

Bethany Baptist Church

Lenten Program

February 14 – April 1, 2018

“Being Faithful Over a Few”



Matthew 25:23

23His Lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

Bethany Baptist Church
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Newark, NJ0710 07103
973 623-8161

www.bethany-newark.org

Six Weeks At A Glance

- February 14, 2018** **Ash Wednesday Service** led by Rev. Adkins-Jones
Noon & 7PM
- February 21, 2018** **Black Wall Street** discussion facilitated by Trustee Candace Wildly
Noon & 7PM
- February 24, 2018** Join Rev. Adkins-Jones and other members of Bethany for a viewing and
2PM discussion of the new movie **Black Panther @ CityPlex Newark**, 360
Springfield Ave., Newark 07103. The movie starts promptly at 2 PM. **Please
be on time.**
- February 25, 2018** **Afro-Centric Sunday** - Come to church in your finest Afro Centric attire! After
8 & 11AM the 11 am service be prepared to attend a workshop on **Financial Literacy**
presented by the BBC Investment Committee and WestFuller (BBC Investment
advisors). Refreshments will be served.
- February 28, 2018** Booker T. Washington & W. E. B. DuBois: **Seeking Financial Freedom**
Noon & 7PM discussion led by Linda Caldwell Epps.
- March 4, 2018** Screening and discussion of **The Two Nations of Black America** in the BBC
9:30AM Church Lounge.
- March 7, 2018** **Black Entrepreneurs** — Discussion moderated by Dorita Dobbins with
Noon & 7PM panelists Hubert Graham, Sharon Graddy, Lisa Polk, and Richard Roper
- March 14, 2018** **Supporting Black Business** discussion led by Cecil Cates.
Noon & 7PM
- March 16, 2018** **Prayer Vigil:** All members of the congregation and guests are invited
Adults, 3PM until Midnight to participate in private and collective prayer from **3PM until 9:30PM.**
Youth, 8PM until 8 AM We will then be led in service by the Youth of Bethany from **9:30PM
until 10:30PM** when service will be conducted by Rev. Adkins - Jones
until Midnight. All youth will remain at the church for a Youth Lock
Down until 8 AM under the leadership of Rev. Porsha Williams.
- March 29, 2018** **African American Passover Seder** - All are invited to Maundy Thursday
6PM service and to participate in our 11th Annual Soul Seder.
- March 30, 2018** **Seven Voices of Thunder** - Seven Women Blessed by God, who will bring
7PM the word based on each of the seven last words of Christ
- April 1, 2018** **Resurrection Sunday!**
Sunrise Service: 6:30AM
Breakfast: 8:15AM
Easter Play and Service: 10AM



What Is Lent?

Lent is the Christian season of preparation before Easter. In Western Christianity Ash Wednesday marks the first day, or the start of the season of Lent, which begins 40 days prior to Easter (Sundays are not included in the count). Lent begins on Wednesday, February 14, 2018.

Lent is a time when we as Christians prepare for Easter by observing a period of fasting, repentance, moderation and spiritual discipline. The purpose is to set aside time for reflection on Jesus Christ - his suffering and his sacrifice, his life, death, burial and resurrection. This year Bethany will observe Lent by drawing its connection to uplift the African American community. There will be a formal church sponsored event each week for the next six weeks in addition to our annual African American Passover Seder, Good Friday, and our Easter Sunday services. It is our hope that this document and the programs will aid in your devotion to this very special time in the life of every Christian. We are living in a turbulent era. **The values that many of us were taught to practice and to cherish are under attack. Let us use this Lenten Season to review our actions and within the context of our care and concern for the welfare of our communities, our families, and ourselves using our Christian faith as our barometer.**

We ask you to make every effort to make this season of Lent a special dedication to your journey as a follower of Jesus the Christ. Remember our church mission: Guided by the Holy Spirit to Recruit, Equip, and Deploy by bringing family and friends to Lenten programs and services with you so that they too may know the good news of Jesus Christ and receive the special gift of his goodness, mercy, and love.

