

The Beacon



May 2016

www.HistoricBethelStPete.org

St. Petersburg, FL



**Rev. Kenneth
Irby**

Pastor

Servant's Corner

A fresh start with FAST

When it comes to doing justice work for people of faith, we could use a fresh start.

In Matthew 23:23, Jesus describes it is the "weightier matters ... justice and mercy."

On April 18 at Tropicana Field, just under 3,000 people tuned out from across Pinellas County to demonstrate their commitment to their neighbors in need at the 2016 Nehemiah Action.

I am proud that for the first time, Historic Bethel AMEC was among this historic aggregation. We were in the number, as the saints of old would say, 33 strong.

Keep your eyes on the Bethel 33. This remnant is certain to grow and glow for kingdom building work for such a time as this.

New life is beginning at Bethel, a "freshness" if you will. Thus, if we are willing, we will embark on new works and ministry to help the lost, the last and the least among us. The power of spring

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What's inside

It's tea time ... and birthday time ... and time to mark your calendars for myriad activities. **News You Can Use, page 2**



What are these two up to with their YPD friends? **Page 3**

Just how did the Lay Organization get the nickname "Best in the West?" **Pages 4-5**

PrayerLine Mediation Leader J. Birice Packer presents this month's Moment of Meditation. **Page 6**

Happy Mother's Day

May 8th



Month by month, the calendar (tea) turns



Assignments have been made and plans are under way for the Annual Calendar Tea under the direction of chairman Willie Felton with assistance from co-chairs Wanda Lawson, Shirley Utley, Carrie Shirley, Charre Laing, Linnell Baker, Joyce Pink, George Banks, Stephen Scruggs, Maria Scruggs, Dorothy Wertz and Crystal Pruitt. As in years past, the chairs of the Monthly Calendar Groups are in charge of contacting their members about efforts for and contributions to the tea, which takes place on Sunday, May 22 at 4 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Get set to be amazed!

Kudos to Pearl McKinney for a giving heart



"I was raised in a family of nine and we were always giving to others. Mama would cook, people would come over, and we fed them," said Pearl McKinney, explaining the root of her giving spirit. She, with the help of Pastor Kenny, recently donated several ministerial robes of her late, beloved husband, the Rev. Ben McKinney, to pastors and elders in the 18th Episcopal District (Lesotho, Africa), under the leadership of Bishop John F. White. "Because I was a minister's wife and through our travels, I knew there was a need for robes in many of our African churches. I know they are happy to receive them. I enjoy being a blessing to others."

Mark your paper calendars and digital devices



Thursday, May 5: 6:30 p.m. National Day of Prayer Program at Gibbs High School

Saturday, May 7: Sons of Allen Mother's Day Activity

Monday, May 16: 7 p.m. FAST Planning Meeting at Holy Family Catholic Church
200 78th Ave. NE

Tuesday, May 17: 6:30 p.m. Quarterly Conference

Thursday-Saturday, May 19-21: Sons of Allen Episcopal Retreat

Saturday, May 28: West Coast Conference Lay Meeting

Sunday, May 29: 10:30 a.m. WMS Worship Service; Marching 100

Friday, June 3: 6 p.m.: Lay Organization Annual Fish Fry Fellowship

Happy May birthdays: Thank God that He made you!



Joanna R. Lee (1st); Greg Ferguson, Allison Patrice Webb (2nd); Sylvester

Norton Jr. (3rd); Major Stephens (6th); Charles Fairrow (7th);

Samauria Conyers, Jade Brown (8th); Mae Vera Little, Luella Miffin (12th);

Carla Regina McClanahan (16th); Lavont Moss (17th);

Stephen Scruggs, Shirley Utley (18th); Cathy Takdari (19th); Jenifer-Burklin

Walker (20th); Vontez D. McGlorthon (21st); Plexie Brown (23rd); Alexis

Wright (25th); Vanessa Curry (26th); Sarah J. Flounary, Elijah Rhodes (27th);

Lauren Brown, Patricia H. Wright (28th); Ervin Reed Sr., Stanley Butler

(29th).



A little child shall lead them



The Young People's Department participates in the Pack a Sack Project to provide over-the-weekend snacks for elementary school students who live at Mosley Motel. "Thank you to Sis. Karen Irby for allowing us to fill up your trunk and deliver the snacks to the students at your school."



BETHEL CAMPUS



All you can eat breakfast

The youth continue to raise money to defer the cost of their ministries, trips and activities. They do this with a delicious all you can eat breakfast on select Saturdays. Look out for announcements concerning car washes and participation in the Bethel Bistro.

