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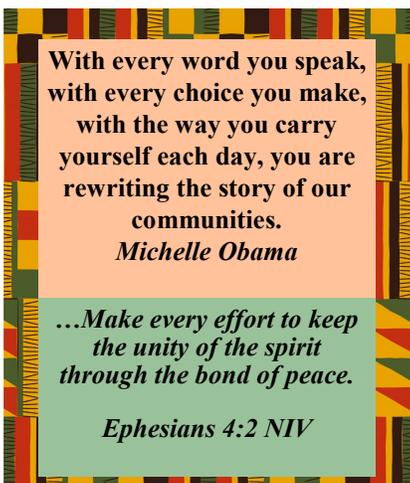


COMEMORATE • CELEBRATE • ADVOCATE
THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

By Deborah S. Andrews

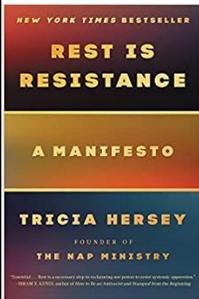
Black History Month is a month-long celebration of African American history and achievement. The celebration illuminates an African American experience that is etched in and critical to the history of our nation. The idea was conceived by historian Carter G. Woodson and fellow African American scholars who in 1926 organized a Negro History Week that slowly evolved in popularity, and in 1976 was expanded into Black History Month with an official designation by President Gerald Ford. The event takes place every year during the month of February, strategically selected to coincide with the birthdays of then-presumed ally President Abraham Lincoln and abolitionist, author and public speaker Frederick Douglas.

Black History Month is celebrated with a range of events at and through various entities including churches, schools, universities, and museums as well as within individual communities across the country, and media forums. Notable and previously unsung African American figures are honored for their contributions to the greater good of our nation. Black stories that are entitled to be



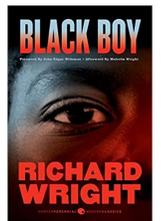
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told are given the space to receive well deserved attention and growth. The African American culture is offered an environment receptive to a celebration of everything it has fought for, and more, including its ideals of freedom, civil rights and justice against systematic unfair treatment in employment, education and housing.



The theme for Black History Month 2023 is **Black Resistance**. It is intended to highlight how African Americans have struggled with all forms of historic and present-day racial inequality. By resisting, African Americans mobilize resources and shape social movements to craft a space for its culture to survive. There is much work to be done to meet the demands of resistance by a culture struggling with disenfranchisement, inequality, classism, racism and other forms of discrimination. African Americans have a constitutional right and civic duty to keep their nation's government in check and demand change. It must be accountable to its creed that everybody is "created equal."

The Zion family celebrates Black History year-round and keeps a keen eye on the news referencing the proposed legislation to prevent the teaching of certain topics/subjects, particularly Black History, in educational institutions. Educators and leaders must continue to make sure their voices are heard, not silenced; and the integrity of the curriculum taught in the classroom, not questioned, but embraced.



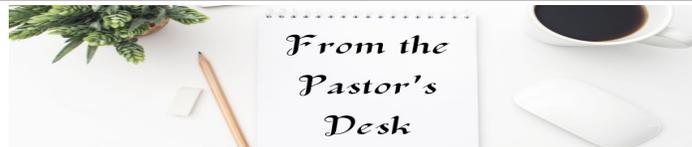
The lessons of Black History month provide us with a way forward by examining the past. There are many stories that have yet to be told about the history of African Americans. Black History Month inspires us to search beyond the typical and seek out the extraordinary. The stories are waiting. We just have to find them.

Because it helps us to remember, there is no more powerful force than a people steeped in their history.

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III, Smithsonian Institution

We ARE **Black Resistance**





Dear Zion Family!

The JOY of the LORD is forever in my spirit as I humbly greet you, my Zion family and friends, in the name of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who daily orders my steps in His Will, His Way, and His Word. Well, it's a new year! So I encourage you to shake off the remnants of the previous year and know that God is crowning this year with favor, presenting us with a great harvest, and is going to bless us in unlikely places. Welcome the provisions of God, our Provider, and watch Him turn things around. Magnify, praise, and honor our Sovereign God and let your light so shine that God's "glory" story is obvious in every phase of your life's journey.

You see, Zion, you cannot make progress in 2023 while looking back at 2022. It's my belief that the fullness of life is realized when we focus on God, our Creator, being the middle or center of every experience of our existence in our homes, our relationships, our jobs, our church, our communities, our society, our schools, and our activities. Through His Word, things can be birthed in one's life and Christians can experience freedom because He's the beginning and the end, and He has the last Word. It is His Word that sanctions love, renews hope, removes despair, protects the weak, instructs the mind, and shields the heart. That's reason enough to give God some "progress" praise every day! When we keep God in the middle or the nucleus of our life and our progress comes to a screeching and an unforeseen halt, we find ourselves in a situation that we can't cross, climb or conquer. However, the good news is that God will change His position based on our predicament. He'll position Himself before us, behind us and beside us; and push us into our purpose and His plan. The blessing is that God's in the middle of situations to give a push or a partition, to become a "Divine Divider" and make a difference in any given situation. Just remember that you can do the impossible if you stay focused; for when you take your eyes off the Christ and start to focus on your crisis, you fail.

