

# The Amen Chronicle



The Newsletter of New Sardis

January 2014

## Sister Stevie Nolan 100 Years Beautiful!



**“Life Focused, Bible Based, And Christ Centered  
With A Mission And Message”**

## NEW SARDIS - 139 YEARS OLD AND GROWING IN CHRIST

By John Glaze

New Sardis Baptist Church has been around a long time. Born a decade after the abolishment of slavery, it was the dream of a community of former slaves in Southeast Shelby County long before the passing of the Thirteenth Amendment. The year was 1874. Reconstruction Amendments ending slavery, providing citizenship, equal protection and the right to vote to former slaves and their posterity, were the law of the land. On December 24<sup>th</sup>, three men who, ten years earlier had been property themselves, paid \$50 to buy property of their own to build a church to worship the God who had delivered them just as he had the Children of Israel. Henry Rhodes, Mont Carlton, and William Pierce are the names that we know. But we also know that they were a part of a larger community on whose shoulders we stand when we worship today at our beloved New Sardis Baptist Church. On the first Sunday of December, we celebrated the 139<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this great church. The generation of Rhodes, Carlton and Pierce is no longer with us, but we are blessed to have a number of members who remember, through their parents and grandparents, the spirit of early New Sardis. Sister Stevie Nolan, born before New Sardis celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> birthday, is one of those members.



There is no question in Sister Nolan's mind as to how old she is, having celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on the ninth of October. She is not sure, however, how long she has been a member of New Sardis. "All my life it seems", she says. "New Sardis was the only church that I knew about down through the years. Well, New Sardis and Polk Chapel. Polk Chapel is where I went to school, although I started on Sardis Hill.

"We lived on the Mississippi line", she continued, "and my Daddy would carry me across the street over to the church on the hill from where Sardis stands now. That's my first memory of going to school. Cousin Hattie Bradley was the teacher. We would open up with singing; 'It's me, it's me, O Lord, Standing in the need of prayer. It's me, it's me O Lord, standing in the need of prayer'. We had devotion. We would sing that song and then she would open her Bible and begin to read: 'The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want'. We had devotion! We would do that, and we would say, 'Our Father which art heaven, Hallowed be thy name'. THEN we would turn around and be ready for class. But first, we had devotion."

She remembers the older students helping the younger students, "...teaching them things like 'Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall. Humpty Dumpty had a great fall'. And, 'Little Boy Blue come blow your horn. The sheep's in the meadow, the cow's in the corn'. We just had one house and in the summer time they would make blocks for the children to sit on".

Asked what she remembers most about the old New Sardis, she closed her eyes and reminisced. "The revivals back then were not like the revivals we have now. We had revival service! The older people would sing and pray, and then they would teach us young ones to say, 'Lord have mercy!' And you would say it until you couldn't say it. Until the Spirit would get a hold of you. Sometimes you would get happy enough until you couldn't stop saying it and the Holy Spirit would come. And you'd say, 'Thank you Jesus!' You'd know you'd been born again when you got to the place where you couldn't stop, because something had a hold of you". She says that's how it happened to her.

"Another thing", she recalled, "the community was together then. They would get together certain nights and have singing and praying and teaching the children to pray. You know, they used to have family prayer. I know I was brought up on prayer." The preacher she remembers best was Rev. A.Y. Crutcher. "He was something else. He knew the Bible and he preached the Bible. And what he had to say, he didn't coat it. He just said it like it was. He was just a plain preacher. He would preach until he tore the old folk up and had them shouting. The Spirit was in the church. I just look back over it all, and when I think about the little church on the hill, I say "Look where the Lord brought me from'. My dad used to talk about the bush harbor, but I didn't know much about it.

"We went to church with our grandparents. My granddaddy had a buggy with a top on it, and a little scoot behind where they would put us in the rhumba seat. The top was over Grandma and Grandpa. They sat us behind them and we went to church, pulled by a pretty red horse. Grandma would be sitting up front, holding the baby.

"In the winter time, the church would get cold and they would build a fire in the wood stove, a big old pot-bellied stove. You would sit by the fire and get warm, and when someone would come in late, you would get up and let someone else get close to the heater.

Sister Nolan still goes to church most Sundays, she and her sisters; Gertrude Ward, Lester West, and Bea Simelton, her baby sister who usually picks her up. She is still active with the Golden Circle and the Mother's Board. Asked if she ever thought she would live to be 100, she says she never thought about it at all. "I just try to live day by day, and I thank God for this day. If He lets me live to see another day, I appreciate it. But I just live for today.

## REMEMBERING HARVEY TUCKER



John Glaze

Two weeks ago, on December 28, New Sardis lost one of its stalwarts. Brother Harvey Tucker had been a faithful member since the age of twelve. Three years ago, he was interviewed by this publication as this church celebrated its 136<sup>th</sup> birthday. We repeat that interview in his honor.

**WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR EARLIEST MEMORIES?** As far back as I can remember this church, we had a building right where the Family Life Center is. That was the original building. You would walk into the sanctuary, there was no entrance, just the double doors. And there was no back door on the back side. You walked out of the side door and you were outside. There was just that one building. We all had Sunday School in that one building. Back then, we only had service one Sunday, the third Sunday, but we always had Sunday School every Sunday. Brother Isaiah Clark was our superintendent. In the winter time we had a pot-bellied stove that sat about middle ways the church with a chimney on the west side.

**WHO WAS PASTOR THEN?** As far back as I can remember, we had Rev. Sinclair. I professed religion under him. I remember a sermon he used to preach all the time about Elijah on the mountain. He would talk about those 12 barrels of water. He would say, "Go get me four more barrels!"

**ABOUT HOW MANY MEMBERS BACK THEN?** At that time, we had, I guess about three or four hundred members. Really, this was about the only Baptist Church in the area. The closest church to us was Prospect on Raines and Ross. On Shelby Drive, there was Polks Chapel and a Methodist Church. Those were the closest churches. Everybody who lived in this area for miles around who were Baptist came to this church.

**WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FONDEST MEMORIES OF THE EARLY CHURCH?** It was a gathering place. It was really a social organization also, because most of the time, that's where you met people and there were a lot of children playing. Right where this building (the sanctuary) is, there were several hickory trees and hickory nuts were a big part of my diet at that time.

**WHAT WOULD YOU DO IN REVIVAL TIME?** We would sing and pray. This went on for a whole week, and on Friday night we would take them into the church. We had what was called the mourners bench back then. When you came off that mourners bench you had better make sure you were right, don't your parents would get a hold of you and put you back on it and say, "No you don't have it". I've seen that done many a time. And those people could sing. Sometimes when it was hot outside, and the windows were raised, when you came over the hill, you could hear them singing and praying.

**NO MICROPHONE?** No microphone. We didn't know anything microphones back then.

**COMPARE OR CONTRAST THE CHURCH BUILDING THAT YOU FIRST REMEMBER AND THE CHURCH BUILDING THAT WE HAVE NOW.** There's no comparison. It served its purpose at the time, when most of the people out here were farmers. We thought it was heaven.

**DID YOU EVER DREAM OR IMAGINE AN EDIFICE LIKE THIS?** No, never. This is truly fantastic. I never thought that in my lifetime I would see something like this here.

**WHAT ARE SOME OF THE POSITIONS YOU HAVE SERVED IN THE CHURCH?** I was a Sunday School Teacher for several years. Then, in 1959, I was elected church clerk. I have been on the trustee board, deacon board, and served as janitor.

**WHAT HIGH SCHOOL DID YOU ATTEND?** Geeter High School.

**WHAT COLLEGE?** Rust College, Tennessee State, and Ole Miss.

**YOU WENT TO OLE MISS?** Yes. I've got 12 hours on a PhD at Ole Miss.

**THAT IS REALLY SOMETHING. WHAT IS THE BIGGER SURPRISE, YOU ATTENDING OLE MISS OR THIS EDIFICE OF A CHURCH?** I think the church.

## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK



We are blessed to have a new beginning for the year 2014. I hope you will join me in developing a closer relationship with God. The first step is to review your experiences in 2013. Make notes of what worked and what did not work. Pay special attention to your failures. Resolve to do better and grow closer to God. The following Personal Rules of Life are for your spiritual growth in 2014.

### INWARD DISCIPLINE

1. Morning prayer and meditation seeking God's will for my personal and professional life.
2. Daily prayer for family, staff, lay leadership, and general intercession.
3. Daily study of the Scriptures that are outside teaching and preaching responsibilities.
4. Read through the New Testament for 2014.
5. Be obedient to the schedule.
6. Embrace a healthy diet.

### OUTWARD DISCIPLINES

1. Seek increased ways to simplify life style in accordance with the Gospel.
2. Set aside specific time of solitude outside designated time for personal prayer.
3. Continue serving through the Two Fish and Five Loaves Ministry.
4. Continue to support mission ministry in Ghana and locally.

### CORPORATE DISCIPLINE

1. Commit to regular worship at New Sardis. Invite family and friends.
2. Meet monthly with Tribal Group.

### CONTINUING EDUCATION GOALS

1. Participate in at least two Bible Classes and two Sunday School sessions per month.
2. Read at least one new book each month related to leadership, spiritual formation, church development, stewardship or vision.



