



the Centenarian

MAY, 1999

The official Newsletter of Centenary United Methodist Church, "The Miracle on McLemore"

"...all that God is doing with us, and through us, and sometimes, in spite of us, here at Centenary!"

The Write Reverend

"This year for Lent I'm giving up sanity."

My favorite cartoonist in the whole world is LDL (a.k.a. Lani Danielle Lester) and her "Side Walk Expressions." It doesn't hurt that LDL is also my twelve year-old daughter. Parental relations aside, however, Lani not only draws well but also has a tremendously insightful sense of humor. She drew this one sitting at my desk on Good Friday after she, Candace (my ten year old) and I had talked about our Lenten experience and how successful, or unsuccessful, our Lenten sacrifices had been.



Rev. Herbert L. Lester, Jr.

Today, however, I don't think that any of us would have any problem agreeing with Lani that a lot of people in our world seem to have given up sanity, but not just for Lent, and it's no laughing matter.

Two teenagers walk into their school and wound and/or kill 41 of their peers and a teacher. This is insane. Middle school students in Texas have been discovered with the same intentions and much of the same equipment. That's insane. The fact that we have an incident like this every six months for the last 39 months is insane. The Children's Defense Fund says we lose a whole classroom of children to gun violence in America every other day. This is insane. Our children are killing themselves and each other. This is insane!

Where are we falling short? What is the problem? How are we failing our children? I believe part of the problem

see SANITY on page 7

Holy Week in Italy

by Chirelle Jefferson

Italy is an amazing country with an abundance of culture and art. Pictures and videos could not begin to capture the very essence of its wealth. I have been so blessed to have visited Italy not only once but twice. This past Holy Week, I felt an awakening of sorts upon arrival at the Leonardo DaVinci Airport and knew immediately that I was about to indulge in a real life lesson in history.



PHOTO BY CHIRELLE JEFFERSON

Our visit included an observance with the Pope

I traveled with 13 students and two chaperones on an eight-day excursion. The first two days were spent in Florence. Florence was simply delightful, full of flavor and haute couture (high fashion). One of the most exciting places in

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Journeys in Faith

Life Is A Miracle - Only Believe

by Lucille D. M. Scott

What a joy it is to belong to this community of faith! Each moment of life is a miracle - a miracle of incredible order and power. With every movement and function of my body, I am reminded that I am a living, breathing miracle of life. "How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders." - DANIEL 4:3

In 1973 when our minister served as interim minister at Centenary, he saw how much we wanted and needed a church library. Although we worked hard toward that end, our plans did not materialize due to circumstances beyond our control.

Fortunately, when Rev. Lester was assigned to Centenary as minister in 1990, HE REMEMBERED! With the help of many members, led by Mrs. Erma Williams and Rev. Richard Cook, the Miracle Library on McLemore became a reality on January 24, 1999. Yes, I believe in MIRACLES and I believe in the Bible: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." - GALATIANS 6:9 (NIV)

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and much more!

MIRACLE from pg. 1

Dedicated to One of "Centenary's Favorite Sons" The Rev. Dr. Herbert L. Lester, Jr.

Honest with and helpful to everyone,
Easily getting any job done.
Respectable...reliable - on him you can depend,
Brilliant and business-like and most of all a real true friend!

Efficient with excellence is his aim,
Reflective and receptive, he is always the same.
Thoughtful of others, he does just what he should,

Lecturer of note, his messages are always good!
Endeavoring to show that any goal can be reached.
Self-sufficient...steadfast, anxious to practice what is preached.

Truthful, trustworthy...he is always there,
Enthusiastic and eager to do well his share.
Responsive to the call of duty from day to day,

Joyfully caring and serving each step of the way.
Religiously, we love "our son" and wish for him the best,
Success will surely be his for he has passed the test!

Journeys in Faith

Being Christian Even When the Road Is Rough

Being a Christian and being a part of wrong just didn't rest well with me. It was the 1960s. The Movement was well under way. I had finally made it into management in a major Memphis company where I began in the 1950s and had spent five years originally as a maid. Being a Christian, I didn't take into consideration getting hurt. During the time they were marching, I decided I needed to act.

The incident that really led to my action was when a white lady was hired to work in the store restaurant and then moved to a commission paying job. She had just been there a few weeks. There were Black staff who had more education and had been working there a long time. They were not even considered for the position. It was just not right!

I filed a complaint with the NAACP. Even my husband didn't know that I'd done it, though he supported me once he knew. The NAACP said they lost the first letter. I had to pray to decide whether to send the letter again, or whether this might be a sign that I shouldn't continue. I sent the letter.

Then, they turned it over to the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission).

The top level company staff told me that I was in the wrong business. They were in it to make money. I felt that there's a right way to do things - even to make money for a business. I had entered into this prayerfully. I thought, "Lord, somebody needs to do something where I'm working. If taking my life would help this, I'm willing to give it. I have to live with myself."

see JOURNEY on page 4

Prayer - How Sweet It Is!

by Zakiya Larry

Do you ever get cravings? You know, time consuming, mind exploding, body shakin' cravings? When we get those cravings, what do we as humans usually reach for? Cookies? Cake? That piece of pie you know you should leave alone?

Well, what about that other craving? That of the sweet tooth of the soul. When the bitter gall of sin aggravates the festering decaying cavities of our spirit, what do we as Christians reach for? I don't know about you, but I've got a health plan better than TLC, Access MedPlus, Medicare - whatever you will pick. It covers my eternal destiny - what I mean is, my rotting, decaying, sin-sick soul -- and it provides me with the best doctor too. My one and only physician is named "Jesus Christ." And when that sweet tooth of a soul starts acting up, I call Dr. Christ. And he's very efficient. He'll clear that painful cavity of sin away and restore the enamel of my soul - but what then?

When everything's all clear and you're ready to flash your pearly whites, you realize there's a void. A craving unlike the reckless tastes of sin, but a hunger. Still you need something sweet, dripping with sugar and honey to satisfy that sweet tooth of a soul. May I recommend prayer. Praying will satisfy that hunger like no other thing you've ever tried. Oh and it is sweet! Sweeter than grandma's apple pie, sweeter than pancakes with extra syrup, than yams and sugar, candy, the fragrance of a newly bloomed rose, a new born baby's smile - that's prayer - how sweet it is!

