is two hours' walk from her home: she makes two trips to the pond every day. The boy, Salva, becomes one of the "lost boys" of Sudan, refugees who cover the African continent on foot as they search for their families and for a safe place to stay.





JRS CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER AND ACADEMY

By Dr. Tammy Alexander, Interim Head of School



We blinked, well actually we went swimming, bowling and skating and then our Summer Camp was over. The campers had a great time and learned along the way.

It's Back to School as we begin 40 years of learning academically and growing spiritually at the JRS Child Development Center and Academy! We are growing our curriculum this year to include foreign language (Pre K4 – Kindergarten) through a partnership with Alabama A & M University. Our scholars will be introduced to a new math curriculum (not new math) as we switch from Saxon to Savvas. We believe this will provide more rigor to the curriculum and push our scholars as they continue to excel and grow. We continue to encourage literacy. We would love for you to adopt a class by reading

weekly, biweekly, or monthly with our scholars. If interested, please contact the school office.

Thank you to those of you who supported our **2nd Annual Golf Tournament**. It was a huge success! A very special thank you to Board Member Sister Yolanda Casmer, and to Deacons Maurice Cowan, and Michael Scruggs for coordinating this event. Those who participated had a great time and our scholars will benefit from the resources raised.

Our school year begins with three new board members joining in the work and ministry. As the new members join us, we say thank you to the following **Board Members** for their service -Sister Ovetta Hobson and Deacons Carlos Long and Melvin McCann. They are rotating off the Board but leave a

legacy that will continue for years to come. We will also miss our very own Dr. Janette Kotey, who served as our music teacher during her tenure as and FMBC staff minister. THANK YOU for all you have done for the JRS CDCA.

Finally, join me in welcoming the following staff members to our **JRS CDCA family** Ms. Alexandria Peterson (office manager), Mrs. Karen Howard, Ms. Taylor Humphrey, Ms. Vera Sharon King, Ms. Pamela Purnell, and Ms. Kimberly Richardson. We look forward to a great year of learning and growing together as we look back on forty years of good trouble where we have helped our scholars to excel and find their voice in a world that would like to overlook their brilliance.

Our History and Legacy

Since its founding by a group of Aberdeen, Mississippi migrant families in 1880, the First Missionary Baptist Church has been a cornerstone of both the black community and greater Huntsville, Alabama. These Christians initially worshiped in an old house on West Clinton Street. In 1881, under the leadership of Rev. Pope Jones, a building program was established and soon after a lot on Steele Street was purchased. The first permanent structure was erected by Rev. Jones and Rev. M. J. Hooks in 1886. The church became a stronghold in the community during the late 1800's under strong leadership and commitment to the community. Members generously provided a meeting space for other churches that did not have a building and for other community gatherings. By the early 1900's FMBC had become the center of leadership for the black community and in 1906 it hosted the meeting of a group of Huntsville ministers that developed the Ministers Union of Huntsville which included members throughout the area.

During the period between 1922 and 1977 many ministers played significant roles in guiding the Church and shaping its future. Amid booming growth in Huntsville the congregation moved to a new home at 236 Church Street under the leadership of Rev. C.N. Perry. In 1949 God sent a strong anchor and blessing to the Church in the form of a young, gifted, well-prepared preacher, the Reverend Horace P. Snodgrass. Rev. Snodgrass possessed both a vision and a plan to move FMBC forward. First Baptist Church became a center in the surrounding black business community. By the end of World War II, it had been established as the largest and most highly educated Black congregation in Huntsville. The Church continued to evolve spiritually and physically. Expansion was rapid with both internal growth, in the form of new ministries and auxiliaries, and external growth, with membership in state and national Baptist organizations. In 1953 First Baptist became the first congregation in the city to broadcast its services on the radio. The Church was also keenly

aware of the social issues of the day. During the civil rights strife, which was a trademark of the sixties, the Church opened its doors as a haven for citizens fighting for freedom. The Church served as a willing assistant in the cause for freedom and full rights for black Americans.

