



THE SANCTUARY AT KINGDOM SQUARE

TSAKS National News

★ **INSIDE... Emergency Preparedness Tips, page 30** ★

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WITH TSAKS NATION

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Mission Statement... Our mission is to promote the spread of the Gospel, the winning of souls to Jesus Christ, the changing of lives, and establishing the presence of the Lord in the world through evangelizing, biblical teaching, economic development, and community outreach. With faith in Almighty God, we seek to be a church preparing born-again believers for the Kingdom of God.

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Selected To Serve

by Christa Bennett

Dear Faithful Readers,

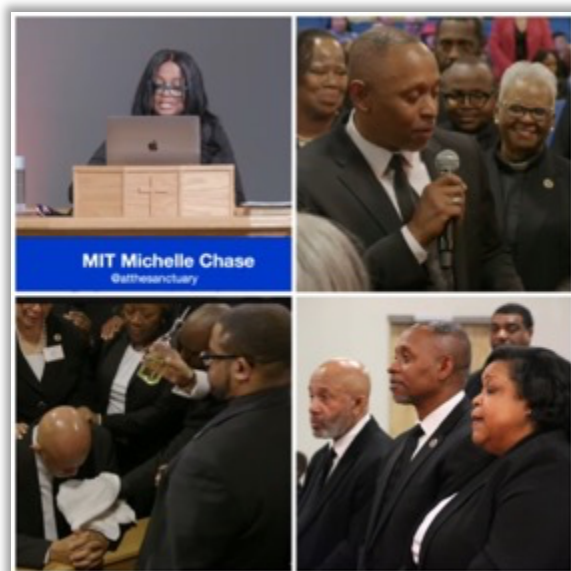
A moment of celebration was on display on the night of May 6, 2026. A sea of people spread throughout The Sanctuary at Kingdom Square, cheering for four of God's chosen Disciples. This was an impressive moment captured in time for all who were present on that day.

Families, friends and members gathered to celebrate the Diaconate Ordination of **Deacons Al Blake, Eugene Long, and Maria Worthy**, and the Ministerial Licensing of **Minister Michelle Chase**, who were all anointed by Bishop Maclin.

The Ordination of servants is a cherished tradition for many churches, elevating faithful servants from Disciples in training to Disciple Makers and official leaders of the church. These four servants are now charged with the responsibilities for commissioning new disciples; facilitating the teachings of Christ; caring for and visiting the sick and elderly; shepherding the lost to seek salvation, interceding in prayer for all and much more.

On that glorious night, many witnessed the celebration of greatness as more faithful servants joined a collective effort to serve the people of God. Summarizing Minister Michelle Chase's sermon, "it is a promise to celebrate as we have a reason to celebrate which is to carry out God's assignment with thanksgiving. It is the responsibility of those selected to serve and encourage believers to hold on to God's word and help to restore them to true worship for eternal celebration on Christ's return." She reminded us that God's word is true and having an intimate connection with Him should give us joy and a reason to celebrate for eternal life through Christ, Jesus. Praises erupted throughout the church in solidarity with thanksgiving to Christ, the temple of God.

Standing before the congregation, Bishop Maclin followed up with a message reminding all that "when you are selected to serve, you must have



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integrity that is unquestionable. Assuming the responsibility to serve with the same mantle that is upon others who serve shall fall greatly upon those chosen with the power of prophetic progression, outcome and promises of Pentecost blessings.” In summary, the spirit of the fruit is inherited by those chosen and set apart to serve the whole, pray for the humble and meek, minister to souls seeking salvation, and “endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ, Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:3). In having a relationship with Christ, Jesus and others within the church, the newly installed servants are charged with helping God’s Kingdom of growth.

Tears flowed gently as many watched a heartfelt emotional moment of Bishop Maclin laying hands on the newly installed servants, preparing them to take their rightful places in the church as Disciple Makers. Oil flowed from their heads as Bishop Maclin anointed each one of them with God’s blessing to flow through their lives, their respective families, friends, and others. Casting the net of blessings even wider, Bishop reached over and anointed another servant of God. He charged Minister Chase with the task of a co-laborer of Christ to spiritually grow others through Christ’s teachings. It was an unforgettable moment to witness how Holy Spirit moved each servant as they humbly stood in God’s presence to give Him their heartwarming thanksgivings. Their lives will be forever changed as they were elevated with the power of prophetic progression to inspire others to serve; promote unity among the body of the church; to remain faithful and encourage others to celebrate for eternal life through Christ, Jesus. They now have a platform gifted from God with a divine purpose to stir up a spiritual movement and spread the good news of gospel to every man, woman, and child on earth.

***“endure hardship with us
like a good soldier of
Christ, Jesus”
(2 Timothy 2:3)***

“Families, friends and members gathered to celebrate the Diaconate Ordination of Deacons Al Blake, Eugene Long, and Maria Worthy, and the Ministerial Licensing of Minister Michelle Chase, who were all anointed by Bishop Maclin.”



Legacy of Love through Faith

by JC McCreary

When you are equally yoked the union is blessed and longevity is the outcome. This recipe has been proven time and time again. Allow God to bring you your forever person even if the wait is a little longer than you expected or want. Remain confident and obedient to the faith and he/she will come.



James and Malinda Green

To God be the glory! On June 27, James and Malinda Green will celebrate 62 blessed years of marriage. Their love story began at Armstead Tasker Johnson High School in Montross, Virginia, where she was a freshman and he was a sophomore. Their journey has also been deeply rooted in the life of this church, dating back to the days when The Sanctuary at Kingdom Square (TSAKS) was known as Glendale Baptist Church, around 1965. They fondly remember the little wooden church with its wooden benches, long before the leadership of our present Pastor, Bishop Anthony Maclin. Through the years, they

Milton and Jennifer Walker

Among the happily married couples are Milton and Jennifer Walker, who have been members of TSAKS since April 2025. They will celebrate 56 years of marriage on August 1. Milton was 19, and Jennifer was just three weeks shy of her 18th birthday when they married. Although they had planned to wait, those plans changed when Milton received his draft notice during the Vietnam War. Jennifer later shared that Milton told her he did not want to wait because, if anything happened to him, he wanted to make sure she would be taken care of. Their first meeting came through mutual friends—one of Milton's

Herbert and Joyce Thomas

Joyce and Herbert Thomas have been TSAKS members for over 20 years. These two lovebirds have been married for 58 years this August 17th. They were blessed with 6 children, (3 girls and 3 boys). Look at how God ordered this union. He will do it so that you know it was meant to be.

They met when Joyce moved to the neighborhood where Herbert's family lived, almost directly across the street. They both have one word for what has kept them all these years, God.

Herbert was raised in the church and has always been a believer. Joyce says they stayed in church all day. It was during

All continued on next page—

The Greens—continued

have remained faithful witnesses to the tremendous growth and enduring ministry of this church.

Malinda and James believe that a strong relationship with God is the foundation of a successful marriage. Both had already accepted Christ when they met as teenagers.

You will find that their “recipe” for a successful, happy, fulfilling married life is to always keep God “first and center.” They say “open communication and trust” are a must. The philosophy is that “it takes two to argue,” so someone has to walk away. Not away from the marriage, away from the fight.

There are two children that came from this union: one son, now 60 and a daughter, 47. They have two grandchildren and five great grands, all of whom are from their son. Wow, God is so, so good and confirms that this union is indeed blessed.

*Legacy of
Love through
Faith*

The Walkers—continued

friends was dating one of Jennifer’s friends and asked Milton to ride along from Northeast Washington, D.C., to Lanham, Maryland, with the promise that there would be a girl there for him to meet. The rest is history.