**DETERMINED TO "HALLOW HIM"**

Rev. Darell Harrington

October 31<sup>st</sup> is usually a date set aside to showcase the worst that the world has to offer. Goons, goblins and ghouls had to take the night off as the members and friends of New Sardis Glorified GOD at our annual HALLOW HIM Celebration!

This year's event was unique in that, due to inclement weather conditions, all activities were held indoors. While the cold and dreary precipitation caused somewhat of a damper outdoors, the Family Life and the DG Gray Fellowship Hall were transformed into a festive, family friendly, fun house for the faithful.

Over 600 souls in search of a safe, yet surprising evening, joined us for food, fun and fellowship. DJ Smooth (a.k.a. Brother Leon Gray) kept the bass bumping and the party live and on point. The food was fabulous as Sister Phyllis Pruitt and her team of culinary specialists tantalized our taste buds. From cotton candy to corn dogs, popped corn to candied apples, funnel cakes to TURKEY legs ... it was all um-um good!

Mother Maggie Barnett and the GOLDEN CIRCLE were present and accounted for as they made the participants follow the rules of the cake walk. The youngsters seemed to have a blast – all except one little girl who was taken by surprise by someone elusively lurking around in a JASON MASK (some say that the eyes in the mask resembled Pastor Gray!). Well, I saw the young girl a short while after she was terrified, bouncing in an inflatable and having a great time.

There were talks of possibly canceling or at best, postponing Hallow Him Festive 2013. I, for one, am thankful that we had the FAITH to carry on in spite of conditions beyond our control. It is a testament to the people of Faith, who believe that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us! Let us use this as a living example of what can happen when we concentrate on celebrating Christ.

A big "THANK YOU" and "SHOUT OUT" to all volunteers and helpers who made this night one to remember! We were all determined to HALLOW HIM!

WOMEN'S MONTH – OCTOBER 2013: Theme: *Becoming a Vessel God can Use*

Sister Zandra Boddie



Although the title/theme for the month centered on being a vessel, this writer would like to start with the word “use”. Then I’d like to break that down a little further, and concentrate on the letter “u”, as in the word UNITE or UNITED.

The Chairwoman for the Women’s Ministry is Rev. Brenda Mills. Without even speaking to her, it was quite evident that her goal was to “unite” the women of New Sardis to help direct our paths through Jesus to be used by God.

Rev. Mills deliberately sought out the women of Sardis by making personal contact with most: handing out invitations, asking for commitments of attendance, holding one-on-one conversations, genuinely listening to our concerns and making each of us feel like a part of the sisterhood that we express when we greet one another.

She and her committee orchestrated wonderfully engaging activities that actually spanned over several months (*and I didn’t hear any of the women complain*): a Saturday lunch outing at Chow Time. The First Lady’s Luncheon and the “Spiritual Explosion” kickoff. (The ladies showed our solidarity by debuting our gray polo shirts – the polo shirts that were worn, were purchased from one of the members of New Sardis.

As the Chair of the month, Rev. Mills spoke on the theme: “Becoming a Vessel GOD Can Use”. She warned us not to forget our own sins while looking/judging others. She went on to explain that IF we were planning on getting “close” to GOD: 1 Face your fears and 2. Press through public opinions; remembering that your life’s stumbles and errors can be forgiven by Jesus’ love.

Evangelist Pamela Helton spoke on: “A transforming Faith: Don’t Be Too Hard on Rahab. We’ve All Done or Been Some Things in Our Lives That We Are NOT Too Proud”. She reminded us that Rahab had steadfast faith, and to be blessed not stressed.

Rev. Dr. Rosalyn Nichols brought the word from Genesis 1:1-15, entitled: “MY GOD Specializes – Is There Anything Too Wonderful For GOD”?

And at the eleven a.m. service on Women’s Day, Rev. Linda Willis’ message: “Destiny is Calling”, was inspired from Jeremiah 29:11. She emphasized that we should all know that “our Destiny/Purpose is NOT by chance. It is a product of Divinity, the Will of GOD!” That GOD is NOT limited by “our” limitations”.

Considering the powerful messages that these dynamic women brought to the women of New Sardis, our family, and friends; the ability to gather such awesome talent, the gift of making all she did seem like it took little or no effort, while still making time to “be there” for others, this writer agrees with those who selected Rev. Brenda Mills as the New Sardis Baptist Church Woman of the Year for 2013. Amen and job well done!

## 9 over 90: Memphian blazes a trail in black theater

Dr. Erma Clanton, our beloved director of dram ministry at New Sardis was the subject of a recent article in the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*. The editor of the newspaper, Mr. Louis Graham, has graciously allowed *The Amen Chronicle* to reproduce the article, as printed in *The Commercial Appeal*.

### 9 over 90: Memphian blazes a trail in black theater

By Jon W. Sparks

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Erma Clanton knows a thing or two about performance.

