



St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

St. John Trumpet

February 2013
Volume 8, Issue 1



Pastor's Word

Greetings!

It is again a wonderful feeling to be able to say for the 30th year, a Very Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year to the St. John Family. I am indeed privileged to serve as the pastor of the greatest congregation in all of Christendom and I thank you, thank you, thank you for all the support, your encouragement and your graciousness -- as you have partnered with me to build God's kingdom here on earth.



Rev. Jesse Hawkins
Senior Pastor

We are off to a great start --- moving from "Good to Great." Our worship has been divine, our participation in the worship and the liturgy of our church has been energized; our congregants have been excited and our ministry leadership has seemingly caught the Pastor's vision. Certainly, all of us are gifted and resourceful, however it is most appreciated to shepherd a congregation who understands that vision comes from the Pastor or the person that has been assigned to lead. For you to embrace that concept says a lot about who you are. Disciples understand spiritual authority and isn't it refreshing to know that we are moving to discipleship instead of just being members of the church? I am so grateful for where God is taking us and so appreciative of your cooperation.

This year promises to be a great and exciting time. Our celebration of Black History will be memorable and historical. Our Youth Ministry promises to provide that population with new adventures, new opportunities and is pregnant with new possibilities. Our Children's Ministry is growing and the children are being nurtured by dedicated and

devoted volunteers. The other ministries of our church, such as the Career Ministry, are operating full speed ahead as they assist in providing participants with valuable information to aid persons on their career journey. We have great leadership and many opportunities for each member to be involved in the life of the church. Why not consider participating in one of these ministries -- we are not complete without you.

Let's make it a great year. Let's reach out to those who are lost; let's invite them share in our ministries and become a part of our family.

You are the greatest -- and it is not bragging, it is just fact!

Many Blessings,

Pastor Jesse

In This Issue:

Letter from the Editor	2
150 th Anniversary	
Black Tie Gala	3-4
Youth Christmas Party	5
Christian Education	6-7
Graduate Update	7
Marie Wilkinson Food Drive	8
Breakfast Fellowship	9
Whispered Prayer	9
Crossword Puzzle	10
From the Archives	10

Letter from the Editor

So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers. Acts 16:5 (NIV)

Browsing through a collection of what appeared to be junk email, I recently came across an article about strengthening our faith. Two major points were brought out in this article: 1) we already have all the faith that we need and 2) God sustains our faith. The article further explained that even though faith inherently has been built into each one of us, the strength of our faith rests with God himself; our faith is the manifestation of God's power revealed through us. Since we all know that God's power is limitless, it follows that so is the potential for our faith.

I don't know about you, but as a lay person, I never really thought about faith in these terms. We should not be deceived into thinking that our faith is not big enough, deep enough, strong enough or whatever enough. The fact that we are involved in a community of believers says that there is some measure of faith within us. In the same way that we develop our God-given skills and talents to make us more proficient in different areas of our lives, we have to use or exercise the faith that God has given us in order for it to become stronger. We can have the kind of faith that will allow us to discover that silver lining in every cloud and see the good in every thing and every body. This likely will not always be easy. It is good to know that this is not something that we have to do by ourselves.

“Your faith will not fail while God sustains it; you are not strong enough to fall away while God is resolved to hold you.” Packer, J.I.. (January 2013). Knowing God Quotes. In *goodreads*. Retrieved January 10, 2013. from <http://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/276686-knowing-a-god>.

Through faith St. John has celebrated its 150th anniversary and Pastor Hawkins begins his 30th year of ministry with this church family. This issue of the Trumpet includes an article on the very successful 150th Anniversary Black Tie Gala, the *piece de resistance* of a year of celebration. What a blessing it was to fellowship and celebrate these achievements and to glorify God for what he has done for and through St. John! Rev. Justin gives us the Youth Ministry's account of the Christmas party that was hosted for St. John and other area youth. We have also included an overview of St. John's Christian Education program that is alive and well and growing.

As we start another new year, what is wavering in your life that would do well to be grounded in strengthened, serious faith? How can we ensure that our spirit life supports us as we take on this challenge? Where does our affiliation with St. John Church fit into this puzzle?

