



Looking Back Moving Forward

Capitol City begins 2016 — the Year of Service!

By Damian Chandler, Senior Pastor

They say time flies when you are having fun. Well I would like to suggest that if that is true, time flies at super sonic speed when God's at work. 2015 came and went like a blur, and it was because God was truly at work. My family and I joined this church community on January 10th and it is amazing to see what God has done in just a year. Let's take a walk through some of the highlights of 2015.

In February, we trained for our mission as we hosted our inaugural leadership conference, "LeaderShape". We amassed a group



of skilled and anointed presenters, and were both inspired and equipped to take on the challenge for which we were called. We ended February with a flag waving celebration in "International Day" and then were moved by the living testimonies shared at our first and now annual "Miracle Sabbath" on Easter



weekend. Both our Women's and Men's Department introduced first as well, hosting their first and annual conferences respectively. There are rumors of the Men's conference allegedly ending with 10 brothers struggling on a hiking trail but, all evidence of such hike has surprisingly disappeared.

Health Ministries was not about to be left behind. They got busy during the summer with "FitFest", an outdoor community



focused event geared at inspiring people to better health and followed that up with "Ready Set Move", an exercise program for all age groups. The summer also brought the beginning of our Revival series. A number of activities highlighted this time of spiritual growth, with both the "Family Worship Night", and the "Homecoming" being features of the revival. It all culminated with "Hopeville", where we saw God add 33 souls



to the kingdom. This brought our total baptisms for the year to 50 and for that we say Praise the Lord.

continued on page 2

Looking Back Moving Forward — continued from page 1

December refused to be outdone with Pathfinders taking center stage on December 5th and our Worship and Arts team presenting the production “The Promised Messiah” on December 19th. The production blessed the souls of the capacity crowd that gathered and reminded us that the Jesus who was prophecies to come the first time is prophecies to return again.



The Promised Messiah



The Promised Messiah



The Promised Messiah

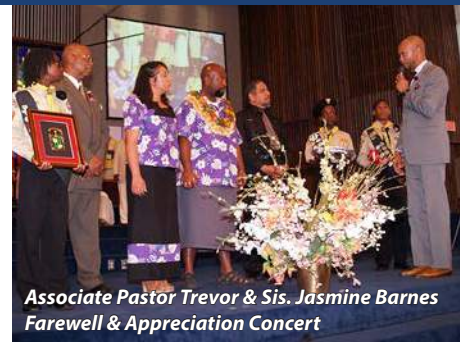


The Promised Messiah

During 2015 we also experienced many losses. We experienced the death of more than our share of family members and we are still grieving their loss. We were saddened to see Pastor Trevor Barnes leave to take on the responsibility of being the head pastor of Appian Way Seventh-day Adventist Church. But we were made glad to see over 50 people baptized into new life and to add our new Associate Pastor, Chanda Nunes to our pastoral team.



The Promised Messiah



Associate Pastor Trevor & Sis. Jasmine Barnes Farewell & Appreciation Concert



Chanda M. Nunes, Associate Pastor

WHATS IN STORE FOR 2016?

Well, that was 2015 at a glance. With a year like that one has to wonder what is in store for 2016. Our vision for the year is that 2016 be the Year of Service. In 2016 we want to give our mantra “Taking Sacramento for the King” legs as we seek to make an impact on our city starting right on our street, Lemon Hill. For if we are going to make an impact on our world, we must first start in our city. And if we intend to make an impact on our city, what better place to start than on our street. Look out for our Sidewalk Sabbaths, days when we as a body will come together to make huge contributions to our community through service. 2016 also marks the return of our beloved Community Services Department. We desire to meet real needs of the community we love. Missions Counsel introducing these and other volunteer opportunities geared toward stoking the spirit of service in the hearts of every member of our church family.