She has, after all, done much to shape theater in Memphis.

Playwright Ruby O'Gray puts it plainly: "Before her, there was no place to see African-American theater in Memphis."

At age 90, Clanton looks back on a life lived with passion about teaching, theater and blazing trails.

"It was so long ago, and so different," she says.

She was one of eight children in her family. "We lived meagerly. My older siblings had gone to Chicago. I had no money or help, but God came down in the 12th grade."

The God she's referring to is the one that helps those who help themselves. Because Clanton was nothing if not prepared. There was an oratorical contest, and she was not invited to participate. But she had memorized William Cullen Bryant's poem "Thanatopsis," and was determined that someone would hear it.

After others had done their presentations, the teacher in charge looked out and saw her and said, "Who are you? What do you want?"

Clanton was a very proper girl, well-mannered, but about as determined as anyone could be. She made her case, got the chance to do her recitation — and won the city and the state competition. At the regionals, she came in second, but the president of Alabama State College in Montgomery approached her and said, "I'm going to give you a presidential scholarship."

After graduating, Clanton went back to Memphis and taught at Orange Mound's Melrose High School, where she would teach English and drama for 24 years.

In some ways, that was just a warmup.

She was in her 40s and had been thinking about getting her master's degree. "My friends said 'You need to do it!' I said, I'm too old, but they said, 'Nooo!'"

So she went to Memphis State University, "and I was scared to death."

In one of her first classes, taught by theater department chairman Keith Kennedy, she listened as he started a discussion about figures of speech. He asked what a metaphor was. She took the question and, having taught English to a generation of students, knocked it out of the park.

"That gave me encouragement," she says. "It was all I needed to let me know that I could do this."

In 1971, she organized and directed "An Evening of Soul" for one performance at the university. At a time when there were few black students enrolled, she beat the bushes for talent and got a score of performers that would tell a story of the black experience in America through two dozen musical numbers.



## 9 over 90: Memphian blazes a trail in black theater

That one performance was packed and a critical smash. Edwin Howard, reviewer for the old Press-Scimitar, came out with a rave review and, as Clanton says, “the rest is history. It went viral.”

More performances were lined up. And one famous Memphian who went to see it was so impressed, he decided he wanted to be part of it. With Isaac Hayes giving it a high profile presence, “An Evening of Soul” became something of an organic, growing Lifetime of Soul.

It’s Clanton’s signature work and ran for years after. It’s had revivals at the 20- and 30-year anniversaries, and was performed last April in St. Louis to celebrate her 90th birthday. Amido’s documentary, “[Orange Mound, Tennessee: America’s Community](#),” was shown at the 2013 Indie Memphis Film Festival where it won the Soul of Southern Film Award. It will screen at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the Malco Paradiso, and at 7 p.m. on Jan. 13 at Malco’s Studio on the Square. Lest you think that Clanton is resting on her laurels as a trailblazer in theater, be assured that she is still busy.

She is director of the drama ministry at New Sardis Baptist Church, where she directs the Christmas and Passion Play productions.

And while she’s happy to look back at her singular life, like any actor or scriptwriter or director, she’s also looking — a little nervously —

toward the next production, whatever it might be.

But if she’s known for that achievement, she’s had an even larger impact by nurturing black theater in Memphis.

O’Gray says, “I had been privy to her work with ‘Evening of Soul’ as most were. She gave us hope that we could be on stage and do as well as anyone else. I began to work in theater in any capacity I could.”

Clanton was always encouraging, O’Gray says, but always offered honest critiques. “I have such a sense of respect for her as a pioneer. Everything happened after Erma, who was the catalyst for African-American artistry in Memphis. She gave you her energy and influence and if you had any talent, she told you you needed to develop it and not sit on it. She helped me know I could walk down my own path if I chose.”

Clanton lit other fires. One that blazed brightly was Larry Riley, who learned from Clanton and went on to star on Broadway, film and in television. Others continue to perform on stages around town, including Hattiloo Theatre, the city’s black repertory theater company that will move into its own freestanding building later this year.

One young man who was struck by what Clanton has done is local filmmaker Emmanuel Amido.

The Sudanese immigrant was fascinated by the Orange Mound community, especially its deeper history and daily life that don’t show up in the typical crime headlines.

He soon heard about this extraordinary Melrose teacher who had used theater to reach her kids, “and I wanted to find out more about her. She’s very passionate about her work and community.”

So he got his camera and turned it on. With three hours of interviews with Clanton, he had to make some tough editing decisions, because she’s got stories and loves to tell them.

