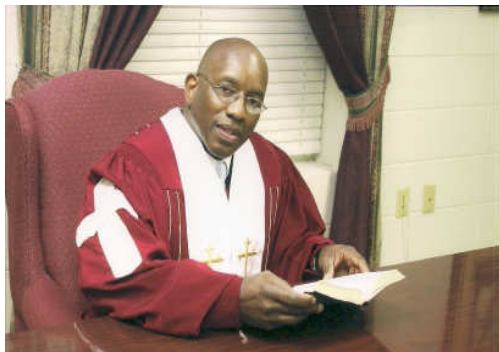


The Pastor's Corner



Greetings my Brothers and Sisters in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...

To the **First African Baptist Church** family, I rejoice in the Lord to be able to speak to you

through the blessed pages of the *FABC Communicator* again. The newsletter is another tool used for the purpose of informing, enlightening, and inspiring our members of God's divine intervention. This letter also helps to keep us on one accord, for the growth, and the benefit of Kingdom work. Our goal and vision is to make Christ known, through Mission, Outreach, and Education. My desire is to make a difference with a greater impact in our relationships with God, and man. The Holliday Season is upon us, and we must remember to be grateful unto the Lord, and give the hope of Christ this season. Our destiny awaits us therefore we must view the vision, verify the voice, and validate the victory.

May the blessing of the Lord be with you this Holiday Season.

Richard L Morgan

FIRST AFRICAN BAPTIST CHURCH
REV. RICHARD L. MORGAN, PASTOR

FABC Communicator

Inside this issue:

The Pastor's Corner	Front page
New Leadership New Beginnings	2
Fall Festival	4
Church News	8
Alabama Adventure	5
Stewardship over money	9
Church Calendar	12

Special points of interest:

- Salem Baptist Church in Greensboro (AL)
- Debt or Credit
- What Priceless Gifts!
- The Mask
- Morgan receives an A+

New Leadership New Beginnings

(Continuation From Article Published in September/October 2008 Edition)

Since **Rev. Morgan's** arrival the media arms of **FABC** has been greatly advanced. It is now dubbed the Media Ministry. The capability for audio recordings has been present for many years. That capacity has been modernized to include CD and DVID recordings. Sick and shut-in members will now have the option of getting copies of Sunday services in all formats for their viewing and listening pleasure. Those persons desiring to enjoy recordings at home and no not have electronic equipment may be given access to such equipment in the near future. Many details and fine points are yet to be worked out in this regard. All Church business, including sermons and special events can be archived and preserved for posterity utilizing the new equipment. A giant screen television has been installed above the pulpit area, and parishioners have an unobstructed living color view of all the Church proceedings. That large hat worn by the well dressed matron will no longer raise the indignation of the short person sitting in the pew behind her. Members can see themselves "on television" if they look closely enough.

Attendance on any Sunday at **FABC**, like most churches, is diverse. Parishioners come in a large assortment of ages, from newborn babies to nonagenarians (persons ninety to ninety-nine years of age). The levels of physical health will vary among the age groups from the frail and feeble to the hale and hearty. On Sunday 14 September 2008 a new Church auxiliary, the Health and Wellness Ministry, was introduced by **Sis. Linda O'Rourke**. Details of this arm of the Church were not available prior to publication. Our congregation includes a caring, talented, and experienced cadre of health professionals and this group, with the blessings and happy approval of Morgan, are moving forward with the development of this ministry.

Well established institutions, with well known, well entrenched, comfortable constituents are resistant to change. Churches are no different. To be sure, there are those who are uncomfortable with some of the changes wrought by **Rev. Morgan**. Virtually every move he has made has been given ample airing before the changes were effected. Transparency is a hallmark of good leadership, and **Richard Morgan**, we believe, is nothing less than open and above board with everything he does in his walk with Christ. He has his critics, but much of the criticism is obscured by the overwhelming majority who support him.

Some of **Morgan's** decisions are questioned, and rightly so. There are those who criticize, for counterfeit and bogus reasons, his bachelorhood. These critics should be reminded that the apostle Paul was not married, but more importantly the son of God, who died for the remission of our sins, was a bachelor. With that in mind, we must concede a Baptist church is a democratic organization and members have the right to question and criticize. It is to be hoped that those criticizing will do so in the best traditions of democratic institutions, and especially democratic religious institutions. Resorting to gossip, innuendo, and insinuation is worthy only of satan. The true followers of Christ at **FABC** will not stoop to such devices. The work of saving souls is the business of God, and those charged with the responsibility of shepherding God's business must humbly

– See **New Leadership**, page 3

and prayerfully move forward. **Pastor Morgan** is moving forward boldly and with daring, and dragging some of us at **FABC** kicking and screaming into the 21st Century.