Along with these service opportunities look out for Youth Day on January 30 with Rio Lindo Adventist Academy Choir and Black History Sabbath on February 14th when Pastor Norman Knight and the Pacific Union College Gospel Choir will be our guest.

We praise God for all that He has done in 2015. We expect only greater things in 2016. Lets get out there and “Take Sacramento for the King!” 🙌

Welcome Our New Associate Pastor: Pastor Chanda M. Nunes



Pastor Chanda M. Nunes was born and raised in Toronto, Canada, in a Christian home, by two God fearing West Indian Parents.

Pastor Nunes recognized her call to ministry at the age of 9, and credits many church leaders who acknowledged this—and took a risk on her as a young person, by assigning her various leadership roles. As a result, she has grown a passion for preaching, youth/young adult ministries, outreach, missions, evangelism, and leading Praise & Worship.

Pastor Nunes is a graduate of Canadian University College (BA Religious Studies, minor Biblical Languages), & Andrews University (Masters of Divinity). She also holds associate degrees in Private Investigation & Paralegalling, and is also a Certified Life Coach Practitioner.

In 2003, Pastor Nunes began her ministry in the Alberta Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, in the largest church in Canada, as an Associate Pastor for Youth, Evangelism, and Outreach; as well as the Chaplain for Parkview Adventist Academy and College Heights Christian School on the campus of Canadian University College.

From 2008-2015, she served the New Haven SDA Church in Overland, Park, Kansas in the capacity of Youth Pastor and Associate Pastor. In October 2011, she was Commissioned to the Gospel Ministry. On October 3, 2015, Pastor Nunes was installed as the Associate Pastor for the Capitol City SDA Church, in Sacramento, CA.

In her free time, this former Private Investigator enjoys emailing, "facebooking", chatting it up on the phone with friends, cooking, interior decorating, and traveling.

Her favorite Scripture is Psalm 91:1-2 — *"He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God in Him will I trust."*

THE CONNECTION

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www.capitolcitysda.org

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**Deadline to submit articles or ads for the
next issue - 2nd Quarter, Spring 2016:**

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HOMECOMING 2015 HIGHLIGHTS

Capitol City SDA Church
Homecoming Weekend:
A Family Affair
September 25-27, 2015

By Carol Herbert, Reconnecting Members Ministry Leader

Our Homecoming weekend was something to remember. It brought back many memories and it was inspiring. On Friday night, the weekend kick off was at the location of the old Capitol City SDA Church, now the home of the St. Jude Christian Tabernacle, located at 2828 33rd Street. It was an exciting time. Many of our members was in attendance who was part of the 33rd Street church. We had members who came from afar just to be part of this spectacular event. We even had a family who drove all the way from the State of Oregon just to help us celebrate Homecoming. He lit up the 33rd street church with his excitement while sharing his memories.



St. Jude Christian Tabernacle - 2015



Sis. Myrtis Brown and Sis. Katherine Summerville.

Sister Myrtis Brown said *"I was happy. It shows progress. A person needs to remember their past in order to move forward. It shows growth. The church grew. The 33rd Street Church was more inclusive and family oriented."*



Sandra Little, Dexter Smith and Sis. Bodelia Colona share testimonies with Beverly Witherspoon.

Sister Sandra Little expressed how everything started at the 33rd Street Church. *"I think of it as excitement. It was like going home because that's where I started. It brought back lots of memories."*



Melody Germany-Wilson blessed us with a musical selection

Sister Melody Wilson mentioned how it was moving. *"When I walked in I wanted to cry. I used to usher there as a child."*

Sister Stacy DeRossett was not a member of the 33rd street church, but she added *"I got to hear memories of the past. It's like having your memories come alive in time. Going back to the roots of Capitol City felt great. It's like I could see it even though I was not there back then and could see the change."*



Damian Chandler, Senior Pastor



Old and new Capitol City SDA Church members come together to celebrate Homecoming at old church location on Friday Evening.