For a brief period following the death of Rev. Snodgrass, Rev. Emuel Cleaver became Pastor of FMBC with a focus on Church finances and retired much of the Church debt in his short tenure. In January of 1977, after informing the search committee that God had already revealed to him that he would be the pastor of FMBC a year earlier, Rev. Julius R. Scruggs began his 42-year tenure as the under Shepard of FMBC. In the early years of his pastorate the Church was normally filled to overflowing with members and visitors and the physical location transitioned to 3509 Blue Spring Road.



Our History and Legacy



God blessed Pastor Scruggs' ministry in many ways: consistent annual increases in membership; numerous advances in ministry outreach; increases in mission support both locally and abroad; launch of the Child Development Center; two additions to the Church facility; addition of the 8 AM Worship Service; initiation of a Young Adults Ministry; TV Ministry began with weekly services broadcasted and later livestreamed; Disciple Ministry Institute launched; and purchase of the Blue Spring Center. He managed to accomplish these things and many more while serving in leadership roles in the State Baptist Convention and a 5-year term as President of the National Baptist Convention USA Incorporated. Rev. Scruggs has continued to provide wisdom and Godly leadership to the FMBC Family since his retirement in 2018 and acceptance of the role of Pastor Emeritus.

In an interview for the church history video, Rev Scruggs shared that "The Future of First Missionary Baptist Church is very bright." His confidence has always been based on the knowledge that God has a plan for his people and He alone will see it to fruition. Under his leadership and with the diligent work of the search committee over a period of two years God revealed the next great leader for FMBC. On April 6, 2019, Rev. Don Darius Butler was installed as the new Pastor of First Missionary Baptist Church. Pastor Butler has brought, in his short tenure, a measure of youthful exuberance to the congregation that has resulted in continued growth

in membership, service to the community and expanded mission work. With Godly wisdom and guidance Pastor Butler has skillfully navigated the congregation through a worldwide pandemic while continuing to care for the needs of the disciple members. Frequently preaching the word of God in an empty sanctuary, he continued to minister to the spiritual needs of the congregation with strong messages of faith and hope via various media outlets. More than ever before FMBC has led in caring for the basic physical needs of the community with food distribution, enhanced technological delivery of the word of God, visits to the sick and shut in, and support of those who work for equal justice in our community. Dr. Butler continues to innovate as he educates by including more members in the worship services and adding the highly informative worship "Talk Back Sessions." Dr. Butler has immersed himself into the local community and is providing leadership to those ministers in the community who seek to gain a better understanding of the need for equality in the justice system and economic development that is occurring in our community. Yes, the future is bright for the First Missionary Baptist Church, with leadership from Rev. Don Darius Butler and God at the helm. We will continue to deepen our love of Christ who came to save us and set us free, our commitment to drawing others to Christ, and our commitment to teaching in order to strengthen our relationship with Christ. We acknowledge that these things are necessary if we are to successfully accomplish our mission of being "the Church that seeks to glorify God and edify humanity" and reach our goal "to become one of the most loving churches in all the world."



BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

IN PERSON

Sunday School

*More about Jesus would I know
More of His grace to others show
More of His saving fullness see
More of His love who died for me*

Attention FMBC Disciple Members! Beginning Sunday, August 7 th, in person, Sunday School is back for all ages with one goal - to know more about Jesus so that we may be more about Jesus. So, bring your Bible (app or print), Sunday School book, and smiling face to the place. The classes that will meet from 8:15 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. includes Nursery and Toddlers, Elementary, Middle and High School, Young Adults, Adult Men, Adult Women, and General Adults. Your teachers are ready and will greet you in the vestibule.

#moreAboutJESUS!

