



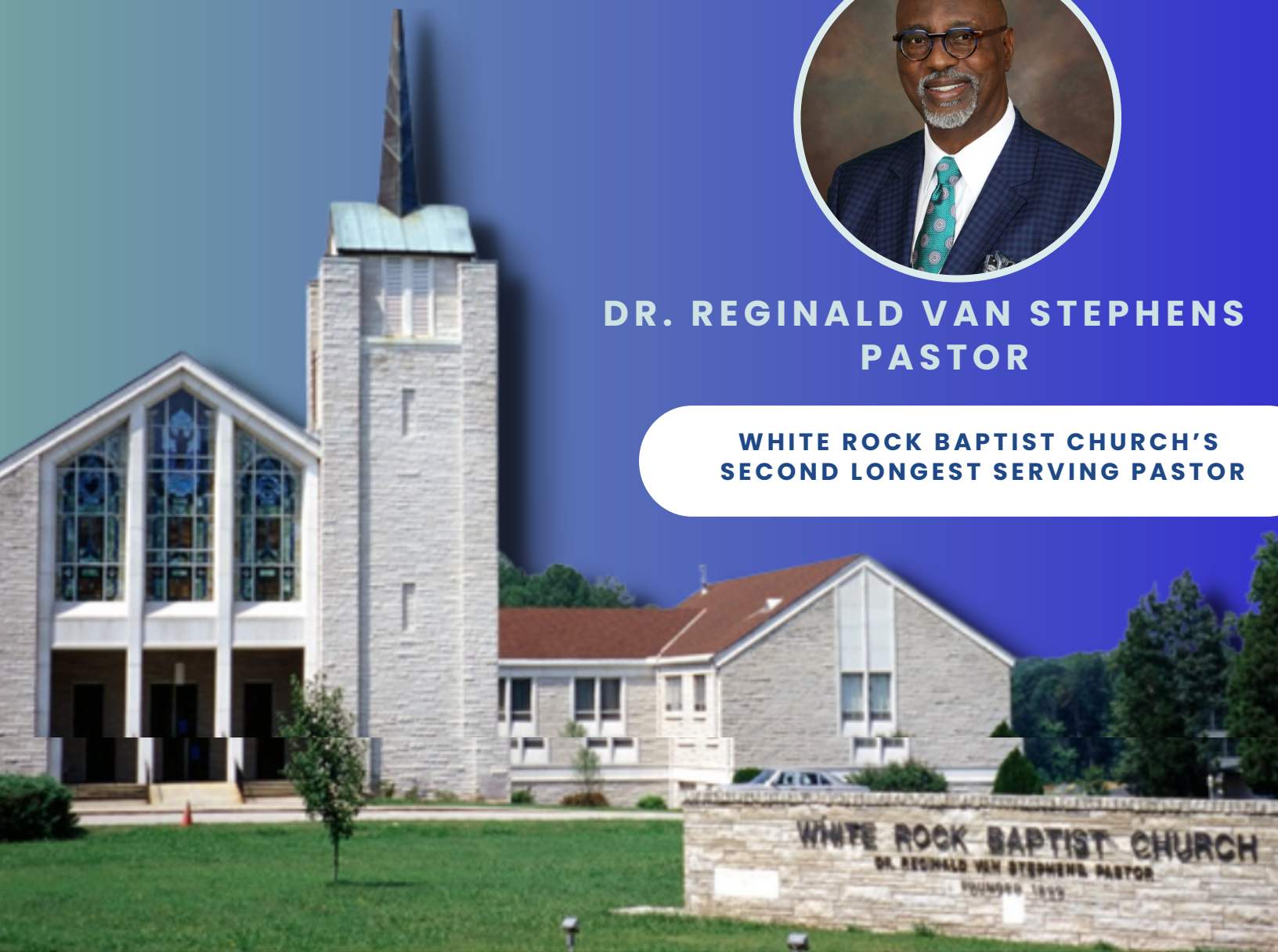
# WHITE ROCK BAPTIST CHURCH

**2023 CHURCH THEME:  
"COMMITTED TO LOVING CHRIST AND  
EACH OTHER!"  
JOHN 15:9-12**



**DR. REGINALD VAN STEPHENS  
PASTOR**

**WHITE ROCK BAPTIST CHURCH'S  
SECOND LONGEST SERVING PASTOR**



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*all* the time.

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## *From the Newsletter Editor*

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Greetings,

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them,” says Ephesians 2:10 (KJV). I’m thankful for the God-given talents implanted in me that allow me to serve the church and God’s people. I give all praises to God and the shepherd of our church, Dr. Reginald Van Stephens for White Rock Baptist Church, in all its glory. The opportunity to serve as the newsletter editor with spirit, faithfulness, and dedication to amplifying the work of our church is an honor. I’m delighted and appreciative that Deaconess Joyce Blackwell has tapped me to succeed her in this role. I’m excited to tackle this task.

I also want to express my deepest gratitude to my mother, Cynthia T. Traynham, who reared me in the church with the solid foundation to do the Lord’s work and always strive to do my best, and grandparents, the late Deacon Robert G. Thomas and Deaconess Mary C. Thomas, who exposed me to several ministries at White Rock that have made an imprint on my spiritual growth and walk with God. They each have always been empowering and supportive. I intend to lead in their image.