On Sabbath Morning, as we entered the church foyer, we were reminded of the 33rd street church, as we looked at the different displays of photos from 33rd street church.

During Sabbath school and personal ministries time, we had two testimonies from members of the 33rd street church. Here is one of the testimonies.



Rosemary Abrahams

Testimony by Sister Rosemary (Spears) Abrahams

"I was the oldest daughter of five children for my parents, Elder Byron and Marthella Spears. My dad's first church was

in Kansas City. His mission was to go around building churches. When the Northern California Conference heard about Elder Spears' work and what he was doing they invited him. When we came to Sacramento, there was no church. My dad was the first Evangelist in the Northern California Conference for African Americans. They started to give out handbills in Stockton and then progressed to Sacramento. They ran into Sister Davis which was the first house that opened its door for people to have Bible studies. When the Evangelistic crusade was to be at the auditorium in downtown Sacramento, we put up a billboard on the streets: Spears is coming. The people in Sacramento didn't know who Spears was so everyone was curious. People came from Stockton, Oakland, and even the Caucasian churches to support the first meeting in the little theater downtown on 16th street. I was a little girl in high school then. I played the piano and my mother played the organ. I stayed in the church until I got married and then I left the church for fifteen years. I eventually came back and got re-baptized.

My husband didn't approve for me to attend the church so I couldn't go. When Elder Neal and Elder Mosely visited me at my home, my husband threw both of them out. One Sabbath my husband woke up and said we are going to church. He said you know what, God wants me to be in church. At that moment I was just crying. He also said God wanted him to start a book store. At that time my husband was working at the university. He opened a Christian Bible book store. He did the store for twenty-seven years. We attended Capitol City for a while. I was the co-treasurer during the building of Capitol City at 6701 Lemon Hill then they did church hopping. My husband died last year.

The experience at 33rd street church was fantastic. Sister Eddie B. Watkins was playing on the organ and I would sing solos. It was good. Sabbath school was live and my son knew all his memory verses for the 13th Sabbath program. The Sabbath school teachers at that time were Sister Dorothy Newson, the Summerville's mother and father. It was a joy to come to church. We had a lot of revivals. Our church had fellowship dinners every Sabbath at William Land Park but it was stopped after a little girl drowned in the park. We had social gatherings every Saturday night for all our young people and anyone who had no place to go. They would be at my house or my parent's house because they did not do movies or bowling. The focus back then was the Lord is coming so you better get ready. The focus is to do God's will, if God said it, we believe it and do it (Matthew 28: 19-20).

The church was growing and there was a need to expand the church and plus there was no parking. Sister Dorothy Newson was working as a real estate agent at that time and she helped the church to buy the land at 6701 Lemon Hill and helped them to sell the church on 33rd street."

During Our Sabbath celebration, we had a special speaker Pastor Lola Moore and we honored the children of those members who worked tirelessly to build Capitol City SDA Church.



Carol Herbert and Pastor Damian Chandler



Jean Doyle, Tony Watkins, Rosemary Abrahams, accepting their Years of Service Awards by award presenter Carol Herbert, Leader Reconnecting Members Ministry.



Frances Johns, Brenda Newson, and France Alton accepting their Years of Service Awards.



Guest Speaker Pastor Lola Moore



Andre Watkins welcomes member with a big smile.



Beverly (Duff) McGhee and Jean Doyle accepting their Years of Service Awards.

continued on next page

RECONNECTING MEMBERS MINISTRY HOMECOMING 2015 HIGHLIGHTS — continued from page 5



We had a special Children's Church for our children as well.

After divine worship, we had a delicious fellowship meal. We enjoyed very Special Sabbath afternoon programs with special presentations, "The Essential Elements of a Functional Adventist Family" by Pastor Norman Knights and Dr. Heather Knights, "Moving forward after the Death of a Love One" by Kathy Whiteside, and the movie, "God's Not Dead." These activities were well attended and specific follow-up sessions were requested by attendees.