Now though prayer is sure enough sweet - we don't need to sugar coat it. There aren't words, synonyms, or metaphors enough that will ever sound as sweet to our creator as our earnest thank yous, confessions or repentances from the very depths of our mortal souls.

So you may be thinking - what's so sweet about this prayer deal? Well, I could tell you everything I've gone through, everything I've witnessed, every trial I've been carried through because of "sweet talking" with my master. But you may know well enough.

Still need convincing? Ask our enslaved ancestors that prayed for deliverance. Ask our forefathers that prayed for equality so that we could gather here!—freely eat where we want and say what we want. Ask your mothers that stayed up late nights praying for you when you seemed to have lost your mind. Ask yourself when you had a broken heart, sick family members, personal illness. Through these events or examples, you will realize a sweetness like no other, a richness in taste that's better than French pastries or Italian cuisine. Taste prayer and see. I recommend you try it.

And now, please join with me in tasting Chef Jesus' finest cuisine: please bow...(in your own prayer)....

Now wasn't that just the sweetest thing your soul has ever tasted? But don't worry - you don't need to brush, 'cause it's good for you, and it's also cholesterol- and calorie-free, so feel much obliged to return for seconds and thirds and fourths, because it's prayer, delicious, fulfilling prayer - how sweet it is! Thank you.

HOLY from page 1

Florence was The Galleria degli Accademia that houses the eight-foot sculpture of "David" by Michelangelo. We visited several Duomos, or Cathedrals, that were a sight to behold. An area that I found intriguing was the Ponte Vecchio, a beautifully detailed bridge built in 1345. Other points of interest were the church of Santa Croce, The Uffizi Museum, and The Boboli Gardens. Of course, shopping was unbelievable. Florence is famous for its quality leather and outrageous fashion.

After leaving Florence, we travelled on to Assisi. There is no place like Assisi, especially on Palm Sunday. We witnessed a traditional palm processional leading to the Basilica of Saint Francis. Due to a recent earthquake, we

were unable to travel to the top of the hillside, but had mass in the Lower Basilica. I was able to gather quite a handful of palms in recognition of the holiday. The mood was peaceful, absolutely serene. There was a feeling of unprecedented spirituality. That day in Assisi was perfection beyond compare.

"City of the Soul" was the epithet Lord Byron gave to Rome. More than any other city, Rome helps us understand ourselves, and the fragility of the world. A city oozing with history and bearing the names of so many who made an impact on the world. Michelangelo, Dante, Julius Caesar, St. Peter, Nero, and many others. At the Coliseum, I could hear in my mind the gladiators struggling to survive. In the Forum, I looked around to

hear Marc Antony deliver the famous eulogy, "Friends, Romans, Countrymen..." It was a sight to be amongst the ruins that survived some 3,000 years.

Vatican City was the highlight of the trip for me. How many people can say that they have been in a Papal audience and received the blessing of the Pope in eight different languages. Although frail and sickly, his presence was strong and commanding. St. Peter's was amazing with the detailed sculpture, "The Pieta," (Mary holding the mature Jesus.) The Vatican Museum was unlike anything that I've seen. It took us about four hours to tour although it could have taken several days to see everything.

The last point of interest in The Vatican Museum was The Sistine Chapel. This is the

room where Michelangelo lay on his back on scaffolding to paint the ceiling for Pope Julius II. It took the artist four years to complete under pressure from the Pope. In this room is the renowned "Creation of Man." I had to sit for several minutes just to digest the wonder of it all.

We also visited the Pantheon, the Trevi Fountain, the Spanish Steppes, and Catacombs. There were many amazing Piazzas, or Plazas, where several of us sat and ate gelatto (a delicious soft ice cream), or took pictures. The Gardens were extremely visual, the food exquisite, and again, the shopping was out of this world. I will never forget this journey and the overall spiritual experience.

Let's Read

by Dorothy Tureaud

As members of The United Methodist Church, we have the responsibility to continuously broaden our knowledge about the world around us. This was one of John Wesley's dictates as he enjoined the early members of the denomination to improve their minds as well as their hearts. To help accomplish these goals, he went into the midlands in England where factory workers did not enjoy advanced educational opportunities. As these people joined his group, he not only preached to them on Sunday, but conducted classes for them on Thursday nights. These meetings became the world's

first church schools.

To Centenary this fact should be very meaningful since we were established in the pattern used by John Wesley. Before the end of the Civil War, the Rev. Hawkins was sent by the Freedmen's Bureau to establish a church and school for Blacks in Memphis. It was exactly a century since Methodism had come to America, so in honor of that fact, we were named Centenary.

It should be a matter of great pride to each of us that Centenary was the first school for Blacks in Memphis. The members were eager to learn, and people who had toiled all day eagerly attended classes at night. With this proud heritage, it seems mandatory that we should follow their examples. One way in which this can be accomplished is "READING," since in the

vernacular of the knowledgeable, "Reading is the window to the World."

At the present time Centenary has two effective instruments to help us maintain the reading habit. The first is our newly established Lucille D. Scott Library, which is directed under the able administration of Mrs. Erma Williams and her staff. The second is the reading program which has long been an important phase of The United Methodist Women. Our contact for this program is Mrs. Grace Colehill.

We are particularly interested in promoting the reading program at this time as we are celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of RESPONSE, the mission magazine for every member of The United Methodist Women. It is hoped that every Methodist Woman will become an active reader. The books

cover a broad spectrum of subject matter and are all germane to the important issues that affect our lives. The books are chosen by members of The Women's Division of the United Methodist Women and our own Emma Tom Johnson is a member of this august body.

It is hoped that all Methodist Women will plan to enter the program this year. There are four plans of reading from which to choose and Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Colehill and Mrs. Earlene Gladney will be happy to help you chart your reading course. Don't fail to examine The Reading List Handbook, make your selections, and become an active member of The Reading Team. Remember that by learning what has been, we become aware of what may be.