As a believing body of Christ, it's not always easy to make a mental adjustment, be bold, and believe that "It's Different This Time." Nevertheless, God constantly reminds us to take authority, know that He has endowed us with strength to keep going, keep working, never lose hope, keep praying, and realize that "greatness" is not determined by prestige or fame, but rather by your desire to be a servant of others. It is hoped that each of us continue to practice being more like Paul who never stopped praying, nor did he ever complain about his current situation, because he knew his experiences, good or bad, shaped his future. To allow God's Will to dominate our life, be conscious of our lifestyle, be consistent in our worship, believe in providence, and continuously work on our relationship with our God surely grow us to a deeper spiritual understanding. In other words, Zion, realize that we'll forever be confronted with changes, challenges, chaos, and even celebrations in our life. Hence, we must realize that if we keep God as the middle, the center or the nucleus of our being, we will move forward knowing that God will block people/things that hinder us from the path He has set for us!

As His children, we are all special in His eyes. Indisputably, we must stay focused on His Will, His purpose and His plan for our life, ask Him to nourish us with His wisdom, never take Him for granted, and know that our present predicament is not permanent. *Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Romans 12:2*

Expect a better year in 2023 because *God's grace offers fresh starts, new perspectives, and the strength we need to persevere and grow!*

Be blessed,



By the time parishioners began arriving at Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church on Saturday evening, December 31, the weather was unbelievably warm for wintertime and it was pouring rain! Nevertheless, at 7:00 p.m. the worship team started singing, "He's All I Need", during which the audience quickly sang along. The Pastor jubilantly entered singing, clapping, greeted the audience, and asked Rev. Harold Sayles to offer the opening prayer.

Remaining true to time and duty, Pastor Cooper offered a short prayer, read his principle scripture, *Numbers 21:4-5*, and entitled his sermon, "Get It Right." Capturing the attention of the audience from beginning to end, Pastor Cooper proclaimed how God kept, covered, and carried us through the 2022 year and reasons why it's important to "get it right" in order to develop a new perspective for the 2023 year.

In this periscope, the Israelites grew impatient and complained to Moses and God about their conditions in the wilderness that confronted them--no bread, no water, the miserable food and the unfavorable situation ahead of them, rather than focus on the praise and realize that God is greater than any problem that confronts us.

How does one get his perspective right?

- ◆ **Accept the route God placed you on:** *Get yourself out of self's way. God knows what's ahead of you. Trust Him!*
- ◆ **Appreciate the resources God provides you:** *God provided the food/manna that kept the Israelites filled, fit, and functioning and kept their bodies strong. As the body of Christ, we must learn to give gratitude to God for all our resources and provisions!*
- ◆ **Acknowledge the remedy to which God points you:** *Have a forgiving spirit, NOT a petty spirit. Do unto others as you want them to do unto you. Be kind.*
- ◆ **Trust in God. Never doubt Him:** *Remember, if He's lifted up, He'll draw all men unto Him. Keep the faith in the LORD.*

In conclusion, Pastor Cooper emphasized the fact that the real remedy is the SAVIOR! As Christians, we must learn to put our focus on the Father, and always remember that **God is just and merciful!!** The Rev. Rosemary Morris prayed a solemn but comforting closing prayer and Pastor offered the Benediction. The audience departed the Zion sanctuary, having received a blessed and gratifying spiritual meal with intentions of receiving the dessert in the morning on New Year's Day!



The rain had dissipated and Zion was celebrating the **first** day of the New Year, the **first** time a full choir would sing since returning to church after the pandemic virus, and the **first** time Zion would offer the Right Hand of Fellowship to twenty-five persons in one service! The melodious voices of the full choir illustrated the joy of the Lord as they harmoniously sang the words to the most appropriate song, "I'm Glad to be in the Service One More Time." The ceremonially singing of the song, *If You Trust Me*, was the prelude for Pastor Cooper's sermon.

Stepping to the sacred lectern, Pastor Cooper briefly prayed orally to God, read his chosen scripture, *2 Kings 7:1-2*, and entitled his sermon, *Expect A Better Year*, one of *favor, blessings, and new opportunities*. The scriptural reading dealt with the most horrific famine mentioned in the Bible. It was so bad that people resorted to eating a donkey's head and to cannibalism. When the people were at their worst, Elisha, a man of God, revealed to the king

that he heard the Word of the Lord that promised that all was going to turn around the next day. Believe His Promise!

Pastor Cooper reminded the congregants that it rains on the just and the unjust. Regardless to how strong one's spirituality may be, everyone goes through a famine. God allows us to go through a famine just to perfect our faith. His divine Word is for everyone! Despite how bad your last year was, it should not have a negative bearing on this year. We must get ready for a better year by elevating our expectations, and giving our plight to the Omniscient God who knows all and has all power in His hands.

How can one have a better year?

- ◆ **Except God's divine proclamation** involves spiritual adjustments. *God is always faithful and true. He provides all the knowledge, wisdom, and guidance we need according to His Word and good plan.*
- ◆ **Avoid doubting people** entails relational adjustments. *When God has spoken, guard your spirit and your relationship with Him because doubting people delay your progress. Keep the faith because without faith, it is impossible to please God. Therefore, we must draw close to the Lord in the time of our weakness.*
- ◆ **Anticipate definite provisions** demands mental adjustments. *God provides all our necessities. He provided for our sins to be forgiven in Christ, for us to experience emotional, physical, and spiritual health, and He provided the Holy Spirit to guide us.*

*Blessed is that man who makes the LORD his trust, and does not respect the proud,
nor such as turn aside to lies. Psalm 40:4 NKJV*

How Well Do You Know Psalm 23?