Progress, in many instances, is expensive, especially when the progress involves upgrades to modern amenities, conveniences and equipment. **Morgan** is acutely aware of costs and members are asked to participate in an arrangement called "The Four x Four Plan." On the fourth Sunday of every month, each member is asked to contribute to the cost of our upgrades. This sum will be over and above the regular tithing responsibility. **Morgan** emphasized, that each member must be comfortable with the amount contributed. The rising costs of transportation, medicines, and other daily necessities have strained many budgets, therefore members are cautioned to take care of needs and then contribute.

People in church and other organizations are inspired by many things, such as; artful oratory, exemplary lives and deeds, stimulating prose, personal encouragement, prayer, and other things. Inspiration, however, is often fleeting and a short duration. That is why it is very important to attend the worship service of your choice every opportunity God gives you, so that your spiritual battery can be recharged and made ready for the tasks that fill our daily lives. New members, especially those who had a prior church relationship with **Pastor Morgan**, are moving and participating with renewed vigor and vitality. They are participating members who attend services regularly, lend their voices to the choir, and help with the work of the Church in other capacities. They seem to glow with a Christian pride worthy of imitation.

The first six months of **Pastor Morgan's** tenure at **FABC** have been joyful, for the most part. A grade of A+ is appropriate. That is the way of most honeymoons. The remainder of his tenure will be joyous if the leadership and lay membership continue in prayer and devotion to God the Father and the teachings of His son, Jesus Christ. It has often been pointed out that there are at least three kinds of men: those who make things happen; those who watch things happen; and those who ask, "What happened?" No prizes will be awarded for recognizing to which group **Rev. Richard L. Morgan** belongs.



*The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the writer, and are not necessarily shared by **Rev. Richard Morgan**, other officials, or lay members of First African Baptist Church. The writer can be reached at otucker@comcast.net or (205) 553-9456.*

Fall Festival

By Sis. Linda Carter

First African Baptist Church held its Fall Festival on Friday, October 31 at 6:00 p.m. The committee chose to combine Family Night with the Fall Festival. Everyone in attendance, 120 children and adults, enjoyed a blessed and a good time.

The evening opened with our **Crusaders** providing an awe-inspiring devotion in our main sanctuary. **Rev. Morgan** entertained the crowd with a game called *Deal or No Deal* questions and answers. Minister Jurrita Williams, a young motivation speaker inspired the youth and children on the subject "The Mask." Minister Williams stated Christians do not need to wear masks because Jesus wants us to look and be our best for him at all times. Masks are a cover up and we do not want to cover up what is good.

Following the short sanctuary presentation, everyone adjourned into the fellowship hall for fun and games. Since it was Halloween, several children dressed in various customs that included a ladybug, dancer, several princesses, a 1970s man, Little Red Riding Hood, and many, many others. No children had customs with masks.

The evening did end there. Everyone then journeyed outside for trunk-a-treat and karaoke. Karaoke displayed much untapped talent in our Church and throughout Tuscaloosa county.

Our church provided a safe and fun place for kids. Thanks to everyone who brought candy, prizes, games, and those who helped in some way. It is a blessing to have a church family that will go above and beyond for our children and youth.



Thank God for our Church Family.
— From the Fall Festival Committee

Can you name all the "Names of Jesus" that are in the Bible?

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

An Alabama Adventure

Part I

On October 8, 2008, the **Torch Bearers of First African Baptist Church** traveled to several points of interest within the state. The journey began from the grounds of **First African** church. Travel was provided via PARA. We left the church at 8:00 a.m. Our first stop was at the Salem Baptist Church located on Baptist Hill. The church is situated to the west of the former Hale County Training School. The new name of the school is Greensboro Public School East.

