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Lord, in the difficulty we face, guard our hearts, guide our words, and show Your grace. May we always turn to You in prayer and don't give up.



Jesus told His disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.

Luke 18:1

Women of Achievement 2025

Women on the Move for God

By Karen S. Brown and Deacon Renita Thornton

And now, my daughter, don't be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All the people of my town know that you are a woman of noble character. Ruth 3:11 NKJV

For more than twenty-five years, the Rising Mt. Zion Baptist Church has recognized women, living or deceased, in the church and community. In 1999, the now late Bessie White Haskins and her husband, William, designed and commissioned the first medallion to present to women receiving the RMZ Women of Achievement Award. The chosen recipients possess the qualities of being a Christian woman devoted and dedicated to her family, church, and community. They are strong when confronted with adversity; and a role model who have great moral character, and are dependable and respected. Past and current works of the recipients are remembered, honored, and celebrated as an inspiration for others to obtain similar achievements in the future.

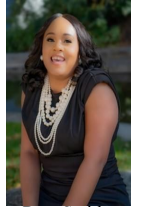
On Saturday, April 26, the RMZ Women Ministry hosted a Worship and Praise Luncheon held in the Zion Fellowship Hall during which church members, their families, and friends fellowshiped with one another. Several women shared testimonies referencing God's goodness and grace bestowed upon them throughout the

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years. Everyone was blessed and enjoyed a delicious meal prepared and catered by Zion members who are also proprietors of the K & C Catering Services. A mighty message, based on the scriptural reading, *Ruth 3:9-11*, was delivered by *First Lady, Minister Laura Davis* of the Mosby Memorial Baptist Church. The afternoon was truly physically, socially, and spiritually fulfilling!



God's favor continued on Sunday, April 27, when the power-house and Senior Pastor, the *Reverend Ciarra N. Smith-Bond*, of the Faith Community Baptist Church graced the Zion sacred pulpit with a blessed Word from God. She utilized *2 Corinthians 12:8-10* as her pivotal scripture and entitled her sermon, "You Are Graced For This."



Rev. Smith-Bond

Some principle points and reminders for us all are:

- The grace of God is not based on how fast you are, but rather how strong your faith is.
- God is a bridge and His grace is sufficient.
- His grace doesn't always remove the struggle, but He helps you through the storm to realize the purpose behind it.
- The thorns in our life are not to break us but to build us.
- Your thorny seasons reveal that our God is still worthy, a provider, and a sustainer in your pain.
- Grace redefines that we are born enough.
- When God created us, He set the standard.

Rev. Ciarra emphasized the fact that grace releases power. We are all called to be the light and graced for assignments. **KEEP MOVING & DON'T STOP!**

This year the Zion Women's Ministry celebrated five women on the move for God.



CONGRATULATIONS
2025 Women of Achievement Award recipients!

Keep Moving AND Don't Stop!



Greetings My Dear Zion Family,

Being obedient to my Calling and treasuring every experience along life's journey, I greet you, my Zion church family and friends in the name of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ the One who daily orders my steps in His Will, His Way, and His Word. From the beginning, it has been my most sincere intentions to encourage my people to constantly *thank God for the journey, be strengthened and faithful to His Word, allow His anointing Spirit to dwell within our hearts and souls, and believe in the power of prayer.* Only God gives us His savoring joy and unyielding support within our being. Therefore, we must not let anyone or anything steal our blessings from whom our joyfulness and livelihood flow! Saints, elevate your expectations and know that we are recipients of God's grace and mercy. He deserves our "good" praise that directly reflects His goodness, peace, and love, and the impact it has on His people.

Trust in our wonder-working God in all situations, permitting your praise to be your weapon of choice---the Holy Bible and prayer! We've all faced challenges or problems. However, everything we classify as problems are really opportunities to give God glory and a time for His willingness to work in our lives. God wants us to get to a point of *release* so that He can speak to us in a fresh way and remember it's not about elimination, but rather it's elevation. Our Ever-Present God can block pressure, people, and peril that can bring us down or take us out. But with Him, there's no challenge that can't be *transferred* or *transformed* if you put it in the right hands—His hands. At any given moment our Savior can show up and speak power, healing and breakthrough in our life. He can always open doors of opportunity, at the perfect time, that are accessible, available, and assigned and no one can close them. In order to get ready for your open door, you must know and worship our Savior, understand that we are pilgrims with a purpose who must have the right spirit and attitude, allowing God's grace and mercy to humble us, and He will give us victory in all situations. No one likes to lose but with Him, losing is not an option. He is the One that took the sting out of death and is the Strength and Source of life! He'll give us peace and we must give Him praise and gratitude.

In my sermons, prayer call and Bible study sessions, I've readily spoken of how the death of Winter gives way to the renewal, growth, and new beginning of Spring. Just as nature springs forth, our lives become new in Christ and our faith in Him lets us know that Spring represents renewed hope and the resurrection of life. Brace yourself and live for the coming of the glory of God! It derives through our faithfulness, fullness and favor of God, knowing that He is our dwelling place through it all, and leaving no room for doubt, depression or disobedience. It's a season to trust God, sow good seeds of faith in His promises, serve with your whole heart, be obedient to His Calling on your life, heed His Commandments, and believe He is good, sovereign, and matchless. Additionally, live a life that pleases God—one of love, compassion, selflessness, service to the marginalized, and participation in real worship and the amazing things God has in store for your life by doing what you can do, and being confident that He will do the rest. There's no doubt in my mind that when we do these things because of God's grace, persistence, and tenacity, He will deliver us from whatever confronts us. ***With God, our future shall walk in His control and His glory throughout the four seasons!***