For Milton it was love at first sight, and he was always the voice of reason, and he tried his best to lead. However, at 18, Jennifer wasn’t having it. She was finally out from under her Father’s rule and wanted to do things her way. This made their first year a little rocky, and they eventually separated, for about two weeks!

Milton was a believer from childhood, when he first heard the story of how Jesus died on the cross to save us all. He still carries and reads the same Bible given to him in 1960, when he was eight. For Jennifer, that revelation would not come until much later in their marriage. She thought that religion was for old people, even though she grew up in a Christian household. It was the cancer diagnosis of a “consistently unfaithful” brother-in-law that would bring two of her sisters and then eventually her to Christ. She was 34, 17 years married, and after their twin girls, Natalie and Nichole, had been born.

Anyone in their presence can see that they are just as in ►

The Thomases’—continued

this time that she was saved.

They both agree that divorce was not an option. The promise “for better or for worse” was real and God remained at the center. When trouble did come, Herbert gave credit to Joyce for holding on. He says his wife is a “strong woman.” They said, almost in unison, that you “must forgive in order to be free!” Have patience and be equally yoked. There is that phrase once again; I am seeing a definitive pattern for longevity saints; how about you?

What do we see repeated by all of the successful marriages? God. It is their faith in Him and their love for one another magnified by Him that has kept them together. Marriages can and do last if God is your matchmaker; you have the assurance of being equally yoked.

Love & Faith

The Walkers—continued

love now, if not more, as they were in the beginning. Their advice for other married couples is, “allow Christ to be at the center of your relationship to ensure that you are equally yoked.”

A Legacy of Love—Honorable Mentions

by Carlette Jameson

⁴And He answered and said to them, “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ ⁵and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? ⁶So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.” Matthew 19:4-6 (NKJV)



Thomas and Eula Johnson

Celebrating **57** years of marriage



Helen and Francis Holmes

Celebrating **48** years of marriage



Curtis and Elaine Sims

Celebrating **48** years of marriage
(in August 2026)

*Legacy of
Love through
Faith*



Robert and Gail Battle

Celebrating **46** years of marriage

Continued on next page—



Deacon Brenda and Eddie Bell

Celebrating **46** years of marriage
(in July 2026)

*Legacy of
Love through
Faith*



Walter and Johnnie Johnson

Celebrating **43** years of marriage

*Legacy of
Love through
Faith*



Deacon Ronald and Toree Griffin

Celebrating **42** years of marriage



Bishop and First Lady | Anthony and Peggy Maclin

Celebrating **42** years of marriage (in July 2026)

You Are Not Alone

by JC McCreary

Mourning a loved one is a deeply personal and painful journey. There is no right or wrong way to grieve and there is no timeline. Allow yourself to feel every emotion that comes, be gentle with your expectations, and understand that healing happens at your own pace.

Navigating this profound loss involves finding healthy ways to cope and knowing where to find support when the burden feels too heavy:



- **Acknowledge Your Emotions:** Grief triggers a wide range of emotions—sadness, anger, numbness, and even relief. Let yourself cry, write things down, or simply sit with the pain without judgment.
- **Share Your Stories:** Talking about your loved one helps process the loss. Sharing memories with trusted friends or family keeps their spirit alive and provides a vital emotional release.
- **Take Care of Yourself:** Grief exhausts both the mind and body. Maintain a basic routine, focus on eating nourishing meals, and prioritize getting adequate rest.
- **Postpone Major Changes:** Try to hold off on making significant life changes (like moving or changing jobs) until you have had time to fully absorb and adjust to your loss.

Seeking Support

You do not have to carry this alone. If your grief becomes overwhelming or if you need to connect with others who truly understand what you are going through, professional help and community groups are invaluable resources.

Use the [Mental Health America](https://mhanational.org/resources/bereavement-and-grief/) guide for practical tips on coping with bereavement and finding support groups.

Acknowledge Your Emotions ♥ Share Your Stories ♥ Take Care of Yourself ♥ Postpone Major Changes ♥ Acknowledge Your Emotions ♥ Share Your Stories ♥ Take Care of Yourself ♥ Postpone Major Changes ♥ Acknowledge Your Emotions ♥ Share Your Stories ♥ Take Care of Yourself ♥ Postpone Major Changes ♥ Acknowledge Your Emotions ♥ Share Your Stories ♥ Take Care of Yourself ♥ Postpone Major Changes ♥ Acknowledge Your Emotions ♥ Share Your Stories ♥ Take Care of Yourself ♥ Postpone Major Changes ♥ Acknowledge Your Emotions ♥ Share Your Stories

<https://mhanational.org/resources/bereavement-and-grief/>

God is still Sovereign

by Jarin Penn

I don't know about you, but occasionally I find myself facing a weird moment in my faith when I discover I've been using words I don't fully understand. I know the overall meaning, or at least a working idea of it. I could use it in a sentence or sing it in a praise song. I could explain the idea well enough to my kids.

But deeply, intimately? It depends.

The constant rush of attention-stealing headlines, governmental decisions, and life tribulations led me down the rabbit hole of my latest face-to-face with theology.

What is sovereignty?

When we remind ourselves and others that God is in control, what does that mean beyond the "let God have His way" concept?

I'm a fan of starting with definitions. Merriam-Webster defines "sovereignty" a few different ways "supreme" power especially over a body politic; freedom from external control; controlling influence; one that is sovereign. Naturally, that leads us to looking up "sovereign", which is defined as "having unlimited power or authority; absolute; having independent authority and the right to govern itself; of the most exalted kind; supreme". What does this mean biblically?

Per Biblehub.com, "Sovereignty, in a biblical context, refers to the supreme authority and power of God over all creation. It encompasses His absolute right to govern the universe according to His will, purpose, and pleasure."

So how do we reconcile a Sovereign God in a world that feels increasingly more fallen and divided?

It's deeper than remembering that God is still (and always) in control. It's taking a step back and understanding what that control *means*. A control that is just and within His plans. A control that

grants humans free will but provides a hope, salvation, and peace that surpasses understanding. A control that works all things for our good, yet holds us close when it doesn't feel that way.

It's acknowledging that God, through the highs and the lows, orchestrates our steps.

There's a lot of reason to fear and to worry. Trusting in God's Sovereignty is to override that fear with faith. It's turning our focus away from agendas and political leaders and centering on God and His will. And better still, balancing that while not falling victim to being so heavenly-minded that we're no earthly good. It's reminding ourselves that no President, establishment, company, church, or person is beyond God's law or influence.

The Bible is full of examples of God using both beloved and hated leaders to further His glory—believers and nonbelievers alike. I'm reminded of a line from Pastor-In-Succession Brandon Maclin's message on Prophetic Revelation. "Some of the things that you are experiencing are not the devil doing things to you, it's God sending you places to reveal exactly who He is to you...He wants to see if you recognize that it's Him keeping you all along."

If there was ever a moment for God to take us somewhere to reveal who He is, this is it. But, know wherever He sends you, He remains with you. In the belly of the whale. In the fiery furnace. In the lion's den. In the wilderness.

We may not understand it all. We don't know where things are headed or why things have to go in the direction they did. But trusting in God's Sovereignty means shifting our focus from what we don't know to what we do know. God is in control. He's stronger than what's against us, bigger than what blocks our path, greater than every weapon formed against us. That includes the rampant fear and anxiety, the distractions, and the noise.

God is Sovereign, and He is on our side.