On Saturday night, we had our Social and Game Night at the Boys and Girls club. Everyone had a wonderful time playing the various games that was made available to all attendees.



RECONNECTING MEMBERS MINISTRY

Homecoming weekend concluded on Sunday with a Church Family Picnic. It was so exciting to see so many members and friends out fellowshiping, eating and playing games. What a weekend!

Thank you!

On behalf of the Homecoming committee, we want to thank all of you for a successful Homecoming weekend. We could not have done it without your help and support. Special thanks to Sister Beverly McGhee for providing all the historical pictures from 33rd Street to Lemon Hill Capitol City SDA Church for our picture display in the church foyer and was willing to share her testimony for the documentary. Many thanks to all of our seniors who were willing to help to identify some of the people from the 33rd Street Church pictures. For this we are grateful. Many thanks to Sister Oree Smith and Sister Francis Alton who were sick but yet provided us with information and a folder of historic pictures to help contribute to the documentary. Blessings to you! We are also thankful for the willingness of Sister Rosemary Abrahams and Sister Brenda Newson for sharing their testimony during Sabbath school and personal ministry time. Many, many thanks to Sister Margrietta Geter for the long hours she spent working to do the work required to make this weekend a successful one. Keep up the great work, we appreciate you.

We cannot say how much we appreciate our First Lady, Sister Tanzy Chandler for taking on the project of preparing the Documentary. It was put together very well and very organized. It was a treat. We are so thankful to have you on our team at Capitol City SDA Church.

Last but not least we want to thank our own Pastor Damian Chandler for the vision he brought forth to make this weekend such an important part of the history of our church. God has truly blessed you to be a great leader. We cannot express enough how much we appreciate your ministry here at Capitol City SDA Church.

The Homecoming Committee Members included: Pastor Damian Chandler, Carol Herbert, Ella Tolliver, Dorothea Simmons, Michelle Husbands, Shawn Williams, and Allana Chambers. 🙏



Capitol City's Women's Ministries "Hotspots" continue to electrify to be a blessing!

What a wonderful fellowship of beautiful women!

Submitted By Maria Hill, Women's Ministries Leader – Capitol City SDA Church

In a 2009 *Washington Times* interview, Bill Search explained: “[Small groups] are the closest thing to the electricity of the early church. Paul wrote his letters to basically small groups run amok.... If we don't confess to each other and hear people affirm us, in the process we lose a sense of forgiveness. If we confessed what we really struggle with, that'd be electric.” The Benefits of Small Groups in Smaller Churches, Exploring the power of accountability, forward momentum, and missional identity by Rachel Gilmore.

So if Biblical small group started with three (Father, Son, Holy Ghost), and moved on to infiltrate the early church, that model prepares the way for group life in our church, whether we have a membership of 75 or 750. After all, isn't a major goal of small groups to give people connection points so they don't feel so alone and isolated in this broken world in which we live? Small-group life allows for a refocusing of relationships, drawing people into greater spiritual intimacy with one another and with God as they seek to know him, love him and serve him.

Here is what some of our ladies from the Hotspots have to say about their experience:

“It is a very nice setting, where I felt a warmth and understanding from being amongst a small group. I liked the video presentation along with the fill in the blank questions that we had to answer.”
– Julie Garcia.

“There is just something powerful in women getting together in such an intimate setting. We pour out our hearts, hurts, thankfulness, and support each other in so many ways. It's just awesome.” – Sandra Little.



“I find our once a month group meetings very inspiring, mindful, and meaningful as to how we should love, live and relate to one another, I also love our prayers.” – Melody Donaldson

“I really have enjoyed meeting with the ladies, we all on varying journeys with our walk with the Lord. Just being able to share our joys, struggles, disappointments, pain, gain, encouragement, insight, and just love on each other. Getting to know each of the ladies on a more personal level has been a treat.” – Nadia Butler

So find your nearest Hotspot and join this fellowship of ladies who only want the ongoing 'newness' of coming with their questions, perspectives and struggles to a community environment where the Fruits of the Spirit is continually developing. Why do this thing alone? Let's transform together into to the beautiful women God has called us to be. 🙌

Next Hotspot Meetings:
January 15th on “Peace” and
February 19 on “Patience”.