I would be remiss not to mention that I graduated in 2020 from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communications Studies. Since graduating, my career has allowed me to navigate the insurance industry, the non-profit sector, and higher education using my communication skills to convey information to different audiences.

I can’t wait to work with all of you much more closely and continue to share the impactful work of our church. As we navigate my transition in this role, I ask you remain patient and prayerful when communicating with me on requests related to the newsletter. And above all, I encourage you to share your voice by submitting content each month on the work of the church ministries and the communities you serve.

Finally, as a reminder, please submit all content by the **15th** of each corresponding month to **newsletter@whiterockbaptistchurch.org**. All articles should be between 300-1000 words in Word. No PDFs will be accepted and articles submitted after the deadline. If you have a recent headshot to accompany your article please include it. Many thanks in advance for your collaboration and cooperation.

Yours in Christ,



*Kelley Traynham*



**DR. JOYCE BLACKWELL**  
**CHURCH ANNIVERSARY**  
**COMMITTEE**

White Rock Baptist Church was organized 157 years ago this month, and yet it feels like this body of Christ has praised the Lord together for our entire lives. Never take days or celebrations like this for granted because they are gifts from God. The Holy Bible presents us with a mission to reach the “lost” with the message of salvation, and it is an amazing feeling to have spent the last 156 years winning the “lost” for the Savior in the community.

Moreover, this year’s church anniversary celebration represents a new beginning. It allows us not only to look back at how far we have come as a church family but also to look forward to all the blessings God holds for us as we continue to do his work. As we celebrate our church’s anniversary this year, let us keep in mind that the spirit of the Lord is undeniable. Furthermore, it is only through his mercy and grace that White Rock has managed to continue to grow and thrive. We are so thankful.

We will celebrate the church’s anniversary this year on **Thursday, October 12**, and **Sunday, October 22**. This year’s theme is ***White Rock Baptist Church, 157 Years: Undergirded by the Love of Jesus and Covered by His Blood***. The scripture verse is 1 Corinthians 13:13(NKJV): “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” Specifically, the committee decided that this year’s celebration will focus on love and loving one another as brothers- and sisters- in Christ.

The church anniversary colors are: red, white, and black. If possible, please wear attire in these colors when you attend the luncheon and the *Love [Jazz] on the Lawn* event. Specifically, how will the church celebrate White Rock’s birthday on Saturday, October 21, and Sunday, October 22? A brief overview of how we will celebrate each day is below. Additional details will be shared by the committee once they are finalized.

### **Thursday, October 12, 2023**

The Church Anniversary Committee will host *Love [Jazz] on the Lawn*. Church members and their guests are asked to bring chairs, blankets, snacks, picnic baskets, etc., and enjoy music on the church’s front lawn while socializing with other members. This will be a love fest for the church. A local band will perform the music.

### **Sunday, October 22, 2023**

During Sunday morning worship service, a guest preacher will deliver the sermon. The committee is finalizing another event that focuses on love as well.

- You will receive additional information once everything has been approved by Pastor Reginald Van Stephens.

At 2 p.m., church members are invited to a free luncheon at North Carolina Central University's New Student Center. All members who plan to attend the luncheon must register for a ticket. The committee will register members on the following Sundays in both the vestibule and the Susie Norfleet Classroom: September 24; October 8; and October 15. Sister Sue Jarmon and Deaconess/Trustee Martha Lester-Harris will also register members during the week in the church office. Please register for tickets early. We have only 300 spaces reserved for the luncheon. If you have family or friends who are not members of the church, they will have to pay the following amount based on their age:

- Adults—12 and up: \$50; Youth—3 years old to 11 years old: \$15.

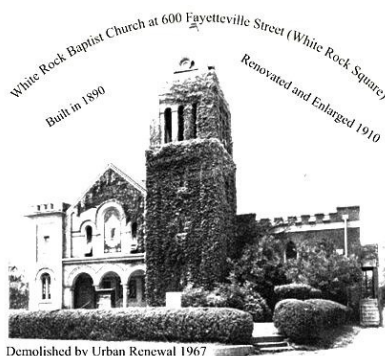
**October 1, 2023–October 31, 2023**

- Throughout October, the Church Anniversary Committee is hosting *The Love Challenge*. Members of the church will demonstrate acts of love by texting, calling, sending cards, visiting the sick and individuals not able to attend church, giving rides, flowers, etc. There will be a contest awarding and subsequently publicly recognizing those who showed the most documented acts of love. The committee will also recognize three unsung heroes and heroines who have been performing acts of love for years.

This year's Church Anniversary Committee includes the following people (in alphabetical order): **Executive Committee:** Deaconess Joyce Blackwell, Chair; Sister Minnie Forte-Brown, Co-Chair; Dr. Tina Hester, Co-Chair; and Sister Cynthia Traynham, Co-Chair. **Committee Members:** Brother Leon Carter; Brother Tim Coles; Deaconess Linda DeBerry; Deaconess Sally Fields; Sister Mina Forte; Dr. Mary Foster, Brother Bernard Gilchrist; Deacon Sonny Harris (Security); Brother Jeff Hester; Deacon Ernest Jenkins; Deaconess/Trustee Martha Lester-Harris; Sister Sue Jarmon; Sister Tanisa Little (Financial Recordkeeper); Sister Simone Perry; Sister Jami Singletary; Sister Paulette Singletary; Sister Jessie Streeter; Deaconess Mary Thomas; Sister Brenda Toomer; and Sister Elfreda Woods.