"You, Lord, reign forever; your throne endures from generation to generation." Lamentations 5:19 NIV

Scams Targeting Older Adults

Credit: *FDIC Consumer News, March 2026*

Spot and Prevent Elder Financial Abuse

Each year, older adults in this country fall victim to financial abuse, costing seniors an estimated \$27 billion. Financial exploitation can take many forms such as theft of money or property by a family member, caregiver, or scammer. It is vital to take precautions to prevent exploitation against older Americans.

Here are suggestions for protecting yourself and your loved ones:

Closely monitor your credit card and bank account activity. Review your account statements as soon as you receive them and look for unauthorized or suspicious transactions. If you find any, report them to your bank immediately.

Protect your personal financial information. Never give out your bank account numbers, Social Security number, personal identification numbers (PINs), passwords, or other sensitive information unless you initiate the contact through a legitimate webpage or phone number. Also, be aware that scam requests may come from an unsolicited phone call, text, letter, email, or a person who shows up at your door.

Keep your checkbook, account statements, and other sensitive information in a safe place. Shred paper documents containing sensitive information that are no longer needed.

Be careful with powers of attorney. At some point, you may want to have a power of attorney, a legal document that authorizes another person to transact business on your behalf. While powers of attorney can be very helpful, be careful who you name as your representative.

Review your credit report. Check to make sure all of the information on your credit report is accurate and complete. Check to see if companies you don't recognize have obtained your credit

report; and contact the credit-reporting agency if you see anything suspicious.

Take your time when deciding on a major financial decision or investment. Make sure you understand the transaction and ask questions. Consider getting a lawyer or financial advisor to help you understand the documents and discuss what is best for you. Walk away from anyone who says you must decide or otherwise do something *right now*.

Remain alert. Finally, here are additional tips:

- To reduce the number of telemarketing calls you receive, consider signing up for the national Do Not Call Registry. If you are on this list, be suspicious of calls from any company or organization that you have reason to believe is not eligible to contact you under the registry's rules.
- Do not comply with requests from strangers to deposit a check into your account and send some or all of the money back to the person.
- If you use social media, many security experts advise against posting the names, addresses, birthdates, and daily activities of relatives, because a thief can use that information.
- Grandparent scams are on the rise. This type of scam involves con artists who look for personal information on the internet that they can use to call or email an older person and pretend to be a relative in distress – such as a grandchild being injured, in jail, or lost in a foreign country – and needing money to be sent fast.

Knowing how to spot and prevent elder financial exploitation will help you protect yourself and your finances.

Spot and Prevent Elder Financial Abuse

Teaching Young People About Money

Credit: *FDIC Consumer News*, May 2026

Give Them a Valuable Head Start

Teaching young people about money can help them become more financially independent as they get older. There is research that suggests financial education may be related to lower debt, higher savings, and higher credit scores.

Ways to Approach Young People About Money

Talk about work and income

Your child may see that a relationship exists between work and money. Consider having a conversation with your child about work and how your earnings influence your purchases, where you live, and transportation options for how you get to work. If your child engages in activities like operating a lemonade stand, hosting a bake sale, dog sitting, or babysitting, you can use these occasions to teach them about earning, spending, and saving.

Talk about paying bills or discuss large purchases

Family meetings can be a way of teaching your children about the financial choices you make and why you make them. Try to explain financial obligations using age-appropriate concepts and terminology. The main idea is to teach them the importance of budgets and making responsible choices with money.

By having your child actively participate in a trip to the grocery store, they can see how budgeting relates to shopping. You can also open a savings account at an FDIC-insured institution to teach them about saving money. At an appropriate time, an outing to a local bank so they can see what a bank does and how a bank operates can

also prompt conversations about money. Consider having a discussion about online banking services too.

Read books with your child that teach about money

A number of children's books teach all about earning, spending, saving, and borrowing. These books provide an easy and natural opportunity for questions and answers. Consider checking your local library for suggestions; you may be able to check out books online with your library card. You may also be able to read books online through other free services.

Children can learn about money by playing games, particularly if you play with them. Board games with play money can be great teaching moments. Online games also provide a fun way to teach about money and start conversations.

Teach healthy skepticism of advertising, unsolicited inquiries, and scams

It is important to teach young people how to analyze advertisements; they need to know that "special offers" may not be the great deal they appear to be or may come with strings attached. Even young consumers are targets for identity theft and can be among the victims of scams and rip-offs.

Having open conversations about money with your children, shopping with them on a budget, reading to them about money, and playing games that involve money can have a positive and valuable effect on their relationship with money and their ability to manage finances in the future. Financial education combined with a deposit account at an early age can shape a young person's financial identity, attitudes, and habits in a way that can provide benefits for a lifetime.

"Financial education combined with a deposit account at an early age . . . benefits for a lifetime."

Celebration of 250 Years and the Existence of Black Churches

by Christa Bennett

“Lift every voice and sing until Heaven and Earth Ring.” These are powerful words of encouragement for God’s people, who know that when you act in faith, what God communicates to you as truth, through His Word, will bring you victory. Reimagining His vision at large, rather than giving into despair and oppression, was the start of a revolution that brought about a revelation of change, redemption, and resilience in building communities of faith through the foundation of black churches.

As the United States prepares to reflect on 250 years of celebrating its independence from Great Britain, celebrating a defining moment in its history, let us consider the question posed by Frederick Douglas during a speech he delivered in Rochester, New York, in July of 1852, “What have I, or those I represent, to do with the national independence?” A befitting question of that period, and for those of us today, who will be reminded during our upcoming national holiday of the hostility of enslavement. Knowing such pain can never fade, because like a pendulum swinging back and forth often returns and spreads like fire. Oh, but the faithful will never completely yield to the reminders of misery and bleakness. Instead, they will forever draw upon the unwavering resistance and courage of our forefathers, forging a brighter path leveraging religious freedom until the very end.

Black Christianity, sometimes referred to as black churches, played a complex role in society. This was especially evident during the Antebellum period (before the Civil War), where our forefathers strategically planned ways to include establishing clandestine religious gatherings to worship God. These gatherings were often used to freely worship and teach many black people to read and write using the teachings of Christ without fear of denouncement and retribution. Efforts by White Christians declared an

indoctrination method to root standardized Christianity practices, often exploiting and preaching flawed messages of spiritual equality, mischaracterizations, and false religious teachings. Determination encouraged black Christians to act on God’s will to unite black people in a secret religious gathering in places such as *hush harbors*^[1] and *invisible churches*^[2]. The will of the people subverted efforts to undermine their given right to reimagine God’s plan to declare their religious independence. “*The eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him.*” (2 Chronicles 16:9)

Alas, moving forward, religious gatherings took root, and the establishment of black churches and congregations flourished signifying a new era of true Black Christianity unification to independently practice and express their faith more openly. “*I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.*” (Psalm 121:1-2 KJV) Today, many black churches systematically stand apart from white churches based on social, cultural differences and shared experiences. Equipped with the truth of God’s word, black churches have taken on greater responsibilities to ensure the people of God seek salvation, offering comfort and an invitation to accept Christ Jesus in a secured place of worship.

In concert with America celebrating 250 years of independence, many black churches will reflect on the rise of a central institution (black church) that serves today as a safe place for denouncing moral struggle, serving as a source for social cohesion, and fostering continued hope of freedom for many black people. It is worth noting that today there are many black churches affiliated with a wide range of denominations such as Protestants and Catholics to name a couple of them. Many believers will be reminded of the

Continued on next page—

churches' roles, cultural emphasis on community and shared experience, serving as a center of resistance and community support for so many seeking inspiration and a place of spiritual unity.