Passover and Liberation

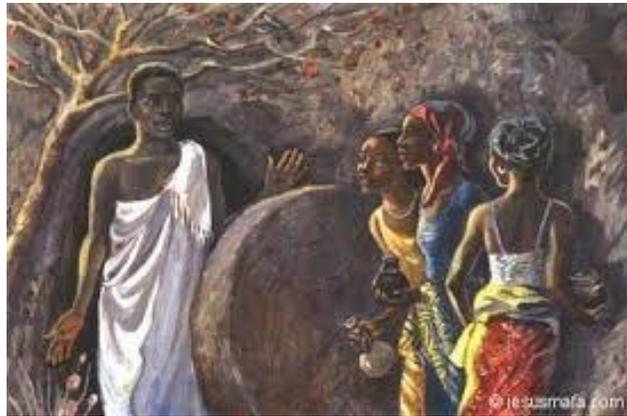
The original Jewish experience of Passover gave each of us an example of the potential for a complete and true freedom. **Passover is a symbolic promise that the Jews will never return to bondage. It is no wonder that African American slaves aligned themselves with the story of the Jewish escape. It was easy for them while enduring their own slavery, to relate with the Jewish oppression under the Egyptians. For them, Passover took on a special meaning.**

Many 21st century African Americans fail to see the connection to the triumphant release of the Jews to their own lives. Unfortunately, we are still bound in the shackles of our two-millennium exile, not understanding the connection between Passover and the liberation of African Americans from bondage as our ancestors did. It is time for us to realize that we are still fighting against oppression.

The African American escape from bondage was not just a physical escape. It is also a struggle for mental escape from oppression. The Passover ritual has a lesson for people of God over 2,000 years later, for the Passover message is that we can never return to a physical enslavement lifestyle again and to remain in constant vigilance to overcome the mental bondage of ourselves and our communities. The death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ has given us a freedom from enslavement of every kind.

Liberation is a relative concept and is not limited to the physical realm. Indeed, one may be physically "free" — yet be trapped emotionally and spiritually. People of African descent need to be freed from the moral and spiritual quagmire of oppressive cultures, be it Egyptian or European. Can one redeem oneself from such darkness?

Well, the Jews managed to raise themselves from almost total degradation to heights never since achieved. Such liberation is possible for African Americans as well by accepting the sovereignty and authority of our Creator, by recognizing the folly of man-made ideas, through the study of the Bible and adherence to our rituals of remembrance, and by supporting our brothers and sisters to achieve freedom over dominance by an oppressive culture. **Providing for our communities is of vital importance.**



Freedom and the Resurrection

Many of our enslaved ancestors were taught that if they were good Christians they would be rewarded in heaven. We know that Christianity is a matter of liberation here and now. We are told in Psalm 72: "For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help." God is there for all who need him. He sent his son Jesus to emphasize the point. In John 3:17 it is written: "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." We have our freedom through our belief in the Lord. Through his triumphant resurrection, Jesus opened the way for us to experience resurrection and eternal life in the new earth when he returns instead of through death only.

How does Christ's resurrection benefit us? First, by his resurrection he has overcome death so that he might allow us to share in the righteousness he won for us by his death. Second, by his power, we too are already now resurrected to a new life. Third, Christ's resurrection is a guarantee of our glorious resurrection.

Rituals of Remembrance and African American Survival

Upon sincere reflection, we all find mistakes that we have made - malfunctions in life that we all pay for one way or the other. Dwelling on the past can only lead to a feeling of futility unless we have proper remorse, make positive commitments, and transform our behaviors. **Lent is an ideal time for this kind of introspection and correction.**



We must forge ahead and have hope in the future — and not just sit back merely wishing that things could be better. We must all take daily action to reach our redemption — to step out from our own individual "slavery" and strive to reach our own release from bondage. It is our historical dedication and dependence on the Lord that brought us through centuries of physical and emotional slavery. The first institution established by African Americans upon their release from exile was the church. The church has provided shelter, support, uplift and hope. It is through the rituals of the church that we pay homage to our ancestors and remember the history of our survival.