PROJECT: HOTSPOT

9 Attributes of a Beautiful Woman

A monthly small group fellowship for women
Every 3rd Friday | 7 pm to 9 pm

Hotspot Locations

Natomas – 5 Jamboree Court, Sacramento

Valley High – 7988 Golden Field Way, Sacramento

Arden Arcade – 8541 Bennington Way, Sacramento

Elk Grove (Hwy 5) – 9232 Mapleview Way, Elk Grove

Elk Grove (Hwy 99) – 9022 Quail Cove Drive, Elk Grove

Rancho Cordova – To Be Determined



Hotspot ~ A monthly small group fellowship for women.
No reservations necessary. Just come!

The small groups located throughout Sacramento will be meeting every 3rd Friday from 7-9 and experiencing fellowship while building deeper relationships.

Next Meetings : January 15th Topic: Peace
 February 19th Topic: Patience

Learn to have a greater intimacy with God and live beyond yourself with the help of the Holy Spirit. Find your nearest HOTSPOT and get “plugged-in”!

Capitol City Women's Ministries

Retiring Deaconess Honored for Years of Service

Celebrating two beautiful, hard working women of God!

Submitted By
Kathy Whiteside, Head Deaconess
Capitol City SDA Church



Sister Dorothy Shelby

Sister Shelby served 20 years, with 8 as Head Deaconess. She helped to train new head deaconess.



Sister Willie Watson

Sister Watson served 40 years and was also the Community Services Leader for many years.

Event Calendar

CAPITOL CITY SDA CHURCH

JANUARY

- Jan. 2 Holy Communion
- Jan. 9 Fijian AY
- Jan. 23 Martin Luther Day Celebration
- Jan. 30 Youth Rally/Quiz-A-Rama

FEBRUARY

- Feb. 13 Black History Month Celebration
- Feb. 27 International Day

MARCH

- Mar. 12 Holy Communion
- Mar. 26 Miracle Sabbath

Check church bulletins weekly and website calendar for times and possible updates.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE (NCC)

JANUARY

- Jan. 23 NCC Fusion Youth Rally
Skyline High School,
Oakland, CA – 10:00 am
- Jan. 24 NCC Jumpstart
Mini-Mission Trip,
Goldengate Academy
Oakland, CA – 8:00 am
- Jan. 30 NCC African American
Ministries Youth Rally
Capitol City SDA Church,
Sacramento, CA – 4:00 pm

FEBRUARY

- Feb. 26-28 Urban Ministries
Symposium
Immanuel Temple Church,
Oakland, CA



How to get announcements into the church bulletin:

Email announcements to

MARGRIETTA GETER

church secretary / office manager

at the following email address:

announcements@capitolcitysda.org

ALL announcements need to be emailed no later than Tuesday at 2:30 pm

All other email, including requests to reserve rooms or dates, should be sent to :

office.manager@capitolcitysda.org

Adventist Youth on the Move!

MATTHEW CULBERSON

Whenever one of our youth are headed in a positive direction, it is important to highlight their progress, achievements, and recognition. So here is an update on how Matthew Culberson is doing.



Matthew is a third year Biochemistry and Molecular Biology major at U.C. Davis, and is pre-med. He works in a traumatic brain injury research lab studying brain theta waves within the hippocampus. Matthew also is a intern at the U.C. Davis Medical Center in the Emergency Department. A recent opportunity was given to him to interview for the Medical Science Preparatory Program. The MSPEP preparation program is a U.C. Davis School of Medicine, Office of Student and Resident Diversity, sponsored program. This program is designed to assist educationally and/or socio-economically, disadvantaged students from the University of California, Davis and California State University, Sacramento to prepare to apply to medical school and to successfully complete the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT).