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## JACKI GOES HATTILOO

When Jacki Muskin decided she would audition for a part in the Hattiloo Theater production of *Steel Magnolias*, she was sure of two things only. She knew that she had loved the movie, and she knew that she wanted to play the role of what many consider the most complex and challenging character in the play. Ouiser Boudreaux stands out in the popular comedy-drama about the ups and downs in the lives of six Southern women, much as a police officer on an urban street corner whose presence can be as disturbing one moment as it is comforting the next.

Jacki auditioned with high hopes but no great expectations. She did not expect to get the part because “The actresses at Hattiloo are top notch”. When she was named the understudy, she was pleased because “That meant the



director thought I was good enough to play the part.” But things changed, and days before the opening, Jacki was informed that the lead role was hers. It was a bitter sweet moment. “The lead and I had gone through the trenches together”, said Jacki. “I felt bad for her, but I was also ecstatic”.

The play was a hit. The public loved it. The critic loved it, too. Of Jacki’s performance, Jon Sparks of the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* wrote: *There is a refreshing bite ... coming from Ouiser, the snarkiest member of the sisterhood. Making the most of the character is Jacki Muskin, whose timing is terrific*

*with physical moves and in delivering lines .*

While Jacki has tons of talent, it is not balanced by her experience. She did plays in high school, but when she got married, she stopped. She became a wife, mother, and theatrically uninvolved, until one night, at New Sardis, she saw an Erma Clanton production. “It was near Easter, and Dr. Clanton had the men, Julius Bradley was alive then, doing *Lord is it I*, and it was so moving. I was like, ‘Oh, my God! I’ve got to be a part of this church because the drama here is so incredible!’ Under the tutelage of Dr. Clanton, Jacki became a sponge, and attributes much of her recent growth to the Mother of Black Theater in Memphis.

While the play was well attended, the best night was New Sardis Night. Early on, Jacki asked Pastor Gray if the church was interested in getting tickets. That was when she was an understudy. It was decided that 20 tickets would be purchased and the church would be reimbursed. By the time of the designated night, however, Jacki had been moved into a starring role. And on the chosen night, New Sardis filled the house. “What’s so funny about that”, she recalls, “is I did not tell any of the other cast members. And that night, we were backstage and hearing lots of laughter, roaring, cheering and all kinds of noise. Somebody said, ‘Wow! I don’t know who is out there, but that is the liveliest crowd yet. They are crazy out there!’ I told them, ‘eighty percent of the people out there are from New Sardis’. They said, ‘What?’ I said, ‘Yeah, that’s my church’”.

After the performance, the members of New Sardis were saying, “Yeah, that’s our Jacki!”

**GOLDEN CIRCLE MEMBERS COMPLETE 2013 MAJOR PROJECT**

By M. Joyce Spight

Thirty-one patients at Quince Nursing and Rehabilitation Center are the recipients of beautiful throws made by New Sardis Golden Circle members. The throws (lap blankets) are the result of the 2013 year-end project for the Golden Circle Ministry. The Circle contributes to Quince Nursing Center each year, but this is the first time circle members actually chose the materials and made the items to be presented as gifts to the patients.

Mrs. Tracye White, who joined the Circle this year, initiated the idea of making throws as a year-end project because she saw the need at the center.

Tracye spent weeks there for rehabilitation after her many surgeries. Her stay there is where and when she learned to make these colorful and functional throws. The idea of creating and completing this project and **not** using a sewing machine or needles and thread, sounded rather impossible. However, Circle members reluctantly put on their listening ears and internalized the instructions that Tracye gave.

Upon returning with their supplies on the work day assigned, and watching another demonstration, one could feel the excitement from the members. Their energy poured out. Once members were able to see what needed to be done, some blankets were completed that day, and others were able to take them home for finishing without further instructions. According to Ms. Ada Binion, it is still fascinating to know that all one needs to complete this type of blanket is a pair of scissors, your selected material, and the energy to move your hands.

The 31 completed blankets were due to the efforts of all Golden Circle members. Completing this project was a two-fold activity. Tracye stated, "Being a new member, this project afforded me the opportunity to meet and work one-on-one with some of the ladies I did not know. It was inspiring to watch members working with each other and assisting those who needed just a little help in finishing."

The blankets were delivered to the Nursing Facility on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December. A blanket each has been reserved for the two New Sardis members who are residents at Quince, and the facility's Director of Activities will distribute others as needed. Many of the residents already have blankets that were made by Tracye when she was a patient with them. Tracye explained that she made some lasting friends while recuperating at Quince and that she, along with Circle President, Sister Maggie Barnett, and other members, go back and visit at least once each month.

## DR. FREDDY EVERSON - USAF



Each Veteran's Day, New Sardis salutes the veterans of our congregation, along with the rest of the men and women who answered the call of their country. In this edition of The Amen Chronicle, we feature two who have faithfully served.