As we, in solidarity, observe communion, commemorate Watch Night and observe the annual days of our clubs and organizations, we are celebrating our achievements and lifting up our members in love. We are praising God for his grace and mercy. We are confirming our triumph over oppression. May we all strive together to reach the highest levels — levels that are within each one's grasp, which take much effort for all of us to achieve, but is ultimately most worthwhile. Christ's victory over death gives us back our identity and restores our meaning. We should come to understand that the death and resurrection of Christ, symbolized by the ritual of remembrance we enact from Ash Wednesday until Easter, symbolizes universal freedom for all who are bound. It is not just a future-oriented hope in a heavenly compensation for earthly woes. Rather, it is a hope that focuses on the future in such a way that it dissuades African Americans from tolerating present inequities. If we do, our future ends in peace. Our past is healed and forgiven. Our belief in Christ and his forgiveness of our sins allows us a new identity, if we are faithful and believe.

Deuteronomy 8:18 NIV ***But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.***

Wednesday, February 14, 2018
12 PM and 7 PM

His Lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'
Matthew 25:23

Discussion led by Reverend Timothy L. Adkins-Jones

As we begin our Lenten journey together, Pastor Adkins-Jones will lead us in a time of reflection and challenge us to use Lent as a time to build better financial and physical discipline into our lives. God has blessed us with all that we have, so the stewardship of our resources is not only a financial issue but a faith issue. When we begin to understand that how we manage our money and how we handle our body reflects how we feel about God, we will be better able to demonstrate discipline in this important faith matter. During this time Pastor Adkins-Jones will also be distributing Ashes and explaining this important Lenten Practice.



Bethany Baptist Church Lenten Fast 2018
“Fasting for our Physical and Financial Discipline”
February 16th – April 1st

Family,

It continues to be one of the greatest honors of my life to lead this amazing congregation. Our ability to love one another and to show our love to the world has served as an anchor in the world that sometimes seems to have gone mad. There is no question in my mind that there is a dire need for us to continue to care for one another and for us to demonstrate God’s love to the community that we are blessed to be able to serve. Plainly stated, in a time that seems so full of hate, God has called us to love ourselves, each other, and our community. The Lenten season that we are entering into together provides us with an opportunity to recharge our faith, as we spend some dedicated time disciplining ourselves for God’s purpose.

Lent is my favorite season of the Christian calendar because it forces us to slow down and focus on our Savior and our call to follow Him. This season is a time for us to reflect on our discipleship and reestablish the practices that deepen our faith. It is with excitement that I invite you to join me in this time of prayer and fasting. I pray that this year, our attention to discipline during the season of Lent will lead to some habits that will prayerfully shape our discipleship long after Easter. This year we are “fasting for financial and physical discipline” and I am excited about what this focus will mean for our church.

Instead of choosing a particular time block to fast or a particular food to fast from, this year we are going to fast ourselves into the diet that we need. While this may mean giving up certain things for some of us, more than anything, I want us to sit down with our families and decide the diet that we aspire to, and then “fast” into that diet during Lent. For example, I know that I need to give up fried foods, wheat, and gluten for my own health. During our fast, I am going to craft a diet that follows these and other restrictions that make the most sense for my health. Instead of going on some extreme “fad” diet, I will use Lent as a way of “fasting into” a better diet. By linking spiritual discipline to our actual diets, I pray that with God’s help we will be able to not only stick to this diet but also build habits that will continue after Lent is over. We all should spend some time outlining what the best dietary steps for us will be and then stick to it over Lent. For some that may mean (and likely should mean), giving up sugar, fried foods, or other things that are bad for us. But more than anyone specific item, this year we are fasting from unhealthy diets so that we might be the best stewards of our bodies that we can be.