Women's Day ... Responding to the Word

by Gloria Wyatt

On Sunday, April 18, 1999, the United Methodist Women (UMW) marked a "first" in the history of Centenary. Both speakers for the day were nurtured and reared in Centenary; each



PHOTO BY VINCENT WALKER

Bertha Mosley, Rev. Herbert Lester, Jr., and Rev. Jacquelyn Harris

is the daughter of a fellow Centenarian, and their mothers are also members of the UMW

The morning speaker was Rev. Lenn H. Milam, daughter of Mrs. Louise Harris; the evening speaker was Rev. Jacquelyn A. Harris, daughter of Mrs. Bertha Mosley, who is also the president of the Centenary UMW.

Both young women were simply awesome as they captivated the congregation ... "Responding to the Word" with such spiritual fire and inspiration.

Mr. Zebedee Jones directed our phenomenal Sanctuary Choir for the morning worship. The Women's Choir, under the direction of Mrs. Geraldine Bynum, and the beautiful voices of Ms. Sheryl Neal and Mrs. Vietta Lewis set the tone for the evening. Mrs. Mosley noted at the end of the evening program, "Centenary has also accomplished another 'first' today. We had our men's ensemble come back and be with us this evening! Our very special thanks to Mr. Virtner Clark, Mr. Vincent Walker, Mr. Autry Parker, Jr., and Mr. Freddie Wilkes."

If you were unable to attend the Women's Day activities, well ... you certainly missed a treat!

Centenary's Wish List

Thanks to the anonymous donors who responded to our prayers for repairing the organ and for office plants.

Some members listed the following as their greatest wishes for Centenary for 1999:

- Improvements made on the parking lot
- Central air/heating system
- A powerful sound system for the Family Life Center
- Church grounds landscaped
- A new church marquee
- Handicapped parking
- Piano (baby grand)
- Choir loft renovated
- A slim table for the narthex

Thank you for your continued support of our community of faith.

the Centenarian

Staff:

Kerris Easley, James Haley II, Rev. Autura Hampton, Susanne Jackson, Chirelle Jefferson, Zakiya Larry, Michael Lewis, Michelle Martin, Susie Mickle, Dr. Marie Milam, Sheryl Neal, Dorothy Tureaud, Stephanie Walker, Erma Williams, Canary Williams, Cory Williams, Brandi Williams, Kametris Wyatt, Gloria Wyatt

Advisors/Contributors:

Emma Tom Johnson, Janice Sampson, Dr. Herbert L. Lester Jr., Rev. Richard Cook, Earlene Gladney

Join the Centenarian

Please call Susanne Jackson at 458-5634 or the church office at 774-7604, if you would like to join our staff. Fill in the Centenarian article form in the Narthex or in the office to contribute your stories. If we have erred in a story, please let us know. We welcome letters to the *Centenarian* and all other comments.

JOURNEY from pg. 2

The President of the store confronted me. He told me that a friend of his had died when he was about 30. He said, "Sometimes we cut our lives short by some of the things we do." I was already over 30 years old when he spoke to me. He also mentioned that I could disappear.

I responded with one of my favorite quotes from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "Longevity has its place...but I just want to do God's will..." I told him it's not how long you live, but rather HOW you live that is important. He got very angry.

Other various scare tactics were used against me. Someone stole my car the day I was signing the affidavit that was supposed to stop any retaliation by the company and its staff. The thieves put some high quality drugs in my trunk. I thought it was my husband's tobacco and drove around the city with it in my car for five days! When my husband saw it, he called someone he knew on the police force, a lieutenant, who told us that such high quality drugs were rarely found in Memphis. He said, "You have some serious enemies."

Someone broke into my office. A Black person tried to run me off the road. I tried to transfer a young woman to another department, but the company fired her instead. I had trouble from her family.

I wasn't taught to hate anybody, black or white. I did learn how to live in the South - what I could and could not do.

My grandmother got through slavery and wouldn't take

see JOURNEY on page 7

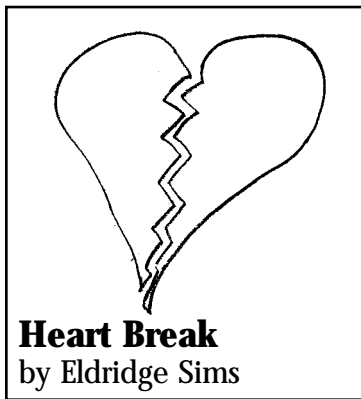
Reflections on the Mass Murders in Littleton

by Community Youth

The children and youth in this community reflected Wednesday, April 21, on the horrendous tragedy that occurred the day before in Littleton, Colorado.

Fifteen children were killed and others wounded and maimed by youth calling themselves The Trenchcoat Mafia. The Centenary youth knew that the targets were African Americans and athletes. Some of the children responding were as young as first and second graders. Some needed help with their spelling, and they asked how to write their words. They took this seriously and wanted to make sure they wrote what they meant. The youth wrote and drew about: **Who's Responsible? What Can WE Do?** Here's some of their comments:

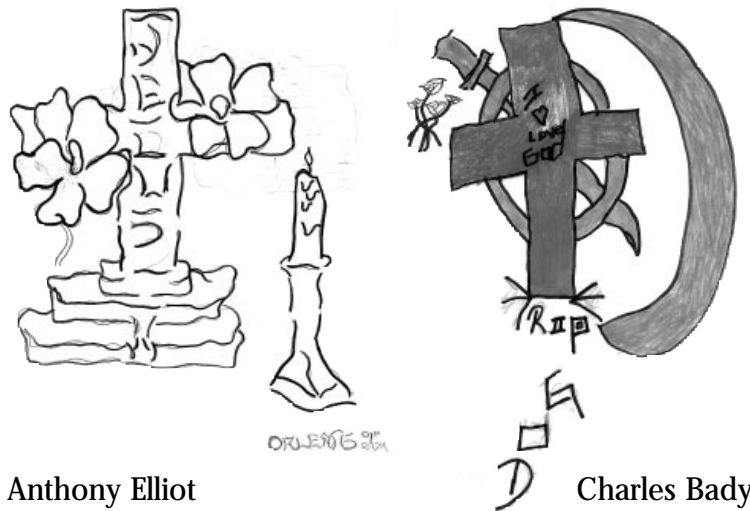
- * Don't take drugs.
- * Don't smoke.
- * Don't drink.
- * Don't smoke crack.
- * Check the lockers.
- * Don't steal cars.
- * Stop cursing.
- * Don't try to fight.
- * Don't take knives.
- * Train them.
- * Take away guns.
- * Don't kill.
- * Punish them.
- * Take away violence on T.V.
- * Don't criticize your children.
- * Teach your kids not to be racists.
- * Don't let your kids watch anything on television.
- * Don't talk about people especially in front of your children.
- * No guns.
- * They need to quit taking guns to school 'cause someone can get hurt badly.
- * I feel sorry for the child.
- * I would stop the persons.
- * The kids were killed, I would make a law that says no more guns.
- * I think children should be more careful about what children do.
- * The teacher in school should have police check people's clothing.
- * The children need GOD in their lives.
- * They should go to church and praise the Lord.
- * The kids should go and get a job and work and get their minds off killing.
- * I think the schools should pat the children down.
- * I think they need to start checking the school lockers to make sure the school is safe.
- * Also, I think the schools need to have more metal detectors.
- * They need to have more policemen in the schools at all times.
- * We can call the police and they will be in jail real



quick.

- * The main thing they need to do is to make sure that people with no license do not get a gun.
- * I think that we can talk to them and tell them what's the right thing to do.
- * They need to search everyone about twice or three times a week.
- * They need to stop the killing and I hope the police have them locked up for life.
- * I wish that I could do something about it.
- * Don't hate other people.
- * Stop violence.
- * Don't break other people's hearts.
- * Love each other.

Tiahra Abston, Tiara Jones, Melvin Sims, DeAngelo Redden, Darryl Greenwood, Morris Sims, Donavan, Gregory Ward, Walter Myles, Dwayne Myles, Maria Jones, Cory Williams, Brittany Reliford, Tony, Timothy Harris, Eldridge Sims, Demonte Suggs, Louesha Henderson



Anthony Elliot

Charles Bady

The Poem from Me to You

by Tina Youngblood

I am who I am,
 Even though I don't know you.
 Pray always my friend,
 Cause God can see you through.
 Through your hardest times,
 and through your happiest days,
 When you're out of pennies and dimes,
 and even in your times of shame.
 God is there always,
 He sees what all you do,
 So stay strong my friend,
 In spirit and in truth.

What's Important to YOU?

Community youth reflected on what's important to them. Here's some of their views:

TO
BE
FREE
IS
EVERY
THING
TO
ME
- BY GREG WARD

Life

by Tina Youngblood

The storms of my life arise,
I can hardly see the skies.
It seems everything is going down
Is it possible that I can be bound?
I've been pressed by the oppressed,
and obsessed with a new stress.
I don't know what to do,
All I know, GOD will see me through.
I'm waiting for that brand new day,
Still in God's hands everything is okay.

Health Tip

Put Health Protection on Your Plate

Take advantage of the health protection from a diet rich in fruits and vegetables. Whether it's vitamin C in oranges or the vitamin A in broccoli and carrots, nutrients in fruits and vegetables help reduce a person's chance of getting a variety of health problems, including heart disease and cancer.

What makes fruits and vegetables so beneficial? Studies have found that vitamins A, C, E and the mineral selenium help prevent cell damage that can lead to cancer development. These are called "antioxidant" vitamins and minerals. During a process called oxidation, caused by normal wear and tear over time, cells can be damaged and diseases can occur more easily.

Antioxidant vitamins and minerals in fruits and vegetables slow oxidation. Unfortunately, many Americans do not get enough antioxidants, fiber and other nutrients because they don't eat five servings of fruits and vegetables every day.

If five servings a day sounds like a lot, remember that one serving is only half a cup of chopped vegetables or one medium-sized piece of fruit. Add fruit to your breakfast-real, eat a piece of fruit for a snack, enjoy salad bar veggies for lunch and eat a cup or more of vegetables at dinner. Buy chopped, frozen vegetables that can be added when you're heating up sauces, soups, and casseroles. The American Institute for Cancer Research suggest eating a wide variety of produce, especially dark green, deep yellow and orange fruits and vegetables.

Almost all fruits and vegetables are low in calories and fat when served without oils or butter. SO STACK THE ODDS IN YOUR FAVOR BY FILLING YOUR PLATE WITH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES FOR GOOD HEALTH.

Source : American Institute for Cancer Research

—from Charles Parker, M.D.

My Grandfather

by Kearia Griffin

One day in 1998 when my grandfather went to the hospital, it was very sad. I thought about it. August 21, 1998, we went to Chicago for a family reunion.

We had some fun. When we got back my Aunt Patrice came and told us the good news. She told us that he was fine. I was happy. My mother told me to stay in the waiting room, so I did. When I went there my Granddad looked so sad. So I was crying and it was very sad. Everybody started to cry.

Then that night when we left from the hospital, they called my house and said that my Granddad had died. But at that time I was at my friend, Ashley's house. I remembered the hospital room number when my mother said it. I asked my friend's mother, Ann Blake, to take me to the hospital. She took me there. Everyone was there. I felt very sad. but now I feel good.

Youth Day

The United Methodist Youth Fellowship will present it's annual Youth Day on May 23, 1999, at 10:15 a.m. The featured speaker will be our own Zakiya Larry, sophomore at Craigmont High School. The theme is "Voices of Youth," and we will present it to you with our own creative flavor. The Centenary Youth and Young Adult Choir will render special music. A reception will follow immediately after the morning worship experience. Please make it a point to be present, and bring your friends!

Riches

by Fannie Hunter

It was late October and business in my beauty shop had fallen off as it always did each year at this time (from October til March). The phone rang. I answered eagerly but it was only another cancellation. Rent would be due in November as well as utilities, insurance, etc., etc.

Well, I was not about to sit around feeling sorry for myself. I decided to close the shop for the day and go home, cook a good dinner for myself and my seven-year-old son Alex. Cooking was my favorite thing to do so I was humming to myself as I prepared the meal: fish, corn bread, french fries, tossed green salad, a half apple pie left from the last dinner, and a pitcher of Kool Aid.