If you are interested in serving on this year's committee, please let one of the co-chairs know. Our meetings are held both virtually and in person.

Please join us this year as we gather in the presence of God to celebrate the historic **White Rock Baptist Church—Durham's oldest African-American church.**

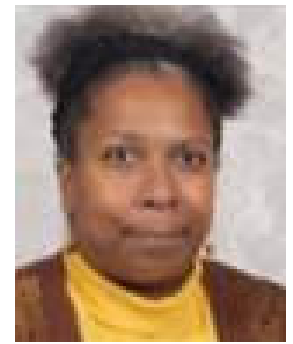


**1866-2023**



## WRBC FOOD PANTRY RECEIVES \$6K FROM FOOD LION GIVEAWAY

It is an honor and humbling that our Father in Heaven would allow us to accept a \$6,000 award from the Food Lion Giveaway. We thank the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina for providing the opportunity to receive this award and the food they supply us each month. With these new pieces of equipment, we will be more organized, have better quality control of food, and serve people more efficiently. All glory and honor be to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the head of the Church and through our God, has made it possible for us to be a blessing to others.



SIS. CAMILLA FELTON  
GLOBAL MISIONS MINISTRY

White Rock Baptist Church has hosted a food pantry each month for seven years! We started out working with people from the community waiting in line inside WRBC with approximately 20 faithful volunteers each month. The 2020 pandemic caused that to decrease to ten faithful volunteers. For the first three and half years, we reached out to an average of 175 families and 723 individuals. During the 2020 pandemic, we averaged 510 families and 1,486 individuals. We are truly grateful that the Holy Spirit showed us how to continue serving the community during the pandemic without any sickness. We also served some of our seniors during this time weekly. God has been mighty good!

The White Rock Food Pantry falls under the Global Missions Ministry. In this ministry, we particularly want to do three things.

- 1.) **Help!** In Matthew 25:40, Jesus said, "When you do this to the least of these, you have done it to me." As disciples of Jesus Christ, we want to do what pleases our Father in heaven. We want to do what shows people his love and direct them to salvation through Jesus Christ. Feeding people is just one of the ways to help elderly seniors, children, and others in need.
- 2.) **Bring hope and have Jesus glorified.** In Matthew 5:16, "We find, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." Global Missions Ministry work with the food pantry and other missions God sends us to meet needs and bring hope. We help people see the love of Jesus and have hope in him and not in us. We pray that the love we show will make them want to seek salvation through Jesus Christ.
- 3.) **Bring harmony.** Ephesians 4:16 says, "From whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love." When the body of Christ works together to accomplish a goal, the church grows, and this is not the building but the disciples of Jesus Christ.

We have volunteers who help distribute food with smiles and give encouragement to people. Another set of volunteers pick up and deliver food, make flyers, send promotion messages, and pray. We praise God for each volunteer. The labor of love by our volunteers makes the WRBC Food Pantry thrive under the Global Missions Ministry work. The benefits of our work include people in the community being helped, disciples, getting better acquainted, and loving each other more while God is glorified. We pray to do more work here in Durham and outreach in other communities. We want to thank God for our pastor, Dr. Reginald Van Stephens as he has given us great support and prayers.



**A Celebration for the 2023 Food Lion Giveaway was held at White Rock Baptist Church on Friday, September 22, 2023. Ephesians 3:20-21**





**SIS. JESSIE PICKETT-WILLIAMS  
MENTORING SINGLE MOTHERS  
MINISTRY**

Mentoring Single Mothers Ministry - "Mommies and Me Care" is a new ministry at White Rock Baptist Church that provides mentoring services to single mothers. The ministry was envisioned by Sister Birdie Midgette, president of the Shepard-Womack-Williams Missionary Circle, led by the Holy Spirit, who saw a need to assist young single mothers with the challenges of parenting alone.

Mentors make weekly contact by telephone or in person with their mentees to listen to their parenting joys, challenges, and other concerns. They provide emotional and spiritual support, share insights, and encourage mentees to set and achieve parenting and/or other desired goals. Mentors are required to uphold the highest standards for confidentiality. This is important in establishing and building trust with mentees. Mentees can, therefore, be assured that conversations will not be revealed with spouses, family members, friends, church members, officials, or colleagues.

The limitations of confidentiality relative to sharing information when there is evidence of danger to themselves or others, child abuse or neglect, or elder abuse or neglect is explained to and agreed upon by mentees. Mentors meet bi-weekly to support each other, reflect on their experiences, and engage in continuous activities for growth and enhancement of skills to ensure the quality of services for mentees. During these meetings, no names or specific details involving mentees are shared. Only minimal information is shared when absolutely necessary to evaluate progress, address a concern, or obtain a resource for a mentee.

