



A Time to Celebrate

After months of silence *The Communicator* has emerged with news, views, reports, and above all a sense of celebration on this the 141st Anniversary of the **First African Baptist Church**.

Following is a synopsis of the activities planned for the celebration as given and seen through the eyes of Sis. Diana Bibb.

Anniversary Celebration

On Sunday, October 14, 2007, the members of **First African Baptist Church** journeyed a few blocks to an empty lot at the corner of 4th street and 24th avenue. The theme for this occasion was *Back to the Old Landmark*. Once there, we all assembled under tents to participate in our regular Sunday School and morning worship

services. This was a new experience for our congregation because **First African** had not held worship services at this location since the original members purchased a church building as their first permanent place of worship.

As we commemorate the historical event that took place on this loca-

tion, it will always be preserved in our hearts and minds. As we honor the memory of our original members, draw from their determination to worship freely, and enjoy the legacy of their faith, we give God the glory.

The message, a dynamic and spiritually stirring sermon from the 37th
See Anniversary Celebration, page 2

Inside this issue:

Family Night	2
Mission Activities	3
Superintendent Tuscaloosa City Schools Speaks	5
October is Pastor Appreciation Month	6
Conference Reports	7
Dr. James O. Ellis Scholarship	9
Birthdays and Anniversaries	10

Special points of interest:

- 141 years of Christian service
- What can we do to be an angel of God?
- In Jesus we've got everything
- Leadership comes with responsibility
- Separate-but-equal?

Anniversary Celebration

continued, page 1

Chapter of Ezekiel (dry bones) was delivered by **Rev. Richard Morgan**. He concluded by emphasizing that the church, as an organism can function when all parts (represented by church groups and auxiliaries) are joined together. Following the worship service that was considered by all to be a truly blessed experience, we enjoyed a delicious fellowship dinner that included deep fried fish, grits, a variety of home cooked vegetables, and homemade pound cake.

The *Back to the Old Landmark* service was the first in a series of pre-anniversary activities. Other scheduled events included a *Health, Food, and Fun* day on Saturday, October

20th, and *Thursday Night Live*, a church youth-directed service on November 8th. The scheduled speaker is Rev. Tyshawn Gardner, Pastor of Plum Grove Baptist Church.

First African's 141st Anniversary Day celebration will conclude on Sunday, November 11, 2007. This year's theme is *The Church Shall Prevail the Test of Time* (Matthew 16:18). Our special guest for the morning service is the Afro-American Gospel from the University of Alabama. **Rev. Richard Morgan** will deliver the morning sermon.

The afternoon worship service will commence at 3:00 with a praise service by

Culver Road and First African praise teams. Special guest include Rev. Frank Kennedy Jr. of Pilgrim Baptist Church, Lanett, Alabama who will deliver the afternoon sermon. The Honorable Walt Maddox, Mayor of the City of Tuscaloosa will also be present.

"The church, as an organism can function when all parts (represented by church groups and auxiliaries) are joined together."

Family Night

Through prayer and planning, God has blessed **First African Baptist Church** with another good family night. It was held Thursday, September 27, 2007 at 6:30 that evening. The theme for the family night was *Faith*. The Crusaders were asked to conduct the devotion and they gladly accepted. The speaker for the evening was **Deacon Frank White Jr.** Words cannot ex-

plain what an awesome job **Deacon White** did on speaking about faith and commitment. He explained the concept about God's angels. His challenge to us was *What can we do to be an angel of God?* **Bernida Byrd** and **Jessie Martin** helped conduct some very good Bible games to test our knowledge. The prize winners were **Sharon Long**, **Audrey Ellis**, and **Taylor**

Long. The dinner for the evening was spaghetti, salad, green beans, baked chicken, cake, rolls, and drinks. Thanks to everyone who contributed to the cooking, purchasing and preparing of the meal. The next family night will be the last Thursday in January 2008. Thank God for our church family.

— *The Family Night Committee*

Church News

Funeral services for the late **Deacon Woodroe McGee**, the husband of **Sis. Linda McGee**, were held on Saturday, September 17, 2007. Please continue to pray for the family.

We extend sympathy to **Sis. Myrtle E. Gray** in the loss of her daughter-in-law.

Special prayers for **Sis. Dorothy M. Richardson** and family in the passing of her aunt, Mrs. Elsie Nickson of Boligee, Alabama.