CLASS LOCATIONS

Nursery, Toddlers and Elementary Classes – South Hall across from FMBC Fellowship Hall

Middle and High School Class – Administrative Wing, 2 nd Floor, Formerly YAM Class

Young Adults - Administrative Wing, 2 nd Floor, Church Chapel

Adult Men – Church Library, South Hall

Adult Women – Conference Room, Administrative Wing, 1 st Floor

General Adults – Church Sanctuary



Member Spotlight

Sister Candyce A. Curry has been selected to serve as a 2022-2023 Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellow. The program provides an opportunity for accomplished K-12 Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Educators to apply their extensive classroom knowledge and experiences to their host offices to enhance federal STEM education efforts.

As one of only 15 K-12 STEM teachers selected from across the U.S., Candyce will spend 11 months engaged in the national STEM education arena, while serving in the U.S. Geological Survey of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Candyce is currently employed by the Birmingham City Schools system at Putnam Middle School as a Curriculum Specialist. She holds the distinct honor of being selected as "Teacher of the Year" for two consecutive years at Huffman High School, where she formerly served as a Life Sciences Educator.

She is the daughter of the late Deacon Charles Curry and Deaconess Pamela Curry, and she is the sister of Trustee Kelli Curry. Candyce is a 1988 graduate of the Julius R. Scruggs Child Development Center and Academy. Educated in the Huntsville City Schools system, she is an alumna of Lee High School, Stillman College and Alabama A&M University.

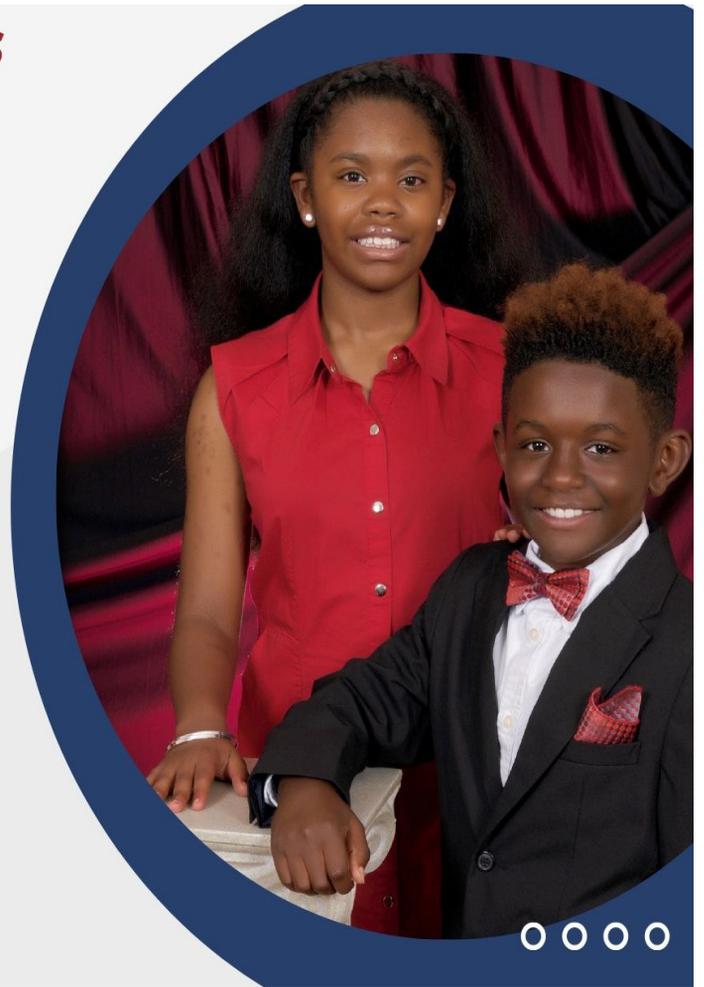
BETTER KNOW OUR YOUTH MEMBERS

Sister Christen Simone McCann was baptized at FMBC on June 15, 2014. Brother Christopher Solomon McCann, her brother, was baptized at FMBC on January 3, 2016. Both have been actively involved in the church ever since.