Alex's eyes lit up when he came in from school and saw the food. He dashed out the door and soon was back with three of his little friends. "Come on," he said to them. "Mama made a good dinner."

I had only made enough for the two of us. Now I had to stretch it to feed three extras. I pretended I was not hungry and divided the food equally four ways. It felt good to see how the boys ate.

Later I ate an apple and a peanut butter sandwich. Before he went to bed that night, Alex said, "Mom, I'm so glad we're rich. Those other boys don't have such good food like we do."

Thank God, we are and have always been so very rich.

Mother's Day - Founded to Honor Methodist Mom

from United Methodist News Service

shared by Annette Stewart

While some of the early origins of Mother's Day may trace back to ancient Greece, the United States celebration honors the vision of Ann Marie Reeves, the wife of a Methodist pastor in West Virginia. Her daughter, Anna, led the successful campaign in the early 1900s to recognize Mother's Day as a national holiday. When Anna was a child, she had heard her mother express hope that a memorial would honor all mothers, living and dead. After her mother died May 9, 1905, Anna started her campaign for the holiday. By 1908, a program was held at St. Andrews Methodist Episcopal Church in Grafton and in Philadelphia, honoring mothers.

Later, the church observed Mother's Day on the second Sunday of May each year. For that first Mother's Day, Anna sent 500 white carnations to the church to be given to mothers. In later years she sent more than 10,000 carnations. Red carnations for the living and white for the deceased - became symbols of the purity, strength and endurance of motherhood.

In 1914, the United States House and Senate approved a resolution proclaiming the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day. President Woodrow Wilson endorsed it. Anna died in 1948 at the age of 84, having promoted the holiday her mother inspired.

COMING JUNE 27 - OPUS III

by Earnestyne Toney

The Centenary Sanctuary Choir will present a musical extravaganza, Opus III, June 27. The choir will perform a variety of musical numbers from anthems to contemporary gospels and spirituals under the direction of Zebedee Jones.

We'd like to involve the entire Centenary family in spreading the spirit, so please contact Joyce Johnson or any member of the Sanctuary Choir to join one of our committees.

JOURNEY from pg. 4

nothing from nobody. A little bit of that tenacity must be in me too. I came from Mississippi and saw a lot of things done that were wrong. I used to wash and iron. The price being paid then was just \$2.50 per washload and it didn't matter how big the load was. I was handling about 25 dresses and 15 shirts a week. I wrote up an itemized cost list and it totalled close to \$7.00. I presented the bill to the lady. She said, "The very idea that I had the nerve to present that list." Some white folks said that

they were going to put the government on me. I said though, "I'm not washing and ironing for \$2.50."

Here in Memphis, I felt that somebody had to be willing to act. Folks usually say, "It ain't my business!" Some even told me, "We won't be feeling sorry for you when those white folks get through with you."

Some folks want to be good Christians so long as it's smooth and convenient. But sometimes we have to stand up for what's right.

I didn't know at the time that I filed the complaint that two other complaints had been filed. Two porters had

filed complaints about unfair pay and a lady in the sandwich shop had filed a complaint. Management thought I was in cahoots with the others.

I was making a pretty good salary. I knew I might get fired so I didn't want anyone else involved in the complaint. I did it on my own.

I got tired of asking for quarter an hour raises for hard-working, very skilled employees and management only gave them a nickel an hour increase. One woman had worked for the company for more than 30 years and was highly skilled, and I could only pay her a nickel an

hour increase. At the same time, white folks were getting 25-cent to 35-cent increases. Raises and other personnel issues were not evenly handled. Whites were getting far more than blacks - no matter what the work, education or number of years on the job.

The complaint process took more than a year and lots of prayers. We did get some results. The other complainants received compensation for the inequities. More Blacks were hired and some were placed in commission paying jobs.

Disciple Bible Study: The Spiritual Feast Continues

The Lenten meals have ended, but the spiritual feast continues as we share reflections in the Disciple Bible Study. Rev. Lester continues to lead us in an intensive and invigorating discussion of the Bible.

We spoke of God's grace and deliverance as we shared our histories of slavery and liberation. We acknowledged the importance of remembering our history - the pain and bitterness as well as the celebrations when faith triumphed over unfaith. We were reminded in Exodus of the miracles God performed and what God expects of us.

We discussed our need for order, the Ten Commandments. We tried to rephrase them as positives. For example, I shall worship only one God. We discussed the tremendous love story and cosmic drama that God has wrought in guiding Moses to lead the Israelites out of bondage. We marveled together at how God is working out God's plan with us -- or sometimes in spite of us.

We delved into atonement (being at one with God - and with each other) We considered how to provoke one another to love and good deeds. We compared the sacrifices of the past and their message of obedience to God to how we can live lives of obedience today. We recognized that atonement requires obedience, remembrance and thanks giving.

We spoke of our reluctance to develop and depend on our relationship with God. We reflected on the false faith of the Israelites who preferred to seek security in kings like other nations - despite the consequences - rather than seek refuge in the kingdom of God. We saw how the people fared with the judges and the kings. And we asked whether we are simply repeating these histories - learning little. We asked, "Does our membership in this covenant community call us to leadership?" And we answered with almost one voice, "Yes - all the time!" Bible Study continues from 6 pm - 8 pm every Wednesday.

An Evening with Zebedee Reynolds Jones at Rust College



PHOTO BY VINCENT WALKER

Zebedee Jones and his mother.

An Evening with Zebedee Reynolds Jones and the World Renowned A'Cappella Choir was an inspirational success. Dozens of Centenarians traveled to Rust College in caravans for the wonderful evening of music and history. As Rev. Lester said, "We saw Mr. Jones in his element."

As a delightful surprise to us all, the Centenary Sanctuary Choir members who were present were asked by Mr. Jones to join students and graduates of Rust College for an exciting rendition of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

Choirs from 1990 through 1999 performed such favorites as "How Great Thou Art," "Precious Lord," "Grand Mass in C minor," "We'll Understand It Better By and By," and many more.