Be blessed,

Benjamin D. Cooper III



Ash Wednesday

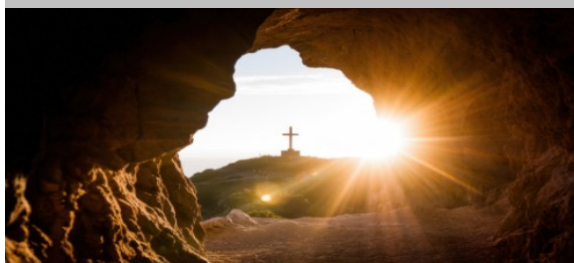
THE START OF A LIFE-CHANGING LENTEN SEASON

By Deborah J. Andrews

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, a 40-day period, excluding Sundays, that leads up to the joyous celebration of Easter. It is a day distinguished by the solemn ritual of placing ashes on the foreheads of the faithful, symbolizing mortality, repentance and humility. This year it fell on **Wednesday, March 5**. Christians of all ages, religions, and personal standings in the church gathered to receive a cross of ashes on their foreheads. The ashes, made from the burned palms of the previous year's Palm Sunday, serve as a poignant or emotional reminder of the biblical phrase "For dust you are, and to dust you shall return," *Genesis 3:19*. This humbling ritual encourages introspection, fasting, and prayer, deepening faith and nurturing spiritual growth.

Pastor Cooper commenced the Ash Wednesday service with a prayer, invoking God's presence and expressing gratitude. He acknowledged the *somberness* of the occasion and encouraged humility, prayer, and reflection on God's greatness during Lent. He prayed for the season to transform lives and bring blessings and favor. The *Word* for the hour began with a declaration that Lent is a sacred season of spiritual transformation, calling individuals to engage deeply in reflection, repentance, renewal, and restoration as they draw closer to God. It is a time to evaluate one's relationship with Him, guided by moments of fasting, prayer, and self-denial. As Psalm 139:23-24 beautifully expresses, "*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.*" This period is meant for introspection—an honest look at attitudes, actions, and priorities, with an openness to God's revealing presence. During Lent, repentance means intentionally turning away from sin and embracing a life aligned with God's will. It involves a radical shift in mindset and behavior, releasing burdens and habits that hinder spiritual growth. Repentance is a commitment to seek God's approval, trusting His grace, mercy, and readiness to forgive. Lent also serves as a time of renewal, where believers are invited to embrace the transforming grace of God. The ashes received during this season remind us of our human frailty, yet they also symbolize hope—the promise of new life through Christ's death and resurrection. This renewal is both a personal and spiritual awakening, inspiring believers to turn toward God's presence and experience profound transformation through His love and grace. Lastly, Pastor Cooper declared Lent a season of restoration, where God's power renews the spirit and brings joy, peace, and hope to those who seek Him. Even in failure or disobedience, His corrective hand forgives and restores us to blessings. God's restoration transcends loss, offering healing and renewal to those who trust in Him. Lent cleanses the mind, shifts perspectives, and helps us emerge from trials with renewed purpose and faith. Through reflection, repentance, renewal, and restoration, it challenges believers to deepen their connection with God and emerge transformed and grateful for His love.

At the close of the service, Pastor Cooper, assisted by Rev. Rosemary Morris, marked each congregant's forehead with a cross of ashes. After the Imposition of Ashes, Pastor Cooper's prayer and Benediction concluded the service, and the reflective assembly departed in silence, spiritually renewed and blessed.



The Resurrection: **JESUS' VICTORY OVER DEATH**

By Deacon Mary T. Kemp

RESURRECTION or **EASTER SUNDAY** is a time to celebrate the *life, death, resurrection of Jesus Christ*, and to remember the power of God's grace and mercy. It is the holiest day and considered the central tenet or belief of the Christian faith. It signifies the triumph over death, and the promise of eternal life for believers, representing *hope* and *new beginnings* through Jesus' victory over the grave. Thus, as Christians, we celebrate the confirmation of our faith; our God is alive and true; and our salvation, by His hands, is secure. The miraculous lesson of Easter is that through Jesus' death on the Cross, we, as Christians have been granted a second chance.

Holy Week began on *Palm Sunday*, April 6, including *Ash Wednesday*, *Maundy Thursday*, *Good Friday* and ended on *Easter Sunday*. It was a week of worshipful worship, fervent prayer, insightful study, individual reflections, and needed repentance.

On April 18, **Good Friday** service was hosted by the Sixth Mt. Zion Baptist Church - the Rev. Tyrone Nelson, Pastor. Seven former presidents of the Baptist Ministers' Conference of Richmond and Vicinity were invited to deliver the *Seven Last Expressions of Christ* before His Crucifixion and His death. Our own Pastor, the Rev. Dr. Roscoe D. Cooper III, delivered the seventh Word, employing the Gospel according to *Luke 23:46*, "Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit." And when Jesus had said this, He breathed His last. Pastor Cooper's poignant points were: a) Jesus called on His Father because of His power, presence, and peace. b) Our Father is the Source of Life and the only One that can get us through our situations. c) Often times, just like the disciples, the ones closest to us, hurt us the most. d) As believers, we must hold on to God's commands, mercy, justice, integrity, and His hand. e) You can get what God has for you only when you let go and give it to Him. f) Jesus released His life and put it in His Father's hands. g) On Good Friday Jesus rested for three days only to pick up His life again early Sunday morning. Cementing the belief, the Father has the last Word over all things! The anointed veteran ministers proclaimed "*The Last Seven Expressions of Christ*" with mighty, liberating, and persuasive energy and the day was undeniably blessed!