Since the launch of this ministry earlier this year, ten wonderful, compassionate, loving, strong women of faith in our congregation have volunteered to meet the need for mentoring single mothers who request this service in our community. They have completed the training designed and presented by Reverend Regina Mitchell, an advisor in this ministry. Congratulations and many thanks to: Ms. Roxanne Dixon, Mrs. Nakia McCleary Mack, Dr. Maxine Manhertz, Deaconess Trannie Meekins, Reverend Regina Mitchell, Reverend Nancy Ross, Ms. Simone Perry, Ms. Susan Thornton (not currently active), Ms. Cynthia Traynham, and one person who prefers to remain anonymous.

If you are a member of White Rock Baptist Church and would like to volunteer as a mentor, please e-mail Jessie Pickett-Williams at [singlemothers@whiterockbaptistchurch.org](mailto:singlemothers@whiterockbaptistchurch.org). If you or someone you know would like to partner with a mentor, please register at our website: [whiterockbaptistchurch.org/singlemothers](http://whiterockbaptistchurch.org/singlemothers).



# CONSIDER YOUR STRENGTHS

There is a need to recommit to God, our love, our trust, and our obedience. "The time is always right to do what is right," said Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. So, discussing what was "right to do" in biblical history and what is "right to do" today is important in our Life Application Sunday School class.

Deacon Kurt Merriweather is facilitating our learning about Ezra, one of the most important leaders of Judah. The book of Ezra is about the Jews regathering and their struggle to survive and to rebuild. Ezra declared they were still God's people and God had not forgotten them. We studied Ezra's actions closely. These actions included receiving permission from the king to return to Jerusalem and with God taking goods from the government for temple business use. Ezra used many godly strengths that serve as examples for Christians today. One is when he used his authority to challenge the people to serve God in purity.



**DR. BRENDA ALLEN**  
**SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Following are some of Ezra's strengths identified online in *Ezra Character Study Inductive Bible Study Notes*. Please answer the questions. They are worthy of our consideration. Ezra:

- 1.) Used his relationship with God. Ezra used his strong personal relationship with God to lead the people effectively. He was authentic. **What can you do to strengthen your relationship with God continually, and improve your Christian witness?**
- 2.) Exercised boldness to ask for what he wanted. Ezra was bold enough to ask the king for help and to preach to the king about God's goodness. He trusted God to protect him. **How do you acquire and show boldness? Why might you need protection?**
- 3.) Prayed continually. Ezra turned to the Lord in prayer continually, and God kept using him. Besides prayer, what spiritual disciplines can you practice? How about fasting? Matthew 6:16-18. **How about the study of the Bible?**
- 4.) Gave thanks and praise to God. Ezra gave God what was due God. In Ezra 3:11 we find this example: "With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the Lord: 'He is good; his love toward Israel endures forever.' And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the Lord because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid." **When and how do you give thanks and praise to God?**
- 5.) Led wisely and carefully. Ezra was transparent. He had an accountability system for the transport and measuring of gold and silver to assure all of it was accounted for and not "misplaced" or used for himself. This illustrates the concept of stewardship. **How do you know if you are being led wisely and carefully in Christian disciplines?** Now, consider how God works all things together for the good. (Romans 8:28).

As you consider your strengths and weaknesses, find encouragement in 2 Chronicles 15:7 NIV. It says, "But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded." Join this study of Ezra in person or virtually to gain strength for life's journey." The going gets rough...," but the Life Application Sunday School class presses on. Hallelujah!

# SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY: FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND ONE ANOTHER

The Senior Adult Ministry (SAM) was overjoyed to host a true fellowship with God (Koinonia) and one another in late August. Our unwavering commitment to enriching the lives of WRBC senior adults by promoting spiritual and healthy activities remains steadfast. What we have learned is that friendships have been formed, knowledge shared, and outstanding socialization and spiritual enrichment occurred as we gathered for this special occasion. In face-to-face gatherings, members continue the idea of sharing themselves. This is a testament to the powerful connection of being like-minded in spirit and purpose as God's people. Our celebration was a tremendously happy event!



**DR. MARY C. FOSTER**  
**SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY**

It included a wide range of dynamic activities that provided attendees with an opportunity to reunite, revitalize, restore, and recognize the warm relationship of God's love and the rich vitality of being reconnected with the five decades of senior adults in WRBC. There has been almost a four-year hiatus since we got together for an event of this magnitude. Focused solely on and for our diverse population of seniors (aged 60-100), the need to join in love, joy, and peace was evidenced by the eager online registration of 123 members.

Everyone who entered the Fellowship Hall was filled with happiness and high expectations of a true fellowship (Koinonia) with God and one another. A sincere fellowship with God that makes us all one "in Christ" and does away with the differences that divide us was apparent. "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your interests but also to the interests of others," said Philippians 2:3-4. The profound significance of our ministry's purpose is to enable our senior adults to continue being an integral part of the church and community while keeping dignity and a sense of well-being. There was joyful interactive engagement, that promoted socialization, service, and self-enhancement. While sharing the same mindsets, we realized the blessings from the prayers and our faith that have brought us through an challenging period. As expounded in John 16:23-24, "In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask for in my name. Until now, you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete." If you missed the event, here is a recap which may be of interest to you. A very important check-in process upon arrival was astutely developed and carried out by Sis. Sue Jarmon.