Mr. Jones was presented with a special tribute, "Portrait of Amazing Grace." He was honored as a man who has touched many lives. He instills discipline, time management and music as an integral part of education.

The Rust Choir will perform at the General Conference of The United Methodist Church in the summer of 2000 in Cleveland, Ohio.

SANITY from page 1

lies in the fact that we no longer have strong mediating institutions that stand between us and the mega-institutions in our society. Institutions like family, church, community organizations, neighborhood associations, block clubs, fraternal organizations, labor unions, voluntary groups, neighbor-to-neighbor involvements and other significant adult-child interactions. These relationships help us stay in touch with one another and they also help keep us anchored in the real world, not pulled to

the fringes and the extremes.

These institutions help us grow and mature and become whole persons in spite of the brokenness and craziness we might have to live with and live through. They provide the infra-structure on which we build the superstructure of our lives. We must, therefore, work to patch-up and fix-up what we can salvage. We must rebuild what has been torn down; and we must redefine what it means for us to live in community in the 21st century as we struggle to be faithful to Christ's call on our lives and in our lives.

SIDEWALK EXPRESSIONS

by Lani Lester



Letters to The Centenarian

Letter to Dr. Herbert Lester and *The Centenarian*

Thank you very much for the copies of *The Centenarian*. It is a most informative and creative newsletter. The contents are educational, inspirational, and very interesting. You combine so well local church news with broader concerns of the community, church, and world; and the humor adds to the interest. It is one of the best church newsletters I have seen! Could I be placed on the mailing list?

Centenary has a long tradition of quality ministry in Memphis and throughout the region and world. It is gratifying to note that the tradition is continuing, and the Memphis Conference is indebted to your pastors and laity for such faithful ministry.

I noted the announcement of the Shalom Graduation on March 27. I regret that I was unable to be present for that important event.

May this Eastertide bring to you and the Centenary Church signs of new life and assurances of God's coming reign of justice, generosity and joy.

Gratefully yours,
Kenneth L. Carder
Resident Bishop

The United Methodist Church
Memphis and Tennessee Conferences

Congratulations and many thanks to everyone involved in producing the recent issues of the Centenary newsletter. To folk at a distance, like Sharon and me, it's almost like being back home on McMormore again. The news keeps us current, and the features let us know what the friends in our community are thinking and doing. "The Write Reverend" column is almost like hearing one of Rev. Lester's sermons on Sundays. (Man, do we miss hearing them in person!)

I was especially excited about seeing the articles by Darryl Greenwood and his brother. Darryl e-mails me every so often, but he didn't tell me he'd have a byline in the newsletter. All those weeks writing on the computers the last couple years are paying off for Darryl. (Thanks, Rich and James, for making it possible.)

The newsletter is a model of good writing and design. I say that as someone who teaches both! It's a good example to use in my classes.

Spring has truly sprung up here in Minnesota. Last weekend I led a church group on a project to help out Urban Ventures, a Christian-based incubator of new businesses rebuilding the down-and-out Lake Street neighborhood of south Minneapolis. We see God's hand at work everywhere we go.

I just wish I could tell y'all this in person!

Bruce (Bruce Maylath)

Emma Tom Johnson Scholarship

by Janice Sampson

The month of May has been designated as Emma Tom Johnson Scholarship Month. During this month the members are encouraged to make a contribution to this fund. A special offering will be taken on the first Sunday and contributions will also be accepted throughout the month of May. Last year due to the generosity of our members and friends, the church awarded six \$300 scholarships to our college-bound students. Please give - above and beyond your regular contributions to the church - so that our 1999 College-bound graduates will be able to receive this same benefit. Please make your checks payable to Centenary United Methodist Church and designate for the Emma Tom Johnson Scholarship Fund. Your donations will be deeply appreciated.

Emma Tom Johnson Scholarship Award Terms of Eligibility - July 1, 1998

1. Applicant must be a member of Centenary United Methodist Church.
2. Applicant must be a high school graduate.
3. Applicant must be enrolled in college by the fall of the year of graduation.

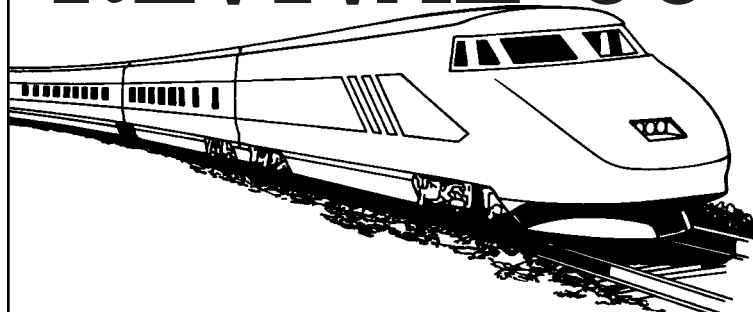
Requirements for Applicants

1. Applicant must submit an application and it must be signed by one of the ministers of Centenary United Methodist Church.
2. Applicant must submit a one-page typed essay on the subject: "Why I Want to Attend College"
3. Applicant must send a written communication advising the scholarship committee after receiving the scholarship to acknowledge that it has been received.

Scholarship Committee: Emma Tom Johnson, Bonnie Turner, Emma Stokes, Joyce Johnson and Janice Sampson

Centenarians,
Coming to your Sanctuary Sept. 27-Oct. 1!!

REVIVAL '99



"Getting Our Faith On Track"

People Get Ready and Plan to Be on Board!

Rev. Herbert L. Lester, Jr. is the conductor,
and a strong committee is leading this train

The Tea Cup

from Chirelle Jefferson

There was a couple who used to go to England to shop in the beautiful stores. They both liked antiques and pottery, and especially teacups. This was their 25th wedding anniversary. One day in this beautiful shop they saw a beautiful teacup. They said, "May we see that? We've never seen one quite as beautiful."

As the lady handed it to them, suddenly the teacup spoke. "You don't understand," it said. "I haven't always been a teacup. There was a time when I was red and I was clay. My master took me and rolled me and patted me over and over and I yelled out, let me alone, but he only smiled, 'Not yet.'