Fill in the blanks in Psalm 23.

The Lord is my _____, I lack _____.

He makes me lie down in _____ he leads me beside _____
_____, he refreshes my _____.

He guides me along the right _____ for his name's sake.

Even though I _____ through the _____ valley, I will fear no _____, for
you are with me; your _____ and your _____ they comfort me.

You prepare a _____ before me in the presence of my _____. You _____
my head with _____; my _____ overflows.

Surely _____ and _____ will follow me all the _____ of my life, and I will
dwell in the _____ of the _____ forever.

~~BAGGAGE~~

Prayers 

~~NEGATIVITY~~

Welcome to Flight # 2023

(a shared email – January 2023)

We, the **People**, are prepared to take off into the **New Year**.

Please make sure your **Attitudes** and **Blessings** are secured and locked in an upright position.

All self-destructive devices should be turned off at this time.

All negativity, hurt, and discouragement should be put away.

Should we lose **Altitude** under pressure, during the flight, reach up and pull down a **Prayer**.

Prayers will automatically be activated by **Faith**.

Once your **Faith** is activated you can assist other passengers.

There will be **NO BAGGAGE** allowed on this flight.

The **Captain (GOD)** has cleared us for takeoff.

Destination...GREATNESS!

Happy 2023!!!

~~Self-Destruction~~

Attitudes 

Blessings 





to the Family!

*From the New Members Coordinator
Yolanda D. Chandler*

“And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” Acts 2:47b

On Sunday, January 1, the Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church welcomed 25 new members to the family. For the first time since March 2020, RMZ held its first Right Hand of Fellowship welcoming *Louis Baker, Johnny Beason, Cathy Berry, Mildred Blanford, Fahryka Bray, Delores Brooks, Joyce Brown, Felicia Burkhalter, Reginald Burroughs, Candice Carter, Alice Davis, Patrice Fitzgerald, Lenora Fleming, Cedric Green, Earnest Green, Rachell Green, Michelle Heath, Audrey Johnson, Wanda Lewis, Rosita Mason, Patricia McGowan, Shantell Ruffin, Sherdina Tucker, LaWanda Wallace, and Augustine Winston*. What an awesome sight to witness these new members join this church family!

For many across the globe, COVID-19 brought life to a screeching halt. For Rising Mount Zion, something that did not stop was church growth. During the COVID-19 pandemic, God continued to bless with nearly 60 individuals (adults and youth) deciding to make Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church their place of worship, work, and spiritual growth.

Under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Roscoe D. Cooper III, the New Members Ministry Leaders, *Rob Mason, Lonnie Harden and Yolanda Chandler - the adult class teachers; and Rylene Mickleberry - the youth class teacher*, began an intensive and comprehensive review of the New Members Curriculum. For ministry leaders, Pastor Cooper emphasized the blessings of this opportunity to refresh, revitalize, and revamp the messages and lessons shared with new members.

After prayerful and intentional review, the Adult New Members Curriculum was finalized. Offered both virtually and in-person, the revised curriculum includes three sessions: Who We Are, What We Believe, and Why We Are Here. During these sessions members are greeted with a welcome video from Pastor Cooper. They are introduced to the church’s mission statement, vision statement, and philosophy. Building on the Articles of Faith, new members explore basic Baptist beliefs and the ordinances of the Baptist Church. Then, the New Members Curriculum ends with a Spiritual Gifts Assessment and a deep dive discussion into life stewardship: time, talents, and treasures. By the end of these sessions, those persons new to the RMZ family are ready to put their faith into action and exercise their identified spiritual gifts and talents.

Over the next couple of weeks, the next wave of members will complete this new member journey. God has been faithful in planting new souls here in this place of worship. The Rising Mount Zion family must now unite to engage, embrace, and edify one another in Christian love.



Spratley Allen Missionary Circle

By Sister Valorie McBee

*For surely, I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord,
plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Jeremiah 29:11 (NRSV)*

All Praises to God Almighty for continued blessings as the Spratley Allen Missionaries faithfully pray for and send cards to the bereaved, and the sick and shut-in. The missionaries continue their outreach ministry by providing clothing to homeless mothers and their children, donating gift cards to the residents at the Ronald McDonald House and supporting other organizations that assist those in need.

The Area A, District-1 missionaries attended an in-person program of devotions, fellowship, lunch, and installation of officers. Deacon Renita Thornton, Area A-1 Chairperson conducted the program and Sister Irene Alexander, the Secretary for the BGC Women's Ministry, connected the missionaries not attending in person to Zoom. It was a truly blessed event.

The missionaries are continuing to participate in TAB (Take-A-Break), a 30 minute midday session that comprises of a short service of prayer, hymn, and mini-sermon from 12:00-12:30 each Thursday. The session was spearheaded by Sister Polly Mason, former President of the Women's Ministry of BGC. Rev. Cheryl Ivy Green, Executive Minister of First Baptist Church, South Richmond has served as one of the speakers.

The Women's Division newly elected President, Rev. Dr. Margaret Edney, initiated a "Wonder Working Prayer" call ministry for missionaries from all areas across the state. Promoting prayer as a priority is the first mission objective of the Women's Ministry Sisters of Substance, as prayer is the source of our empowerment. Prayer warriors and participants gather by phone on the third Monday of each month at 7:00 a.m.