Spiritual unity is one of many facets that cultivated a movement that strengthened a community of believers even before it was decided to emancipate the people of God. So, while the United States celebrates Independence Day on July 4, many Black churches look to celebrate their spiritual liberation and the prominent social cultural work that has been essential for many communities. This will include, but not limited to reflecting on social justice achievements such as the Civil Rights Movement, Black Lives Matter, Criminal Justice Reform, equity, economics, and education support. Emphasis will be placed on ministry support made available to communities, such as providing groceries, restoring faith, counseling, providing housing, and so much more. Many black communities continue to rely on their churches to provide important cultural and historical significance to this day, cementing the everlasting impact of bringing the people together in a location that is secured and maintained by and for God's people^[3]. It is important that these sanctuaries are preserved to continue the teachings of Christ; to understand the role of the church; encourage hope and salvation, and to support so

many differing needs of our communities throughout this country.

Stories of black liberation and so many achievements supported by the churches' roles will be highlighted in the coming months, expressing the ongoing work to be done in bringing souls to the Kingdom through Christ, especially during a time of unrest. *"Engage in 'good works' and serve faithfully, as Jesus brings rewards for those found working when He return."* (Revelation 22:12) Many black churches will reflect on the joyous moments of tears from Heaven that helped lead our forefathers to emerge from the shadow of darkness to the light of inspiration and courage. Reflections will include the legacy of black churches, resiliency, faith, activism, and recognition of so many who led the way to celebrate Black excellence and its role in the nation's history. The Sanctuary encourages everyone to join in on the reflections of celebrating God's will for the people, not just on July 4, but every day as He has gifted us life.

Reimagine God's vision today to continue the work of saving souls and being steadfast and resilient in unifying the country through witnessing and ministering His word to those who are seeking peace and salvation. *"He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son."* (Colossians 1:13 NLT)

Citation

[1,2] "On the Secret Religious Meetings of Enslaved Persons". Archived from the original 2012—5-18

[3] Jacobsen, Douglas (June 2005). "Fortress Introduction to Black Church History. By Anne H. Pinn and Anthony B. Pinn. Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 2002. Church History 74:416-417.

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*"Lift every voice and sing until
Heaven and Earth Ring."*

MEMBER ACCOMPLISHMENTS . . .

Celebrating Elaine Sims' 30 Years of Guiding Girls Toward Success

by Carlette Jameson

For three decades, Elaine Sims has dedicated her time, talents, and heart to helping young girls grow into confident, capable leaders through the Girl Scouts. Recently honored for 30 years of service, her commitment has touched the lives of hundreds of young women and helped create opportunities that extend far beyond the traditional scouting experience.

Sister Sims' journey with the Girl Scouts began long before she became a leader. Growing up in East Cleveland, Ohio, she was a Girl Scout herself. As a young African American girl living in an urban community, scouting opened doors to experiences she might not otherwise have encountered. Camping trips, outdoor adventures, and exposure to new environments broadened her perspective and helped cultivate a lifelong love of the outdoors.

Years later, while raising her own daughter, she returned to the Girl Scouts as a volunteer leader. As her family moved throughout her husband's military career, she continued supporting scouting programs, even helping maintain a troop while living in Japan. After returning to the United States and becoming a member of Glendale Baptist Church, she joined the church's growing Girl Scout ministry and has remained actively involved ever since.

Over the years, she has served in numerous leadership roles, including troop coordinator and service unit leader. Through her guidance, hundreds of girls have participated in scouting programs that promote leadership, community service, personal growth, and educational enrichment.

One of the accomplishments she remembers most proudly is helping six (6) girls earn the Girl Scout Gold Award at the same time. The Gold Award is the highest honor a Girl Scout can achieve and requires extensive leadership and service projects. Seeing multiple girls reach that level of achievement was especially meaningful and remains one of the highlights of her scouting career.

Beyond awards, Sister Elaine has helped provide life-changing experiences for countless girls. Troop members have traveled nationally and internationally, visiting places such as Japan, Canada, the Dominican Republic, and countries throughout Europe. Through these opportunities, girls have participated in community service projects, learned about different cultures, and developed a broader understanding of the world around them.

Community service has always been at the heart of the troop's mission. Throughout the years, the girls have participated in food drives, collected hats, socks, and other essential items for those in need, supported church outreach efforts,



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partnered with local organizations for Martin Luther King Jr. Day service projects, and donated a portion of their annual cookie sale proceeds to support the church.

Sister Elaine credits the troop's success to creating an environment where girls are encouraged to share their ideas and explore their interests. Whether through camping adventures, museum visits, theater performances, art projects, leadership discussions, or service activities, the troop strives to give each girl a voice and an opportunity to grow.

She has also witnessed significant changes in the Girl Scouts over the years. Technology has transformed everything from communication to cookie sales, with online ordering systems

replacing the paper order forms she once carried as a scout. New leaders have brought fresh ideas and innovative approaches while maintaining the organization's core mission of developing girls into strong leaders.

Perhaps one of the most rewarding aspects of her service has been watching former Girl Scouts return to become leaders themselves. Today, three (3) former troop members are actively helping lead and mentor the next generation of girls, continuing the cycle of leadership and service that she has worked so hard to establish.

As for the future, she has no plans to step away from the Girl Scouts anytime soon. Having recently become a lifetime member, she remains committed to supporting the organization and mentoring younger leaders who will continue the work for years to come.

"As long as I'm able, I'll play some part in being a Girl Scout," she shared.

After 30 years of dedicated service, Elaine Sims' impact can be measured not only in awards earned or trips taken, but in the lives she has helped shape. Through her leadership, countless girls have gained confidence, discovered new possibilities, and learned the value of service—creating a legacy that will continue for generations to come.



Minister Gregory Scott

Building a Stronger Future for Eagle Students

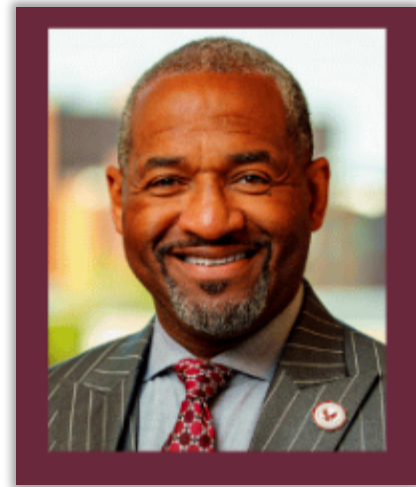
Leadership, mentorship, and community connection remain at the center of NCCU's vision for the future

by Carlette Jameson

Minister Gregory Scott of Atlanta, Georgia, was recently appointed to the North Carolina Central University (NCCU) Board of Visitors. I had a chance to speak with him briefly, and before the interview started, we reminisced about our days on the campus of the “sloping hills and verdant green.” Our conversation took us back to our cafeteria with the mint green and pastel yellow or blue cafeteria trays and “meal cards” that the cafeteria lady would hole punch upon checkout, to our tiny bookstore in the Student Union where books were once the only thing you could purchase. Minister Scott spoke fondly of his time at Central. He credits his 33 years of success in law enforcement and various government roles to his foundation at NCCU, noting that his career connections and networking opportunities were all because of our alma mater.

The NCCU Board of Visitors is made up of professionals from various areas in the community who have come together to support key areas of the University's growth and development. Its primary focus is centered around finances, specifically finances for programs - i.e., gap funding, athletics, student housing, and other various funding initiatives essential to the University's continued success. Minister Scott will serve on committees that will target specific initiatives that will help to lead the way in these efforts.