## **The Nonsecular**

The program kick-off was introduced by **Sis. Mary C. Foster**, followed by opening prayer and scripture by **Rev. Regina B. Mitchell**. A non-secular aspect continued to flow whereby Rev. Mitchell had **Bro. Melvin Williams** plays piano notes. Folks seated at each table were invited (in an orderly fashion) to recall the "Name of the Hymn." This activity was analogous to the t.v. music game show entitled "Name That Tune" (1952-1985).

The venture was not only fun, uplifting, and interactive, but it also stimulated engagement of long-term memory. 12 hymns (one per table) were more than a notion, to recall so were required more notes had to be played to properly identify the hymn. "The Blood Will Never Lose its Power" was sung by virtuoso, Bro. James King. This rendition made for an impactful assurance of God's love and omnipresence!

### **The Entertainment**

Master of ceremonies; **Bro. Joseph Thorpe**, "Soul of the Occasion", initiated the "fun-tastic" segment of the program with his unique, energetic, flexible, improvising skills and comical demeanor! Bro. Thorpe's great sense of humor inspired the excitement of the crowd! To embrace the proponent of intergenerational (Generation Z) integration with seniors, the Harambee Collective community mime group honored us with a creative performance led by Artistic Director **Bro. McDaniel Roberts**. Our resident satirical humorist, **Sis. Eloise Jordan**, was hilarious and filled us with "good medicine". Proverbs 17:22 wisely states, "A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones." Just goes to show you that old saying, "laughter is good medicine," goes back to ancient times. Everyone seemed to thoroughly enjoy themselves. The roving mic transported by **Bro. Keith Bagby** traveled from table to table for "Share a Funny" as a few attendees read a poem or joke.

### **The Luncheon**

A healthy balance of nutritionally wholesome foods graced our buffet. **Deaconess Martha Lester-Harris, Deaconess Mary C. Thomas** and Special Occasions and Events Ministry, as well as all other volunteers, are honorably credited for food service hospitality to the epitome of excellence for discriminating palates with a preference for soul food. A tasty offering of homemade cakes offered a "bite of heaven" with one supreme "Life by Chocolate on Chocolate in Chocolate" triple layer cake as prepared and artistically decorated by **Sis. Terra Crudup**! Who could ask for anything more than incredible soul food, with amazing desserts, great fellowship, ' and superb fun? Someone once said that food for the body is not enough, there must be food for the soul. The truth of the matter is regardless of the activity; the souls were bountifully blessed and sufficiently nourished with the nine ingredients contained in the magnificent "Fruit of the Fruit."

### **The Souls**

You may recall that soul music is an African American-inspired genre that originated from African American gospel singing and our professional D.J.s **Bro. Brian Scott** and son, **Bro. Marcus Scott** provided plenty of it. We could not help but release and share the joy that filled our souls when Sis. Meredythe Holmes led dancers in a White Rock version of the 'eclectic' - electric slide! To witness many of our WRBC seniors enjoying the ten minutes of spectacular physical and emotional engagement was exhilarating! Those who were unable to join on the floor, danced in their seats and hearts, dancing like David, utterly and completely overcome with the joy of God. All souls enjoyed receiving gifts with those seniors celebrating their August birthdays were especially recognized as special gifts were extended to them.

Closing remarks and prayer were offered by **Pastor Stephens**, followed by a euphoric joyful exit to that popular tune from "Soul Train". Gee, I ponder why there is the repeated usage of the word "soul" in this article? Perhaps it exemplifies that our souls were truly "...filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit "says Acts 13:49. While Jesus is the true source of our happiness, it is the Holy Spirit who fills us with joy that we are all one in Christ Jesus! 1 Peter 4:13 reads, "But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed." **To God be the glory!**

**CONGRATULATIONS**, to all White Rock Seniors! Your commitment to excellence in the true fellowship with *God and One Another* luncheon program is exemplary of your love of Jesus and his church! You have helped to lead us, guide us, and inspire us to be happy people as we share this unexpected blessing all to glorify God. Deuteronomy 31:6 says, "Be strong and steadfast; have no fear or dread of them, for it is the LORD, your God, who marches with you; he will never fail you or forsake you." We pray that you enjoyed reading this and are blessed with the highlights that exemplify, that he is always here with us! Grace, love, joy and praises!

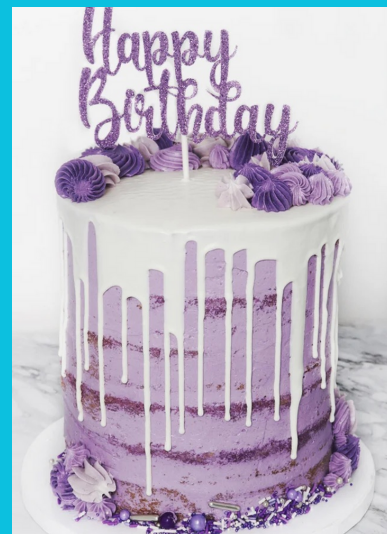
**SAM PLANNING COMMITTEE 2023:**

**Keith Bagby, Mary C. Foster, Meredythe Holmes, Sue J. Jarmon, Eloise Jordan, James King, Martha Lester-Harris, Regina B. Mitchell, Irene G. Perry, Mary C. Thomas, Joseph Thorpe, and Melvin Williams**