The Women's Ministry *Sisters of Substance* sponsored its first *Sister-to-Sister Round Table Conversation*, focusing on the second mission objective, "Mentoring Intergenerationally", an interactive conversation with women across the commonwealth. Sister Cathy Whitley Whitaker, public school educator and guidance counselor, was the presenter. Mentorship is a relationship where one person helps in guiding another. Sister Whitaker spoke about mentoring intergenerationally in several ways:

- Invite other generations to different programs at church.
- Encourage growth in youth by giving them room to grow through connection, compassion, commitment.
- Communicate with children, not necessarily for them. Be a compassionate listener.
- Work with all sister groups in church such as Sorority sisters to help provide scholarships and by visiting schools.
- When visiting schools, show the love of Christ by providing resources, tutoring, and opening up topics with trained professionals.
- Keep the lines of communication open when young women enter the church by creating a space of trust and confidence, for example, read a book together.
- Show forth the love of God regardless of the gender or person who enters the house of the Lord.
- Reach unwed mothers by providing a safe environment for them to talk and for someone to listen without judgement.

Note: One must understand the topic before discussing a topic and to be honest. Anyone should not be a mentor as confidentiality is very important unless there is harm intended.

She opens her hand to the poor, and reaches out her hands to the needy.

Proverb 31:20 NRSV





Sick, Shut-in & Bereaved Families

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation... 2 Corinthians 1:3 NKJV

There's healing and freedom in realizing that your pain can awaken you to a new beginning. Feeling weighed down with pain or grief can make you blind to God's presence but you can find hope and comfort in the reality that Jesus is alive and at work in the world—and in you because He is the Light of the world and can bring rays of hope to brighten your way. So, when you are in a low place and filled with despair know that the LORD your God is there and will bless, comfort, strengthen, and sustain you. Pastor Cooper and the Zion family love, support, embrace, and pray for you as you adjust to the physical absence of your loved one.

- ◇ **Brother Rodney Butler (Sister Elita)** and **Sister Gina Butler** mourn their father, *Brother Willie Butler, Sr.*
- ◇ **Sister Connie Hill Glover (Brother Walter)** mourns her sister, *Sister Michelle Booker* of Bridgeport, Connecticut.
- ◇ **Brother Warren Reid (Sister Edith)** mourns his brother-in-law, *Brother Raymond Dickson.*
- ◇ **Sister Barbara Jones (Brother Steve A.)** mourns her sister, *Sister Delores Finch-Mason.*
- ◇ **Sister Johnelle Torbert** mourns her father, *Brother John Henry Torbert.*
- ◇ **Sister Audrey C. Robinson, Sister Leondra Sutton, Sister Tamara Johnson,** and **Brother Quane Robinson** and the **Zion church family** mourn her husband, her father, her and his uncle, and a faithful Zion member, **Brother Walter J. Robinson.**
- ◇ **Sister Brenda Finney, Sister Patricia Bowman-Carter** and **Sister Sabrina Bowman-Coles,** and **Sister Glenda Hale Williams,** mourn their mother, her sister, and faithful Zion member, respectively, **Sister Virginia S. Bowman**
- ◇ **Brother Arthur Smalls (Rev. Sandra)** mourns his mother-in-law, *Sister Carrie Mae Elliotte* of Upper Marlboro, Maryland.
- ◇ **Sister Lesley Holland** mourns her sister, *Sister Thelma Baldwin* of Philadelphia PA.
- ◇ **Brother Donté Jones** mourns his cousin, *Brother Deandré Broidy.*
- ◇ **Brother Antowan Johnson (Sister Kenya)** mourns his father-in-law, *Brother William Marzette.*
- ◇ **The Zion Family** joins the children (*Brother Robert Knight* and *Sister Joyce Knight*) of our faithful Zion member, **Sister Mildred I. Monroe,** in mourning her transition.
- ◇ **Sister Barbara Garrett Moffett (Brother Fred)** mourns her cousin, *Sister Viola Brinkley Williams* of New Haven, Connecticut.
- ◇ **Sister Brenda Finney** mourns her great-grandson, *Baby Kobi Keemari Finney.*
- ◇ **Brother Gary Smith (Sister Candice),** and **Sister Vylonda Derricott (Brother Dante),** **Sister Jada Brooks,** and **Sister LaWanda Wallace** mourn his father and their uncle, *Brother Earl C. Smith, Jr.*
- ◇ **Sister Rylene Mickleberry** and **Brother Corey Mickleberry** mourn her father and his grandfather, *Brother Ryland Randolph, Sr.*



~the SPIRIT of FEAR~

~by Deacon Mary Kemp

Imagine how many Christians live in defeat, spiritual poverty, and depression because they do not know the riches they have in Christ

The Spirit of Fear is the probably the most worldwide spirit that seems to readily attach itself to people. It provides many chances for a person to lose emotional balance. Often times, the threats to our families, finances, friends, children, jobs, and other traumatic events that come into our lives that wound us are factors that provide opportunities for the enemy to exploit.

