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CEWC NEWS

Truth for the Journey

Book of Psalms 23:1-3 presents restoration as a divine act in which God lovingly guides the believer back to spiritual wholeness, stability, and renewed purpose. The term *restore* means to return something or someone to its intended condition or original state. Within this passage, the psalmist portrays God as a shepherd who not only provides physical sustenance, but also nurtures the emotional, spiritual, and psychological well-being of His people. Seeking the Lord and pursuing His righteousness becomes the foundation of the restorative process, for true healing begins when one submits to God's guidance and care.

The passage suggests that restoration encompasses far more than material provision. God's desire is to restore peace, health, clarity, joy, and inner stability—those intangible qualities that sustain a person's overall well-being. The imagery of green pastures and still waters symbolizes places of safety, renewal, and rest for the weary soul. In this sense, divine restoration involves both comfort and transformation, enabling individuals to recover from seasons of brokenness, grief, trauma, or spiritual exhaustion.

At the same time, restoration requires human participation and intentionality. While God initiates healing, individuals must also confront the circumstances, wounds, and patterns that contributed to their brokenness. This often involves accountability, self-reflection, and the willingness to seek support through healthy and constructive means, including counseling and mental health professionals. Such resources should not be viewed as contrary to faith, but rather as instruments that can assist in the healing process God intends for His people.

Furthermore, restoration is frequently tested through life's recurring experiences. Often, God permits individuals to encounter situations similar to those that once caused pain or spiritual defeat. These moments become opportunities for growth and evidence of genuine healing. A transformed response demonstrates emotional maturity, spiritual development, and the effectiveness of the restorative work God has accomplished within the individual. Thus, restoration is not merely the removal of pain, but the cultivation of renewed strength, wisdom, and resilience through

ROAD TO CONSECRATION
Atlanta
CITY LIMIT

ACCOMMODATIONS

- HOLIDAY INN & SUITES ATLANTA AIRPORT NORTH
RATES STARTING AT \$139/ PER NIGHT
- EMBASSY SUITES BY HILTON ATLANTA AIRPORT
RATES STARTING AT \$165/ PER NIGHT
- MARRIOTT GATEWAY - ATLANTA AIRPORT
RATES STARTING AT \$209/ PER NIGHT
- GROUND TRANSPORTATION
TO AND FROM THE SERVICE - PROVIDED BY CEWC

CAREY CONNER MTH
BISHOP DESIGNATE
JULY 29 - AUG 1

The Bishop's Ball

SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY
AUGUST 29, 2026

CONNECTING WITH THE CITY

FAITH. | VISION. | IMPACT. | LEGACY.

TICKETS
\$125

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION COMING SOON

GRACE COMMUNITY OF CHELSEA INTERNATIONAL
MARCUS

The Anthropology of the Community We Serve: A Las Vegas Native's Perspective

Our church is not simply located near the Historic Westside of Las Vegas; it is planted in the very heart of it. More specifically, Embassy is situated within the Vegas Heights neighborhood, the area where the majority of our demographic resides. Historically, Vegas Heights represented opportunity, stability, and community for many African American families in Las Vegas. It was here that families purchased homes, raised children, built generational roots, and established churches that reflected the diverse faith traditions within the neighborhood.

For decades, it was often said jokingly that there was “a church on every corner” of the Westside and that they might as well all come together. Yet there was always something uniquely special about the church located at 1072 W. Bartlett. Originally a small white church founded and pastored by Elder Robert Tolefree, the ministry later transitioned under the leadership of Superintendent (now Bishop) Bill H. McDonnell and Missionary (now Lady-Elect) Alma F. McDonnell following Elder Tolefree's passing. Under their leadership, Ebenezer COGIC—now Wealthy Place Ministries—became a heartbeat within the community.

Its impact was deeply connected to both its location and its people. The ministry drew an overwhelming number of youth and young adults, many of whom connected with the church because the leadership themselves were young, raising families, and relatable to the realities of the community. The church became more than a place of worship; it became a center of belonging, guidance, and hope. Though the building has since undergone renovations and housed various occupants over the years, it now belongs to Embassy, and its heart still beats for a community in need of restoration and hope.

Today, the community remains predominantly African American, with many younger families residing alongside a smaller population of elders who originally helped establish the neighborhood. Many residents have spent most, if not all, of their lives within the Westside community. For some, their sense of hope and security is tied directly to the church, trusted relationships, and the familiarity of their surroundings. Economically, much of the community falls between the poverty line and working-class status, creating both visible and invisible barriers that affect opportunity, mobility, and access.

As a Las Vegas native raised on the Westside in the Winslow Park area north of the Heights, I understand firsthand that this community has always functioned as an extended family. Family was never limited to blood relations; the neighborhood itself operated as a village. Though I am biologically related to many Las Vegas residents, there are just as many individuals I affectionately call cousins, aunties, and uncles because we were raised together within the same community fabric. That sense of care, protection, and collective responsibility still resonates whenever I return to the neighborhood.