"I had prayed that God would have his way with the decision, because I knew that program is very intensive," Matthew stated. His prayers were answered, because he was notified just last week that he has been accepted into the program.

Congratulations to Matthew!

E.G. WHITE ON . . .

The Importance of Seeking True Knowledge

Provided by Giwania Banta
Excerpt taken from
"MINISTRIES OF HEALING," page 194 and 195

"...character building is the work, not of a day, nor of a year, but of a lifetime. The struggle for conquest over self, for holiness and heaven, is a lifelong struggle. Without continual effort and constant activity there can be no advancement in the divine life, no attainment of the victor's crown...The life of the apostle Paul was a constant conflict with self. He said, "I die daily"(1 Corinthians 15:31) His will and his desires every day conflicted with duty and the will of God. Instead of following inclination he did God's will, however crucifying to his nature. At the close of his life of conflict, looking back over its struggles and triumphs he could say "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day...The Christian life is a battle and march. In this warfare there is no release; the effort must be continuous and persevering. It is by unceasing endeavor that we maintain the victory over the temptations of Satan...No one will be borne upward without stern, persevering effort in his own behalf. All must engage in this warfare for themselves, no one else can fight our battles. Individually we are responsible for the issues of the struggle..."

Angel Tree Christmas Banquet 2015

Bringing the holiday cheer to those in need!

Submitted By Carol Herbert

During this season, you can hear the words “Angel Tree” everywhere. From News 10 to the Salvation Army and many other entities. It has become a famous word everywhere. Well, on December 6, 2015, Capitol City SDA Church supported the Angel Tree Banquet by helping to provide gifts for children and gift cards to families to help those families who are in need in our community.

About 3:30 p.m. on December 6, 2015, cars started to roll in the parking lot and didn't stop until the fellowship hall was packed to capacity. It was a beautiful sight to see. There were many happy smiling faces of children and adults. We hope that we have left a lasting impression of this day. We want to thank all those who have contributed and helped in whatever way. We could not have done this without your support. Thanks! Thanks! Thanks! 🙌



The Most Wonderful Time of the Year?

For some, holidays are the hardest.

Submitted By Dr. Karen Higgins (Dr. Higgins is a psychiatrist with Western Sierra Medical Center in Grass Valley.)

Now is the time of year for bright lights, jingle bells, Christmas carols and thoughtful gift giving. While “Merry and Bright” rings true for many during December, this season can bring up difficult emotions for others.

Typically people spend time with family and friends during the holidays – sharing joy and laughter, memories and traditions – but not everyone looks forward to the holidays.

For some people, the holidays are a time of dread. They may have lost a loved one recently, or have bad memories of a broken family. Feelings of isolation, loneliness and disconnection are not uncommon during the holiday season for these individuals, as they observe the joy around them but do not participate in it.

Those who dread this time of year may want to withdraw, but this can make the depression worse. Instead, we encourage these people to reach out and remain connected with others, even though it’s hard.

As a psychiatrist, I often encourage my patients to rely on their spiritual and interpersonal strengths (prayer, meditation and relaxation) during the holidays. This is a great time to reach out to a church family for fellowship, or join a new church if they don’t already have one. If church isn’t the right fit, meditation can do wonders for mental wellbeing. Try a meditation book or podcast, or check out a local yoga class.

Another way to lift spirits is to spend time with family and friends. Being around a supportive network plays a big role in lifting the cloud of depression and loneliness.

Volunteering can also be effective. There are many organizations that serve those less fortunate (shelters, food drives, soup kitchens, etc.), and giving to others may be just what someone needs to gain a new perspective – no matter how difficult it might seem.