For Minister Scott, accepting this appointment is a way of giving back to a university that helped shape his future. He shared that he wanted to be part of something he believes is continuing to grow and evolve. Chancellor Karrie G. Dixon has



made it a priority to revitalize this vital board. Minister Scott, along with 16 other dynamic industry leaders, was specifically appointed by the Chancellor to rejuvenate the board and strengthen the university's outreach and engagement efforts. Together, they will serve as NCCU's ambassadors to align engagement with local, state, and national stakeholders. By utilizing their expertise skills, the strong relationships they have, and the deep connection to Central, it is the goal to strengthen North Carolina Central University's impact as an economic driver and help the university reach even greater heights.

During the interview, Minister Scott spoke enthusiastically about the university's future and the responsibility shared among the newly appointed board members to help elevate NCCU even further. He emphasized his desire to support both student advancement and the university as a whole, while helping Central continue to grow

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into a globally competitive institution where students can succeed at every level.

Minister Scott's professional background and long-standing relationships within the Durham community make him a tremendous asset to NCCU students and the university as a whole. Through connections established during his years in law enforcement, as well as relationships built with fellow alumni and community leaders, he believes the Board of Visitors can help increase the university's visibility and create meaningful opportunities for students.

He also believes that strengthening financial support systems can ease the burdens many families face while opening doors for students through expanded resources and opportunities. Beyond Durham, Minister Scott views this effort

as part of a broader push to increase NCCU's presence at the national and international levels.

One of the greatest opportunities this new Board of Visitors will bring to Central over the next few years is the continued evolution of the school. It will also be a great opportunity for NCCU to compete with other universities academically and professionally in a global sense. As the university continues to grow, Minister Scott says he is excited not only to serve on the Board of Visitors, but also to help continue the rich legacy of university founder James E. Shepard.

With pride and optimism for the future of Central, Minister Scott summed up his excitement best when he shared, **"I just want to be a cast member in the bigger scheme of what's to come!"**

Review Visionary Leader Shaping Lives—Jaemellah Jackson

by Carlette Jameson

Our very own **Jaemellah Jackson** is a dedicated leader, mentor, author, and strategist whose passion for service continues to impact lives both within and beyond the church. Through her work in nonprofit leadership and youth development, she has helped organizations strengthen their boards, cultivate effective leaders, and expand their reach in the communities they serve.

Known for her commitment to excellence and purpose-driven leadership, Jaemellah invests her time and talents into empowering others to grow, lead, and thrive. Her influence extends through coaching, training, mentoring, and speaking, helping individuals and organizations build a strong foundation for lasting success.

In addition to her leadership work, Jaemellah is an accomplished author of *20 Must-Ask Questions to Recruit a Rockstar Board* and a creative voice whose song *Oil & Fire* reflects her passion for inspiring and uplifting others.

We are honored to celebrate Jaemellah Jackson and her continued dedication to building leaders, strengthening communities, and leaving a legacy of service, faith, and impact.



SANCTUARY HAPPENINGS . . .

BE THE CHURCH SUNDAY

“Uniting To Make An Impact”

by JC McCreary

On May 31, 2026, four churches in Prince George’s County, Maryland—The Sanctuary at Kingdom Square (TSAKS), Antioch Baptist Church, Christ Way Cathedral, and Greater Saint John Cathedral—joined together for ***Be the Church Sunday***. This collaborative effort brought the church beyond its walls and directly into the community and globally to serve others and spread God’s love in practical ways.

Volunteers, including leaders and members from each congregation, along with community members, came together to serve with a shared purpose: to make a meaningful impact wherever help was needed.

The turnout exceeded expectations, reaching more than 60,000 people through the combined efforts of the participating churches in one day! Individuals and families received food, clothing, prayer, and care—demonstrating faith in action and answering the call to serve others.

TSAKS contributed through several outreach efforts, making an impact, including:



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Sanctuary Happenings—continued



- Assembling and packaging meals for children in Bangladesh
- Serving free gas to 700 vehicles
- Distributing free groceries to 160 families
- Offering free clothing for men, women, and children
- Visiting nursing homes
- Kingdom Agents prepared goody bags for underprivileged students for delivery to Tayac Elementary School in Fort Washington, Maryland.

Following the outreach activities, volunteers and community members

“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, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”

Matthew 25:35-36 - NIV

gathered for a celebration at Montpelier Farms in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. The event featured food trucks, live music, games, bounce houses for the children, and activities for all ages. Additional support included energy bill assistance and community safety resources such as tips for staying safe and distribution of steering wheel locks provided by the Prince George’s County Police Department.

The event also received support from Maryland Governor Wes Moore and Prince George’s County Executive Aisha N. Braveboy, who attended and showed their encouragement. The day was marked by fellowship, connection, and joy, as attendees prayed, shared meals, built relationships, and celebrated together. Favorable weather and strong participation contributed to the event’s success.

Due to its impact, additional churches have already expressed interest in participating next year, signaling continued growth and greater opportunities to serve.

We can’t wait to see what God will accomplish through those who love and want to serve Him, in Jesus’ Holy name!

MOTHER'S DAY BRUNCH

by JC McCreary

The event was beautifully done and thoughtfully planned. It was designed to honor women who “mother” selflessly and care for others every day.

The church Conference Center was transformed into an elegant dining ballroom. A red-carpet runway and photo backdrop set the stage for professional pictures by Brother Clarence McIntosh, who made sure every woman had a chance to capture a great shot.

The entertainment kept everyone engaged, from a hilarious comedian to a DJ who played gospel and a touch of R&B, including Mary J. Blige. The women enjoyed line dancing and wobbling, and each guest received a gift along with a framed Hollywood star bearing her name.

Outside the ballroom, the hallway was lined with vendors, creating a “Rodeo Drive” shopping experience with booths featuring clothing, jewelry, handbags, beauty products, prayer pillows, and more.

The pièce de résistance of the day was the food—fresh, delicious, and plentiful. Guests could also enjoy a mimosa station if they wished.

We prayed before, during, and after the festivities, giving thanks to God and Jesus for the blessing of life and the opportunity to enjoy such a meaningful time of rest. Fellowship with our sisters in Christ was enlightening and comforting, and the day was deeply appreciated by all who attended.

I can’t wait to see what comes up for Mother’s Day 2027!



Spotlight on the Missions Ministry

Minister Charlene Anderson, Captain

In March 2026, The Sanctuary at Kingdom Square (TSAKS), Missions Ministry, received recognition from the Baptist Women of North America (BWNA), for their work and accomplishments from 2025. It came in the form of an award and a monetary blessing of \$5,000! The money was used to assist the ministry in continuing the very valuable services they provide to underprivileged children and their parents, currently living in shelters for those experiencing homelessness.



The BWNA is the member body of the Lott Carey Global Christian Missional Community.

The organization provides prayer partnership, financial support and technical assistance to international leaders, to touch lives across the globe, with transforming love. They execute this mission across four core pillars:

- Evangelism
- Compassion
- Empowerment
- Advocacy

TSAKS Missions Ministry partners with Community Crisis Services Incorporated, (CCSI), to ensure that they reach the most extremely disadvantaged members of the community. CCSI provides a 24/7/365 Social Safety Net and is the first point of contact for people experiencing crises across Prince George's County.

This recognition is well deserved! Here at TSAKS **Minister Charlene and her team** are a true testament of how God has commanded all of us who make up the church, which is the body of Christ Himself, to love, care for and serve one another. Jesus' walk and teachings in living, breathing form.