FACTS TO REMEMBER:

- ⇒ Therefore, as Christians, in order for us to successfully run the race of life, it is essential that we lay aside the spirit of fear and the sin of unbelief that can easily distress or torment us. We cannot become inactive or stagnant and allow fear to paralyze us, but rather run patiently, consistently, and enthusiastically the course that God sets before us.
- ⇒ Through the many examples in the Bible, believers learn that God does not want His people to fear, but rather, biblical scriptures encourage us to stand in awe of God, trusting that He'll keep His promise to us by working everything out for His glory and our good. What we see with our physical eyes can be deceiving. Therefore, let us not submit to the spirit of fear because of what we see, but instead, we are to rise up in the power of Christ and in the authority of Jesus, displacing fear with the faith God has placed within us.
- ⇒ Our teachings have taught us in *Psalm 146:1* that God is our refuge and our strength, He has given us power to overcome the fear that tries to aggravate us.
- ⇒ Because God's presence is always with us, we shall not fear when we walk through hard times. He shall comfort us in the midst of the shadow of death.
- ⇒ God reveals Himself to His children according to their personal circumstance.
- ⇒ Each of us is His unique creation and His child and as our Heavenly Father, He knows our needs better than we know ourselves.
- ⇒ God is our protector, our provider, and the only One who can satisfy our desire for peace and security in the midst of life's anxieties.
- ⇒ The Word of God and the perfect example of Christ who sent the Holy Spirit will direct our paths.
- ⇒ Through Christ, the body of believers can overcome fear and confidently walk in the power, authority, and courage that God has given to us.

POWER, AUTHORITY and COURAGE

The spirit of fear doesn't have to have a place in our lives if we utilize the scriptural readings in the Bible to give us power, authority, and courage. To begin, allow the following scriptures, and there are more, to serve as weapons to eliminate the spirit of fear in your life:

- ⇒ **ISAIAH 41:10 NLT** – *Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will uphold you up with my victorious right hand.*
- ⇒ **PSALM 46:1 NIV** – *God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.*
- ⇒ **2 TIMOTHY 1:7 NKJV** – *For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*
- ⇒ **1 JOHN 4:18 NLT** – *Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced His perfect love.*
- ⇒ **PSALM 27:1 ESV** – *The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*
- ⇒ **PROVERBS 3:24 NIV** – *When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.*
- ⇒ **JOHN 14:27 NIV** – *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*
- ⇒ **ISAIAH 35:4 TLB** – *Encourage those who are afraid. Tell them, "Be strong, fear not, for your God is coming to destroy your enemies. He is coming to save you."*
- ⇒ **PSALM 23:4 NASB** – *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.*
- ⇒ **MATTHEW 10:28 KJV** – *And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*
- ⇒ **PROVERBS 18:10 NASB** – *The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous runs into it and is safe.*
- ⇒ **PSALM 2:11 NIV** – *Serve the LORD with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling.*
- ⇒ **DEUTERONOMY 31:8 NIV** – *The LORD Himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.*

Health Matters

By Cheryl Jordan-Sayles, MD



What is that blood spot in my eye?



A subconjunctival hemorrhage is when a blood spot appears in the white part of the eye. It occurs when one or more of the tiny blood vessels in conjunctiva of the eye ruptures or break. When this happens the blood leaks out of the blood vessel from the area of the conjunctiva (the clear lining of the eye) and becomes trap under this lining and appears on the sclera which is the white part of the eye.

The blood is usually bright red in the eye since it is fresh blood out of the blood vessel. This blood spot in the eye can be alarming for most people to see this in the mirror. However a subconjunctival hemorrhage is usually harmless and should cause no change in the vision or eye pain. This blood spot will heal and clear up on its own. Occasionally the blood spot can cause very mild irritation of the eye.



The subconjunctival hemorrhage can be cause by hard coughing or sneezing, straining, or rubbing at the eye. This temporarily increases the pressure in the vein of the surface of the eye which causes the smaller blood vessels or capillaries to break and leak. Less commonly it can occur spontaneously in persons who are on blood thinner that make you bleed more easily. Other risk factors include diabetes, high blood pressure and blood clotting disorders.



The subconjunctival hemorrhage is diagnosed just by looking at the eye. No treatment is needed when this blood spot occurs in the eye. It may take a week or more in some cases for this blood to clear from the eye. The blood is reabsorbed on its own. Artificial tears drops are recommended to help with any eye irritation. If the subconjunctival hemorrhage becomes a recurrent problem, then further evaluation is needed for other potential causes.



SPOTLIGHT ON.....

Victoria LaMone Perry

By Dana Davis



Victoria LaMone Perry is the youngest of three sisters and the daughter of her Petersburg and Chester, VA parents, Lloyd Linwood Perry and Mozelle West Perry. Vickie, as she is affectionately called, accepted Christ at an early age and was baptized at Mount Sinai Baptist Church where she participated in Sunday school, the Junior and Mass Choirs, the Pastor's Aid Ministry and the "Brown Bag" Outreach Ministry that served the unfortunate homeless population.



Vickie graduated from Highland Springs High School and furthered her education at Virginia Commonwealth University where she majored in Political Science and received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1989. She aspired to becoming a lawyer, politician or social worker. Mysteriously and unrelated to her major, she was offered a job in banking at Bank of America (Computer Operations Supervisor), Henrico Public Schools (Long Term Substitute Teacher and Assistant Girls Basketball Coach) and Richmond Alternative School (Therapeutic Assistant). Currently, she is employed as an IT Specialist/COR (Contracting Officer Representative) with the Department of the Treasury in Washington, DC for 23 years.