We arrived in Greensboro at 8:55 a.m. Several deacons of the church greeted us (Deacons John E. Thomas, Simon Rhone, and Gwinn Ezell). The deacons led us through a tour of the sanctuary and the educational building. The structure is designed in the Neo-Byzantine architectural style that bears pointed arches and stained glass windows. It is a well-designed structure. It is interesting to note that Salem Church's history is similar to **First African's** history. The church was founded in 1869 three years after the founding of **First African Church**. The church stood on the grounds at the site of the present courthouse located on Main Street. After the War Between

the States (Civil War) the property was sold to the city of Greensboro for the sum of \$8,000 dollars. Two thousand were given to nine trustees who used the funds to purchase the real estate upon which the building now stands. The church celebrated its Centennial year in 1966 while the writer of this article served as the church's sixteenth pastor. The deacons who guided the tour were most kind to us. To the east of the church stands the old outdoors baptismal, which is now serving as a flowerbed. Adjacent to the baptismal a monument is erected to the memory of the Late Judson Lyons Kilpatrick who served as pastor of the church and the first principal of the school.

We boarded the vehicle and traveled to the west side of the city to view the St. Matthew A.M.E. Church. St. Matthew is the sister church to Salem church. We remained on the bus and drove west on Main Street to the home of Richmond P. Hobson a Spanish American War hero. The home is a fine specimen of Antebellum Architecture. The stately mansion is furnished with furnishing contemporary to this historical period. The various rooms are fur-

nished appropriately, to the rear of the mansion are the slave quarters and the kitchen. The kitchen was built a distance from the main dwelling for safety reasons. The kitchen was considered a fire hazard because of the use of fire for cooking. The buildings and grounds are kept up by the state of Alabama. It is property of the state and its upkeep is maintained by state funds. We departed from this site and traveled on to Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. This area is commonly referred to as the "depot" because it is adjacent to the old train depot. The railroad tracks are now taken up.

The Safe House Museum is located on this street. The museum is given the name "Safe House" because it is reported that Martin Luther King Jr. stayed in this house for safety reasons while visiting in the area. The museum houses relics of the past. Included among the holdings are mild churns, smoothing irons, sewing machines and other utensils that were in use during the 19th and 20th centuries. Numerous photos are displayed of persons who participated in the local civil rights struggle.

— See **Adventure**, page 6

Several photos that are on display reflect the likeness of many national civil rights leaders as well. Mrs. Ridgeway serves as curator of the museum. The Mrs. Theresa Burroughs is listed as the founder of the museum. We left the Safe House Museum and traveled southward via Alabama Highway 69.

At 10:20 we arrived at the Oak Grove church and school. Near the church is one of the two Rosenwald schools. Julius Rosenwald was a wealthy American businessman. He was a native of Springfield, Illinois. He served as president of the Sears Roebuck Company for fifteen years. He contributed more than \$63 million toward Negro education. He funded 5,000 schools at the primary level for impoverished areas. Mr. Rosenwald funded many schools throughout the state. He teamed up with Booker T. Washington in this endeavor. However, the Rosenwald Fund was established in 1917, about fifteen months after Mr. Washington's demise. The historical marker that is erected in front of the building informs the readers of Mr. Rosenwald's generosity. The historical marker bears the names of teachers who worked at this school. There is a **First African** connection to this school. Among the teachers listed on the plaque Mrs. Lois Dean Penny. Mrs. Lois Dean Penny-Stokes is the niece of the late **Sylvia Collins** for whom the **Collins** room at **First African** is named. On display within the building is the old pot bellied stove that was used for heating the school. Pupil's desks are also displayed, along with old textbooks and newspaper publications. On display is a military uniform worn by the late Charles Foreman who served in this U.S. Army during World War II. The uniform bears the rank of Sergeant. Mrs. Edmonia Borden a member of Oak Grove Church guided us on the tour of this facility. Mrs. Borden is a former pupil who attended school in the building. Her mother, Mrs. Roxanne Garrett Dawson is listed among the teachers who taught at Oak Grove School. Our tour of this facility ended at 11:00 a.m. The entourage departed from this site and continued down Alabama Highway 69 S. Highway 69 S. junctions with Hale County Road 12. We drove eastward on county road 12 approximately six miles. We drove by the property that is owned by Selma University. The property is situated to the north side of the roadway. It lies directly across from St. Michael Church. This property was bequeathed in the will of the late Mr. Richard G. Phillips in 1932. We passed by this property and continued in an easterly direction until county road 12 junctioned with Alabama Highway 25. We turned south on this highway and traveled to U.S. Highway 80 en route to the city of Selma, Alabama. Part II of the Alabama Adventure will be continued at a later date.