Both have sung in the Sunbeam Choir and actively participated in Sunday School, Bible Study, and youth activities. Currently, Sister McCann uses her gift of song in the youth choir, while Brother McCann is putting his outgoing and caring personality to work on the Youth Usher Board.

Sister McCann is an eighth grader at Meridianville Middle School where she is in the Honors Program and plays flute in the band. In her free time, she also enjoys vocal performance, art, playing tennis, and participating in Girl Scouts where she is a Cadette and working towards her Silver Award. Her professional aspirations include music and helping others (mom thinks we have a future musical therapist in the making).

Brother McCann is a sixth grader at Moore's Mill Intermediate where he participated in the Gifted Program (ACE), plays trumpet in the band, and was recently selected to participate in the LEAD the Mill Leadership program. In his free time, he also enjoys playing video games, making stop-motion animation shorts, and playing soccer which, he has been doing since he was four years old. He is also a brown belt in karate and was recently elected President of the Kappa Knights of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc. Huntsville Alumni Chapter Guide Right Program. His professional aspirations include computers, engineering, and criminal justice. A natural leader, perhaps a future Senator or President.



BETTER KNOW A MEMBER

Trustee Ron Eady has been a servant-member of FMBC for over 30 years. He is an honored graduate of Alabama A&M University and a proud member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Incorporated. He is the Presiding Partner of the Omega Select Investment Group.

He is currently serving a second stint as a member of the Trustee Board as Chairman. He also serves as a Lay Minister with his wife, Attorney Rita Eady. They raised two amazing children, Ronda and Ronnie, that are both former students of the Julius R. Scruggs Child Development Center and Academy.

Trustee Eady was employed by the State of Alabama as a Court Officer in the District and Circuit Court of Madison County for 26 years before retiring in 2011. He continues to work part-time, which sometimes feels like full-time. In his spare time, he enjoys attending all types of sporting events, specifically at A&M where he was a standout linebacker on the championship AAMU Bulldog football Team. He also enjoys spending time with family and friends, traveling, and relaxing on the beach.

FIRST MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

CELEBRATES OUR

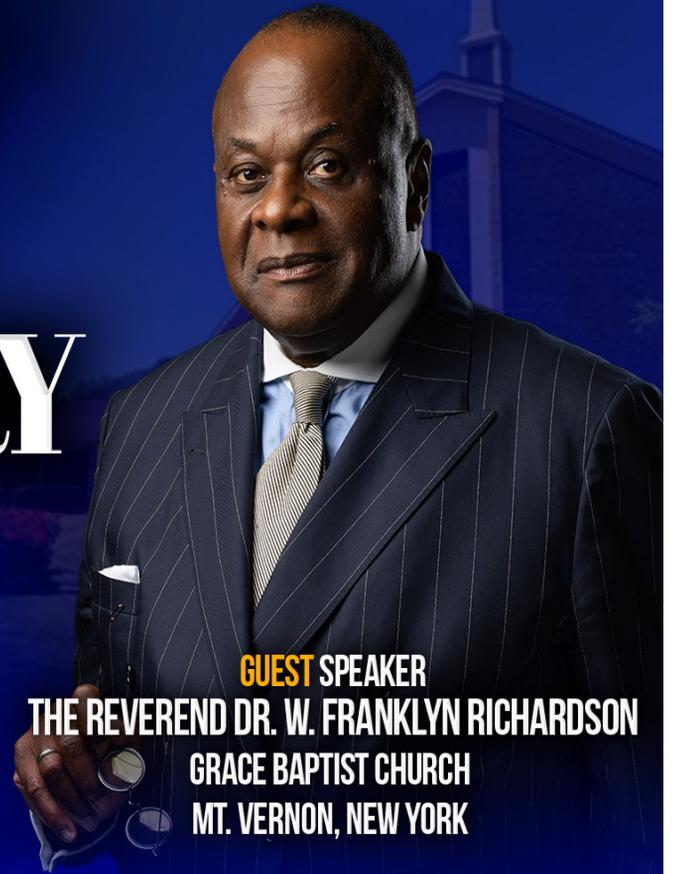
142nd **CHURCH
ANNIVERSARY**

AUGUST 28, 2022

9:30 AM (IN-PERSON & LIVESTREAM)