Explore all that God has put right in front of you, by way of St. John's leadership, clergy, ministry, members, etc. We can start or continue our spiritual growth and transformation through consistent prayer, bible study, participation in ministry, etc. It is just up to each one of us to become more involved in the life of this church as we start or continue on the road to building our spiritual refuge on a foundation of faith. Our faith is good enough and it is just enough to get us started and as we need it, our faith will keep us growing. In this new year of 2013, let us continue to pray for one another as we strengthen our faith through Christ!

Happy New Year!

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra A. Hall-Brewster
Editor

This Issue's Contributors:

The Rev. Dr. Cheryl Green
..... Christian Education

Mrs. Wendy Swims
..... Marie Wilkinson Food Drive

The Rev. Justin West
..... Youth Christmas Party

St. John AME Newsletter
February 2013, Volume 8, Issue 1

“The Church at the Caring End of Ministry”



150th Anniversary Gala

St. John brought its year-long 150th anniversary sesquicentennial celebration to an auspicious close by hosting a Black Tie Gala, *"Celebrating 150 Years in Service, Mission and Ministry."* The overall theme for the cumulative celebration year was, *"Remembering the PAST... Celebrating the NOW... Transforming the FUTURE."* Founded in 1862, St. John holds the distinction of being the oldest African-American congregation in the western suburbs. The celebration was held at the Oakbrook Terrace Drury Lane Theatre and Banquet Hall on the evening of Friday, November 16, 2012.

Dr. Benjamin Solomon Carson was the keynote speaker for the evening. Dr. Ben Carson is Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at John Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. Dr. Carson was born and raised in the inner city of Detroit, Michigan and credits his mother, Sonya Carson, for a huge influence on his success. His mother paved the way for Dr. Carson and his brother Curtis by setting an example of hard work and dedication. After a few harrowing experiences in childhood, Dr. Carson became a focused high school student, ultimately graduating with honors. He went on to earn a Bachelors' in Psychology from Yale University and an M.D. from the University of Michigan. He once felt that his niche would be psychology, but he later discovered his true passion in neurosurgery. In addition to his position as Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery, Dr. Carson is also a professor of neurosurgery, oncology, plastic surgery and pediatric medicine. Dr. Carson, a Seventh Day Adventist elder and Sabbath school teacher has stated, "I feel that the Lord is using me in a number of different ways."

Dr. Carson is an extremely brilliant, entertaining, and inspirational speaker. His speech gave the audience glimpses of his childhood, family background, religious beliefs, and the source of his strength, character and expertise. The audience was mesmerized by Dr. Carson's facility to impart his vast knowledge based in the medical field in such an engaging manner. We could not have selected a better speaker for the occasion.

Over 600 people attended the black tie affair and were not only entertained by Dr. Carson, but also heard from several ministers, politicians and other

dignitaries throughout the evening. Some of our most notable speakers and presenters, many comprising the impressive dais, were: The Rev. Clarence Robinson, Retired Presiding Elder, Chicago Conference; The Rev. Louis Toney, Retired Presiding Elder, Chicago Conference; The Rev. Thomas Hughes, Presiding Elder, South District Chicago Conference; The Rev. Walter Bauldrick, Presiding Elder, Milwaukee District, Chicago Conference; The Rev. Dr. George Flowers, Executive Director, Global Witness and Ministry; Mayor Tom Weisner, City of Aurora; The Rev. B. Chris Dorsey, Visiting Professor of Theology and Preaching, Western Theological Seminary, Holland, MI; and The Rev. A.D. Tyson, III, Presiding Elder, North District, Chicago Conference.

The Gala's MC was broadcast journalist Christian Farr, NBC5 Chicago's general assignment reporter and fill-in anchor. Accompanying Mr. Farr to the gala was his lovely wife, Karen Jordan, co-anchor of the ABC7 Weekend News in Chicago. We were honored to have everyone's participation and presence at the celebration.