We are so inspired and the Newsletter Ministry is compelled to bring more of the work and real-life stories about how the Missions Ministry serves to change the lives of the ones living amongst us who need us (the church) the most.

Evangelism + Compassion + Empowerment + Advocacy

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

Revelation 22:21 KJV

CHRISTMAS IN APRIL 2026

by Christa Bennett

A time-honored tradition, Christmas in April is an opportunity for hundreds of humbled residents across Prince George's County, MD, to join hands and volunteer to bring much joy and comfort to senior citizens living across the county. Beginning in 1989, with a vision and open heart, the volunteer organization has flourished in helping thousands of senior citizens with low-income and others with physical impairments with no-cost home repairs, ensuring they are being honorably cared for. There are numerous heartfelt stories of helping hands that have pitched in to help those in need, and these stories are commended and shared across the communities. These stories are uplifting reflections of the hardship, sacrifice, achievement, and celebrations of life, all symbolic representations of Christ's love and sacrifice for humanity. Though Christmas in April is celebrated once a year, it is a cherished annual honor for The Sanctuary to partner in this community-wide effort for the elderly residents of Prince George's County, MD.

At a time when the world is so divided, with many feeling lost and confused, doing a good deed with a cheerful heart is certainly a way to supercharge the spirit. On Saturday, April 25,

members of The Sanctuary Missions Ministry and the Air National Guard (ANG) from Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, gathered to bring comfort and joy to Ms. Dorothy's spirit by revitalizing her home. Ms. Dorothy, a vibrant, graceful, and faithful servant of the Lord, has lived in Prince George's County for many years. She has served her community as a volunteer for charitable missions and has supported many church ministries, always lending a helping hand wherever needed. Now, she sits quietly on Sunday

mornings in her pew of choice, absorbing the Word of God, knowing that she has faithfully completed her assignments from God. On the special day, she was over-whelmed with gratitude when volunteers arrived outside her home. She took each volunteer's hands and welcomed them with a heart-warming thanksgiving. Feeling excited and ready to execute, we were all reminded that no work can be performed without giving thanks to God for His grace and mercy. With heads bowed, eyes closed, and hands joined together, Ms. Dorothy,

continued on next page—





with a soothing voice, led a prayer of thanksgiving, reminding all of us that even in the midst of so much discord, there is still hope for those to seek salvation, and that we all have a lot to be thankful for. We should reflect on His blessings and grace daily.

With looming clouds and potential rain lurking in the atmosphere, sheer determination was clearly present on April 25. Even a gloomy day couldn't deter the people of God from showing up and showing out, to put it simply. A call to duty from our Heavenly Father was quietly echoed amongst the inspiring team, ready to bring some comfort to a wonderful and faithful servant of God. *"If you keep yourself pure, you will be a*

special utensil for honorable use. Your life will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work." (2 Timothy 2:21) Leading the way, the ANG was prepared to ensure that everyone had a job and no one was left behind in partaking in a noteworthy cause.

With a commanding but cheerful tone, the Captain called everyone to attention. The Ambassadors of Christ carefully listened and absorbed the instructions eagerly, ready to take their positions and move out to execute the mission. Cheerful laughter and chatter rang throughout the home as busy hands were hard at work. With many gifted hands on-site, it was a solid reassurance for the homeowner that everything was going to be alright. Volunteers

restored a deck, painted walls, hung curtains, installed carpet and new commodes, organized books, reconfigured and cleaned rooms, and compiled trash and more in the home. The many gifted volunteers were excited to showcase their skills in every possible way, representing their community, country, and in the classroom as teachers, administrators, professional painters, engineers, gardeners, and visionaries. Members of The Sanctuary Missions Ministry were also present, bringing their talents and experience to the effort with strong, unparalleled commitment to serving with honor and grace. *"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."* (James 4:6 NLT)

As the volunteers began packing up, the Captain looked around and, feeling satisfied, shared his thoughts on the work completed. Paraphrasing his statement, "This is what the world should look like with people who are humble and truly care about the work they do for humanity." Determination, faithfulness, trust, heartfelt commitment, and obedience are key to serving others with grace. When you are called to serve as an Ambassador for Christ, there should be no hesitation to do it. Paraphrasing Pastor Brandon, "You are the solution by God's anointing." There are many promising opportunities to serve God's people, and as faithful servants, we should be ready for God to call us into action. Caring is sharing!

Welcome Our Newest TSAKS Newsletter Writer

by Christa Bennett

Greetings! I am **Christa Bennett**, a new writer for The Sanctuary at Kingdom Square (TSAKS) National Newsletter and am delighted to join the TSAKS Newsletter team and so grateful to have an opportunity to work with an amazing group of talented individuals. Creative writing and illustration are my niches and being able to share my writings and illustrations with others is truly a blessing. I have long desired to write stories or articles that help others to feel a connection to other heartwarming stories, stay informed of what's happening in the church or around the nation and to help readers reimagine their individual lives through different perspectives.

I am a native of Oklahoma and have had the opportunity to travel as a military dependent, a federal worker, and live abroad embracing a world of different cultures, languages, tasty dishes and hospitality. Like many other military families, my family and I were fortunate enough to travel to different countries and other parts of the United States such as Portugal, Alaska, Hawaii, Germany and Turkey where we made new friends and, in some cases, embraced others to become part of our extended family. It wasn't easy at first being a young mother of two (2) and having to adjust to a different way of living, especially when you are separated by thousands of miles from your loved ones back home. As time evolved, my family and I adjusted as expected and for 28 years we have settled in Prince George's County, MD where this area is our second home away from home.

I recently retired after 33-years of civil service with the Department of Defense and Defense Intelligence Agency where I proudly served my country. I earned a bachelor's in criminal justice from Wayland Baptist University and a master's in public administration from Troy State University. I have reflected on the many leadership and other endeavors that I pursued throughout my government career and have come to realize that my true desire is to continue sharing my thinking out of the box and creativity aspirations with others alike. I live much of a quiet life with my husband and often share time with our daughter and her family who live in California, our beautiful grandchildren in North Carolina and other military families and friends that we have met during our travels across the country.

My daughter and I accepted Christ and joined Glendale Baptist Church now The Sanctuary at Kingdom Square in the early 2000s where I have truly been blessed by the love of Bishop Maclin, First Lady Maclin and family and the congregation. Although I accepted Christ at a very young age, rededicating my life as an adult has been a rewarding experience, especially knowing that my Heavenly Father has given me another chance to live righteously according to His Word. As a recent graduate of the MasterLife Disciple Program, I now know that God has His hands on me guiding me along my path every day to be faithful and obedient to His Word.



A New Writer Joins the Newsletter Ministry

by Jarin Penn



Hey all! My name is **Jarin Penn**, and I'm thrilled to be contributing as a writer for the TSAKS Newsletter Ministry. If you've been around The Sanctuary at Kingdom Square long enough, there's a chance you've seen a flyer, a program, a brochure, a design, or even an older version of the website that I was privileged to work on. I actually worked on a previous iteration of the Newsletter under Minister Charlene Anderson, so in a way, this feels like a homecoming!

I like to say that TSAKS helped raise me. Truly, it's been foundational. I grew up here back when it was still Glendale Baptist. I sang in the choir (with varying degrees of skill), jumped on chairs getting too hype leading Tye Tribbett songs, played basketball with the Glendale Gladiators, and stayed up way too late at lock-ins. Spiritually, creatively, and emotionally, this

church has been woven into the fabric of my life for as long as I can remember. It's also where I married my beautiful wife, Morgan, so it's safe to say TSAKS has been a part of my biggest milestones.