The Zion church worshipers eagerly gathered on **Resurrection Sunday**, April 20, to glorify the Risen Savior, praise God for the gift of Salvation, show our gratitude for God, and to be blessed by the preached Word! The preamble to the preached Word was a rhythmic *Praise Dance* exhibition, fervent *prayers*, and *gospel songs* by the Mass Choir. The opening joy replaced the grief in the hearts and minds of the congregants and reminded us that "HE IS RISEN!" Pastor Cooper crowned the morning with his noteworthy sermon, chose his scripture, *Luke 24:7* and entitled his sermon, "It Must Happen." Pastor stated that Jesus was betrayed, and knew that He had to suffer, die and rise while living out God's plan, sandwiched by destiny, necessity, and urgency. We, too, must suffer, go through things, rise up from our troubles, and believe in our God when the storms are raging in our life, not just when the sun shines brightly. We serve a God that exceeds our needs, blesses us with left-overs to bless someone else, and keeps His promises. "He rose proves the perception." Like those who didn't believe the women, some must see to believe because their faith is not strong. Therefore, we must praise our Savior for what He has done, is doing and shall do. Stop doubting---God will show us! We can count on His Word because He promises and He fulfills! The church received 13 candidates via Baptism and/or Christian Discipleship—A *God-favored day indeed!*

Never look for the Living God among the dead — **HE IS Risen**



A Fun **FESTIVAL & FELLOWSHIP DAY** *At RMZ*

The RMZ Events Ministry members intentionally designed a fun and festive day that took place on Saturday, April 19, for hundreds of children, families, friends, and community members. The weather and pristine grounds were perfect to entertain the energetic children searching for Easter eggs, taking pictures with the Bunny Rabbit (*Sister Rylene Mickleberry*), bouncing in the Bouncy House, playing games, racing, drinking water and cool drinks, and eating scrumptious food. Zion members and owners of the Haywood Grill & Food Truck of Goochland VA prepared all food on the church site. The chicken fingers/fries, drinks, chips, and cookies were provided by the church; fish dinners could also be purchased for a minimal cost. Although the adults had the option of remaining at church, dropping off their children, or running errands, some chose to stay, fellowship, and enjoy the delicious food, friendly ambiance, and comfortable weather.

THERE'S NO FUN BETTER THAN SPIRITUAL CHURCH FUN!





AND GOD SAID, "LET THERE BE LIGHT"

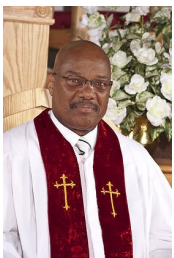
~ scripted by Deacon Mary T. Kemp ~



The evenings of April 28 – 29, the Henrico Ministers' Conference and Vicinity presented two days of power-packed County-Wide Revival, hosted by the *Rev. Dr. Roscoe D. Cooper III*, Pastor of the *Rising Mt. Zion Baptist Church*, and members of its ministries. Several HMCV clergy and guest clergy ministered or served as a participant on the program. The Ministry of Music was offered by *Unified Praise* and the HMCV President, the *Rev. Dr. Zynora D. Manson* extended a heartfelt appreciation to Pastor Cooper, the Zion church family/ministries, and gave the Benediction both nights.



In spite of the jubilation of the devotional period, the congregants patiently awaited the highlight of the evening, the Preached Word! When the *Rev. Dr. Kevin L. Sykes*, Pastor of the St. James Baptist Church stood, the accolades, shouts, applause, and standing ovations didn't stop until he praised his way back to his seat. He chose the scripture reading, *Genesis 1:1-5* and entitled his sermon, "God Is Not Afraid of the Dark." Dr. Sykes cited the following poignant points: a) People of God, trust in the Lord – the God of Creation is the God of Light. b) The world was dark, dismal, gloomy, and depressing and God said, "Let there be light" and there was light. c) Justice serves some, but not all—*darkness!* d) Students are in a quandary—*darkness!* e) World friends are vanishing--*darkness!* f) We've all had dark moments and need some light in our life—Seek God, trust Him, wait on Him, listen to His voice because He's not afraid of the dark! g) Don't worry--God will never abandon us. Dr. Sykes emphasized that "Darkness" has benefits—It helps us to realize our limitations. It has a lasting impact on what we've been through. Lastly, it forces us to reach out to God. In summary, Dr. Sykes stated how we can handle dark moments: 1. Know that God orders your steps. 2. Allow His presence to invade your dark moments. 3. Stand-up and say God is your life, fortress, your Lord. 4. Hold to God's unchanging hand. 5. Increase your faith. 6. Trust Him for His grace. 7. Have confidence that God will see you through--- JESUS IS THE LIGHT, without Him you are living in darkness! DARKNESS cannot exist in the same space with HIS LIGHT!



Tuesday night the *Richmond/Goochland GMWA* provided the Ministry of Music and the *Trinity Baptist Church Ushers* served. The *Rev. Dr. A. Lincoln James, Jr.*, Pastor of the Trinity Baptist Church, was the evangelist who chose the scriptural text, *John 5:2-4*, and named his sermon, "Bethesda." The term, Bethesda, means a House of Mercy. This seasoned servant of the Gospel stated that many churches are everything but a House of Mercy. Instead, too many churches are houses of augmentation, gossip, fighting, fussing, one member against another—Everything but what God wants. In Jerusalem, there's a pool in the Hebrew language called, Bethesda, which is surrounded by five porches or colonnades. It's a place where a multitude of impotent, powerless, disabled folk such as the blind, lame, and paralyzed lie, waiting for years for someone to help them get in the moving water to be healed. Dr. James stated that the disabled folk are not physically disabled but spiritually disabled. God wants the church to be about His business, more kind, more loving, more forgiving, more helpful, more thankful, more service, more peace, more faith, and less complaining, less jealousy, less critical, less rebellion, and less doubting! ***Two blessed and anointed evenings for sure!***

MAKE YOUR CHURCH TRULY A HOUSE OF MERCY!



Spratley Allen Missionary Circle

By Sister Valorie McBee

To prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. Ephesians 4:12 (NIV)

Thank the Lord for grace and mercy bestowed upon the Spratley Allen Missionary Circles as its members continue to assist those in need. We are so grateful and appreciative for our past President, Sister Pauline Holmes, who now serves as the Vice-President, and we pray for God's blessings upon our new president, Deacon Renita Thornton, as we continue to do God's Will in missions. In addition to the offering of prayers to the bereaved, sick and shut-in, and providing monetary and gift card donations to persons in need, we are also embarking upon a few other ministry outreach projects.