The Ultimate Concept Band provided an outstanding musical backdrop before and during dinner. They returned to the stage after dinner to perform during the "Dancing until Midnight" portion of the evening. The band entertained attendees with a variety of hits from the past as well as more current selections. In all cases, they were at the top of their game.

Gala preparations were coordinated by the Sesquicentennial Committee ("the Committee") over the course of several months. This committee's combined talents were evident in the venue and menu selected, promotional materials distributed, public relations generated, and ambiance created for the evening. Pastor Hawkins was the Committee Chairman and Marlene Rickman served as Committee Co-Chair. Under their direction, the gala was an overwhelming success. Other committee members were: Tracy Austin, Beverly Barbour, Bruce Bennett, Sandra Brewster, Ivan Brooks, Phoegina Brown, James Byrd, Jr., Karies Carter, Judy Clark, Nate Cockerham, Eugene & Reta Crawford, Leslie Davis, Dr. Calvin and Donna Edwards, Theodia Gillespie, The Rev. Cheryl Green, Winston & Paulette Griffin, Stephanie Hatchett,

(continued on page 4

St. John AME Newsletter

February 2013, Volume 8, Issue 1

"The Church at the Caring End of Ministry"



150th Anniversary Gala

(continued from page 3)

Ron Hawkins, Shontal Jefferson, David Knight, Clyde Morgan, Archie Needam, Al Nichols, Stevie Porter, Marlene Rickmond, Arthur & Dr. Joy Ross, Nakita Stewart, Willie Swims, Cathy Taylor, and Collette Taylor. The efforts of and support from St. John's Board of Stewards and Trustees were also instrumental in making the gala a success.

We would also like to extend a genuine, heartfelt thanks thank our corporate partners for their support during the sesquicentennial celebration: African American Heritage Committee of Aurora, Amtrak/Local 43, City of Aurora, Indian Prairie School District 204, First Midwest Bank, Alderperson Sheketa Hart-Burns, Kellogg Corporation, and an Anonymous Donor.

In the midst of enjoying a four course meal and an incredible speaker, commiserating with each other, collecting Dr. Carson's autograph, taking pictures, and dancing, the real purpose of the evening's celebration was never far from our minds. We were blessed to be able to commemorate St. John's achievement of 150 years of ministry in DuPage County, Illinois. We also celebrated a second blessing – having our Pastor, The Rev. Jesse Hawkins, once again appointed to St. John. This marks the beginning of Pastor Hawkins' 30th year in ministry with the St. John family. It is largely because of Pastor's leadership that St. John has been sustained for the past 29 years and has truly become "the church at the caring end of ministry." Pastor Hawkins insists on nothing less than a standard of excellence in the work of kingdom building and ministry. More than that, he clearly leads by example. Words cannot adequately express the St. John family's gratitude for being the beneficiaries of Pastor Hawkins leadership and the unwavering support of Ms. Mary and David Hawkins.

Included is a link to the fabulous St. John 150th Anniversary Black Tie Gala souvenir program. Please enjoy this remarkable compilation with our blessings!

Program: http://www.sjohnamec.org/Pages/Gala_Booklet.pdf
Additional pictures can be viewed on St. John's Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/sjohnamec?fref=ts.#!/media/set/?set=a.399693980119540.97651.119835891438685&type=3>



Youth Christmas Party

Christmas. Celebration. Friends. Fellowship. Food. Games. 1 DJ. 3 MCs. *and* a Dance Floor? Yes! All these were present and on display during the exhilarating Youth Christmas Party of 2012!

On December 7, 2012, youth from St. John, along with their many friends from local schools and neighborhoods, gathered to party because Christmas is a cause for celebration! Dancing to the tunes of the extremely talented DJ, Mr. Ray Sibley, munching on chicken wings and deli sandwiches, duking it out in a Metea vs. Waubonsie Freestyle Battle, walking for a cake (cakewalk), competing in video games, and – of course – finding time to meet new people and



make new acquaintances, about 50 youth came together to bring in the Christmas season! Since about half of the youth present were guests of St. John, our youth did a wonderful job of outreaching to the community. The Youth Party was a tremendous success as the youth enjoyed their time together, got know each other a little better, responded with positive comments, and inquired about the next event.