# October

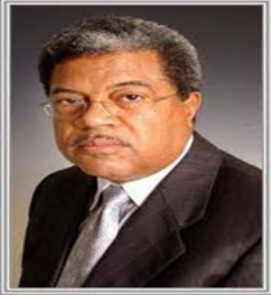
## BIRTHDAYS



**May God bless you with abundant joy and happiness on your birthday!**

**Shirl Davis Kidd, 1**  
**Birdie Midgette, 2**  
**Joyce Spivey, 2**  
**Arielle Curtis, 3**  
**Allyson Lawrence, 3**  
**James Graham, 4**  
**Carol Shirley, 5**  
**Devon McMillian, 8**  
**Leah Miller, 8**  
**Paula D Harrell, 10**  
**Earle Manhertz, 10**  
**J. Rick Singletary, 10**  
**Sherron Williams, 10**  
**Marc Duchatelier, 13**  
**Brian A. Scott, 13**  
**Zamariah Womack, 14**  
**Cecil Fields, 15**  
**Robert Hartsfield III, 15**  
**James King, 15**  
**Thomas Tucker, 15**

**Nephdarlie Saint-Cyr, 16**  
**Sharon Winstead, 18**  
**LaShana Broussard-Morris, 19**  
**Betsy Johnson, 20**  
**Jordan Oldham, 20**  
**Jonathan Hale, 21**  
**Lisa Moody, 24**  
**Diane Pierce, 24**  
**Annisianna Egerton, 26**  
**Malinda Jolly, 26**  
**Randall Moore Rogers, 26**  
**Roger Brown, 27**  
**Delores Grant, 27**  
**Angela Lawrence, 27**  
**Jalen Fields, 28**  
**Anita Holmes, 29**  
**Cheryl Yates, 29**  
**Jerry Head Jr., 30**  
**Anita Jones, 30**  
**K'la Brannon, 31**  
**Reteina R. Vanhook, 31**



Deacon Samuel Harrison, a graduate of North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (NC A&T), shares his personal accounts of being Black in America through his love of poetry. **Read more** of Sam's lived experiences living in the South during the civil rights movement navigating college life and how those experiences guided his career, and retirement below.

**DEACON SAM HARRISON**  
**SUNDAY SCHOOL**

### ***N.C. A&T Alumnus Samuel Harrison Recounts Black Experience in America through Collection of Poetry*** **By: ncatalumni**

*Samuel Harrison '70 had his first experience with racial tension when he was a freshman at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. He found himself in the middle of a protest after a well-known African-American pastor had moved into a predominately white neighborhood. Harrison and his friends were out exploring Greensboro as college students and found themselves among protesters when he was hit in the back of his head with a glass bottle, leaving a lasting scar for more than 50 years.*

*College life for Harrison in the late 1960s and early 1970s was shaped by the 1968 riots, after the assassinations of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy, and the 1969 Greensboro Uprising on the campus of North Carolina A&T. Harrison received his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering in 1970 from A&T and MBA from Duke University in 1981.*

*Harrison worked for IBM in numerous managerial roles and was afforded the opportunity to travel internationally for 31 years. He worked at A&T as the Associate Vice Chancellor for Information Technology for 14 years. "When I returned to A&T to work as an alumnus, I approached this experience with a sense of pride and it was more than a job for me," said Harrison.*

*Now in Harrison's retirement, he is doing consulting work and has written two books, "Reflections on the Black Experience in America" and "Faith, Sacrifice, and Perseverance: Foundational Support for The Black Experience in America." Both books, which are available through Amazon, offer a wealth of gems and wisdom shared through the art of poetry. His second book will be available on Amazon.com in September.*

*"My campus experience at N.C. A&T including my parents, grandparents, mentors and former teachers have influenced me the most with their wisdom and guidance on how to navigate through challenges," said Harrison. "My two books were written in honor of the people who have had significant influence on my life."*

## MEET OUR YOUTH USHERS

White Rock is blessed to have wonderful children who are talented, gifted, and committed to serving in the body of Christ. Among them are the following Youth Ushers: Heaven Brown, Rashad Fields, Myles Haggins-Dixon, Leah Miller, John Monk, and Tyler Monk. On behalf of the Ushers Ministry, Deaconess Linda DeBerry and Sister Jessie Pickett-Williams would like to express their appreciation for the service of our youth ushers. Many thanks to the parents and grandparents who ensure that these ushers are uniformed and ready for service, lead by example, and lay a strong foundation for growth in their faith, love for Christ, and service to others.



**Heaven Brown** is the daughter of Ms. Clytina Hubbert and granddaughter of Mr. Walter and Deaconess Trannie Meekins. She is excited to be eleven and a 6th grader at Brogden Middle School. Heaven's favorite subjects are art, math, science, and computer science. We find Heaven an authentic comedian who is always full of jokes and she loves making others laugh. "I wanted to be an Usher to help the people at Church," mentions Heaven.