One of the community outreach projects was to assist several of the VCU Massey Cancer Center patients. The missionaries chose to provide monetary gift cards, socks, lip balm, mirrors, tissues, nail clippers, healing journals, and healing prayer cards to several men and women who are battling cancer and are patients at the center. The VCU Massey Cancer Center is one of two National Cancer Institutes designated Comprehensive Centers in Virginia with a community-centric approach to a future without cancer.

Another major community outreach project was to help provide food for the families who are affiliated with the Ronald McDonald House. This establishment is an independent, non-profit chapter of the Ronald McDonald House Charities that provide a "home-away-from-home" for families with children receiving care at local area hospitals throughout the Richmond region. The RMHC keeps families with sick children together and close to the medical care their child needs by providing a temporary place to stay, a sibling center, hospitality cart and lunches with love programs. The Spratley Allen missionaries purchased and delivered breakfast food items to the, and remain prayerful for the children and their families.

The Fifth Sunday of March was celebrated as Missions Sunday at Rising Mt. Zion morning worship hour during which the Spratley Allen missionaries gathered as a group adorned in black and wearing an Area A-District 1 red corsage. To God be the glory!

The missionaries continue to participate in the Baptist General Convention Women's Ministry District I Area A programs and events as well as the state BGC Women's Ministry meetings and programs. The state quarterly meeting was held March 15 at the state BGC office on Graham Road. Women's Ministry President, Sister Barbara Coleman-Brown and officers are continuing to hold Area workshops throughout the state. Monthly prayer calls are held each third Monday at 7 a.m. Members are looking forward to the Hybrid 125th BGC Annual Session and Congress of Christian Faith Formation to be held in Roanoke, June 2025.



The Black Experience in Richmond, Virginia

An intriguing and Informative Tour of Landmarks and Cultural Insights in the River City

By Sister Valorie McBee

Believing in celebrating Black History year-round, many members of the Rising Mt. Zion Baptist Church, including our Pastor, the Rev. Dr. Roscoe Cooper III and First Lady Candice Cooper, were delighted and eager to tour several African American historical landmarks in Richmond VA on March 1. The RMZ Black History Ministry did an amazing job in planning and implementing this event with the expert assistance and tour guide, Sister Robinette Cross of Cross-Cultural Talks, LLC.



The Richmond tour began at the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia, located on Leigh Street. This historical building was once a part of the Benjamin A. Graves Junior High School where our own Trustee Murley Richardson, Brother Douglas McBee, and others attended Physical Education and Health classes many years ago. The two-story museum features a tall statue of the famous Richmond-born/reared Black American tennis player, Arthur Ashe, Jr. for which several edifices are named in his honor. In the game of tennis, he won several Grand Slam titles, was selected to the United States Davis Cup team, and the only Black man ever to win the singles titles at Wimbledon.

Each room in the center displayed historical Black artifacts, culture and archives. The galleries featured digitally enhanced exhibitions, a multi-paneled touch screen and an interactive timeline of Black history. In the medicinal section of the museum were exhibits of Black physicians, optometrists and chiropractors that explored the profound impact of Black medical professionals who not only treated patients, but also became educators, civil rights activists and leaders in public health. In the 1863 era, Dr. Alexander Thomas Augusta was one of the early healers who drew knowledge from the Indigenous people. Black people in dentistry emphasized trailblazers such as Dr. Peter Hawkins, one of American's earliest Black dentists, and Dr. David Ferguson, founder of the National Dental Association. The contributions of Black pharmacists, nurses, and midwifery put emphasis on the indispensable roles these professionals played, particularly in underserved communities. The Black Hospital Movement delve into the creation of facilities like the Richmond Community Hospital and Norfolk Community Hospital. In Virginia, the history of Black healthcare professionals is a story of resilience, innovation and leadership. Black Virginians have been at the forefront of healthcare for centuries as trailblazers who have influenced the healthcare system for all. The galleries' exhibitions and presentations of historical African Americans were not only remarkable, but inspiring, and educational for all people of every age group.



A walking tour of the Jackson Ward area was comprised of information and tour of the Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site whose namesake was the first African American woman to charter a bank and serve as a bank president. The tour also involved the Richmond Historic trail of enslaved Africans, the path where enslaved Africans entered Richmond. Sister McBee who was reared on the Eastern Shore of Virginia shared that many slaves were brought to Jamestown, and later migrated to the Eastern Shore. Richmond's First Municipal African Cemetery is on land purchased by the city in 1799 for enslaved and free Africans, and also the Lumpkin's Jail site, once known as the Devils Half Acre. The Richmond river



front was explored as well as the Historic Jackson Ward District which was once called the "Harlem of the South", a neighborhood that was a thriving center for Black entrepreneurship and culture.

All in all the tour was certainly fascinating and edifying, and offered everyone on the tour new insights and perspectives into the legacy of our Black history.

Spring Cleansing the Soul

Researched & Developed by Deborah S. Andrews

“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” Psalm 51:10 KJV

The burgeoning warmth of spring draws individuals out of winter's hibernation, revealing the accumulated dust and clutter that went unnoticed in the dim light. As nature sheds its dormant layers, a corresponding urge arises to do the same within personal spaces. The vibrant energy of new growth inspires a desire for fresh starts, prompting windows to be opened and the cleansing breeze to flow in. With each blossoming bud and returning bird, a sense of renewal emerges, motivating efforts to tidy, organize, and create spaces as vibrant as the world outside.

While refreshing the physical space at the start of this new season, do not overlook the inner space—the very soul, the essence of a person. At times, spiritual life benefits from a deep cleaning as well. How can the spirit undergo a “spring-cleansing”? Drawing inspiration from seasonal housekeeping, here are a few suggestions.