While spending time with others can often be uplifting, putting too much pressure on someone to “get out there” can

have an adverse effect and cause stress. If activities and events begin to cause negative feelings, it may be better to seek other ways to combat depression.

Music often has a healing, positive effect on people. When all else fails, it’s helpful if someone listens to music that makes them feel good. The effect music can have on one’s mood is remarkable.

If you or a friend are depressed this season, remember that a regimen of proper self-care is essential to working through these feelings. Proper diet, regular exercise and a healthy sleeping pattern are all essential to feeling good.

And when it comes to sleeping, it should be limited to the amount needed during the night to feel rested. Sleeping all day will only intensify feelings of depression and loneliness.

It’s equally important to keep busy even by yourself to get through the holidays. This may be by starting a new craft project for the home or devoting time to a favorite hobby, running or cooking.

Whether people want to participate or not, the holidays will happen. I encourage anyone who feels depressed or lonely to challenge negative thinking and assess negative expectations and feelings prior to the holiday. Envision a positive outcome, and this will help make it a special day.

Seize this opportunity to make plans with friends, or try starting a new holiday tradition. Perhaps someone wants take up ice skating on Christmas Eve or attend a church service for the first time. It can also be enjoyable and rewarding to bake and deliver treats for friends.

Remember, there is always something to be thankful for. Many people may feel hopeless and bleak, but taking a moment to find one thing to be thankful for will remind them that things could be worse. Altruism is a mature coping strategy.

If these tips do not seem helpful and feelings of depression linger despite an individual’s best efforts, seek additional professional support. 🌊



Baptisms — July through December 2015



- 1 Tomisha Pickett *
- 2 Unaisi Rokoduru*
- 3 Litia Setitala
- 4 Mya Pogue
- 5 Essence Pogue
- 6 Phyllis Payne *
- 7 Fayeisha Claborne
- 8 Prence Saulter
- 9 Gil Patterson
- 10 Alicia Patterson
- 11 Deborah Hudson-Stevenson *
- 12 Lavell Washington
- 13 Tamekia Barr
- 14 Joy Smith
- 15 LaDonna Williams *
- 16 Breanna Summerville
- 17 Sandra Matthews
- 18 Hustenton Middlebrooks
- 19 Tamiila Loadholt *
- 20 Salem Chandler
- 21 Denise Hunt *
- 23 Saddell Whiteside
- 24 Yusef Stokes
- 25 Oluwadara Ogundiwin
- 26 Duanna Challenger
- 27 LaShana Hall
- 28 Tenesha Thomas *
- 29 Nancy Drake *
- 30 Sheila Denise Douglas *
- 31 April Walford
- 32 Jada Smith *
- 33 Kesha Cornelius

*re-baptized members

The Greatest

By Damian Chandler, Senior Pastor

The arena was a hill called Calvary. In this corner, a Roman soldier. But he was not just any soldier. He was one who had faced many foes and fought many battles. His discipline in training, courage in combat, loyalty to his superiors paved the road for his rise through the ranks. For his greatness he was rewarded with the rank of centurion, captain of 100 soldiers. He wore his fancy helmet and armor like a heavy-weight belt and carried the short vinewood staff, a symbol of his rank, like a trophy. These were his tokens of greatness.

In the other corner, well, that sight was not so pretty. There stood a pitiful peasant rebel, claiming fulfillment of a silly Jewish legend about some coming King. This “Messiah” came to deliver the people and destroy the Roman empire, he’d been told. He was an enemy of the state and any enemy of Rome was an enemy of his. It was not enough that He be defeated. This level of insolence demanded humiliation as well. And so, as if pouring on points in a blowout, the captain stood aside, allowing his soldiers to have their way with no limitation.