Colligate Ministry thrives

Students have been engaging regularly at church and by phone in Thursday evening Bible study under the direction of first lady Karen Irby. Cards of encouragement are sent and regular contact is being made. Many will return home soon for summer jobs and visits to family and friends. Please encourage them, along with our local students, in their studies and continue to pray for their success. Also, the ministry welcomes any donations.

Student information sheets

Parents, it's time for your children to update their student information. We use this to publish graduation and promotion announcements in the *Beacon*. They usually fill out these sheets during their activities at church. Please ask your child if they've updated their info, and if not, encourage them to do so, or pick up a sheet from Renee Brown (YPD), Linnell Baker (Christian Education) or Joyce Pink (*Beacon*).

Operation Graduate

This program provides rising high school seniors with educational opportunities with a focus on life and financial skills that develop a foundation for success. In addition, students receive dual enrollment credit at St. Petersburg College. For information, contact Paula Kay, Neighborhood Initiatives Operation Graduate Program, at pkay@uwsuncoast.org or (813) 274-0936.

Teach. Train. Educate.

LAY ORGANIZATION

This, in essence, is the church's classroom. It is where teaching takes hold and a love of learning is nurtured. It is open to all who are not a part of the clergy.

If you ever find yourself wondering “What is the Call to Worship?” “Why do we keep standing up, sitting down?” “What does the Bishop have to do with this, anyway?” you might need to sit in on the closest Lay Organization meeting.

Here at Bethel, you need to

show up at 6:30 p.m. the Wednesday after the third Sunday.

According to president Patricia H. Wright, “the main objective of the Lay Organization is to develop a love of church history in all members. Our training component is important in accom-

plishing this goal.”

For many, the Book of Doctrine and Discipline, which states the law and governance of the church, can be daunting. The Lay “not only teaches *about* the church, but also delivers the *why* and *how* things happen in the church,” Wright says.

Through education, you aspire to higher offices in the church, says Wright, who spent the majority of her life in the Baptist Church and has immersed herself in the history of the A.M.E. Church to the point of participation that extends to the Connec-tional level. This, she stresses, is available to all who want to dig deeper. “You don’t have to be born into it. But you do have to learn it.”

* * *

“I’d put Bethel’s Lay up against any in the Connection. Mother Bethel, Metropolitan in Washington, D.C., First A.M.E. in Los Angeles,” says Alicia Cotton, president of the St. Petersburg District Lay Organization.

Continued on page 5



“I continue to renew my membership with the Lay Organization because I learn so much about the function of the church. One of the best things about being in the group is knowing that I’m a contributing part of the organization.”

Rosa A. Nesbitt

“I love that you can ask about anything. Pat’s sense of humor is catching, that’s one of the reasons we keep coming for the training; you think you’ll miss something. I enjoy the lessons. I could keep going on ...”

Altermease Williams

“... it has afforded me the opportunity to share and obtain knowledge about the church, the organizational structure, and other life and biblical lessons needed to grow as a Christian. The organization ... seeks to reach higher heights of inclusion and collaboration between clergy and laity.”

Linnell Baker

Continued from page 4

“Bethel has a wealth of people who work on ALL levels: District, Conference, Episcopal and Connectional. Pat, Lolita (Brown), Altermease (Williams), Linnell (Baker), Evelyn (Graham) ... their work is represented on all those levels” Cotton said. “I look to Bethel because of the wealth of knowledge, experience and expertise that comes from the church. Bethel does great work in supporting the Lay in all aspects,” says Cotton, who speaks with great excitement about working with Bethel.

All this led to Bethel being named the West Coast Conference Lay Organization of the Year during the Confer-

ence Convention held in March. At that time, Bethel was also honored for having the most members in attendance.

Cotton says “Bethel was the only church among the 17 on the St. Petersburg District to receive a nomination” for the award, which is based on activities held on the local level as well as those held in the community and interchurch outreach programs. Bethel Lay members routinely participate with other Lay Organizations via worship services, training programs and in numerous meeting and seminar sessions.