The Historic Westside has always possessed a vibrant culture and identity that can only truly be understood by those who experienced it firsthand. Before the expansion of major fast-food chains, neighborhood staples such as McNeil's Corner Store on Martin Luther King Boulevard and Carey Avenue served as gathering places where children bought barrel juices, snacks, and small comforts of daily life. Jimmy's Market—now Mario's Market—provided fresh catfish, deli food, groceries, and fresh-cut meats to families throughout the area. Community institutions such as the Doolittle Community Center and the West Las Vegas Library Theatre & Arts Center offered recreational, educational, and artistic opportunities that shaped generations of children during the summer months. While many of these resources still exist today, the atmosphere surrounding them has shifted as generations have aged and community dynamics have changed.

Over time, many of the community's strongest influencers either relocated, passed away, or became lost to incarceration. For some youth, gang culture emerged as a substitute for identity, security, and belonging. As these shifts occurred, the communal “village” that once defined the Heights began to weaken. In addition, some longstanding churches became heavily rooted in tradition, unintentionally creating generational divides that limited growth and engagement with younger residents.

The decline in consistent community involvement became especially noticeable as the building at 1072 W. Bartlett transitioned through various occupants before eventually sitting vacant. As someone who knows this community intimately, I recognize the significance of that reality. This building once housed thriving ministries within walking distance for neighborhood residents—many of whom lacked reliable transportation to travel beyond the area for worship, mentorship, or support. When those ministries disappeared, accessible spiritual and communal resources became increasingly limited.

Now that Embassy has inherited this space, we also inherit a unique responsibility and opportunity: to breathe life back into the Heights. The work may take time, patience, and intentional relationship-building, but we firmly believe we are equipped to fulfill that mission. More than occupying a building, we seek to restore a sense of hope, connection, and community to a neighborhood that has long carried both deep wounds and extraordinary resilience.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

The Silent Struggle: Men's Mental Health

For generations, men have been taught a simple rule: be strong. Strength, however, has often been defined in the narrowest possible way—silence, endurance, and emotional restraint. From early childhood, our society tells boys not to cry. Boys are programmed not to have feelings. In truth, boys do have feelings. The result is a quiet crisis. Men often struggle internally while appearing “fine” on the outside. The world rarely asks them how they're really doing—or gives them permission to answer honestly. As a result many men carry their battles alone.

From a young age, boys hear messages like: “Don't cry.” “Man up.” “Handle it.” “Be tough.” “Be strong.” These phrases may seem harmless, but they teach men that emotional expression is weakness. Over time, this becomes a barrier to seeking help, even when the need is urgent. Many men fear, being judged, appearing weak, losing respect, or not fitting the “strong man” image. So they stay silent. They attempt to push through. They cope in isolation.

Men experience stress, anxiety, depression, trauma, and loneliness just like anyone else—but they often express it differently. Men may demonstrate their emotions through irritability, withdrawal, fatigue, anger, overworking, emotional numbness. These reactions are frequently ignored, or misunderstood.

Why Men Don't Reach Out

It's not that men don't feel deeply—they do. The issue is that many don't have the language, the space, or the permission to express what they feel. Here are some barriers men experience:

1. Stigma - Men worry that admitting emotional pain will make them appear weak or incapable.
2. Lack of emotional vocabulary - Many men were never taught how to name their feelings, making it harder to communicate them.
3. Limited safe spaces - Men often don't have close circles where vulnerability is welcomed or modeled.

Ways to Support Men's Mental Health

1. Normalizing emotional honesty -Men need to hear—and believe—that vulnerability is not the opposite of strength. It is strength.
2. Creating spaces for real conversations - Whether through community groups, friendships, or online platforms, men benefit from safe (confidentiality respected) places where they can speak without judgment.
3. Encouraging check-ins -A simple “How are you really doing?” can open a door that's been closed for years.
4. Modeling healthy behavior- When one man shares his truth, it gives others permission to do the same.

What Men Need to Hear

- ◆ You're not weak for feeling overwhelmed.
- ◆ You're not alone in your struggles.
- ◆ Asking for help is a sign of courage and emotional intelligence, not failure.
- ◆ Your emotions are valid.
- ◆ You deserve support, connection, and understanding.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Upcoming Career Fairs

Las Vegas Career Fair

Santa Fe Station Hotel and Casino
4949 North Rancho Drive, Las Vegas
Thursday, June 25, 2026
11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Virtual Job Fair – Technology Focus

Santa Fe Station Hotel
4949 N Rancho Dr, Las Vegas, NV 89130
Thursday, June 4, 2026

Virtual Job Fair – General Employers

Tuesday, June 23, 2026
Online Event – Registration Required

Community Events

Living Well Senior Expo:

A Summer of Wellness Camp and Connection

East Las Vegas Library
2851 E Bonanza Rd, Las Vegas, NV 89101
June 12, 2026
10:30 AM – 1:30 PM

DAY OF GRATITUDE

June 6, 2026
Allegiant Stadium
Doors Open at 11AM Begins at 12 PM
Register and get your free tickets online
Day of Gratitude exists to ensure that every Veteran, Service Member, First Responder and their families feel seen, celebrated, and supported.