We solicit your prayers for the following person on our sick list, also to those serving in the military and their families:

Sis. Irene Berry – Birmingham

Sis. Melnee Johnson – out of town

Sis. Ida Hobson – at home

Sis. Julia Howard – at home

Sis. Norma Whitfield – retirement home

Sis. Naameka White – California

Sis. Mary Hall – at home

Sis. Mary White – nursing home

Sis. Hazel Eubanks – at home

Sis. Dorothy Smith – at home

Sis. Marie Hester – at home

Bro. Manley Knox – at home

Bro. Ernest O'Rourke – at home

To add or remove someone from the prayer list, please call the church office at 758-2833 or contact the church secretary, **Sis. Irma Mason**.

Mission Activities

Matrons

At the entrance of the Fellowship Hall, the Matrons have placed two huge boxes – one intended to be a Food Bank and the other a Clothing bank. Anyone can donate to these projects.

In the Food Bank, one is asked to donate canned goods, and any non-perishable food items, paper towels, and disposable eating utensils. Items in this box are evenly distributed to people on the sick list who can make use of such items. Sometimes donations are made to the Turning Point Organization. Items are also given to people who come to the church in need of food.

See Mission Activities, page 4

The Clothing box is a new project. Plans are being made to donate the clothes to the Boys and Girls Ranch in Tuscaloosa. If anyone knows of someone in need of clothing please contact a Matron. Clothes donated should be clean and in good condition.

The Matrons would like to thank all those who made donations and look forward to your future support.

Red Circle

The Red Circle are busy with the Annual Shoe Box project for the Samaritan Purse. Volunteers are involved in wrapping boxes and donations are accepted. The goal is 85 boxes this year. For more information, please contact **Sis. Audrey Ellis** or **Sis. Debra Bell**, Counselors.

Crusaders

The Crusaders have plans to resume their service at the Soup Bowl in the very near future.

East End Circle

The *FABC Communicator* is an outreach project of the Circle. Its purpose is to make members aware of activities taking place within the body of believers and to inform the sick-and-shut-in as well as those who are away from the community.

Copies of this newsletter are sent to members who live out of town. Anyone with items of interest for the newsletter may submit them to any member of the Circle or to **Sis. Irma Mason**, church secretary.

In Jesus We've Got Everything!

The greatest man in history.

Jesus had no servants, yet they called him master.

Had no degree, yet they call him teacher.

Had no medicines, yet they called him healer.

He had no army, yet kings feared Him.

He won no military battles, yet he conquered the world.

He committed no crime, yet they crucified Him.

He was buried in a tomb, yet He lives today.

Feel honored to serve a leader who loves us!

Jesus.

Superintendent Tuscaloosa City Schools Speaks to The Torchbearers

On September 21, 2007 a sparse audience, gathered in the Dr. James O. Ellis Education Center, listened intently as Dr. Joyce Levey, Superintendent of Tuscaloosa City Schools, presented an overview of the school system she manages. There are nineteen schools housing a student population of 10,580 from grades kindergarten through twelfth. There are 1,300 staff members, and about 900 are certified teachers or administrators. Dr. Levey spelled out the excellent academic programs offered by the school system, lauded the certified staff for their dedication and professionalism, and gave kudos to the many successful students enrolled.

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), a federal mandate, requires all publicly funded schools to meet established measurable objectives in reading and mathematics. Each school district is graded to determine if those objectives have been accomplished. These grades or findings are published annually as an Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) report. Levey admitted that the AYP for her school district is a mixed bag. Some schools have met 100% of their objectives, but many have not, and most of those

schools that have not are all black schools or nearly so. My schools have a lot to be proud of, she boasted, but lamented the dropout rate of the system, and especially deplored the abominable graduation rate (46% last year) of all black, Central High School. Northridge and Bryant High Schools have better graduate rates, 87% and 77% respectively, however these percentages need to improve. We can never be satisfied with anything less than 100%, she stressed.

Those present, in large measure, came to get the details of the restructuring plan that was formulated during the 2006-2007 school year, and implemented at the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year. Levey did not disappoint. The restructuring plan created attendance zones or clusters for the various schools. This plan resulted in some students being transferred from schools that were performing at or above AYP standards to schools that were performing below standard. Most of the students transferred were black. According to Levey the plan is color blind, Race, she empha-

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sized time and time again, did not play any role in the restructuring plan, thus played no role in the transfers. Residency, not race, income, social standing, religion, etc. was the only factor considered when the restructuring plan was developed. One of the frequently mentioned objectives of the restructuring plans was to attract white families to the district, ostensibly to enhance the tax base and increase the number of white students. Race, therefore was an element in the development of the restructuring plan.