The Lay also does extensive

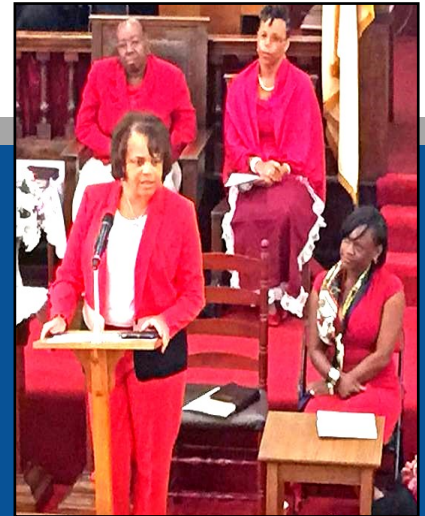
work on the local level in presenting two very popular annual events at the church. The Men of Vision and the Women of Purpose worship services (pictured below and on previous page) feature people from all walks of life who tell of their faith journey. Men focus on “vision,” while women speak of “purpose.” Also in the works is a Youth of Promise component. The Lay Person of the year is named on the annual Lay Day. The ever-popular Fish Fry Fellowship is an annual fundraising event that focuses on family fun and games.

Wright is quick to point to

those in the past and present who helped pour the foundation of what stands today.

“We stand on broad shoulders. Names like Cornelius Stockton, Joanna Lee, Betty Thompson, Therae Batten, Louis ‘L.D.’ Brown Sr., Evelyn Graham, William Butler, Juanita ‘Doll’ Jackson and so many others come to mind,” Wright acknowledges. “Betty was called the GPS because she knew where every church was.”

“If you don’t know the story, who will tell it? If people don’t hear the story, what will entice them to come?” asks Wright. “We have to be able to continue to tell the story.”



“When I was away from Bethel, I was active in the WMS. But when I returned, I started working with the Lay. The teaching and training fit what I liked to do. But once I got started, it’s the camaraderie and fellowship that kept me coming back. Lay folks love to have a good time together!!! It’s a great chance to meet different people. The people are the real drawing card.”

Lolita Brown

Officers

President: Patricia Wright

First vice president: George Banks

Second vice president: Linnell Baker

Recording secretary: Crystal Pruitt

Financial secretary: Wanda Williams

Treasurer: Plexie Brown

Asst. Recording Secretary: Dwineshia Latimore

Chaplain: Maria Scruggs

Historiographer: Wallace Ollinger

Corresponding secretary: Rosa Nesbitt

Parliamentarian: Vesta Ellerbe

Director of Lay activities: Lolita Brown

Young adult representative: Jenifer Burklin Walker

ON THE AGENDA

CHURCH SCHOOL

Sunday, 9 a.m.

MORNING WORSHIP

Sunday, 10:30 a.m.

BOARD OF STEWARDS

Wednesday before the first
Sunday, 6:30 p.m.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Wednesday before the first
Sunday, 6:30 p.m.

TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY

7 p.m.

MIDWEEK BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday at Noon

LOVE FEAST

Tuesday before the first
Sunday, 7 p.m.

OFFICIAL BOARD

Monday after the first Sunday,
6:30 p.m.

The Gathering

Every first Thursday,
11:45 a.m. until 1:15 p.m.

Lay Organization

Wednesday after Third Sunday,
6:30 p.m.

Sons of Allen

Third Saturday, 9 a.m.

Doorkeepers

Third Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.

Young People's Division

Second Thursday, 6 p.m.

Liturgical Dance Ministry

Monday, 6:45 until 8 p.m.

New Members Class

Sunday, 9 a.m.

PrayerLine Ministry Moment of Meditation Serving Christ

By J. Birice Packer
Meditation Leader



Scriptural Reference:
Matthew 25:37-40 KJV

"Then shall the righteous
answer Him saying, 'Lord,
when saw we Thee hun-
gered, and fed Thee? Or
thirsty, and gave Thee

drink? When saw we Thee a stranger, and
took Thee in? Or naked, and clothed
Thee? Or when saw Thee sick, or in pris-
on, and came unto Thee?' And the King
shall answer and say unto them, 'Verily I
say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it
unto one of the least of these my brethren
ye have done it unto me.'"

Have you seen Christ this week? Of
course you have seen Him. I would guess
you have seen Him several times. You saw
Him huddled under a blanket early in the
morning trying to stay warm. You saw
Him asking for a handout on the corner.
Then there was the time you passed Him
digging in the trash looking for something
to eat or wear. Then you visited Him in
the nursing home and hospital. You also
saw Him at the prison because you visited
there. When you have done it to the least,
you have done it unto Christ.