I'm a native of the DMV area, born and raised. Professionally, I wear a few hats. I'm a graphic designer and owner of JPenn Creative, and I served as TSAKS's graphic designer for nearly ten years before COVID changed the landscape.

Outside of design, I'm also a published fiction author and spoken word poet. Writing has always been my thing, even when life got busy. I'm also a gospel hip-hop artist, though I'll be honest: four kids will slow down your music career just a little bit. Speaking of which, I'm a proud homeschool dad to four amazing children, and have a brand new appreciation of what functional organized chaos looks like.

One of the things I'm most excited about with this opportunity is getting to stretch my writing muscles in a new direction. I've written fiction, poetry, and song lyrics, but writing for the church community hits different. There's something special about using the gifts God has given you to serve the people and community who helped shape you.

My favorite Scripture is Joshua 1:9 — *"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."* That verse has carried me through every season, every career pivot, every late night, and every new chapter. It reminds me that none of this is done alone.

I'm grateful to be here, grateful to be writing, and grateful to still call The Sanctuary at Kingdom Square home. Looking forward to sharing stories, encouragement, and maybe a laugh or two with you all through this newsletter!

In Joyful Harmony: The Sanctuary Welcomes the Putte Nelsson Sweden Gospel Collective

A Transatlantic Evening of Gospel, Fellowship, and Community

by Denise Polk

A Night to Remember

On Thursday, May 21, 2026, The Sanctuary's choir rehearsal room buzzed with excitement as voices gathered for a special joint rehearsal. The Music & Fine Arts Ministry welcomed the Putte Nelsson Sweden Gospel Collective, a renowned choir whose passion for gospel, pop, and soul music reaches across continents.

About the Putte Nelsson Sweden Gospel Collective

Led by Putte Nelsson, this musical community includes more than 1,800 members in the Swedish cities of Stockholm, Jönköping, and Linköping. The "Gospel Collective" welcomes all who love to sing, regardless of age or background. Their visit to the United States was an opportunity to experience gospel music at its roots, and The Sanctuary was honored to be part of that journey. Their time in the Washington, DC-area included visits to local churches, sightseeing, and creating meaningful connections and lasting memories along the way.

Crossing Borders, Sharing Songs

Guided by our own Choir Director Brian Hill, the combined choirs joined in rehearsal and fellowship. Over 30 members of the Gospel Collective brought vibrant energy, shared their musical gifts, and deepened our sense of unity. In return, we extended the warm hospitality The Sanctuary is known for, ensuring every guest felt welcome and valued.

Preparing for Pentecost Worship Experience

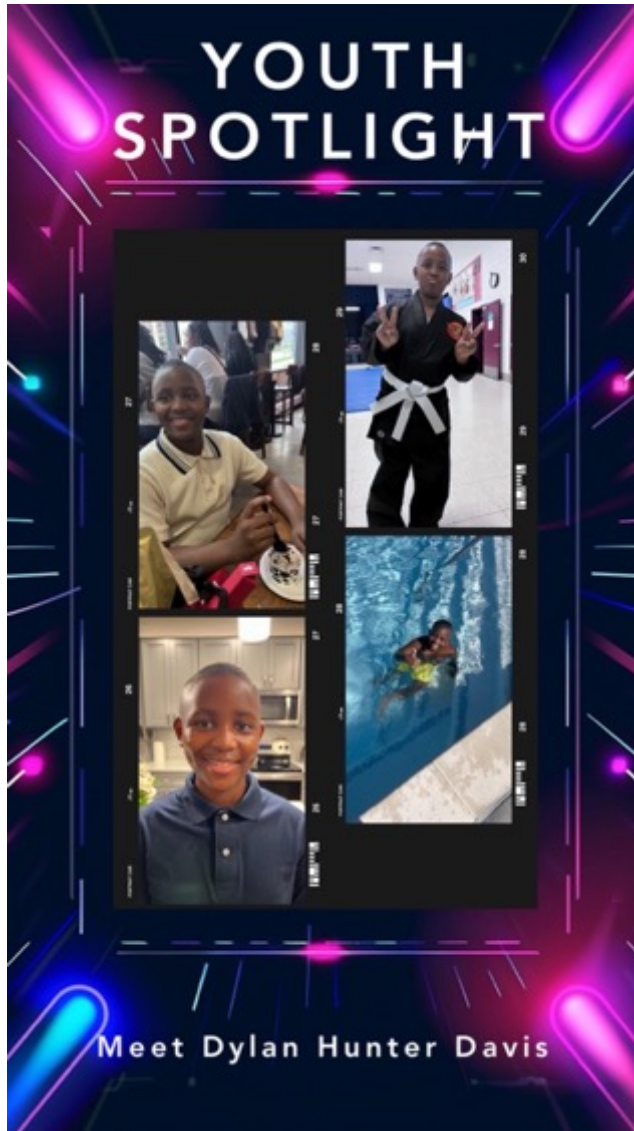
As rehearsal continued, preparations for the Pentecost Worship Experience took on even greater meaning. The exchange with the Gospel Collective inspired fresh musical energy and reminded us of the universal language of song and spirit. The evening felt especially meaningful as we prepared our rendition of "Manifest" by gospel artist Jonathan Nelson for Pentecost Sunday. As we sang together, it felt as though the Holy Spirit rested on us all, echoing the moment described in Acts 2:1-4. United in purpose and voice, we celebrated the beauty of music, fellowship, and faith.

We are grateful for the opportunity to share this experience and look forward to all that lies ahead. The Sanctuary remains a place where music and spirit intertwine, welcoming all to join in joyful harmony.



When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Acts 2:1-4 NIV

WHAT'S THE 411? KINGDOM AGENTS



Dylan Hunter Davis is one of TSAKS' budding youths from the Kingdom Agents! He has been a Kingdom Agent for two years. What Dylan loves most about being a part of the Kingdom Agents,

is that he is learning how to be a young disciple and how to grow closer to God.

Dylan is 12 years old and attends Aunie's Learning Center, a homeschool preparatory school. Dylan says that some days he loves school, and other days not so much. What he likes most is that he learns two (2) grade levels above his current grade, which helps him to grow. What he doesn't like that much about school is the amount of work that he has to complete every day.

When Dylan is not in school, he enjoys playing on his iPad and PlayStation. He also enjoys playing football and swimming.

As a child of God, Dylan lives his life by being kind to others and helping his friends out when they don't understand something. He also aims to make good decisions and to be a good example for others. He says prayer is important to him because it allows him to talk to God and tell Him how he feels every day. Dylan strengthens his relationship with the Lord by memorizing bible verses every day and following His commandments.

When asked who he would like to interview, Dylan said he would want to interview his godfather, Justin, because he is so important to him. Dylan said, "The top question I would ask him is about his life growing up in New York and what it was like working in the church."

Fun Facts about Dylan...

- If he could go anywhere in the world, he would go to Japan and the Bahamas for about a month because he thinks both places have amazing food and that makes Dylan happy.



Zoey Dashiell is one of TSAKS' seasoned youth from the Kingdom Agents! She has been a part of the Kingdom Agents since she was about three (3) years old. When asked what she loves about being a part of the Kingdom Agents, Zoey said

that she loves to be able to learn about Jesus and being able to connect with kids her age.

Zoey attends Prince George's Christian Academy. She is 12 years old. She really enjoys school because she likes the people and her teachers there. She especially likes the activities that her school provides. Whenever she can, Zoey always tries to help her classmates out with their work if they don't understand. When she is at school, Zoey lets her light shine by helping others, being kind to everyone and just being a good listener.