The success of this party could not have

happened, however, without the many people who sacrificed and volunteered their time, energy, and resources. First, we must start with St. John's youth who developed the vision and oversaw its implementation. Over the course of just two months, a group of youth met on various occasions and came up with their outstanding

The Youth Party was a tremendous success as the youth enjoyed their time together... and inquired about the next event.

planning, marketing, and executing strategy. Many thanks to Alyssa Sibley, Jenelle DeVry, Nyerra Shepard, Miyah Bell, Mario Lyles, and Mekai Lyles! Secondly, the youth staff was unbelievable. Rev. Lorie, Ms. Gwen Mance, Ms. Krystal Jones, and Rev. Robert were invaluable to the planning and execution of the event. In addition, we had several other church members step in to offer some amazing help during the night. Mr. Sibley was the DJ, Mr. Tommy Wofford provided security, and the Trustees guarded the doors. To each of these persons, we must say a tremendous thank you! We also extend our thanks to all the parents who supported the event. Lastly, we are extremely grateful for the constant support and oversight from Pastor Hawkins and Rev. Cowan.

Coming up next, the Youth Ministry's calendar includes a Bowling Outing on January 26th, Open Mic Night on February 22nd, and a Spring Break Trip in March. We are looking forward to the events and ministry of the new year, as we seek to become committed disciples of Christ.



St. John AME Church Christian Education Ministry

Pastor Hawkins and the clergy staff of St. John Church ("SJC") are excited about the 2013 Christian Education Ministry ("CEM"). Under the direction of Pastor Hawkins and the leadership of The Rev. Cheryl Green, who is also Church Administrator as well as Minister of Evangelism, the CEM is being enriched to support St. John members as well as prospective new members and other visitors. Rev. Green has provided her insight regarding the goals, scope and general overview of this ministry in the following Q&A.

Q: What are the main objectives of the Christian Education Ministry ("CEM") for 2013?

A: To move from good students and teachers to great students and teachers of God's Word;

To enable learners/students to become spiritually stronger and spiritually healthier hearers and doers of God's Word, regardless of age or number of years in the church;

To equip persons to be better disciples of Christ so that they may impact their homes, school, places of employment, community and world for Jesus; and

To develop and/or offer studies/teachings/activities that will create a hunger and thirst for more of God.

Q: What types of resources are available to facilitate accomplishing the goals of the CME?

A: Aside from daily searching and meditating on the Scriptures vis-à-vis the Holy Bible which can be purchased, downloaded, read online, etc., persons should seek to avail themselves of Pastor Hawkins' rich knowledge;

Ask persons who are a facilitating studies;

Take opportunities to purchase additional materials that are biblical in nature but relevant to an individual's situation, attend AND participate in the studies and teachings offered at SJC; and

Be open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

Q: What do you see as major challenges?

A: Busyness: Persons are pulled in so many directions, so making "choices" between attending Fulfillment Hour, Bible Study and/or Vacation Bible School ("VBS") gets "lost" in the mix;

Lack of interest in one's own spiritual growth or believing that there is no need for what is being offered;

Inability or unwillingness to connect the teachings of the Word of God with life and living, hence the need to be intentional in the study of the Word; and

The assumption that attending worship service on Sundays is "enough."

Q: How is SJC's CEM being developed to serve as a vehicle to increase the membership of the church?

A: We are unveiling a Seekers Service/Study for individuals who are not churched or unsaved or looking for answers about the Holy Trinity;

Each person attending studies/teachings are encouraged to bring someone with them to our times of study/teaching IN ADDITION to worship service;

We're offering studies that are relevant for the 21st century issues AND challenging misconceptions and/or misunderstandings. Persons are not simply being lectured to. Instead they are given assignments which require their own personal commitment to seeking out answers in the Scriptures, as well as opportunities to discuss the application of the studies in real life situations; and

Midday Manna is our Tuesday bible study, offered at 12:00 Noon. It is open to any and all persons who desire to avail themselves of the study of

(continued on page 7)



Christian Education Ministry

(continued from page 6)

Q: Other than active, consistent participation, how can the SJC membership assist in making the program a success?