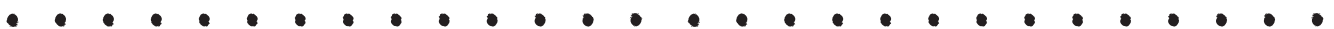
**Myles Haggins-Dixon** is the son of Ms. Roxanne Dixon. He serves nearly every Sunday in ways he has not been called upon to serve. Myles is fourteen and is musically gifted as he plays the cello, violin, viola, upright bass, and piano. He is a student at J.D. Clement Early College with future aspirations of becoming a cardiothoracic surgeon. Myles also likes playing sports and currently plays lacrosse. His favorite sport, however, is football. "I enjoy serving as a junior usher at White Rock Baptist Church because welcoming people into the sanctuary with a smile starts worship off on a high note," says Myles. "Most importantly, I love my mom and I know she loves me. She supports and encourages me every day. For that, I am grateful and happy to be a part of my loving family at White Rock."

**Rashaad Anthony Fields** is the son of the late Rodney A. Fields and Ms. Lakisha Dolby, grandson of Mr. Ronald A. and Deaconess Sally G. Fields, great-grandson of the late Odell and Deaconess Emeritus Minerva Fields. Rashaad is a freshman at Corinth Holders High School in Clayton, NC. He is interested in business and coding.

**Leah Miller** is the sister of Heaven Brown, the daughter of Ms. Clytina Hubbert, and the granddaughter of Mr. Walter and Deaconess Trannie Meekins. She is twelve and in 7th grade at Brogden Middle School. Leah loves most subjects, however, science is one of her favorites. Leah enjoys playing basketball. "I love attending church, Sunday school, serving as an Usher, and helping people," mentions Leah. Leah loves her family and is a great help to her mother as she patiently assists with caring for her two younger brothers.

**Tyler Monk** is the son of Mr. Julius and Dr. Selena Monk. He is in 11th grade at the School for Creative Studies. Tyler enjoys participating in the IT Service Center Summer internship program, where he is responsible for IT support. Tyler has served faithfully as an usher for several years.

**John Monk** is the younger brother of Tyler Monk and the son of Mr. Julius and Dr. Selena Monk. He is in 6th grade at the School for Creative Studies. John enjoys playing with friends and making video games. Like Tyler, John has served as an usher for several years.



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## 2023 Durham Municipal Primary – October 10, 2023

Durham’s 2023 municipal primary is on Tuesday, October 10. Voting precincts will be open from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. in designated locations. The ballot will include candidates for Mayor and City Council. As a reminder, early voting takes place now until Saturday, October 7, at the following locations: North Regional Library, South Regional Library, NCCU Turner Law Building, and Durham County Main Library. You are now required to show photo identification when going to vote. For more information on North Carolina photo ID requirements, visit: [www.ncsbe.gov/voterID](http://www.ncsbe.gov/voterID).

Make your voice heard by voting. We each have the right to vote, and the livelihood of our communities depends on the leaders we elect. We must encourage and educate one another to ensure our communities are safe, new job opportunities are available, and food insecurity decreases under the right leaders.

Please reach out to the Durham County Board of Electors with any questions regarding voting: [dcovotes.com](http://dcovotes.com).

### 2023 ELECTIONS AT A GLANCE

Durham County Board of Elections



The 2023 municipal primary election will be held on Tuesday, October 10

The 2023 municipal election will be held on Tuesday, November 7

#### THE VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINES ARE:



Friday, October 13, at 5:00 p.m. for the November 7, 2023, municipal election

#### ABSENTEE-BY-MAIL VOTING:



Began Sunday, September 10, for the October 10, 2023, municipal primary and election

Begins Sunday, October 8, for the November 7, 2023, municipal election

#### ONE-STOP EARLY VOTING WILL BE HELD:



Thursday, September 21, to Saturday, October 7, for the October 10, 2023, municipal primary and election

Thursday, October 19, to Saturday, November 4, for the November 7, 2023 municipal election



ELECTION DAY POLLING PLACES WILL BE OPEN FROM 6:30 A.M. TO 7:30 P.M. ON ELECTION DAY

PHOTO: INDY Week publication



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Ordination of Minister Christopher Norwood – October 7, 2023

Minster Christopher S. Norwood will be ordained at noon on **Saturday, October 7** in the sanctuary of White Rock Baptist Church. A reception will immediately follow in the church’s Fellowship Hall.

Minister Norwood received his Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Master of Education in Special Education from Fayetteville State University. He completed his Master’s of Divinity from Shaw University in 2022. He currently works as an Instructional and Vocational Specialist in Durham Public Schools. His work as an educator is rooted in his desire to empower, motivate, and transform the minds of youth in our competitive global society.

Join Pastor Stephens and the entire church family in this momentous occasion and celebration for Minister Norwood.

*To our Church Family:  
You are cordially invited to the  
Sacred Service of Ordination for  
Minister Christopher S. Norwood.*

*Saturday, October 7, 2023, at 12noon,  
in the Sanctuary of  
White Rock Baptist Church.  
A reception will follow immediately in the  
Fellowship Hall.*

*We give thanks to our Lord  
and Savior for all that He  
has done and look forward to  
celebrating this occasion as  
the family of God.*

## Back to School Sunday – October 15, 2023



Back to School Sunday is scheduled for **Sunday, October 15, 2023**, and W.G. Pearson Principal Kendall Dorsey has been invited to worship.