During the 2006-2007 academic year and during the Summer of 2007 several meetings were held to advise parents and students of their options in the event they were being transferred. At these meetings, according to Levey, affected persons were given every opportunity to be assigned to their school of choice. Unfortunately, these meetings were sparsely attended by those who could potentially be adversely impacted by the restructuring and transfer plan

See Superintendent, page 6

Dr. Levey took great pains to assure her audience that she nor the Board of Education made any effort covert or overt to re-segregate the schools, as has been alleged by some individuals and groups.

During a lively and sometimes contentious question and answer session, Superintendent Levey was asked in various ways, if the Board of Education was trying to turn the clock back to an era of separate-but-equal system of education. Her steadfast unswerving response was an unequivocal, no. One questioner asked Levey if she believed in separate-but-equal. Many in the audience, including this reporter, heard Levey say, "Yes," and then launch into an elaborate clarification

of her answer. The clarification did not support a yes response, but that yes response made everything that followed controversial.

On 24 September 2007, a request for further clarification was made. Dr. Levey, on 25 September 2007, gave the following written response. Dr. Levey wrote, "When the question was broached concerning separate and equal...I repeated the question, "separate but equal...that was your question?" The response was "yes" ...and I restated her answer, "yes!" I was surprised after all my responses during the meeting that I had not communicated well enough that the question was even asked. I by no means believe in separate but equal and tried to give an adequate

response and example. I believe that we all should have the same equal opportunities and equitable means to reach our goals, visions, and dreams. There should never be anything separate period...and education and opportunities should always be equal. I apologize if that was misunderstood.

Packets containing brochures, information about individual schools and students were made available. Dr. Levey conveyed he thanks for the opportunity to speak to **The Torchbearers** and graciously consented to attend any meeting where she feels she can make a contribution to an organization or group, but mostly to our children.

October is Pastor Appreciation Month

And God chose me to be a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of this Good News (II Timothy 1:11)

This is more than a single calendar event. When we express our appreciation and give our prayer support to those who have answered God's call, we are doing what a loving congregation should do throughout the year.

The pressure that pastors and their families live under can be incredible. Their lives are on display as though they

are on a stage, and the entire congregation and community are the audience, watching every move they make. We are reluctant to forgive their mistakes, and we expect them to be perfect people with model families. They are expected to come when we call, to never be down, and always wear a smile. When they fail to meet our unrealistic expect-

tations, we turn away from them rather than embrace them as a loving congregation should do in good times as well as bad.

That's why God has instructed us to recognize His servants (I Timothy 5:17) for they have accepted the most precious assignment which is

See Pastor Appreciation Month, page 7

the spiritual well-being of His flock. We recognize our associate ministers: **Reverends J.C. Carter, James Evans, Don Key, Walter Hinton, Oscar Rivers, Michael Brown**, and a special thanks to **Rev. Richard Morgan**.

Conference Reports

The third annual Southwest Region Youth Conference was held Monday, July 23 through Wednesday, July 25, 2007 in Tyler, Texas. Sixteen youth and eleven adults traveled by Tuscaloosa Charter Service bus to the Holiday Inn Express hotel. The Conference theme: *Write the Vision, share God's Word* (I Corinthians 2:2).

Three members of **First African Baptist Church** were elected as officers for a 3-year term under the director Mary M. Hopkins of Mississippi.

Briana Bell – Red Circle Vice President

Roderick Martin – Crusader Vice President

Miracle Lawson – Sunbeam Secretary

Every child and adult attended a conference workshop/class. Every child participated in a rehearsal, example: dance, choir, etc.

Following are expressions of some of those who attended.

Matthew Brown

We learned a new dance, songs. The lights were blinking on and off to tell us God was pleased. We ate and we slept in a hotel. Marlon, Marquis, and I slept in a room with O'Neil. We ate at a cool restaurant.

Marquis Brown

It was fun and we learned about sharing God's Word and how God's love goes around and around. I enjoyed dancing. We did a group song. When we danced the lights blinked on and off. I loved when the audience clapped. I knew we did a good job. We ate at a great restaurant, the food was good. Jesus loves me.