—Dr. J.C. Carter

*Associate Minister of First African Baptist Church and Interim Pastor of
First African Baptist Church—Northport*



Alabama Adventure Footnotes

*On behalf of the **Torch Bearers**, I feel compelled to express my gratitude to Rev. Carter who (in the absence of a secretary) responded spontaneously and graciously to my request to record the events of our recent tour.*

I thought it was most appropriate for him to do so since he was the chief architect of the planning, coupled with his geographical and historical knowledge of the area that also made him the most suitable person as the tour guide.

I applaud him for his patience, his tolerance and calm demeanor that was demonstrated throughout the journey. I am proud that he is a part of this group and is always so supportive of its activities. I pray for God's continued blessings on his future endeavors.

—Gladys Stringfellow

Dear Torch Bearers,

I received an unexpected delivery today! Thank you so much for the beautiful plant. I appreciate it so much. We had a lovely day and we saw so many interesting historical things.

Rev. Carter did a great job of planning our stops.

I enjoyed traveling with you all. We will have to do it again.

*Once again, thanks so much,
Pam Erickson*

*May God Bless
President-Elect
Barack Obama and Family*

Yes, we can!

Church News

Please pray for our bereaved families...

Mrs. Eloise Hinton, the mother of **Rev. Walter Hinton**, was funeralized on October 4, 2008 at the Morning Star Christian Church, Birmingham, Alabama. **Rev. Hinton** is an Associate Minister here at **First African**.

Ms. Myrtis M. Richard, the grandmother of **Rev. Michael Brown**, was funeralized on November 22, 2008 at Morning Star Baptist Church, Holt, Alabama with Rev. Pherelle Fowler officiating. **Rev. Brown** is an Associate Minister her at **First African**.

The brother of **Deacon L.V. Hall** passed away recently in California. Funeral plans will be announced later.

Don't forget our members on the sick and shut-in list that appears in the bulletin each Sunday. Pray for them and help in any way you can.

*Happy Birthday Greetings to Everyone born in the months of
November and December*



Stewardship Over Money Matters
Debt and Credit
By Sis. Diana Bibb

As we attempt to steady ourselves after the recent national financial disaster, we can seek the advice of financial analysts, read books on investments, or we can take our direction from God's Word, and not from the world. The logical decision would be to observe what the church is doing and use that as our guide. However, in doing so we will find that the average American church is as deeply in debt as the average American business.

The only reliable source of wisdom is the Word of God. Only by going back to the true source of all wisdom can we possibly hope to find the right balance today. God's Word tells us that His plan for us is to be debt-free and, even better, that we should be lenders rather than borrowers. "The Lord will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand; and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow" (Deuteronomy 28:12).

The Bible give us some practical principles concerning borrowing, although it must be remembered that these are principles, not laws. Principles are instructions from the Lord to help guide our decisions. A law is absolute. Negative consequences may follow from ignoring a principle, but punishment is the likely consequence of ignoring a law God has given us.

The principle of borrowing given in scripture is: "A man lacking in sense pledges and becomes guarantor in the presence of his neighbor" (Proverbs 17:18). Principles are given to keep us clearly within God's path so that we can experience His blessings. To ignore them puts us in a constant state of jeopardy in which satan can cause us to stumble at any time.

Some common attitudes that lead to debt are:

1. **Lack of knowledge**—Many of us were never trained to manage money. Our society is no help because its philosophy is to spend spend, and spend. If you can't afford it, get it anyway; you deserve it. That type of attitude leads to debt.
2. **Indulgence**—We tend to need everything NOW. Somehow it has become our 'right' to have at least two new cars, a nice home, and exciting vacations whether we can afford them or not.
3. **Poor Planning**—No matter how noble our intentions may be, a person without a plan is on the way to debt. We don't plan to fail; we fail to plan.

If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always gotten. Remember, you are too blessed to be stressed!



What Priceless Gifts!