1. **Purge any old attitudes and allow yourself the freedom to move into a new season.** It's easy to fall into maintaining a certain spirit continually, even if that train of thought doesn't line up with God's Word. Ask God to remove this attitude, paving the way to embrace newfound spiritual independence and move forward.
2. **Ask Jesus to scrub your heart clean, request forgiveness, and forgive yourself.** A sermon once spoke about keeping short accounts with God, explaining that closeness to Jesus involves not only forgiving others but also embracing personal forgiveness. How about experiencing His grace *afresh*?
3. **Clean out the cobwebs of negative thoughts.** Grab a rag and dust “I can't do this” and “This will never work” right out of the corner and into the trash. Discarding negative thought patterns and latching on to the spiritual truths will deliver a renewed spirit. Wouldn't it be wonderful to experience a vivacious, positive thought-life?
4. **Take an inventory of spiritual routines.** Spruce them up as needed. Restore stale relationships by connecting and showing love again. Reach out to a friend who hasn't been seen in a while with a call or text.
5. **Declutter your prayer life.** Clearing away physical clutter transforms a living area into a tranquil space, and similarly, distractions that interfere with conversations with the Divine can be set aside. Choose a peaceful corner, light a candle, and allow the heart to communicate freely and openly with God, releasing worries and offering gratitude.
6. **Embrace the freshness of new beginnings.** Seek opportunities for personal growth. Join a Bible study group, attend a retreat, or begin a devotional journal. While adding new decor to refresh homes, consider incorporating spiritual practices that deepen faith and strengthen the connection with God.
7. **Reorganize your spiritual priorities.** Examine daily routines. Much like rearranging furniture to create a more functional and inviting atmosphere, consider structuring days to include moments of devotion, worship, and reflection. Placing God at the center of the schedule brings a renewed sense of purpose and direction.
8. **Simplify your commitments.** Just as a clean and organized home can bring a sense of peace and renewal, simplifying commitments for prioritizing time with God nourishes and restores spiritual lives.

9. **Brighten up your day with kindness.** Aim to be among those Christ praises for demonstrating kindness and compassion—feeding the hungry, offering water to the thirsty, welcoming strangers, providing clothing to those in need, caring for the sick, and visiting those in prison. During moments of reflection on spiritual wellbeing, consider how to further support others and foster personal spiritual growth.
10. **Scan for big problems you might have overlooked.** Take a moment to reflect on the Ten Commandments found in the Bible, *Exodus 20:2–17*. Consider whether any of these are not being fully lived out. If one seems to be a stumbling block, confess it and seek God's help to sweep away, or spiritually spring cleanse, the sin.

While embarking on this journey of spiritual spring cleansing, keep in mind that it is a process of ongoing renewal. Extend grace to oneself to grow, change, and embrace the beauty of a cleansed and revitalized spirit. This spring is a wonderful opportunity to spend some quiet time with God, perhaps even during moments of dusting, mopping, and decluttering. What better moment than now to refresh the soul through spring cleansing? Invite Him to reveal what may need to be "cleaned up" to deepen faith and draw closer to the Father. Such renewal brings blessings throughout the spring season and beyond.

Ways to Say Your Spring Prayers

Spring can be a great time for refreshing your prayer life. As we are called to persistent prayer, try these new ways to pray during the spring season.

- **Pray in the garden.** Changing the location of prayer can bring a fresh perspective and renewal to the practice. This spring, consider praying among flowers in a personal garden, a park, or a community garden. Take deep breaths and enjoy the fragrances of soil and flowers, pondering the fact that everything in sight, including oneself was created by God.
- **Pray by the window.** For those unable to visit the garden or park, prayer time can still be meaningful by creating a comfortable and inspiring spot at home. Placing this space near a window allows for a view of God's creation—such as blooming flowers, the fresh green leaves of trees, and birds making their return.
- **Pray while walking.** With warmer weather finally here, spring presents a wonderful opportunity to begin or restart daily walks. Morning strolls or evening walks after a busy workday can be dedicated to prayer. By focusing on steps and breathing, engaging in a conversation with God can flow naturally and effortlessly.

"April showers bring May flowers," as the saying goes. Embrace rainy spring days as an opportunity to deepen your prayer life. Each time raindrops are heard, take a moment to pause from your tasks, and offer a quick prayer. These moments of connection with God can turn rainy days into something to anticipate with joy.

*A little flower that blooms in May
A lovely sunset at the end of a day
Someone helping a stranger along the way
That's heaven to me ...*

Sam Cooke
Singer-Songwriter

Deaconess Ola R. LUCK

*Penning by
Deacon Mary T. Kemp*



Fondly addressed as **Deaconess Ola R. Luck** or **Miss Ola**, she didn't just become an angel-like person when she came to Richmond VA more than seven decades ago, she arrived here from Pittsylvania County VA with the same character as she exhibits today. Having been reared by two God-fearing parents, they taught their fourteen children to live a life loving God, one another and others, as well as to live by the "Golden Rule." After 32 years being employed by the Caroline County Public School System as a librarian, she retired having established deep-rooted and enduring relationships with her co-workers, students, community, church, as well as social, professional, and civic organizations that still exist today. Her compassionate, soft-spoken, reverent, kind-hearted, polite, loving and caring spirit speaks volumes about her attitude and respect for herself and others no matter what her surroundings may be. Deaconess Luck is a gracious, humble, and an indelible person who is a valued and resourceful individual whether she is in the position as leader, team member or friend. To this day she continues to receive phone calls, visits, letters and gifts from her former students.

During her membership as a faithful member of the Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church for 46 years, Miss Ola was soon selected and consecrated as a member of the Rising Mount Zion Deaconess and the Trustee Ministries, and has dutifully served as an able chairperson and/or cooperative member of several ministries, such as serving as a Church School teacher, Superintendent of the Zion Church School, coordinator of its mid-week services, and a devoted editor of the RMZ VOICE Newsletter for 23 years.