DR. FREDDY EVERSON - USAF

By John Glaze

Young Freddy Everson went to college with the goal of becoming a physician. When he finished his university requirements, however, he found himself a doctor and an officer. In addition to the medical profession, he had also joined, what Private Will Stockdale called, in the movie, *No Time for Sergeants*, "The Air Force!"

That wasn't the plan (for Will or for Freddy), but that was the happy result for the Columbus, MS native who entered the University of Mississippi with a passion and a purpose. The passion was to follow the trail blazed by James Meredith whose fiery enrollment and historic graduation opened the door for students like Everson. He had Meredith on his mind when, as a high school graduate he resolved, "My family pays taxes. We are citizens of this state. I am going to the University of Mississippi." His purpose was to fulfill his childhood dream of becoming a physician. A degree from the university in Oxford would be his ticket to the medical school in Jackson.

While in undergraduate school, Everson joined the Air Force ROTC and became the first African American cadet commander at the University of Mississippi. That might have made Meredith, an Air Force veteran, happy and sad. Happy, because it happened, but sad, because it took so long. Being in the ROTC allowed Everson to apply for and receive a scholarship from the Air Force to attend medical school.

Medicine and the military made for a happy marriage for the young doctor, whose college sweetheart became his bride. Juanita Pryor Golden was a music major with a voice made for great auditoriums. After receiving a degree in music, she went back to school, got a degree in early childhood education, taught pre-school, reared a family, and traveled with her husband half-way around the world. Her life is a tale waiting to be told.

From Oxford, Dr. Everson went to the Medical Center in Jackson. He was now on active duty. When he finished medical school and residency training, Dr. Everson had accumulated seven years of military service. He was among the last group of students to receive scholarships that allowed them to be on active duty while in school. His assignment from Jackson, MS was Scott AFB in Belleville, IL. There he completed his family medicine residency training.

The next move was to Offutt AFB in Omaha, NB, where Dr. Everson was to establish a family medicine clinic. Upon completion, Air Force physicians, right out of medical school, would come to Offutt and receive their training in the art of family medicine.

From Offutt, Dr. Everson was sent to Iraklion AFB on a Greek island called Crete in the beautiful Mediterranean. With only three physicians assigned to the base, they may have sometimes resembled three blind mice in that they were often seen running around the clock. In addition to military personnel, they also treated tourists, especially in summer months, providing them with emergency care and getting them to other Greek facilities.

Off duty days were times to remember. The family toured Crete, Greece, Egypt, Israel, and Turkey, where the Apostle Paul started a number of churches. It was unforgettable, he says. Their children, Felicia and Stefani, still thank their parents for what they saw and experienced during those excursions.

What do doctors do in the military? According to Dr. Everson, pretty much the same thing they do on the outside. Physicians provide complete care for active duty personnel and their families including their children, and retired personnel. They are also trained to provide service and military care in times of war.

Dr. Everson never saw combat and never killed anyone. That was not his job. He was and is a healer. After 20 years of faithful service, Dr. Everson retired in 1994, a Lieutenant Colonel. New Sardis joins a grateful nation in saying "Thank you".



## REV. ROSIE FLOWERS – U.S. ARMY



John Glaze

Some people join the army to “See The World”. Some join to be “Army Strong”. Many have joined to “Be All That They Can Be”. Rev. Rosie Flowers joined to get away from home.

“I thought I would be a little grease monkey”, she says. “My Dad had spent a lot of time teaching me to work on cars and I would have made a good mechanic”. Her Uncle, however, had different plans, and she spent the next 20 years doing administrative work.

Rosie Flowers did not leave home alone. She and her sister, Ernestine James, entered the army on the Buddy System. They went in as reserves, expecting to be gone four to six weeks, and then a series of monthly meetings. After basic training, they went to Ft. McClellan in Alabama, and then Ft. Jackson in South Carolina. That’s when the Buddy System ended, as Sister Rosie decided she wanted to make the army a career, and Sister Ernestine decided she wanted to go home. One of the things that made her change her mind, says Rev. Flowers, is she found that she liked being in charge.

One of the benefits of being in the military is traveling abroad and seeing different parts of the world. Sgt. Flowers saw duty in Korea, Japan, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines.

It was hard being a woman in the army, says Rev. Flowers, especially the first ten years when discrimination was the strongest. “The men had no respect for the women. They would have you doing meaningless jobs. Nasty jobs. You had to attach yourself to certain people like your commanding officer, your First Sergeant, and your Drill Sergeant. These were the three people you needed to have a family life so to speak. If you were not OK with all three, any one of them could make your life miserable”. Rev. Flowers says her first ten years in the army were miserable. But, as more and more women enlisted, race relations began to improve. Being a woman and black, she faced a double whammy. Interestingly, Rev. Flowers says she caught more grief for being a woman because females were not looked upon as equal by most of the male soldiers, even those who were black.