A: Persons who are receiving something good and great from the teachings offered through the Christian Education program, should intentionally share with others what they are learning and how the teachings are impacting their lives. It is their personal testimony, which also is another vehicle to win souls for the Lord Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God. Every opportunity that persons have to demonstrate their spiritual growth coming through the worship experience and the times of teaching serve as a measure of "success."

Q: Is there anything else that you would like to add about the CME at St. John Church?

A: In Scripture, we read that after Christ taught His disciples, He commissioned them to go out and make new disciples, teaching these new persons

all that He had taught them. This is part and parcel of the mission of Christian Education: to effectively educate and equip followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, so that they in turn will go beyond the church walls to teach others what they have learned, in order that these persons will come to know and have a personal relationship with Him. Christian Education is a facet of preparing laborers for the harvest - the harvest which is already ripe and ready to be gleaned.

We are asking persons to make every effort to fully engage in the times of teaching: Fulfillment Hour, bible study and VBS. Our facilitators, clergy and laity have studied hard and are well prepared to share. What each brings to his/her time of teaching, has purpose for and in the lives of those who attend, both now and in the future.

For more information on St. John's Christian Education Ministry, please contact The Rev. Cheryl L. Green, revclg79@gmail.com.

Doctor of Dental Surgery

The previous issue of the St. John Trumpet included an article highlighting our graduates. Due to time constraints, Lt. Erin Shari Bailey was not featured in that article. Included below is the update detailing Lt. Bailey's accomplishments.

Congratulations!

LT ERIN SHARI BAILEY

- ❖ Howard University College of Dentistry
- ❖ Doctor of Dental Surgery
- ❖ United States Navy, Dental Corps

I left home at 17 and since then I've lived in New Orleans LA, Knoxville TN, Hyattsville MD, and now San Diego CA. There were times where I wanted to give up and just come home. I was stressed, tired, overwhelmed, and homesick. When you live so far away from the people who love and support you, you become vulnerable and susceptible to follow paths that weren't created for you by God. In my times of weakness my family (parents and church family) - gave me the strength, courage, and guidance that I needed to continue on with my journey.

I've received several phone calls and cards with words of encouragement. Although I am far from home, I know in my heart that I have so many people praying for me. That knowledge and my faith in God are what motivated me through out school, and what continues to motivate me now. I am truly thankful and blessed.



Marie Wilkinson Food Pantry

Women's Missionary Society Food Drive



Matthew 25:35-36 states, "I was hungry and you fed me; I was thirsty and you gave me water; I was a stranger and you invited me into your house, naked and you clothed me, sick and in prison, you visited me."
(Life Application)



Under the direction of Pastor Hawkins, the Women's Missionary Society ("WMS") coordinated the collection and delivery of donated food to the Marie Wilkinson Food Pantry (the Pantry)

during the month of December. Located in Aurora, the Pantry's website states, "The Marie Wilkinson Food Pantry has been putting food on the tables for its clients in need for over 50 years." St. John was honored to play a small part in this mission.

Over the course of several weeks, contributions from St. John members and others were

"The Marie Wilkinson Food Pantry has been putting food on the tables for its clients in need for over 50 years."

placed in boxes under the beautiful Christmas trees (decorated by St. John ministries) throughout the building. The WMS then coordinated their efforts to consolidate the food in one area and organize the logistics needed to transport the food to the Pantry. Thanks to the contributions made, St. John was able to present the Pantry with several hundred pounds of food. The Pantry and the WMS are very appreciative of every person who took the time to shop and contribute a variety of non-perishable food items that became part of the total amount of food contributed to the Pantry.

Also, the WMS would like to give a special thanks to Mr. Bruce Bennett, Mr. Larry Crider, Mr. Fred Jamison, and Mrs. Yvonne Lindsey for loading the food on the Marie Wilkinson van.