The Church & School Together (CAST) Ministry is asking members to contribute school supplies to be given to W.G Pearson Magnet Elementary School. The wish list of items includes: glue sticks/bottle Glue, crayons, blunt-tip scissors, pencils (#2), large erasers, colored pencils, copy paper, large plastic storage bags (quart and gallon), wide rule composition notebooks, boxes of tissue, 3 ring binder, pocket folders, hand sanitizer, Clorox/Lysol wipes, construction paper, latex gloves, expo markers, dry erase spray, folders, highlighters, sticky note pads, and first-aid supplies (bandages).

A collection box is located in the vestibule and hallway outside the Library for items you would like to donate. The ministry is also asking you to consider making a financial contribution using a yellow envelope. Please put the amount you would like to contribute on the front side under “Gift Offering” and on the reverse of the envelope put “CAST” on the “other” line and indicate the amount you would like. For more information reach out to **CAST Chair Kimberly Sherrill** by email:

**cast@whiterockbaptistchurch.org**

## ***The Unexpected Humor of God*** **by Dr. Irene Perry**

As a young child kid, I spent a lot of time trying to understand the OT, without much instruction. Sometimes, I'd ask my mother to explain certain pages but I spent a lot of time reading the Bible in my alone time. Sunday School teachers did not usually go very deep—so I was left to my own ideas and interpretations.

Because of this, I formed the idea that God was stern—and without humor. And as a young adult I sought to know, “Does God have a sense of humor?” While this was an interesting question, I never thought that humor was offensive or unimportant to God. Still, I lacked understanding. Though the question may be one that is amusing to think about, it should never make one think less of God, or that He is one-dimensional because we can approach it theologically and have meaningful thoughts about it. Over time, the thought lingered in the back of my mind. Praise be to God, I learned that faith & humor are not mutually exclusive, but even more, context matters. There is a time for laughter and a time for seriousness, (Ecclesiastes 3:4).

Over time, I learned that humor is a gift from God that has the power to hurt or heal (Ephesians 5:4). Used well, humor is like medicine for our souls (Proverbs 17:22). A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones. That brings me to the point of my testimony.

As an adult, when working for the Feds, I was accepted to present a professional research paper I had written on computer and information security at a conference that was to be held in Paris, France. The presenters in the conference were from four countries: United States of America, France, Germany, and China.

The year was 1989. It was a turbulent time, a year full of political tensions between the United Kingdom and Iran, political revolutions saw to the collapse of communism in eastern Europe, the Iron Curtain which had divided Europe since 1946 was beginning to lift, and the Cold War was coming to a close. I was a bit nervous about the trip because I was traveling alone, and had to first stop in London for several days to work on a mutual project between the United States and the government of the United Kingdom.

When I arrived at Heathrow Airport, I was detained and questioned rather intently about why I was entering the country. I answered and was soon released. I spent several days in London before concluding my business after which I continued on to Paris.

I had made my hotel reservations well ahead of time—and arrived at the appointed hotel in Paris the day before the conference. I was scheduled to stay in Paris for several nights before traveling back to the States.



**DR. IRENE PERRY**  
**DIRECTOR OF DISCIPLESHIP**  
**DEVELOPMENT**

When I arrived at the hotel in Paris, I was greeted warmly, was given a key to my room on the fourth floor, and was informed that my luggage would be delivered. When I arrived at my appointed room, I opened the door—and to my surprise, there were men’s shoes in plain sight close to the doorway. I let out a shriek and quickly closed the door. I stood in the hallway frozen—totally stunned. At that moment a voice coming toward me in the hallway, inquired, “Madame, is there a problem—I am the hotel manager.” His response: “Not to worry, Madame. Come with me. I am the hotel manager, and I will take care of this.” We got on the elevator, and the next thing I knew, the elevator door opened to a beautiful penthouse suite overlooking Paris, with the Eiffel Tower in plain view, lit in all its majesty.

The manager wished me a wonderful stay and was gone. I stood gazing around the room. And moments later there was a knock at the door: Two hotel attendants entered, arranged two dozen roses, opened a box of chocolates, and poured a glass of bubbly for me.

The attendants left, but very soon, another knock at the door, and a fabulous dinner was set before me. I was swept away. Staggered. I couldn’t wait.

I called my mom and told her all about it, exclaiming, “Can you believe it? Can you believe this is happening to the girl who slept on a rollaway bed in the kitchen—next to that old stove.” Mom and I laughed and laughed.

**What a delight!** I reflected on God’s Holy Spirit within me, and his unexpected humor at a tense moment when I was alone, afraid, and so far away from home.

The all powerful God of the universe, made me laugh that evening in Paris. And I cherish that moment when I first believed that our God, indeed, has a sense of humor!

**For now, there is “a time to laugh” (Ecclesiastes 3:4). One day, we will all laugh forever, and like never before!**





## **White Rock Baptist Church**

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**Newsletter Design—Deaconess Joyce Blackwell, Ph.D. & Kelley Traynham**

## **Schedule of Services**

Sunday School . . . . .	Sunday, 8:30 a.m.
New Disciple Orientation/Bible Study. . . . .	Sunday, 8:30 a.m.
Worship Service . . . . .	Sunday, 9:30 a.m.
Mid-Week Prayer . . . . .	Wednesday @ 12 Noon & 6:00 p.m.
Bible Study . . . . .	Wednesday @ 7:00 p.m.

**The Lord's Supper** (1st Sunday during 9:30 a.m. Worship Service)