*The wisemen traveled from afar
With gifts both rich and rare,
Each guided by an unknown star;
Their gifts they had to share.
Some frankincense, a wedge of gold,
Any myrrh – what could this mean?
What secrets were these Magi told?
What vision had they seen?*

*Their pathway led to Bethlehem
To seek a little Child,
To worship and adore this One
So pure and undefiled.
Jesus was that Infant's name,
Our hearts He came to win;
God in the flesh was He who came
To save us from our sin.*

*The wisemen's gifts are not for play –
Some toy would better do –
Unless in them deep meaning lay
That speaks to me and you.
The gold reveals His kingly reign
From all eternity –
A rule that someday will be plain
For all mankind to see.*

*Then frankincense with fragrant scent
That rise to God's throne
Symbolic of a priestly work
This world has never known.
But what of myrrh, that bitter spice
With which to bury dead?
How could this priest be king in death
By Making hell His bed?*

*Ah, herein lies God's gift of love
To sinners here on earth;
For since His Son left heaven above,
A cross eclipsed His birth –
A cross on which the world could see
Him pay sin's awful price,
For no one else could sinless be
To make the sacrifice.*

*And when redemption's work was done,
The powers of death gave way;
So now when sinners trust God's Son,
They are reborn that day.
How fitting, then, the wisemen's gifts,
The spices and the gold;
But far more priceless is God's Gift –
A Gift of love untold!*

– Dennis De Haan



Jail Ministry Update

By Sis Diana Bibb

It's Thursday afternoon, and I have just returned from our NABD jail ministry visitation to Metro Jail that houses both city and county, male and female inmates. I thought it best to put my thoughts on paper while the experience was fresh on my mind. I have been searching for the appropriate words to express the gratitude and humility that I feel as a result of being given the opportunity to share the Word with the men and women who are incarcerated in Tuscaloosa County.

First of all, I have to acknowledge that I truly believe that my participation in the NABD jail ministry is under the divine direction of the Lord. It doesn't seem to matter how physically, mentally or emotionally exhausted I may feel leading up to the visit time; when I enter the facility I feel as though I have received a surge of energy, and I can hardly wait to enter a cell block and share the word with the inmates.

There was something unusual about today's visit. After asking if we could share the Word with them, I asked those with Bibles to get them so they could read along with us. I wanted to be certain they understood that any scriptures we might read are available for their reading also. Normally, there would be a few inmates who desired not to participate. But, when I asked for their attention, all of them seemed eager and ready to receive us. Their warm and cooperative reception was very encouraging.

They listened attentively to the 'Lost Sheep parable' about salvation. I explained to them how Jesus "in His incarnation came to earth (in the flesh) after the lost sheep; in His life, through His ministry He continued to seek it; in His death, He laid it upon His shoulders; in His resurrection, he bore (carried) the sheep on its way, and in His ascension, He brought it home rejoicing. I told them what the story meant: Just like there was a big party over the one lost sheep; there will be a big party in heaven over just one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine people who think they are perfect and don't need to repent.

I compared the lost sheep to all of us who, according to Romans 3:23, "have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." One of the challenges that we face as jail mission workers is to relate to the inmates how we are all sinners (saved by God's grace, and not by our good works). If anyone is interested in the jail ministry, please see me.

Be Blessed!

Church Calendar

- December 6 Leadership meeting (10:00 a.m.)
First African Baptist Church
- Candlelight Christmas Service (5:30 p.m.)
First African Baptist Church, Main Sanctuary
- Church Banquet (7:30 p.m.) \$10.00 per adult
Ma'Dear's restaurant (Culver Road)
- December 8 West Alabama Christmas Parade
Downtown Tuscaloosa
First African Youth participating with a float
- December 21 Youth Department Christmas Extravaganza
(9:00 a.m.)
First African Baptist Church
- December 31 All hotel monies due for trip to
Panama City, Florida
(See Lisa Washington, Georgia White, or
Irma Gore)
- January 4, 2009 Family Communion (6:00 p.m.)
First African Baptist Church
Special Guests: Rev. Vernon Swift, Pastor of
Elizabeth Baptist Church and
Congregation
- January 11 Pastor's Anniversary for Rev. Darren C. Allen
Cordova, Alabama

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The Friendly Church on the Corner

We're on the Web
www.firstafricanchurch.org

The *Communicator* is a project of the East End Circle where Sis. Willie M. Carter is chair. The purpose of this newsletter is to disseminate information to members regarding the Bible and church activities. Copies are mailed to students and anyone away from home. The newsletter is also sent to sick and shut in members locally.

Any suitable literary or Bible-based articles will be accepted from members for publication at any time. These may be given to **Sis. Irma Mason** or **Sis. Gladys Stringfellow**.

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Contributing Writers

***Remember early morning church services at
7:45 a.m. every Sunday***