"Then I was placed on a spinning wheel," the teacup said, "and suddenly I was spun around and around and around. Stop it! I'm getting dizzy! I screamed. But the master only nodded and said, 'Not yet.' Then he put me in the oven. I never felt such heat."

I wondered why he wanted to burn me, and I yelled and knocked at the door. I could see him through the opening and I could read his lips as he shook his head, 'Not yet.'

Finally the door opened, he put me on the shelf and I began to cool. "There, that's better," I said. And he brushed and painted me all over. The fumes were horrible. I thought I would gag. "Stop it, stop it!" I cried. He only nodded, 'Not yet.' Then suddenly he put me back in the oven, not like the first one. This was twice as hot and I knew I would suffocate. I begged. I pleaded. I screamed. I cried. All

the time I could see him through the opening nodding his head saying, 'Not yet.' Then I knew there wasn't any hope. I would never make it. I was ready to give up. But the door opened and he took me out and placed me on the shelf.

One hour later he handed me a mirror and said, 'Look at yourself.' And I did. I said, 'That's not me; that couldn't be me. It's beautiful. It's beautiful. I'm beautiful.'

'I want you to remember, then,' he said. 'I know it hurts to be rolled and patted, but if I left you alone, you'd have dried up. I know it made you dizzy to spin around on the wheel, but if I had stopped, you would have crumbled. I know it hurt and was hot and disagreeable in the oven, but if I hadn't put you in there, you would have cracked. I know the fumes were bad when I brushed and painted you all over, but if I hadn't done that, you never would have hardened; you would not have had any color in your life. And if I hadn't put you back in the second oven, you wouldn't have survived for very long because the hardness would not have held. Now you are a finished product. You are what I had in mind when I first began with you.'

MORAL: God knows what He's doing (for all of us). He is the Potter, and we are His clay, He will mold us and make us, so that we may be made into a flawless piece of work to fulfill His good, pleasing and perfect will. No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful, he will not tempt you beyond what you can bear...(I Corinthians 10:13) Have a good and blessed day in the Lord.

Young Adult '70s Spring Fling

by Rev. Autura Hampton

The Young Adult ministry is planning a Spring "get together" for May 22, 1999, at 7:00 p.m., at the home of Autura and Denise Parker. This will be a 1970's theme party. So get a babysitter, comb out those afro puffs, and break out those bell bottoms, halter tops, afro picks, mood rings, platform shoes, leisure suits, and polyester pants suits. Remember, 70's gear is back in style in all the stores. If you do have problems finding something to wear, get creative! Hook up your hair, clothes, or shoes for that 70's flavor. We want to see you there!

Directions to the Parkers: I 240 to Walnut Grove East, cross Shelby Farms to Sanga Road, Turn Right. Follow Sanga to Bazemore, Turn Left. Follow Bazemore to Riveredge, Turn Right. The address is 431 Riveredge. For more information, contact Denise Parker at 752-0295 or Rosalyn Ross at 360-1193.

Young adults are usually 18-45 years old...but anyone who would like to become a part of the group is welcome.

Centenary: The Early Years II

by Marie A. Milam, Ed.D.

"We are called together as the people of God to celebrate the long and rich heritage of our Church....Thanks be to God!"

Many of the early members were former slaves who felt that membership at Centenary was more advantageous than in the Colored Methodist Episcopal (now Christian Methodist Episcopal) body, established for African-Americans after the Emancipation by the Methodist Episcopal Church. The benefits included the importance of education of its membership that Centenary has always advanced.

From the beginning, the old Centenary Chapel, as it was first known, made an impact on the community. The first school for Negroes in Memphis, located at Centenary, prepared many of the first African American teachers and business owners. The oldest Boy Scout troop in the city and the first kindergarten for African-American children were also begun at Centenary.

From 1865 to 1913, Centenary occupied the following sites:

1865-1866 The first building was on Raburn Street (now Third Street) under the leadership of Rev. Hawkins (1865)

1866-1913 The second building was located on South Avenue (later named Calhoun, now G.E. Patterson Avenue), also under the leadership of Rev. Hawkins.

A second frame building was erected on this site during the pastorate of Rev. Charles Sewell (1888)

The third building on this site was a brick edifice that was never completed. The minister in 1907 was Rev. H.W. Keys (1907); followed by Rev. Fields and Rev. Thomas (dates unknown). (In 1913, Rev. Chavis led the congregation to purchase a lot on Mississippi at Alston.)

Bishop James S. Thomas Conducts Workshops

by Erma Williams

Bishop James S. Thomas of Atlanta, Georgia, a retired United Methodist Bishop of the Ohio Conference, conducted two workshops on Saturday, April 24, 1999 at Centenary. The workshops were on Methodism and Black Methodism.

Attending the workshop were the youth from several African American United Methodist congregations who are going through a year-long joint Confirmation experience and members and pastors from each of these churches.

During the first workshop, Bishop Thomas took us on a journey of Black People in the Methodist Church. The journey started in 1703 with the birth of John Wesley and ended in 1997. Some of the important dates covered were:

1784 - The Christmas Conference, the formal beginning of organized Methodism. Circuit riders voted to expel those who sold and bought slaves

1787 - Black Methodists, led by Richard Allen, leave the Methodist Episcopal Church after having been humiliated at St. George's Church, Philadelphia

1816 - Richard Allen forms the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME)

1821 - James Varick forms the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AME Zion)

1844 - The issue of owning slaves divides the Methodist Episcopal Church into the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South

1870 - Colored Methodist Episcopal Church was formed (CME)

1939 - The Methodist Protestant, Methodist Episcopal, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South unite to form The Methodist Church. Black churches are grouped in a single, segregated Central Jurisdiction.

1956 - Full ordination of women

1964 - The Methodist Church enacts plans to merge the Central Jurisdiction with geographic jurisdictions. Bishops



Bishop Thomas and clergy, Sunday, April 25, 1999

James S. Thomas and Prince Taylor are first to move into previously all-white geographic jurisdictions.