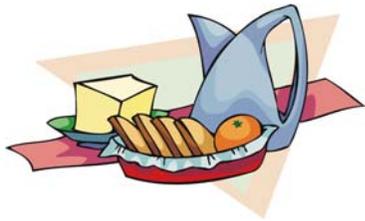
This project indeed follows the mandate in Matthew 25:35-36. Over the last year the Pantry has seen an increase of 68% in the number of people served in the community. When the staff from Marie Wilkinson came to pick up the food, they were overwhelmed with joy. We as members of St. John are blessed to be a blessing to others.

In addition to the Marie Wilkinson food drive, the women of the WMS visited the young ladies at Illinois Youth Center ("IYC") in Warrenville. Lunch was provided; Christmas BINGO played; and everyone enjoyed themselves in the spirit of love, peace, and joy. Tanisha Hawkins shared with the group her personal testimony of her struggles and accomplishments. Gifts were provided for the children of four of the young ladies. The WMS's next visit to the IYC will take place in February.

If you would like to join the WMS for their next visit to the IYC, or if would like further information, please contact Wendy Swims at her email address: wendyswims@gmail.com.



Breakfast Fellowship Hour



With the exception of holiday weekends and other special occasions, St. John hosts a Breakfast Fellowship in the café every Sunday morning. Listed on St. John's web page, the fellowship hour is usually from 7:30 – 8:30 AM. This timing is very conducive for everyone to also attend Fulfillment Hour on Sunday mornings, which starts at 8:30 AM. The Fellowship is coordinated by St. John members based on their respective birthday month and under the leadership of at least one of these members. Breakfast typically consists of a variety of breakfast foods including eggs, sausage, bacon, pancakes, grits (the huge crowd pleaser), pastries, coffee, and juice. Breakfast can be purchased at a nominal cost; most items are \$1 or less.

Each month, the host group prepares their menu listing the items available and cost. We do find that due to public demand, there are certain items (grits) that are almost always on the menu. This menu can be found on the events page of St. John's web site.

The Breakfast Fellowship Hour offers a great opportunity to do just that – fellowship! Pastor Hawkins has mentioned on several occasions that many of us

are creatures of habit when it comes to where we sit every Sunday during worship service. The Breakfast Fellowship just might provide you with a chance to meet new people or rejuvenate old relationships. Take this opportunity to get to know or reacquaint yourself with someone who sits on the other side of the sanctuary or in the choir loft.

St. John members are encouraged to voluntarily assist in any way possible to host the fellowship hour during their birthday month. Take advantage of this chance to get to know other St. John family members who share the same birth month on a completely different level. Some months have more participation than others, but every month can be made that much better with everyone's involvement. It is refreshing to witness the camaraderie, team work and enthusiasm shown by the St. John family during each month's breakfast fellowship hour.

We would like to thank St. John members who have made the fellowship hour a regular part of their Sunday mornings and also encourage you to invite someone else – St. John member or visitor – who has not made the same commitment.

Stop by the Breakfast Fellowship Hour at your very next opportunity and don't forget Fulfillment Hour. Try it – we know you'll enjoy it!

Whispered Prayer

Father,

We thank you for Jesus, who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood!

We thank You, Lord, that You have highly exalted Jesus, and given him a Name which is above every name:

He is the Last Adam; the Alpha and Omega, the Bread of Life; the Chief Cornerstone; the Chief Shepherd; the Chief Apostle and the Firstborn from the Dead.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd; the Great Shepherd of the Sheep; the High Priest, and the Holy One of God. He is the Immanuel (God with us); King of kings, and Lord of lords.

He is the Lamb of God, the Light of the World; the Lord of Glory, and the Mediator between God and Men.

Jesus is the Only Begotten of the Father; the Prophet foretold; the Savior of the world; the Seed of Abraham; the Son of Man; the Faithful Witness; the First Begotten of the Dead; the Prince of Kings of the earth; and THE WORD OF GOD!

We thank You for the Name of Jesus, Father!
In His Name we pray, Amen!

"Whispered Prayer." Weblog post. Minister Sandy Jackson, 3 May 2011. Web. <<http://www.thepurposeofthewoman.org>>.