The other portion of our fast will help us develop financial discipline. Throughout Lent, we will be talking about Financial Stewardship and celebrating Black Entrepreneurship at our Wednesday gatherings. In addition to teaching about tithes and offering, we will be talking about what it takes to develop wealth and how God's children can grow our wealth for the sake of the Kingdom of God. One of the ways that we build wealth is by investing in our own communities. As such, one of our Lenten financial practices will be to buy black and buy local. Our challenge is to discipline ourselves to buy black and buy local as much as we can. This will take some planning on our part. The church will provide a list of local Black-owned businesses, as well as businesses owned by people within our church. In addition, I suggest those that are technologically savvy should download the "Black Wall Street" app which serves as a Black business finder. In addition to buying Black, I am also calling us to keep track of every dollar that we spend. In order to be better stewards of our money, we have to be able to take an actual accounting of all of the money that we spend. After keeping track of our spending for the entirety of Lent, we will be better able to see where all of our money goes and will be able to adjust accordingly. The third aspect of our Financial fast is a call to give up a luxury that we regularly spend money on. Here's where the sacrifice comes in — we find something that we enjoy and something that we spend money on but that isn't essential to us, and we give it up for Lent. Then, we save the money we would have spent on this item in preparation for our final Lenten financial discipline, a "first fruits" offering.

In the Old Testament, the children of Israel were required to offer the Lord a First Fruits offering in thanksgiving for all that God had brought them through (Leviticus 23:9-14). This offering represented the very best that they had, it was a choice to give God their absolute best. In the New Testament, the First Fruits offering is used primarily symbolically as a way of speaking to the uniqueness of a gift, most vividly used as a way of describing Jesus as "the First Fruits of those who have fallen asleep [1 Corinthians 15:20]." In this tradition, I would like us to prepare a First Fruits offering for the Lord that shows just how grateful we are for all that God has given us. By paying greater attention to how we spend our money, giving up something that we regularly spend money on, and by simply making the choice to bring a sacrificial offering to the Lord, I want to challenge all of us to bring a special offering on Palm Sunday that is the equivalent of our one month's tithe. This is not to replace our normal giving, but to be a special first fruits offering that reflects both our gratitude to God and our financial discipline through the season of Lent. I realize that this is a difficult request, but as with our normal giving, I'm only asking that you do the best that you can and that we make an attempt to grow in our giving together.

Along with the financial and physical portions of our Lenten practice, we will again be distributing Daily Devotionals to help guide you through the season. Each devotional includes a short message, scriptures to read, a question for us to meditate on, and a prayer. I trust that we each already have the daily devotionals that we use to study the word so these devotionals will simply serve as supplements to what you already do at home. We will print some and place them in the vestibule but I am asking that only those people who do not have access to the internet or email take a copy of the devotionals. The devotionals will be available each week on our website. This year we are also going to make our devotionals available via Podcast. The link to download them will be available online. Finally, I would encourage you to come to at least one of our services during the week, the two Lenten services on Wed (12:00 noon and 7:00 pm.) or our Thursday evening Bible study (prayer service at 7:00 p.m. and Bible Study at 7:30 p.m.). If we commit ourselves anew to the Lord and challenge ourselves in our discipleship, this Lenten season will be a time of deep transformation in our lives. I am so incredibly excited to see what God will do for us. Hold on, the Best is yet to come!

Strong in the Lord and the Lord's Might (Ephesians 6:10),

Pastor Jones

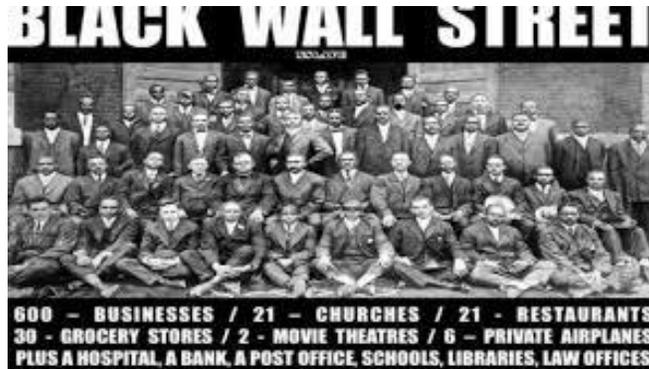
February 21, 2018

12 PM & 7 PM

Presentation & Discussion : Black Wall Street

Discussion Leader

Candace Wildy



June 1st, 1921 will forever be remembered as a day of great loss and deastation. It was on this day that America experienced the deadliest race riot in the small town of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Ninety-four years later, that neighborhood is still recognized as one of the most prosperous African American towns to date. With hundreds of successful black-owned businesses lining Greenwood Avenue, it became a standard that African Americans are still trying to rebuild. The attack that took place in 1921 tore the community apart, claiming hundreds of lives and sending the once prosperous neighborhood up in smoke.¹