When the Lord blesses you, you should be
a blessing to someone else. Is there any-

thing you are willing to share with Christ
today? It could be a phone call, a visit, a
card or a few dollars. When we share with
others, we are serving Christ. Sometimes
a few moments of your time makes a big
difference in a person's day.

In your service Christ do not show partial-
ity. James 2:1-4 states "My brethren, have
not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the
Lord of glory, with respect of persons, for
if there come unto your assembly a man
with a gold ring in goodly apparel and
there come in also a poor man in vile rai-
ment; and ye have respect to him that
weareth the gay clothing and say unto him
sit thou here in a good place, and say to
the poor stand thou there or sit here under
my footstool: Are ye not then partial in
yourselves and become judges of evil
thoughts."

You exhibit your love for Christ when
you serve others. If you want to jump start
your spiritual life try serving Christ.
Sometimes there are no shoes or there
maybe rips in His garments. You must
pray and seek help to look beyond the
outward appearances and see the needs.
There are times when those in need are
well dressed but are hurting inside, be will-
ing to help them as well. When there is a
need act on it. Always pray, ask for for-
giveness, study the word and listen to the
Holy Spirit.

From page 1

Servant's Corner: A fresh start with FAST

lends us the fresh forces we need to break
through and to let go of old patterns and
traditions. During this time of the year,
the possibility of blazing a brand-new be-
ginning in life is rich — pregnant with
possibilities.

This has never been truer, because after
the long winter, springtime dawns us out,
and if we align ourselves with the power
of its presence and like-minded people of
faith, there is strength in "people power"

guided by the Holy
Spirit. Then the un-
stoppable principle
of rebirth and its
freshness will work
within us.

What better time
could there be to harness this seasonal
cycle of life to do good and start a new life
for ourselves for the greater good of us all.
Let's stand FAST together!



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BETHEL A.M.E. CHURCH

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33733-6423

Prayer Line (6-6:20 a.m.)
(605) 475-4000
Access Code: 874821#

The Right Rev.
Adam J. Richardson Jr.
Bishop, 11th Episcopal District

Mrs. Connie S. Richardson
WMS Episcopal Supervisor

Rev. Joyce J. Moore, Presiding Elder

Rev. Kenneth F. Irby, Pastor

Ministerial Staff
Rev. Gwendolyn Williams
Itinerant Elder

Rev. Paul Hodges
Local Deacon

Licentiate
Sis. Kennetra K. Irby
Bro. James Robbins II
Bro. Andrew Pink
Bro. Julian Fullmer

Exhorter
Sis. Maria Scruggs

Retired
Rev. Virbet White, Rev. Patricia Nelson
Rev. Marvin Lowery

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Bethel was built in 1894. Made initially of wood, it was altered several times and moved across the street so that the larger masonry church, known as the "Stone Church," could be built in 1905.

In 1922, construction began on the present brick building, which is based on Mother Bethel in Philadelphia. It was literally built right over the existing masonry church. Records show that only one Sunday service had to be suspended because of construction.

Bethel was designated a local historic landmark in 1988.



Another disciple added to the role

Crystal Pruitt accepts her Certificate of Full Membership from Pastor Kenny Irby on Sunday, April 24. After successfully completing New Members Class, which is conducted by Patricia H. Wright, probationary members are officially welcomed into full membership with all rights and responsibilities granted by the Connectional Church.

Answers to puzzles on page 7

Sudoku

6	1	2	7	9	3	8	5	4
3	4	5	8	1	2	9	6	7
7	8	9	4	6	5	1	3	2
9	3	1	5	7	4	2	8	6
8	5	6	9	2	1	4	7	3
4	2	7	6	3	8	5	9	1
5	6	4	1	8	7	3	2	9
1	7	3	2	5	9	6	4	8
2	9	8	3	4	6	7	1	5

Rebus

1. Chicken in every pot
2. Pace back and forth
3. Son of a gun
4. Double parked
5. Round of applause
6. Pennies from heaven
7. Cross country
8. Face in the crowd
9. Peppermint twist
10. Undersea fishing
11. Bermuda Triangle
12. Take one before each meal
13. Shrinking violets
14. Middle of the road
15. First five to give answer to the *Beacon* get a prize.
16. Mixed bag

Rhyme time

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. Book crook | 6. Fast blast | 11. Flame game |
| 2. Bare chair | 7. Cash dash | 12. Bent cent |
| 3. Book nook | 8. Flag bag | 13. Clean bean |
| 4. Raw paw | 9. Bread bed | 14. Greek freak |
| 5. Ham scam | 10. Cat brat | |