As a VOICE Newsletter editor, Deaconess Luck was punctual, diligent, devoted and serious about her responsibilities. All VOICE meetings begin and conclude with prayer. When it was Deaconess Luck's turn to offer prayer, her prayers were always meditative, meaningful, heartening, gracious, grateful, and fervently welcomed God's presence. This worshipful servant of God contributed so much to the betterment of the RMZ newsletter through her editing, keenness in creating clarity, readability, and grammatical skills. In addition, she was a thoughtful and imaginative author who painted a picture through her writing. The article, "The Real Christmas Story," that she wrote was so inspirational that it was the only article published twice in different quarters of the newsletter.

Furthermore, her Pastor, the Rev. Dr. Roscoe D. Cooper III, the RMZ trustees, VOICE staff members, Deacons, Deaconesses, and Zion church members keep in constant contact with Deaconess Luck so that she forever remembers how much we love, appreciate and admire her for the immeasurable difference she has made in the life of the Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church! Although Miss Ola was the fifth born child, she has been a mother-like figure to her siblings, thousands of others, and has contributed so very much to every phase of life that she touched!

*Thus, the VOICE staff is elated to honor this beautiful soul, **Deaconess Ola R. Luck**,
as our choice for **Mother of the Century**, whose godly life of longevity
and service has always been to seek God's approval and use
her God-given gifts to serve and bless others!*

The staff is eternally grateful for the good and great things God continues to do!
HAVE A BLESSED & HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!

INTERNATIONAL *Women's* DAY

WORD SEARCH

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

1. Marie Curie
2. Rosa Parks
3. Maya Angelou
4. Queen Elizabeth II
5. Amelia Earhart
6. Sally Ride
7. Mother Teresa

8. Harriet Tubman
9. Isabel Perón
10. Frida Kahlo
11. Michelle Kwan
12. Anne Frank
13. Wangari Maathai
14. Gloria Steinem

15. Janet Reno
16. Indra Nooyi
17. Katharine Graham
18. Jane Fraser
19. Nancy Pelosi
20. Greta Gerwig



Sick, Shut-in & Bereaved Families

*Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace,
that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:16 NKJV*

Prayer is the place where burdens change shoulders! Total healing ultimately comes from the God who gives new life. Jesus affirms, “I AM NEW LIFE.” *Believe in Me and you shall have life beyond the grip of pain and suffering.* Pastor Cooper and the Zion church family are praying that all your beloved ones have received a new life and each of you will receive His perfect peace in the physical absence of them.

- **Sister Monica Mack (Brother William III), and Brother William “Billy” Mack IV, Sister Jalah Mack, and Sister Jaleah Mack** mourn her father and their grand-father, *Brother Alex Dillard, Sr. of The Bronx NY.*
- **Sister Qiana Davis** and her children, **Brother Hoover Davis IV, Brother Asaiah Davis,** Sister Qiair Davis and Young Master Damon Davis mourn her father and their grandfather, *Brother William R. Hardy of Victoria VA.*
- **Sister Jackie B. Manning (Brother Edward), Sister Mickenzie Manning,** and *Sister Margaret B. Branch (Trustee Jerry)* mourn their cousin, **Sister Lolita Brown.**
- **Sister Teresa Olivis** mourns her aunt, *Sister Delores Johnson of New York City.*
- **Sister Annette Farmer, Brother Orlando Battle, Sr., and Brother Jerrod Jackson, Sister Kimberly Wall, Brother Kelvin Wall, Jr., Sister Angel Calhoun, and Brother Jonathan Calhoun (Sister Karey)** mourn her uncle, his friend, and their great-uncle, *Brother Melvin Farmer.*
- **Sister LaWanda Wallace and Dr. Jada Brooks** mourn their father, *Brother Lawrence H. Brooks.*
- **Sister Patricia Nash, Brother Hilton Nash, Jr., Brother Carl Nash, and Sister June Nash Williams** mourn her sister and their relative, **Sister Carolyn Nash Fuller.**
- **Sister Connie Hill Glover (Brother Walter)** mourns her grandmother, *Sister Grace Baldwin (100) of Connecticut.*
- **Sister June Hatch (Deacon Joseph (Joe))** mourns her cousin, *Sister Julie Johnson.*
- **Sister Pamela Rogers, Brother Rodric Ward (Sister LaCoya), Deacon Renita Thornton and Sister Normie Cameron** mourn her mother, his grandmother and their cousin, *Sister Menerva Rogers.*
- **The Zion church family** joins the Powell/Thomas in mourning **Sister Dorothy P. Thomas.**
- **Sister Britanica Travers and Sister Jaimie R. Lewis** mourn their grandmother-in-law, *Sister Ruth Harrell (99).*
- **Sister June Hatch (Deacon Joseph (Joe))** mourns her aunt, *Sister Elizabeth Coleman.*
- **Deacon Jaron Dandridge (Sister Kinnecia),** their children **Brother Jaron Dandridge, Jr., Sister Kirah Dandridge, Young sister Kayla Dandridge,** and his sister, **Sister Janna Dandridge** mourn their uncle/great—uncle, *Brother David Robinson, of Ft. Washington MD.*
- **Sister Pamela (Pam) (Brother Paul)** mourns her brother, *Brother Earl Hawkins of New York City.*



Health Matters

By Cheryl Jordan-Sayles, MD



Move With a Purpose: Exercising Outdoors vs. Indoors

MOVE WITH PURPOSE: THE BENEFITS OF EXERCISING OUTDOORS vs. INDOORS



Enjoying the beauty of the summer months is a great time to think about exercise --- whether outside or indoors ----both can be a great benefit to your health. Regular exercise is the best way to maintain overall good health, improved our well being, and increase energy levels. Both indoor and outdoor exercise offer unique benefits – physically, mentally and spiritually.