But, Looking back, she says it was, overall, a good experience. Being in the army, she learned a greater sense of self responsibility. She got to travel extensively and experience different cultures. Most of all, though, it was the people she met and the relationships that were formed. “There are people that I met in service that will be a part of my life for as long as I live”, she says.

And, given the chance, she says, she would do it all over again.

## Annual Health Fair and Blood Drive

On Aug 17, 2013, The New Sardis Health and Wellness Ministry sponsored a Health Fair and Blood Drive. The purpose of the Health Fair was to educate our congregation and community through preventative care. Preventative care consists of dental exams, health screenings, exercise, healthy diet, immunizations, eye exams, and more. There is a great need to educate our community on Health Care.

The National Diabetic Fact sheet released in 2011: Shows over 25.8 million children and adults in the United



States have diabetics. According to the World Health statistics report of 2012, 1 of 3 adults has raised blood pressure that causes half of all deaths from stroke and heart disease and one out of ten has diabetes. Diabetes can lead to cardiovascular disease, blindness and kidney failure, if left untreated. Obesity is another major concern in the community. Over half a billion people (12% of the world population) are considered obese. The highest levels of obesity levels are of Americans 26% and the lowest in the South East Asian region 3%. Obesity can lead to diabetes and heart disease. Hosea 4:6 states: My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

We want to educate our community.

The Health Fair included the following agencies: The Shelby County Fire Department brought a fire truck and taught fire safety to children and adults. Mr. Jay Haley was the contact person. Linda Kelley RNNP with Total Weight Loss and Wellness Center, taught disease associated with obesity and shared ways to lose weight through consultation, products and diet. Farmers Market with Steve Richardson sold healthy fruits and vegetables, Rhonda Wiley with Insurance for Life, Joel Thomas with Health South Rehabilitation center, Graceland Nursing Home with Janet Mitchell did screenings for blood pressure, Emily, with Fresenius Medical Group, Firestone Dental with Tamitha Johnson and associates performed with poor hygiene, and also gave balloons to children, and children were able to take pictures with Mickey Mouse. American Cancer Society brought brochures and contact person was Bert Fayne. Amedysis Home Health was represented and shared how Home Health can aid to patients that need assistance at home. Blanch Thomas (Navigator of Congregational Health Network at Methodist South Hospital) shared the many ways CHN can aid when a patient is admitted to the hospital within the biometric screenings and immunizations. Debra Brown (Director of Life Blood) and associates collected products, shared beauty techniques for women and raffled off a prize. Valeria Bryant, owner of "Touch of Beauty", displayed her beautiful, handmade beaded jewelry. Answorth Robinson (instructor of Zumba Classes) gave free classes for that day and raffled out prizes. The New Sardis Health and Wellness ministry performed glucose and cholesterol screenings. Patients that had abnormal results were counseled by Dr. Freddie Everson MD and by Dr. Vernita Duncan MD.



## Annual Health Fair and Blood Drive

The Health Fair and Blood Drive was well attended, approximately one hundred thirty people in attendance. A Special Thanks to all the Health Agencies, Life Blood, Mary Kay, and Touch of Beauty. We give a Special Thanks also to the “New Sardis Health and Wellness Ministry” with Dr. Vernita Duncan MD-Consultant, Dr. Freddie Everson MD - Assistant Consultant, Jenny V. Currington RNBSN - Pres. Raphael McInnis- Vice Pres. Cynthia Fulson-Sec, Olean Bryant- Assistant Sec, Wanda Morgan RNBSN, Vanessa Griffin RNBSN, Joyce Campbell, Answorth Robinson-Fitness Instructor. We also thank Rev. C.W. Pinkston for his support in the past but were unable to make it due to his mother illness during this time and we express our deepest sympathy in the death of his mother. We thank Pastor LaSimba Gray for his support and vision. Most of all we thank God, to Him be the glory that we be used as his vessels.

Submitted by Jenny V. Currington RNBSN



## ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT MINISTRY

By Rev. Loyal Featherstone

This ministry was started approximately 10 years ago to support and strengthen business ownership in the African American community. While this effort continues today, a special emphasis is being placed on business owners who are members of New Sardis Baptist Church. Additionally, its goal is to encourage and prepare others to become business owners in the future.

Much has been written regarding Economic Empowerment, but its meaning is rooted in education, opportunity and self-help. Education must include financial literacy, development of marketable skills, and basic business acumen. Also essential is a network of other businesses, marketing strategies to adjust product and services to current trends, and public needs and access to credit and finance.