Vickie is also a proud member of the most illustrious sorority, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, Henrico County Alumnae Chapter. The organization is based on Christian principles and its mission is *Service, Sisterhood and Scholarship in the Black community nationwide and internationally*. Serving and helping others is a born passion. While growing up with her grandmother in her neighborhood she incorporated nurturing and caregiving ways from her grandmother and mother. Her grandmother kept kids in her home, and Vickie would help her watch them and read to them. Although no kids of her own she has been a mother, godmother and auntie to many of her family, friends and neighbor kids.



W As an avid sports fan of basketball, football and track, she played basketball and ran track/field while in middle and high school. She credits all her great skills and athleticism from her father Lloyd Perry and her sister Pat Perry. Her favorite NFL team is the Washington Commanders, and her favorite NBA basketball team is wherever her favorite player, LeBron James, is playing. Vickie also loves shopping and is a FASHIONISTA at Best. Shopping for shoes, boots, fine fragrances and purses are among her favorite items. She also enjoys relaxing and walking on the beach, R&B, Jazz, and Gospel concerts, visiting museum exhibits, Zumba, line dancing, nature walking, and cycling.

Vickie has been a member of the Rising Mt. Zion Baptist Church for the past 17 years, joining under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Roscoe D. Cooper III. She serves on the RMZ Joseph Smith Usher Ministry; sings with the Inspirational Voices and Mass Choir. Additionally, she's a member of the Zion Women's Ministry and has served as a New Members' Class teacher for the youth. "God Favored Me" and "Order My Steps" are her favorite gospel songs. Victoria's favorite scripture is *Mark 9:23* ...*"Everything is possible for the one who believes."*

The Zion church family extends heartfelt congratulations to *Victoria LaMone Perry* for being selected as the Rising Mount Zion Voice Newsletter spotlight person for its first quarter, the March 2023 issue!



Ash Wednesday

by
Deacon Mary Kemp

This year Ash Wednesday fell on February 22. Like Easter/Resurrection Day, the exact timing of Ash Wednesday begins 40 days before Easter every year. Sundays are not counted because each one of the 6 Sundays during this period is seen as a “mini-Easter” celebrating Jesus’ victory over sin and death. However, it is always in the month of February or March. Easter Sunday must fall on the 1st Sunday after the 1st full moon after the spring equinox (*either of the 2 times in the year when the center of the sun crosses the celestial equator and the day and night is of equal length in all parts of the earth*). It is a season to focus on sacrament preparation, a new habit, volunteering, studying, serving, and loving God and others. Accordingly, we can understand the magnificence of God’s Love for us as He humbled Himself and gave His Life on the Cross that we might receive the gift of Eternal Glory with Him. The most essential part of the day is that it makes one feel closer to Christ, and reminds him/her of the true meaning of Easter/the Resurrection season.

Ash Wednesday is a day of fasting and repentance. During the Imposition of Ashes Service, the ashes that are placed on parishioners’ forehead in the shape of a cross serve as, in the Old Testament, a reminder of worshipers’ sign of humility, mortality, sinfulness, repentance, and a need to ask forgiveness from God. The custom jogs the memory of Christians that we are *dust and to dust we shall return*; it renews the fact that we are ultimately sinners and need to examine our faith and deepen our commitment to live a Christ-like lifestyle.

Pastor Roscoe D. Cooper III reverently greeted the believers and asked Rev. Harold Sayles to offer prayer, followed by Deacon Mary Kemp who shared the principle purpose of the Lenten season. The ambiance of the seamless hour-long service was blessed as Pastor spoke the words of the opening selection, *What A Friend We Have in Jesus*, while the audience sang the words.

Remaining at the sacred podium, Pastor invoked God’s presence through prayer, and in his own words, reiterated in precise detail the purpose for Christians to observe Ash Wednesday, our responsibility to reflect on our self, and know that we have much work to do. Working on our attitudes, actions, and spiritual appetites, turning to God in prayer, reconnecting to God, and drawing closer to Him are essential for our growth. Our Sovereign God gives us victory over sin and death, brings hope and opportunity in desperate situations, and light back into faith, health, and everything that appears to be dark, dead or dry. Pastor Cooper repeatedly emphasized that God’s divine Word can lift us from dry places and readily prompted energy into the spirits of the audience by asking, “If it had not been for the Lord on our side, where would we be?” Zion, when God speaks, He gives His children new dreams, lets them know everything is going to be alright, and turns situations around. Because of His Word and as He breathes a Word, He empowers, rescues, and revives. As a body of Christ followers, we must let our Lenten season help us to be more intimate with God, meditate, read, study more, focus on our spiritual reflection and cleansing, and know that we are resilient people who have victoriously journeyed through many trials.

At the conclusion of the service, each congregant received a cross of ashes on his forehead that was administered by Pastor Cooper and assisted by Zion Associate Ministers, Rev. Rosemary Morris and Rev. Sayles. At the completion of the Imposition of ashes, only Pastor Cooper’s prayer/Benediction was orally spoken as the audience silently departed the sanctuary, feeling spiritually recharged and blessed! The EVENING---POWERFUL and INSPIRING!

Help us, Heavenly Father, to surrender our attempts to secure our own happiness in exchange for embracing the knowledge that God provides the strength we need to persevere and grow.

Ash Wednesday Word Search



Find the word in the puzzle. Words can go in any direction. Words can share letters as they cross over each other.