Hebrews 10:24-25 Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

¹ <https://officialblackwallstreet.com/black-wall-street-story/>



Saturday, February 24, 2018
2 PM

Join us for a viewing of
Black Panther

**CityPlex Newark, 360 Springfield Ave., Newark
07103**

After the death of his father, T'Challa returns home to the African nation of Wakanda to take his rightful place as king. When a powerful enemy suddenly reappears, T'Challa's mettle as king -- and as Black Panther -- gets tested when he's drawn into a conflict that puts the fate of Wakanda and the entire world at risk. Faced with treachery and danger, the young king must rally his allies and release the full power of Black Panther to defeat his foes and secure the safety of his people.

Rev. Timothy L. Adkins - Jones will lead a post-screening discussion.

Screening begins promptly at 2 p.m. Please arrive early.

Psalm 25:4 *Make me to know your ways, O. LORD; teach me your paths. (25:5) Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.*

Sunday, February 25, 2018

Afrocentric Sunday

Membership is encouraged to wear African Centric Clothing to Sunday service

"It is a quality of thought that is rooted in the cultural image and human interest of African people."

Afrocentrists regard all blacks, no matter where they live, to be Africans and believe their views should reflect traditional African values. It is a political, cultural, and ideological movement that strives to preserve African identity, alter any beliefs that regard Africans as inferior, and raise the self-respect of Africans throughout the world. The Afrocentric movement calls for the recentering of African minds to traditional values. Afrocentrists strongly believe the self-determination of blacks has been extremely hampered by European colonialism.



The Afrocentric movement is not just about people's views, but it is also a call to action. It is meant to be a motivational force for addressing the social issues that hamper the African people from reaching their full potential. The movement can be seen in community efforts, political action, and economic advancement.¹

¹<http://interesting-africa-facts.com/African-Garb/Afrocentric-Clothes.html>

Sunday, February 25, 2018

You are cordially invited to attend a

Financial Literacy Workshop

Financial literacy is the ability to understand how money works in the world: how someone manages to earn or make it, how that person manages it, how he/she invests it (turn it into more) and how that person donates it to help others.

When: Sunday, February 25, 2018
Immediately following the 11 AM Service

Where: Bethany Baptist Church Fellowship Hall



Presented by: Westfuller (the financial advisor for the Bethany Baptist Church Investment Committee) Endowment Fund under the direction of Frantz Massé, Chair of the Endowment Fund and Mark Epps, former Chair.

Refreshments will be provided!
All are encouraged to attend

Wednesday, February 28, 2018
12 PM and 7 PM

Presentation & Discussion:
“Booker T. Washington & W. E. B. DuBois - Seeking Financial Freedom”

Discussion Leader: Linda Caldwell Epps



“Political activity alone cannot make a man free. Back of the ballot, he must have property, industry, skill, economy, intelligence, and character.”
- Booker T. Washington

“The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line. To be a poor man is hard, but to be a poor race in a land of dollars is the very bottom of hardships. The cost of liberty is less than the price of repression.” - W. E. B. DuBois



Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois presented prescriptions of the success and eventual equal acceptance of African Americans after the Reconstruction Period. Although outwardly different, their hopes and dreams for the prosperity of the African American community were sincere and with merit.

Ephesians 4:11-13 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.



Sunday, March 4 & March 11, 2018

**BBC Lounge
9:45 — 10:45AM**

**Screening of
*The Two Nations of Black America***

Henry Louis Gates takes a sharp look at the structural and behavioral issues that have led to lower class blacks falling further behind and candidly assesses violent gangster culture and why personal responsibility is as crucial as a structural change to help the underclass.

Gates's journey is a vivid, compelling, thought-provoking portrait of a formerly close-knit African American community now fragmented by a great class divide.