6:30 PM (LIVESTREAM ONLY)

**3509 BLUE SPRING ROAD, NW
HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA**



GUEST SPEAKER

**THE REVEREND DR. W. FRANKLYN RICHARDSON
GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH
MT. VERNON, NEW YORK**

REVEREND DR. DON DARIUS BUTLER, PASTOR | REVEREND DR. JULIUS R. SCRUGGS, PASTOR EMERITUS



ANNUAL
**HOMECOMING
PICNIC**

CELEBRATING 142 YEARS

**AUGUST 27, 2022
4:30 PM UNTIL 7:30 PM**

FIRST MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
3509 BLUE SPRING ROAD, NW
HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

FOOD • FUN • GAMES • RIDES • AND MORE



FMBC MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



Brother Jeffrey and Sister Mattie Massey celebrate 13 years of marriage on August 1st.



Reverend Willie and Sister Tammy Alexander celebrate 40 years of marriage August 7th.



Brother Tony and Sister Gail Fisher celebrate 37 years of marriage on August 8th.



Deacon Denver and Deaconess Tina Betts celebrate 52 years of marriage on August 9th.



Brother Ernie and Sister Mary Robinson celebrate 53 years of marriage on August 9th.



Brother Arthur and Sister Rose Henderson celebrate 54 years of marriage on August 10th.



Deacon Emeritus Robert and Deaconess Elizabeth Ann Ware celebrate 62 years of marriage on August 16th.



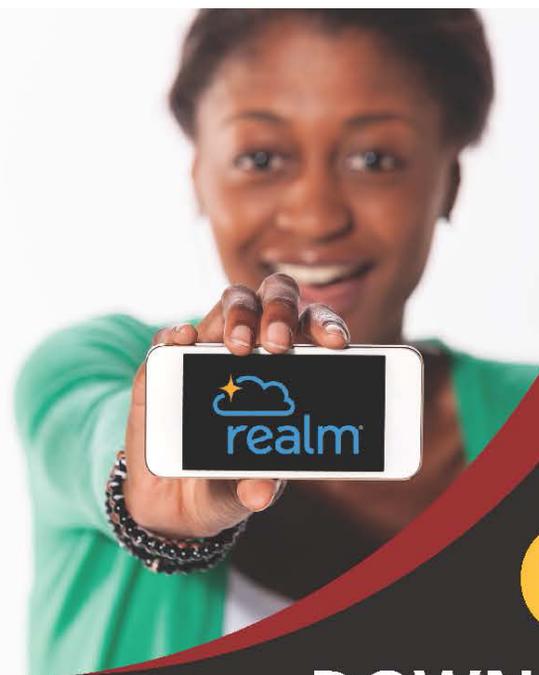
Brother Leonard and Sister Phyllis Harris celebrate 42 years of marriage on August 16th.



Brother Michael Shingleton's 1989 St. Marys football team is being recognized by the City of Dodge City, Kansas by inducting them to the "Wall of Fame" on Saturday, July 23, 2022. Also, The Kansas Sports Hall of Fame will honor the 1989 St. Mary's team with the Distinguished "Pride of Kansas" Award for its season and National Team Records.

**WANT TO BE SHOWN IN THE
COMMUNICATOR?**

**Email a picture and your
information of an anniversary
or accomplishment to
clynk@fmbc.org**



LET'S STAY CONNECTED

DOWNLOAD THE REALM APP TODAY



GIVE VIA TEXT MESSAGE

Text 'FMBCHSV' and
the amount you want to give
to **73256**

① **Click the link**

② **Complete your gift**

LET'S BE THE CHURCH... TOGETHER

- *Update your personal information
- *Communicate with groups
 - *Follow church announcements
 - *Look up members
 - *Manage giving
- *Create and join events
- *Birthday announcement