Stepping outside to move your body is more than just a workout.

- **IMPROVE MOOD AND REDUCE STRESS:** Sunlight increases serotonin levels, helping you to feel more positive and calmer. Nature also has a soothing effect on the mind.
- **BOOST VITAMIN D:** Just 10 to 15 minutes of sun exposure a few times a week can help your body produce the vitamin D it needs for bone health and immune function.
- **ENHANCE CREATIVITY AND MENTAL CLARITY:** Time outdoors often brings a sense of renewal and perspective. Many people find that being in nature helps them to pray, reflect and reconnect with God on a deeper level.

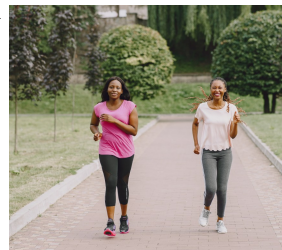
The value of indoor exercise while less scenic offers convenience and comfort. Other benefits include some the following factors.

- **YEAR-ROUND ACCESS:** Rain or shine, heat or cold, the indoor setting let you keep up your routine. Exercise time can be more flexible whether you choose early morning or late evening.
- **SAFE AND STRUCTURE ENVIRONMENT:** Indoor facilities allow equipment and supervision to support proper form and prevent injury. Gym facilities also offers a wide range of exercise equipment and classes, promoting variety and challenge.
- **COMMUNITY CONNECTION:** Group fitness classes can be a great way to connect with others and enjoy the fellowship of exercising together. Also, group exercises allow you to encourage each other and stay accountable in your health commitment.

Ultimately the best choice depends on individual preferences, needs and goals. While both indoor and outdoor exercise offer physical benefits, research suggests that exercising outside in the natural environment can have the additional advantages related to mental and cognitive function and well as the physiological effects of reducing stress and promoting a more positive mood. If you want to increase more outdoor exercise, start with places such as parks, trails, even a bike or walk in the neighborhood or along the beachfront. Prepare for outdoor exercise with

proper clothing, protection
proper hydration.

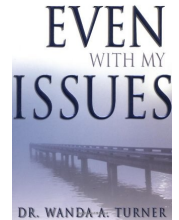
from the sun and



Even With My Issues

By
Dr. Wanda A. Turner

Overview by Sheila Cunningham Price



Dr. Turner would hope that this book would speak to us all who believe purported untruths about ourselves and think that the issues in our lives should prevent our destined success in life. We can acknowledge that we all have issues and it is imperative that we learn to leave the guilt and shame behind and seek healing. God wants to do a new thing in our old selves, our old lives. He wants us to reach out to Him and allow Him to heal us even with our issues.

The woman with the issue of blood depicted in *Mark 5:25-34* realized that she alone could not resolve her issue and felt she could no longer live with her condition. She bravely defied her seclusion and actively sought deliverance from Jesus. We can also reach out to the Deliverer to absolve us of our infirmities. We all have secret struggles that bind us and drain us, preventing us from experiencing the abundant life God desires for us. We all have constraints that require us to seek assistance from time to time. Sometimes the only way to resolve our specific issue is to reach out to God. Some of the barriers or hindrance in our lives consist of things such as pride, poverty, fear, rebellion and even mental and physical limitations.

Issues are private, uniquely personal things that we try to hide. We try to cover them up, push them off to the side, but on our own, we do not have the strength, courage or intellect to eradicate these problems. We may waste valuable energy attempting to camouflage and deflect from our imperfections, often separating ourselves from God and others. Our issues can prevent us from true intimacy and vulnerability with God and those around us. They result in character qualities that limit us, often eliciting strong emotions, such as fear. Likewise, our issues may trigger strong emotions from others in reaction to our own self-perception and self-projection. Most issues are unwanted, challenging problems that plague us from past hurts, generational curses or bad choices we have made. Some may be the work of the enemy seeking to deter us from our intended ministries. They negatively affect our daily lives, often resulting in bondage, as we wrestle unsuccessfully to manage them in our own strength. Issues can become excuses, when rather than dealing with the issues we make detours and head further away from our hopes and dreams. Issues attract more issues and the higher the talent and potential we possess, the more likely we are to have multiple issues. They are part of a deliberate enemy strategy to keep us cowering in the dark, away from the Grace of God.

Recognizing that we have these issues can be enough to depress us, but we must understand that we can be free of the that bedevil us. Even with our concerns we are valuable to God. We are useful, even in our weakness and we can experience wholeness through the following three imperatives: **1. Exhausted** as we accept that we cannot heal ourselves and seek to find out where the strongholds are founded and then turn them over to Jesus, who already knows the sources and roots of our issues. **2. Enlightened** issues are brought into the light to be submitted to Christ to be dealt with. These are spiritual wounds and can be healed only by being exposed to the light of the Spirit of God. **3. Entrusted** issues must be given to Jesus to be healed. This requires humility and the willingness to surrender in order to be restored. We must accept that we are helpless outside of God's Grace through Jesus Christ.

The things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world—John 16:33

Whatever the issues that bind us, the true path to healing is the path that leads straight to Jesus Christ. Go in Peace and Run to Him!

And He said to her "Daughter (or son), your faith has made you well. Go in peace and be healed of your affliction"—Mark 5:34

Suggested

"What's Driving Your Life?: A 10-Day Turnaround for a Fresh Start"
By
Rick Warren





by Sheila Cunningham Price

On August 1, 1980, a beautiful, bouncing baby boy was born to Sheila C. Price and Winfield O. Price, Jr. His name, **Damon Nashan Price**, was thoughtfully chosen as his father's name is derived from the surname Wingfield, which signifies friendship. Likewise, in the Bible, the name Damon connotes masculine friendship. Nashan means divine and Damon has lived up to his name and proven to be a good friend to many and also a child of God. He has been a part of the Rising Mt. Zion Baptist Church family since birth. He accepted Christ at an early age and was baptized at RMZ under the leadership of the late Rev. Dr. Leroy M. Bray, Jr. He gives tirelessly of his time and talents to various ministries and activities of his church and is a staunch supporter of his beloved pastor, the Rev. Dr. Roscoe D. Cooper III.