Luke 6:38 *Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.*

Wednesday, March 7, 2018

12 PM & 7 PM



Black Entrepreneurs

**Join us for a moderated panel discussion featuring
Black Entrepreneurs of Bethany Baptist Church**

Moderated by Dorita Newsome-Dobbins

Panelists:

Hubert Graham, Sharon Graddy, Lisa Polk, & Richard Roper

Hebrews 11:1 (KJV) - *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

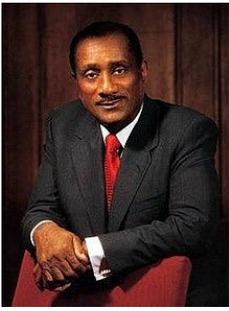
Entrepreneurs of African Descent



Photo of Kofi Ayim, Biographer and 21st century relative of Jack Cudjo Banquante. Jack Cudjo was a royal from Ghana (Gold Coast) sold into slavery. During the Revolutionary War, he substituted for his master Benjamin Coe. He fought gallantly and he was given his freedom and an acre of land in downtown Newark. He eventually became the first documented businessman of African descent in New Jersey.

Annie Minerva Turnbo Malone (August 9, 1877 – May 10, 1957) was an American businesswoman, inventor, and philanthropist. In the first three decades of the 20th century, she founded and developed a large and prominent commercial and educational enterprise centered on cosmetics for African-American women.





John Harold Johnson (January 19, 1918 – August 8, 2005), was an American businessman and publisher. He was the founder of the Johnson Publishing Company. In 1982, he became the first African American to appear on the Forbes 400. Johnson's Ebony and Jet magazines were among the most influential African-American businesses in media in the second half of the twentieth century.

Maggie Lena Walker (July 15, 1864 – December 15, 1934) was an African-American teacher and businesswoman. Walker was the first female bank president of any race to charter a bank in the United States.

As a leader, she achieved successes with the vision to make tangible improvements in the way of life for African Americans and women. Disabled by paralysis and limited to a wheelchair later in life, Walker also became an example for people with disabilities.



Wednesday, March 14, 2018
12 PM & 7 PM

Supporting Black Business
Facilitator : Cecil Cates

Luke 1:37 *For nothing will be impossible with God. John 12:32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.*

We ask that the congregation, during this period of Lent and beyond, make a conscious effort to support Black Businesses. Deacon Cecil Cates will discuss the importance of supporting Black business and offer information on how to accomplish this goal.



Friday, March 16, 2018
Adults - 3PM until Midnight
Youth - 8PM until 8AM

Prayer Vigil



Empowered by the Holy Spirit, Bethany's mission is to RECRUIT, EQUIP, AND DEPEND on you to dedicate at least one hour during this period to pray for our world, our country, our city, our church, and our homes that we might understand and accept the dictates of Jesus the Christ.

Program

3:00 pm — 9:30 pm

Individual and collective prayer led by the Diaconate and members of the congregation

9:30 — 10: pm

Youth service led by the youth of Bethany Baptist Church

10:00 pm — 12:00 am

Rev. Timothy L. Jones with music provided by Jamal Barnes

Psalm 19:14 *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer*

Thursday, March 29, 2018

6 PM

African American Passover Seder



He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword. For WE are convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Corinthians 1:18 *For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God*

Seven Voices of Thunder

Friday, March 30, 2018

7PM

Featuring Seven Women Blessed by God who will bring the word based on each of the seven last words of Christ

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

Today you will be with me in paradise.

Behold your son: behold your mother.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

I thirst.

It is finished.

Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

Easter Sunday, April 1, 2018

Sunrise Service - 6:30AM

Breakfast - 8:15AM

Easter Play and Service - 10AM



Rev. Timothy L. Adkins - Jones

Sermon: "What If?"

1 Corinthians 15:13-20.

13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. 14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. 15 Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. 16 For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. 17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! 18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

For Your Information:

EVOLUTION OF BLACK AMERICAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

After the Civil War, Black business ownership was minimal at best. Many places in the nation forbade Blacks from business licenses. Construction and farming were the major income providers until the turn of the century. The Industrial Revolution created a big demand for entrepreneurship and employment. What became known as the First Migration caused millions of Blacks to leave the South and populate northern urban centers with the prospect of working in plants. The National Urban League was formed by well-meaning whites to encourage Blacks to leave the South and provided assistance in assimilating them into these northern urban centers.