D U S T Z Q H E M X C U R C W C J Z D V
 O R A N E R C O T G K E I H V G S H X U
 N A I T S I R H C H S N Y H L D N B R X
 I Q Z K W H U X J U L A Q F H P S J R U
 R V Y G A E H X R Q D Y E R R U W C S B
 E P B I A J C R F S C C W E S R U J D K
 C D E S S P E L E L S U P E S P N D A G
 D J T F O C A N C E A E J S S L U M A F
 M E S E T N D L A N N F L M O E W G Y G
 R M T I U E G U M T L A O B R R A Z N W
 Q T O T W N I A A S H N G R C V J B H T
 K N E H H G P N I S U S U N T C C D Z J
 N R S M S H C U F P W N K H I Y G N G G
 E A X U P E L A P R Y V D B D T D V R A
 M L E W J T V S R A O J M A Z Z S A W J
 U N C T S Q A C M Y G H C L Y D T A Y V
 J J P E N Z D T F E C I F I R C A S F S
 B F H J G G F U I R F O R E H E A D M Y
 H S H I L I P O E O L F C A P E Y Q F I
 A X F A S T T C V L N Y Z R T T X N U C

Ashes
Christian
Dust
Fasting
Jesus
Palm Sunday
Repentance

Ash Wednesday
Church
Easter
Forehead
Temptation
Prayer
Resurrection

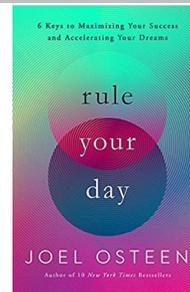
Bless
Cross
Fast
Forty Days
Lent
Purple
Sacrifice

BOOK REVIEW

Rule Your Day

By Joel Osteen

Overview by Sheila Cunningham Price



We all have a space, an atmosphere that belongs only to us. Our atmosphere is our thoughts, our attitudes, and our emotions. It is how we spend time, with whom we spend time. It is what we watch and what we listen to. We often live stressed, worried and offended, largely because we allow everything into our atmosphere, such as news, the medical report and the time we spend with critical people to contaminate our space. We are allowing things that we have no control over to rule our atmosphere. It is important to keep our space full of faith, praise, hope and victory. We must learn to say no to the things that offend us, saying you are not welcome here. Because we don't have control over what others do, we must learn to control our thoughts, attitudes and the way we respond to negativity in order to stay at peace.

We must quit allowing trials to dictate and disquiet our spirit, by recognizing that God is our Source and He will provide all that we stand in need of. Our time, attention and our assignments are too valuable to allow ourselves to dwell on the things that are out of our control. Instead we should focus on the things that build us up, make us more positive and more hopeful. While it's good to be informed of what is happening in the news, it is wise to limit our exposure and to stay in faith. We must not take the ugliness of the world into our spirit; thereby, putting our walls up and controlling what gets inside of us.

We must choose wisely the company we keep, for spirits are transferable. We should evaluate our friendships and determine if our friends and associates are inspiring us to be better, challenging us to go further or if they are pulling us down and causing us to compromise our standards. We must not sit passively in the path of the ungodly and allow others to pollute our lives. We should avoid small-minded people who are going nowhere, those who cannot help us to move forward. We must avoid the people who drain us of our energy, those who are limiting us from our goals and purpose. It may be lonely to let go of certain people, but God will bring new friends who will build us up and push us to higher heights rather than pulling us down.

We should learn to remain calm, even in times of diversity. Some circumstances are beyond our control. Those circumstances, we must put in God's hands. We can, however, control our reactions in the face of any hardship. Stay calm, cool and remain steady. We should only fight the battles that are ours to fight. Sometimes people will draw us into conflict, as everyone does not desire peace. It is a distraction and we should avoid taking the bait. We can be wise by consulting with God for clarity, because He can see things that we cannot see. Without God, the battle will be a constant struggle. We must go to God daily for His wisdom, guidance and direction. While it is good to go to church on Sundays, we must seek God in every aspect of our daily lives to remain on the path He has for our destiny.

We should believe in ourselves as children of the King and we should speak words of victory into ourselves, over our lives. Say **I am blessed. I am strong. I am valuable. I am favored. I am loved.** We must speak it into existence and eat the fruit of our words by speaking health, favor and abundance. In speaking this, we release our faith. Likewise, we must speak life into dead situations for others. When we pray and sacrifice for others, God will give back to us and will help to make our desires come to pass. The seeds of generosity will continue to produce good fruit. As we bless others, God will bless us and will store up blessings for our children.

We all face things that will threaten our comfort level. As Christians, we were created to be overcomers. We should have a "bounce back" spirit. In His strength, we have a force within us that makes things happen that we know would not have happened without God's intervention. It is that force that causes us to rise up from difficulties that were meant to defeat us. We must declare **I shall arise**, then God's angels will go to work on our behalf. Always remember that God did not bring us this far to forsake us and He can remove every mountain put before us if it is His will. The same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead resides in us. Know that although we may bend, we will not break. Sometimes we feel as though we are in a pit of despair, but with God, all things are possible. If we let God arise, by taking the time we would normally worry and turn that worry to worship, our troubles will be smaller because of His greatness. He is greater than our fears, the sickness, the relationship and financial woes. When we allow God to arise, the chains that once held us are broken, as favor comes and new doors are opened. Letting God arise within us is what allows the most powerful force in the universe to go to work on our behalf.