Zoey is extremely creative. Her hobbies include a variety of cool things. She loves building Legos, playing volleyball, and dancing. She also loves to make junk phone cases.

Outside of school, Zoey enjoys talking on the phone with her friends and building Legos, but hanging out with her friends is what she likes best.

Zoey loves spending time with God. Praying allows her to talk and connect with God. She says she talks to God about any and everything to continuously strengthen her relationship with Him.

If Zoey could interview anyone, she'd choose God. She chose God because she says He has done so many things for so many different reasons and of all the questions anyone would ask God, she said, she would ask Him "why did He choose Jesus to do all these wonderful miracles instead of any other person."

Fun Facts about Zoey...

- If she could go anywhere in the world, she would go to Hawaii for about two (2) months because it looks very tropical and a fun place.
- Spending time with God, her family, and her friends make her happy!

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS . . .

Trials, Testing, and Faith

by Minister Robert Hines
TSAKS Minister to the Seniors

Consider it all joy, my brothers, whenever you encounter various trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing.

James 1:2-4.

MMy brothers and my sisters, James never suggested to his readers that Christianity would be for them an easy way. He warns them that they will find themselves involved in what the Authorized Version (commonly known as the King James Version) calls divers temptations. The word translated as temptations is “peirasmos,” whose meaning we must understand fully if we are to see the very essence of the Christian life.

Peirasmos is not temptation in our sense of the term; it is testing (trial in the Revised Standard Version). Peirasmos is trial or testing directed towards an end, and the end is that anyone who is tested should emerge stronger and purer from the experience. The corresponding verb “peirazein,” which the Authorized Version usually translates as to tempt, has the same meaning. The idea is not that of enticement into sin but of strengthening and purifying. For instance, a young bird is said to test (peirazein) its wings. The Queen of Sheba was said to come to test (peirazein) the wisdom of Solomon (1 Kings 10:1). God was said to test (peirazein) Abraham, when he appeared to be demanding the sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 22:1). When Israel came into the promised land, God did not remove the people who were already there. He left them so that Israel might be tested (peirazein) in the struggle against them (Judges 2:22, 3:1, 3:4). The experiences in Israel were tests which contributed to the making of the people of Israel (Deuteronomy 4:34, 7:19).

Here is a great and uplifting thought. F. J. A. Hort, the New Testament scholar, writes: “The Christian must expect to be jostled by trials on the Christian way.” All kinds of experiences will come to us. There will be the test of the sorrows and the disappointments that seek to take our faith away. There will be the test of the seductions that seek to lure us from the right way. There will be the tests of the dangers, the sacrifices, and the unpopularity that are so much a part of the Christian way. But they are not meant to make us fall; they are meant to make us soar. They are not meant to defeat us; they are meant to be defeated. They are not meant to make us weaker; they are meant to make us stronger. Therefore, we should not complain about them; we should rejoice in them. Christians are like athletes. The heavier the course of training they undergo, the more they are glad, because they know that it is preparing them all the better for a victorious effort. As Robert Browning said in his poem



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“Rabbi Ben Ezra,” we must “welcome each rebuff that turns earth’s smoothness rough,” for every difficult experience is another step on the upward way.

James describes this process of testing by the Greek word “dokimion.” It is an interesting word. It is the word for sterling coinage, for money which is genuine and absolutely pure. The aim of testing is to purge us of all impurity. If we meet this testing in the right way, it will produce unswerving constancy (or steadfastness as the Revised Standard Version translates it). The Greek word is “hupomonē,” which the Authorized Version translates as patience, but patience is far too passive. Hupomonē is not simply the ability to bear things; it is the ability to turn them to greatness and to glory. The thing that amazed the non-Christians in the centuries of Christian persecution was that the martyrs did not die grimly; they died singing. One smiled in the flames; they asked him what he found to smile at there. “I saw the glory of God,” he said, “and was glad.” Hupomonē is the quality that enables people not simply to suffer things but to overcome them. The effect of testing borne in the right way is the strength to bear still more and to conquer in still harder battles.

My brothers and my sisters, this unswerving constancy in the end makes those who are tested three things.

First. It makes them perfect. The Greek word is “teleios,” which usually has the meaning of perfection towards a given end. A sacrificial animal is teleios if it is fit to offer to God. A scholar is teleios if he or she is mature. A person who is fully grown is teleios. This constancy, which comes from a positive response to testing, makes each one of us

teleios in the sense of being fit for the task we were sent into the world to do. Here is a great thought. By the way in which we meet every experience in life, we are making ourselves either fit or unfit for the task which God meant us to do. Amen.

Second. It makes them complete. The Greek word is “holoklēros,” which means entire, perfect in every part. It is used of the animal which is fit to be offered to God and of the priest who is fit to serve him. It means that the animal or the person has no disfiguring and disqualifying blemishes. Gradually, this unswerving constancy removes the weaknesses and the imperfections from a person’s character. Daily, it enables us to conquer old sins, to shed old blemishes, and to gain new virtues, until in the end we become entirely fit for the service of God and of one another.

Third. It makes them deficient in nothing. The Greek word is “leipesthai,” and it is used for the defeat of an army, of the giving up of a struggle, of the failure to reach a standard that should have been reached. If we meet our testing in the right way, if day by day we develop this unswerving constancy, day by day we will live more victoriously and reach nearer to the standard of Jesus Christ himself. Amen.

Have a wonderful and blessed day in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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Minister Robert Hines
Minister to the Seniors

Source: William Barclay (Bible Commentary)

JAMES 1:2-4

Emergency Preparedness at The Sanctuary at Kingdom Square

Be Ready, Stay Calm, Follow Instructions

At The Sanctuary at Kingdom Square, the safety and well-being of our congregation remain a top priority. While we pray that emergencies never occur, being prepared allows us to respond wisely and confidently if they do.

Our Emergency Preparedness Team has developed procedures to help protect every member, guest, and visitor while at our church. Whether responding to severe weather, a medical emergency, a fire alarm, or another unexpected event, we ask all members to remember three simple principles:

1. Be Ready. 2. Stay Calm. 3. Follow Instructions.

What Should You Do During an Emergency?

- **Stay Calm** – Take a deep breath and remain calm.
- **Follow Instructions** – Listen to and follow directions from the emergency preparedness team and church leaders.
- **Use the Nearest Safe Exit** – At the direction of the emergency preparedness team, leave the building through the nearest safe exit when instructed.
- **Proceed to Your Assembly Area** – Move to your designated gathering location and check in.

- **Wait for the All Clear** – Do not re-enter the building until the safety team provide instructions.

New Emergency Preparedness Bookmark

To help everyone become familiar with these procedures, each member will receive an **Emergency Preparedness Bookmark in July**. This convenient resource includes emergency response steps and a link to additional preparedness information.

We encourage every member to:

- Keep the bookmark in your Bible or devotional book.
- Review the emergency procedures with your family, especially children.
- Become familiar with the exits nearest your regular seating area.
- Participate in future safety drills and training opportunities.

A Shared Responsibility

Emergency preparedness is not just the responsibility of the emergency preparedness team—it is a shared responsibility of our entire church family. By staying informed and collaborating, we can help ensure a safe and secure environment for worship, fellowship, and ministry.

For more information, visit www.tsaks.org and select the Discover tab to access the Emergency Preparedness FAQ.

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” Psalm 46:1



**SEEKING WRITERS
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