Myles Hargrove

When we went to Texas we learned about dance we sang and ate a lot. We slept in a hotel. We had a play and we learned about God's word.

See Conference Reports, page 8



Charae Carter

I enjoyed the workshop and learned about having faith in God. I also enjoyed staying at the hotel.

Linda Carter

The Youth Conference had something for everyone. There were workshops for all ages and there were rehearsals that all the kids could partake. I loved the fact that Alabama was represented well and everyone at First African did their part. We met a lot of people and Tyler was a place I had never been before.

Jerome Martin

I enjoyed being Crusader Vice President at the Youth Conference in Texas. The people were nice and I thank everyone for supporting me.



Jessie Martin

I enjoyed the Conference. I was impressed with the way the officers were treated. Our youth had leadership classes, lunches and dinners together. This drove the point home, that to hold an office comes responsibility. The theme and messages was carried and was carved throughout the whole Conference reflecting the purpose. "Write the Vision: Share God's Word" (I Corinthians 2:2).

Recipe of the Month

Blueberry Cobbler

1 quart frozen blueberries or 3 cups fresh blueberries
1 1/2 cups sugar
1 tbsp. lemon juice
1 recipe Oil Pastry

Oil Pastry

2 cups all purpose flour, sifted
1 1/2 tspn. Salt
1/2 cup cooking oil
4 or 5 tbsp. ice water

Combine the flour and salt. Add ice water to 1/2 cup oil. Then pour into flour mixture. Mix well, roll into pastry. Combine blueberries, sugar and lemon juice. Use a large shallow baking pan to bake the cobbler. Put a layer of blueberries in the bottom, then a layer of thinly rolled baking strips. Repeat. Then cover top with rolled pastry. Pour water into the dish until it slightly covers cobbler. Bake 1 hour at 350 degrees or until lightly brown.

More Conference Reports

NAB District Youth Officers Nominated for 2007-2008:

Taylor Long was voted Sunbeam Assistant Secretary

Jerome Martin was voted Crusader Parliamentarian

William Marshall was voted Crusader Devotion Leader.

NAB District Youth Conference Awards:

Charae Carter won first place in reciting Psalms 23

First African Sunbeams won the first place attendance trophy.



Special Recognition

Bro. Charles Charter is listed in the **2007 Who's Who Book of Americas best teachers.**

Dr. James O. Ellis Scholarship Sis. Audrey Ellis will accept applications in March 2008

Purpose: To provide an educational opportunity, beyond high school, to a deserving young person who desires to pursue a college education or prepare himself/herself for a specific trade/vocation.

Guidelines: The amount of scholarship awarded to one student each year is \$1,000. In the event no student applies, two \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded the next year for eligible applicants.

Criteria for Scholarship

- A. Be an active member in good standing with **First African Baptist Church**
- B. Have a "B" average
- C. Be accepted at a two-year or four year institution
- D. Submit an official high school transcript
- E. Complete a scholarship application form
- F. Apply for the scholarship by May of each year
- G. Be active in Sunday School, Red Circle/YWA, or Crusaders

Evaluation Points

- A. Church Involvement 25 points
- B. Community Involvement 25 points
- C. District Involvement 25 points
- D. Academic Record 25 points

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The Friendly Church on the Corner

We're on the Web
www.firstafricanchurch.org

Birthday Greetings

November	1	Odessa Warrick
	2	Doreen Thompson
	5	Mary Kemp
	5	Tameron Long
	6	Miracle Lawson
	9	Olivia Maniece
	12	Jonathan Edwards
	19	Edward O. Jones
	20	Myrtle Gray
	20	Andreas Hester
	20	Gladys Stringfellow
	22	Alfreda White
	28	Wilma O'Rourke
	30	Rev. Walter Hinton

Happy Anniversary

November	2	Rev. Don and Sis. Vera Key
	27	Rev. Michael and Tamioka Brown

Who Is He?

In **Chemistry**, he turned water to wine.

In **Biology**, he was born without the normal conception.

In **Physics**, he disproved the law of gravity when he ascended into heaven.

In **Economics**, he disproved the law of diminishing return by feeding 5,000 men with two fishes and five loaves of bread.

In **Medicine**, he cured the sick and the blind without administering a single dose of drugs.

In **History**, he is the beginning and the end.

In **Government**, he said that he shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace.

In **Religion**, he said no one comes to the Father except through Him.

So, Who Is He?