"Rule your day, or your day will rule you."

Suggested Reading

**"How to Human:
Three Ways to Share Life Beyond
What Distracts, Divides, and
Disconnects"**

By
Carlos Whittaker



JESUS' DISCIPLES and FOLLOWERS

The words listed below can be found in a straight line horizontally, vertically, or diagonally and may be read forward or backward.

H E V N A H T R A M B J Y Y F
 I D H T L S G F L S A L O M E
 T O Y U Z U T Q W A Z D J H A
 J A M E S M S E A M P L U X U
 V H W Z J E R H P O V P D C I
 B T B T A D C F G H C J E P Y
 O I A X N O L E J T E N T S M
 P B K A K C P P O I E N H D N
 H A A P R I S C I L L A A J E
 G T A R G N Z T A Q B F D O W
 S F C N T D F D E A P K D V P
 I Y L M H H G C L H Z S E K J
 S K A P S A O E I S I O U S U
 E M Z B M B H L E M R H S U H
 Y D A Y G O I J O A N N A S L
 Y J R A N P G N Z M A E W A R
 M A U N X Y C W U O E X G N O
 M D S D R M A T T H E W T N Y
 O P Y T A O O W G P D O G A F
 R M N Y C S A P O E L C B O P

ANDREW	JOHN	MARY MAGDALENE	SALOME
BARTHOLOMEW	JUDAS	MATTHEW	SIMON
CLEOPAS	JUDE THADDEUS	NICODEMUS	STEPHEN
JAMES	LAZARUS	PHILIP	TABITHA
JOANNA	MARTHA	PRISCILLA	THOMAS

ANSWERS: 2022/2023
 1.E 2.F 3.I 4.H 5.A 6.G 7.B 8.D 9.C 10. It was the first time in the history of the NFL Super Bowl Games that two Black quarterbacks played against one another to become the winner of the Super Bowl.

Some Blacks Who Made History in 2022/early 2023

By Karen S. Brown

Match the name to your right to the statement listed below:

___ was capitol police officer who was injured during the 2021 insurrection at the U.S Capitol. He's still dealing with the emotional scars from that day. He received Presidential Citizens Medal.

a. Hakeem Jeffries

___ is a Zion member who published a book of poetry, Poems and Prayers of Inspiration 4 You: Love, Joy, Peace, and Happiness.

b. Shaye Moss

___ is the first black woman voted in as the Vice Chair of the Henrico County School Board.

c. Damar Hamlin

___ was a Fulton County election worker who persevered doing her job through those who tried to overturn the election accusing her of fraudulent accusations. She received the Presidential Citizens Medal.

d. Eugene Goodman

___ is a Brooklyn NY native, attorney, and politician who was unanimously elected the first Black Minority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives. He's a Democrat and the first Black leader of either U.S political party.

e. Harry Dunn

___ is an American lawyer and politician who is a member of the Democratic Party. She won the vacant seat of the late Rep. Donald McEachin and became the first Black woman to represent the Commonwealth of Virginia in Congress.

f. Valorie McBee

___ received the Presidential Citizens Medal for exemplary deeds of service during the 2020 election while facing adversities. She also received the 2022 John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award.

g. Jennifer McClellan

___ was an army veteran and capitol police officer, who during the 2020 attack on the U.S. Capitol diverted invading rioters from the U.S. Senate Chamber. The Senate adopted a resolution awarding him the Congressional Gold Metal.

h. Ruby Freeman

___ is a Buffalo Bills' safety who suffered an on-field cardiac arrest has been released from a Buffalo hospital and allowed to go home to continue his recovery.

i. Alicia Atkins

How did the NFL Super Bowl LVII Game make Black History?

Activity Page



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Black History Month Word Search

K Y U T E P V R R W R N H P T H R N F T
 D X X P C X Z W F L O Q I D N O A O R P
 L W D L I R D U F S V D H K B U W I E A
 Q H Z C T K G Q B U I E Q I P V L T E Y
 E C J M S O Z I W V Y E N B U R I A D Y
 N C J D U Q G U E W Y S U R B X V P O W
 I H G A J A M R M B O P V T L P I I M W
 W N E J E R S K K N Q C Y J I L C C R G
 S P T H R I G H T S B L M B C O B N I H
 Q O T E T E U L A V E H O O W U K A D C
 N L B Y G G G M M R M V B S O I W M E F
 A C C E L R F A P I L B K H R I S E S D
 M P B J C Z A E R C S Z V F K X Q O C V
 R S A O V I R T B F C M G U S N A H H Q
 V C U Z V R D C I S F T S S A L G U O D
 W Q P U Y A T U E O A U T U X F K W J E
 M W Z C X H L D J A N X S N B Y Z X O Y
 B X J X C N O S R E K L I W L E B A S I
 R M I C H A E L J O R D O N B O B F K R
 T P H I L A N T H R O P Y A Q K Z D T U

- | | | |
|----------------|------------------|---------------|
| Althea Gibson | Civil War | Diversity |
| Douglass | Emancipation | Freedom Rides |
| Integration | Isabel Wilkerson | Justice |
| Michael Jordan | Philanthropy | Prejudice |
| Public Works | Rights | Robinson |
| Suffrage | Tyler Perry | Value |

Words can go in any direction. Words can share letters as they cross over each other.