As a child, Damon endured a number of obstacles, but would demonstrate many exceptional qualities. He was extremely active, inquisitive, rambunctious, yet highly determined as a youngster. His natural resolve, his loving and dedicated parents, along with a strong, supportive village of family and friends helped to propel him to his super powers of faith, self-assurance and tenacity.

Damon was educated in the Henrico and Hanover County Public School Systems, graduating from Lee Davis High School, now known as Mechanicsville High School. He earned an Associate Degree in Computer and Electronics Technology from J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College. He further matriculated with Virginia Commonwealth and Virginia State Universities, subsequently graduating with honors from St. Paul's College in Lawrenceville, Virginia with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration. He later achieved a Maintenance Technician 1 (MT1) certification.

Vocational endeavors have been vast as Damon has held multiple positions, often simultaneously, from the time he was eligible to work at age 15. Damon has been referred to as a "model employee" by several employers. He is quick to proclaim that he gets his work ethic from his dad. Most notable previous assignments were with the Department of Taxation, BB&T/Scott & Stringfellow, Amazon and Goodwill Industries. He was later employed with the Defense Logistics Agency/DLA Aviation in 2022 as a Purchasing Agent and currently serves as a Contract Specialist with that same agency of the federal government. Additionally, he works part-time as a Security Officer with RMC Events.

This fine gentleman helped to spearhead and was co-chairman of the first Youth Revival at Rising Mt. Zion in 2002. He was the recipient of the RMZ Men Standing for Christ award in 2006 and serves as a member of its Men's Ministry, Male Ushers and the RMZ Betsy Gunn Greeters Ministries, as well as the Zion Security team. A proud Eagle Scout himself (of Troop 535), he has been a faithful, long-term Assistant Scout Master of the Boy Scout Troop 525 which is sponsored by RMZBC. Damon is active in community affairs and is a member of the St. Paul's Richmond Metropolitan Alumni. He is an "Ambassador for Christ" and for Pastor Cooper. Having overcome great odds to achieve success, Damon is a remarkable example of *I Can Do All Things Through Christ Who Strengthens Me, Philippians 4:13*.

His loving family joins the Zion church family in extending hearty congratulations to:

DAMON NASHAN PRICE

for being selected as RMZ VOICE Newsletter spotlight person for the June 2025 quarter!



Father's Day

By Karen S. Brown

*And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath,
but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. Ephesians 6:4 NKJV*

Father's Day is a special occasion celebrated on the third Sunday in June, dedicated to honoring fathers and father figures. It's a time to recognize the love, strength, and guidance they provide. A father figure is not limited to a biological parent—it can be a teacher, coach, neighbor, mentor, or minister—anyone who plays a supportive, nurturing role in our lives. On this day, many people express their gratitude with heartfelt cards, thoughtful gifts, acts of service, or touching poems—small gestures that carry deep meaning and appreciation. These tokens remind fathers just how cherished they are. As fathers, may we keep our hearts and minds focused on God, leading our families with faith, integrity, and compassion. Below is a poem that reflects some of the key qualities of a godly father.

A Godly Father is:

Faithful to God and family.

Able, to discern God's will in trying times and good times.

Thankful, for all the joys and trials of life.

Happy, no matter what life brings.

Enthusiastic, about a life lived with purpose.

Righteous, rock-solid in heart and mind, from a growing relationship with Jesus.

Author Unknown

*For these things and so many more we praise God for our Fathers, this
Father's Day and always.*





Opinions & SMILES



- Some people are kind, polite, and sweet-spirited---Until you try to sit in their pews.
- Don't let your worries get the best of you; Remember Moses started out as a basket case.
- People are funny; they want the front of the bus, Middle of the road, And back of the church.
- Quit griping about your church; If it were perfect, you couldn't belong.
- A recent study has found that women who carry a little extra weight live longer than men who mention it.
- I don't know why some people change churches; What difference does it make which one you stay home from.
- Don't wait for six strong men to take you to church.
- He who angers you, Controls you.
- The best mathematical equation I have ever seen: **1 cross+3 nails=4 given.**
- Kids today don't know how easy they have it. When I was young, I had to walk through shag carpet to change the TV channel.
- You can tell how big a person is—By what it takes to discourage him/her.
- If a church wants a better pastor, It only needs to pray for the one it has.
- Opportunity may knock once, But temptation bangs on the front door forever.
- The task ahead of us is never as great as the Power behind us.
- Remember back when we were kids and every time it was below zero outside, they closed schools? Me Neither
- The good Lord didn't create anything without purpose, But mosquitoes come close.
- God Himself doesn't propose to judge man until he is dead. So why should you?
- If God is your co-pilot---Swap seats.
- We don't change the message. The message changes us.
- A thief broke into my house last night---He started searching for money so I got up and searched with him.



Activity Page



In The Bible Or Not ?

Write "yes" or "no" in the blank if you think this is a quote from the Bible.

- _____ 1. "All hard work brings a profit."
- _____ 2. "Cleanliness is next to godliness."
- _____ 3. "God works in mysterious ways. His wonders to perform."
- _____ 4. "Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and nagging wife."
- _____ 5. "The wings of the ostrich flap joyfully."
- _____ 6. "God will not give you more than you can handle."
- _____ 7. "God helps those who help themselves."
- _____ 8. "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity."
- _____ 9. "Hate the sin, love the sinner."
- _____ 10. "I have escaped only by the skin of my teeth."

Decode the message.

Each letter in the phrase has been replaced with a random letter or number. Try to decode the message created using: <https://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/cryptogram/>

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
13			21				16								1		3							11	

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Ephesians 6:1-3