A counter to this was a movement created by Booker T. Washington, President of Tuskegee Institute, AL, which encouraged Blacks to remain in the South and develop agribusiness and locally based retail establishments to recycle their precious dollars and economically empower themselves. Based on the model established by the newly formed US Chamber of Commerce, Booker T. founded the National Negro Business League. There were 40+ chapters of this organization and they provided economic activity and leadership within Black communities from Texas to Maryland. Some of the business communities formed by these chapters such as Greenwood, OK, and Durham, NC were burned to the ground by white extremists and then rebuilt.

Another organization was formed by white liberals of Western New York. The Niagara Movement founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and appointed Harvard educated W. E. B. DuBois as its Spokesperson. The NAACP encouraged the federal government to become more involved in the assimilation of Blacks into American society and was opposed to the approach of Booker T. Washington. Mr. DuBois and Mr. Washington held famous debates over their differences.

As President Theodore Roosevelt rudely found out (after he had Booker T. Washington for dinner at the White House), it became politically incorrect to support Booker T. Washington and his vision of Black capitalism. While the Urban League and the NAACP gathered significant financial support, the chapters of the National Negro Business League withered with many becoming no more than social clubs. Black entrepreneurship went on the “back burner” and social programs began to spring up especially during the Great Depression. The Second Migration began as World War II evolved and the demand for increased industrialization to support the war effort created many jobs for Blacks leaving the South for the North and Western urban centers.

With the victory of World War II, the nation established the GI Bill of Rights. This provided significant educational, employment and homeownership opportunities for veterans. Black veterans took full advantage of it and the new evolving American Middle Class had its Black representation. This provided a good base when the Civil Rights Movement would obtain new opportunities for all minorities and females beginning in the 1960's. All industries of the United States, through law and serious litigation, became seriously diverse. The skill sets of African Americans transformed into managerial and executive expertise by the early 1980's.

By 1990, the stage was set for this seasoned crop of educated and experienced business executives to venture into entrepreneurship. The timing was right for organized business organizations addressing and promoting Black business ownership as a vehicle to empowerment and a guarantee for the gains realized from the aforementioned experiences. The vision of Booker T. Washington was ready for a big rebound.

The National Black Chamber of Commerce, Inc. was formed in May 1993, with 13 local chapters. At the time, according to the US Census Bureau, there were 300,000+ Black-owned businesses doing \$33 billion in annual sales. Today, according to the US Census Bureau, Black businesses are more than 1.5 million strong with sales exceeding \$88 billion. According to the Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia, Black consumers have buying power after taxes of nearly \$1 trillion. Economically, African Americans are the fastest growing economic segment of American society. The NBCC and its 140+ chapters are proud to have been active participants in this phenomenal growth.

Despite the phenomenal growth of small business including all segments of minority populations, the amount of available technical support resources has been on a steady decline. When the NBCC was formed, the Small Business Administration had an annual budget of \$980 million and a staff of over 5,000 trained employees. Today, that budget is less than \$400 million and the workforce has shrunk to less than 1700 very demoralized employees. It is a conspiracy.

The downturn has taken its toll. Black business, when the Clinton Administration arrived, was at 6% of all federal procurement. Today, it is at 1%. It is time to stand up and fight to win our share back. The good news is that Black Capitalism has arrived and nothing is going to turn us around. On a worldwide basis, we are soaring.²

² Mr. Alford is the co-founder, President/CEO of the National Black Chamber of Commerce, Inc. (R). Website: www.nationalbcc.org. Email: halford@nationalbcc.org.

LENTEN COMMITTEE

Rev. Timothy Levi Adkins - Jones — Chair

Ministers:

Rev. Porsha Williams Min. Renee Brown Johnson

Diaconate Leaders:

Linda Caldwell Epps Patricia Fullilove Mary Gabriel Cosby

Many Thanks to:

Darlene Anthony
Jamal Barnes
BBC Diaconate
BBC Men's Fellowship
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