1968 - The United Methodist Church (UMC) formed by the union of the Methodists and Evangelical United Brethren

1971 - Merger of last black conferences into geographic jurisdictions marks end of segregated Central Jurisdiction

During the afternoon workshop Bishop Thomas discussed some of the people involved in the History of the Methodist Church. He gave us information on the first black missionary bishops, black bishops that were elected to serve Black Conferences and the first black bishops transferred to majority white Annual Conferences. Bishop Thomas related to us some of his personal experiences that he had, as one of the first black bishop's to serve in a majority white Annual Conference. He spoke of his work as Director of the Black United Methodist Colleges. It was awesome to sit and listen to him talk about his experiences with Mary McLeod Bethune. Participants in the workshops had a number of questions regarding Blacks in the Methodist Church and about the Methodist Church in general. One of the most profound statements that he made, was during the question and answer period. He stated that, it does not matter what color you are or what group you are working with, the most important concern in any situation, is that you take the time to prepare for the task that has been assigned to you and that you are able to understand human nature.

Bishop Thomas delivered the sermon for the Worship Celebration on Sunday, April 25. In his message, he outlined to us, how to live an abundant life. He reminded us all that life itself is a gift from God and that we should always be able to give something back to somebody.

Bishop Thomas is the author of Methodism's Racial Dilemma: The Story of the Central Jurisdiction. If you did not purchase one of the books, copies are available in the Lucille M. Scott Library here at the church.

It was truly a blessing for us to have been able to hear the history of the Methodist Church from a man who has been involved in a big portion of that history. Dr. Lester, along with Robert and Janice Sampson, are to be commended for all that they did to provide us with this wonderful experience.

Stewardship Note

Feeling God's Pleasure

by Rev. Rich Cook

When I _____, I feel God's pleasure.

Fill in the blank. Too often, we associate giving money with being good stewards, but our Book of Worship mentions "prayers, presence, gifts and service." God has given everyone gifts to be used in His Kingdom on Earth. What gift has God given you to feel His pleasure?

Is it singing? Teaching a young person to read? Working outside or with your hands? Fixing things? Greeting people? Cooking? Driving people to worship or to the doctor? Praying? Writing? Playing or coaching sports? Painting? Storytelling? Organizing? You know what the blank is, it is what stirs you in your soul, it is what words cannot express, it is God's gift to you to give to the rest of us.

Tell us what it is, and let us help you find a place to feel God's pleasure here at Centenary.

HEAVEN BOUND by Michael Lewis



Church Bulletin Bloopers

- The music for today's service was all composed by George Friedrich Handel in celebration of the 300th anniversary of his birth.
- The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the church basement on Friday at 7 p.m. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.
- The concert held in Fellowship Hall was a great success. Special thanks are due to the minister's daughter, who labored the whole evening at the piano, which as usual fell upon her.

—via the Internet from Chirelle Jefferson

Buy Books & CDs on-line from the Centenary Bookstore - <http://www.centenary-umc.org>



Centenary

United Methodist Church

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Centenarian News

Congratulations to **Byron W. Johnson, M.D.** and to his new bride **Jinni Ali**. They were married February 20, 1999, in Chicago, IL. Byron, a long-time Centenarian. He was a former staff member for the University of Tennessee-Memphis where he was employed as a Diagnostic Radiologist. In July, he will complete a fellowship at Loyola University in Chicago in Neuro Radiology. Jinni is a former reporter for Channel 5 News. Byron is the son of Augustus L. Johnson.

Congratulation to **Crystal Rawlings**, daughter of Diane Johnson, who was presented to society as a 1999 Kappa Alpha Psi Debutante on Saturday, April 3, 1999. Crystal is a senior attending Germantown High School. She plans to attend Tennessee State University during the 1999-2000 school year. Her goal is to become a Civil Defense Attorney.

Nurses Week is May 6-12, shared by **Annette Stewart**, who has been honored as a Nurse of the Year by the North Delta District Nurses' Association. She was in charge of the recovery room at Northwest Mississippi Regional Medical Center in Clarksdale, Mississippi.

Congratulations to **Erick** and **Ursula Williams** on the April 15th birth of **Erick Tommie Williams** who weighed in at 5 lbs. 5 ozs.

Memphis Churches Rebuild with Grants from UMC

shared by Earlene Gladney

The General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church responded to the wave of arsons by presenting \$15,000 to The Greater United Christian Center and \$7,000 to Greater Gospel Truth Church, two predominantly African American churches in Memphis. The fires were investigated by Ministries in the Midst of Hate and Violence in consultation with the National Coalition of Burned Church Pastors. The money will be used to help the churches rebuild and continue their ministries.

Baptists from Arkansas Visit This Community of Faith

Rev. Ted Rogers, pastor of First Baptist Church in Trumann, AR brought the Associate Pastor, Jamison May, and the Capital Improvements Committee to tour Centenary and discuss our outreach ministries with youth and adults. Other visitors included Charles Stephan, David Thompson, Marsha Phillips, Matt Moon and Mike Roach. In July 1998, Rev. Rogers participated in Dr. Lester's Models for Ministry class which is part of the curriculum at Memphis Theological Seminary. He was so impressed with the importance of our model of a community of faith that he wanted to share the experience. In addition to Rev. Lester, Rev. Richard Cook, Janice and Robert Sampson, Grace Colehill, Michael Lewis and other Centenary members assisted in the discussion.

Following their visit, Rev. Rogers sent this letter:

Thank you so much for your hospitality and kindness in sharing with us this afternoon. Your folks were very helpful. It was very encouraging for me to

see our folks excited about opportunities in Trumann. One of our men said, "These folks make me feel lazy." Y'all really do have a lot of energy and excitement and I can see that God is doing some wonderful things through your efforts.

While it was beneficial for the committee to tour your facility, I was especially pleased that they got to hear you say what you are doing in and beyond your facility. I pray that we will have the same heart and compassion for ministering in our context....Again thanks for everything. Be sure and extend our appreciation to your folks.

Sincerely,

Tad (Rogers), Pastor, First Baptist Church
in Trumann, Arkansas

Centenarian Photos



PHOTOS BY VINCENT WALKER

Rust college Acapella Choir at Centenary



Youth Easter visit to Lamar Nursing Home