A Journey Through the Bible: Exploring Places That Still Speak Today

Recently, Bishop Conner assigned the Equip to Serve students a powerful research project: to identify locations mentioned in Scripture, explore their historical significance, and determine whether evidence of those places still exists today. Through biblical study, archaeology, and historical research, students discovered that many places mentioned in the Bible are not only historically documented, but continue to connect modern readers to the reality of Scripture. The following selections highlight how biblical history and present-day discoveries work together to deepen our understanding of God's Word.

Nineveh: A City of Repentance and Historical Proof

One student chose to research Nineveh because the story of Jonah had always been meaningful from childhood. While many remember Jonah and the great fish, deeper study revealed a greater lesson about God's guidance, mercy, and purpose. As Bishop Conner explained, the fish was not only punishment, but also transportation used by God to direct Jonah back toward obedience and destiny. Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire, is prominently mentioned throughout Scripture, especially in the book of Jonah. God commanded Jonah to warn the people of Nineveh to repent from their wickedness. Though Jonah initially fled because of the Assyrians' violent reputation, he eventually obeyed God's command. The people of Nineveh responded with fasting, prayer, and repentance, and God spared the city from destruction.

Historical and archaeological discoveries confirm that Nineveh was a real and powerful ancient city. Located near present-day Mosul, Iraq, excavations uncovered palace ruins, massive city walls, temples, and the famous Library of Ashurbanipal containing thousands of clay tablets. These findings support the Bible's description of Nineveh as a "great city." Research also revealed how relevant Nineveh remains today. The area surrounding ancient Nineveh has appeared in modern news because of war, rebuilding efforts, and preservation projects following ISIS occupation. Studying Nineveh demonstrates how biblical locations continue to connect Scripture, history, and current events, strengthening confidence in the historical credibility of the Bible.

The Sea of Galilee: Where Faith, History, and Ministry Meet

Another Equip to Serve student explored the Sea of Galilee, one of the most important locations in the ministry of Jesus Christ. Known today as Lake Kinneret in modern-day Israel, the Sea of Galilee remains a real and active body of water surrounded by historical sites, fishing communities, and archaeological discoveries that continue to support the biblical record.

The research revealed that the Sea of Galilee was much more than a geographical location in Scripture; it served as the center of Jesus' earthly ministry. Many pivotal moments in the New Testament occurred along its shores, including the calling of Peter, Andrew, James, and John, Jesus teaching the crowds, healing the sick, calming the storm, and walking on water. The region connected major trade routes and surrounding villages, allowing Christ's message to spread rapidly throughout Galilee and beyond. Historical and archaeological evidence continues to confirm the authenticity of the area described in the Gospels. One of the most significant discoveries was the "Jesus Boat," an ancient first-century fishing vessel uncovered in 1986 when drought conditions caused the lake's waters to recede. Though not directly connected to Jesus Himself, the boat closely matches the type of vessel used by fishermen during the time of Christ, offering valuable insight into daily life during the New Testament era.

The student also highlighted how the geography and climate of the Sea of Galilee help explain many biblical events. Surrounded by hills and positioned below sea level, the lake is known for sudden and violent storms caused by shifting winds descending into the basin. This historical and environmental reality gives deeper meaning to passages such as Mark 4, where experienced fishermen feared for their lives before Jesus calmed the storm with His words alone. Today, visitors continue to travel to sites surrounding the Sea of Galilee, including Capernaum and the Yigal Allon Centre, where the ancient fishing boat is displayed. The study of the Sea of Galilee demonstrates how Scripture, history, archaeology, and geography work together to strengthen understanding of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

The Pool of Bethesda: Where Archaeology Confirms the Miracle

Another Equip to Serve student researched the Pool of Bethesda, one of the most historically verified locations connected to the ministry of Jesus. Located near the Sheep Gate in ancient Jerusalem, the Pool of Bethesda is most widely known as the place where Jesus healed a man who had been paralyzed for thirty-eight years, as recorded in John 5:1-15.

The student's research revealed that the biblical account contains remarkable historical and architectural accuracy. Scripture describes the pool as having five covered colonnades where the sick gathered while waiting for the water to stir. For many years, skeptics questioned whether such a structure truly existed. However, archaeological excavations later uncovered two large pools separated by a central wall, creating exactly five colonnaded walkways, matching John's description in precise detail.

Research also showed that the Pool of Bethesda served as a major public gathering place in Jerusalem. Historical evidence suggests the site functioned as a ritual purification area used during Jewish pilgrimage festivals, helping explain why large crowds gathered there. Following the destruction of Jerusalem, the Romans later transformed the area into a healing sanctuary dedicated to pagan gods associated with medicine and restoration, demonstrating the site's longstanding reputation as a place connected to healing.

Today, the ruins of the Pool of Bethesda can still be visited near the Church of Saint Anne in Jerusalem's Old City. Archaeological remains, ancient writings, and historical maps continue to confirm the authenticity of the location described in Scripture.

Most importantly, the research emphasized that the miracle recorded in John 5 did not occur in mythology or symbolism, but at a real and verifiable location filled with real people during a real historical period. The study of the Pool of Bethesda demonstrates how archaeology continues to support the reliability of the biblical record while giving deeper context to the ministry and power of Jesus Christ.

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