But his humiliating tactics produced unusual results. Instead of the usual cries for help or mercy, the centurion heard Jesus give instructions for the care of His mother, and the centurion watched as He recruited a thief. In the bloody face of the Man across the ring the centurion saw resolve. His bloodshot eyes screamed defiance; His countenance flashed determination. This was familiar. He had seen it somewhere before. He was seeing discipline in training, courage in combat. He was witnessing a soldier defiantly determined to obey His Officer’s command. This great man was now a spectator to greatness and he knew it.

Eye of the Tiger

Insert the soundtrack from Rocky right here? Two great fighters in one public ring, with only one possible victor. Like Apollo Creed, this Roman captain probably wondered why this Man fought with such resolve.



“Why won’t He just give up? Stay down. Take off the gloves. Stop fighting!” he thought. But Jesus would not stop. John tells us He did not stop until He declared “It is finished.” There was a reason for Him coming to this world. There was something He was assigned to do. And until He had finished His task he would not take His last breath.

In the bloody face of the Man across the ring the centurion saw resolve. His bloodshot eyes screamed defiance, His countenance determination.

There is an assignment, a purpose for which you were born and that task is no easy one. Unfortunately for many of us, our assignments lead to difficult situations in an arena called Calvary. And Calvary is a very public place. So not only do we suffer and struggle but, oftentimes we do it while people look on and wonder why we do not just give up. Forget this God thing! Give up on faith! Stop fighting! But if we stop fighting there is a centurion somewhere that will never start believing.

Finished

What an amazing feeling. To be able to declare that you completed the task to which you were assigned. That you did not give up. To be able to say, *“Father I did what You asked me to do. It is finished.”*

Not only did the centurion hear Jesus say that He finished His task, but both Matthew and Luke record that He also witnessed the response. Soldiers who valiantly perform in battle usually receive a medal, or they are thrown a parade. However, the affirmation that followed Jesus was one that the centurion had never seen.

All of creation responded to the completed work of Jesus. The earth shook and the sun refused to shine. The veil that hung in the temple ripped from the top down, exposing the inner chamber of the Most Holy Place. God the Father needed this Roman captain—and everyone around—to know that His Son had completed His mission. There are no pictures of this moment, yet the mind can envision the great Roman Centurion—fancy helmet removed, no trophy in hand—kneel before Jesus whom He now recognizes was so much more than the greatest Soldier that ever lived. He declares breathlessly, *“This must be the Son of God.”*

Because Jesus finished the task, the soldier finally saw the Savior. It is tough. You are going through it. You want to quit, but remember there is someone who is watching you and they will only follow your Commander if, even through pain, you finish your task. So fight the good fight, finish your race, and keep the faith. Do not stop fighting! 🏆

Source – <http://www.messagemagazine.com/grow-your-faith/the-experience/the-greatest/>



B A Y D A P R E S E N T S

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UNITED YOUTH CONGRESS 2016

APRIL 13-17, 2016

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA

**IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS, HE IS FAITHFUL AND JUST AND
WILL FORGIVE US OUR SINS AND PURIFY US FROM ALL
UNRIGHTEOUSNESS. - 1 JOHN 1:9**

**SUPER EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION - NOW THRU SEPTEMBER 1, 2015: \$309.00
EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION - SEPTEMBER 2, 2015 - FEBRUARY 2, 2016: \$349.00
REGULAR REGISTRATION - FEBRUARY 3, 2016 - MARCH 15, 2016: \$399.00**

**4 NIGHTS HOUSING, 7 MEALS, 5 SEMINARS, TRANSPORTATION, RECREATION,
ISERVE PROJECTS, GENERAL SESSION/WORSHIP, BEACH CONCERT, DELEGATE MA-
TERIALS, DELEGATE BAG, REGISTRATION WRIST BAND, CONGRESS T-SHIRT
*COST IS FOUR (4) PERSONS IN A ROOM**

**MEALS PROVIDED ARE THURSDAY BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER; FRIDAY BREAK-
FAST AND DINNER (NO LUNCH) AND SABBATH BREAKFAST AND LUNCH (NO DINNER)**



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