During the early eras post slavery, Blacks in America experienced a large growth in economic development. The establishment of black colleges and universities now commonly called HBCU's, resulted in education and the utilization of opportunity to establish businesses as well as to provide services and products. African American doctors, teachers, and lawyers became role models in our communities. Newspapers printed community news, black leaders emerged, and black labor movements were established. Madam C.J. Walker said, "I am a woman who came from the cotton fields of the South. And from there I was promoted to the washtub. From there I was promoted to the cook kitchen. And from there I promoted myself into the business of manufacturing hair goods and preparations. I have built my own factory on my own ground." Madam Walker was the first American woman to become a self-made millionaire. She employed thousands of black women at premium wages and then left two-thirds of her estate to such institutions as the NAACP and Tuskegee Institute.

During the industrial revolution of the 30's, 40's and 50's, blacks became publishers of newspapers and magazines. They opened businesses such as funeral homes, insurance companies, barber and beauty shops, cleaners, grocery stores, and night clubs. However, during the 60's and 70's with desegregation, "Corporate America" began hiring educated blacks and the number of new black owned businesses and self-employment dwindled. We were taught to go to school, get an education, and a "good job". While there are still "good jobs" available to some, the masses of our community are finding it harder and harder to find decent and continuous employment. Recent trends show a startling decrease in direct hiring employment. Companies such as Federal Express, International Paper, UPS and many others are using in part a system of temporary employment that provide no benefits such as vacation time, sick leave, and insurance. Factory labor has often been referred to as the "new plantation". An organized system of self-help, education and skill training can compensate for this disparity and economic growth within our community. It is necessary that we develop businesses and business practices that will continue to provide opportunities for our people not just for today, but for ages to come.

**ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT MINISTRY**

There is a great need and much work to be done within the current Economic Empowerment Ministry. We must help equip current business owners with tools to become more productive. Our goal is to assist with marketing strategies to enhance competitiveness in order to gain a larger market share. Those contemplating starting a new business can be helped with early business considerations, such as, is the product or service needed or desired? What type of location will provide a steady supply of potential customers? And what type of funds must be available to invest in order to become viable? In other words, a business plan is needed for every business. Fair and competitive pricing of products and services, skill certification, licenses, and insurance, even for self-employed one man operations, are necessary ingredients to a viable business.

During late 2013, Pastor Gray charged our ministry to reorganize. Our first undertaking was to initiate "Sunday Dinner at Sardis". Mitchell Catering was highlighted and served affordable dinners on two occasions. Other caterers are encouraged to select a Sunday and participate by having dinner available to our members. In 2014, during an annual EXPO, we plan to expand the type of businesses highlighted. Our goal is to introduce the church and community to each business. We will promote our businesses and have them reciprocate by providing good products or services, good customer service, and fair prices. If we are to survive in the business world and provide fair wages and benefits to our community, we must support each other. To this end, we will compile a New Sardis Business Directory.

If you are a business owner or plan to become one; or, if you are self-employed, you are encouraged to attend our monthly meetings the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in each month at 3:00 p.m. Our next meeting is Saturday, January 18, 2014. We also asking that those who are interested in contributing to this ministry or serving as mentors to also attend.

Rev. Loyal Featherstone – President

J.B Payne – Vice President

## FASHION WITH A PURPOSE



What other way to kick off Women's Month at New Sardis than to have a fashion show! The annual Breast Cancer Awareness Fashion Show was held October 5, 2013, to recognize survivors of this disease and to memorialize those who have passed on as a result. Founded by Dianne Walls in 2001, this was the 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the celebration, and the 10 year anniversary of Dianne's passing.

Dianne was always a fashionable woman, and when she was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2000, she wanted a way to minister to others who were experiencing the same battle. After Dianne's passing, Pastor Gray wanted the shows to continue, and our own Linda Burrow stepped up to the plate and took on this huge responsibility. Under Linda's tutelage, the show has grown into a wonderful celebration filled with fashion, a silent auction, and fun!

With over 300 people in attendance, we were able to honor over 20 survivors and pay homage through libations to countless others who have succumbed. We have been blessed to have sponsors like Olive Garden, Kroger, SuperLo, and many private donations to help offset some of the expenses associated with coordinating an event of this size. As a result, we have donated \$7,802 to the Komen Foundation!

Mark your calendar now for the 2014 extravaganza! Whether you enjoy modeling (all ages and experience levels are welcome), the silent auction, or just plain fellowship. This event is one you simply must attend!



## MISSION TO AFRICA

By Rev. Kobena Charm

We had come to the ends of the world, both literally and biblically. We had come to Mampong, a non-descript farm village in the jungle of the western region of Ghana, bearing the Good News of the Kingdom. We came to a village that had never had a Gospel witness, and before we left, a church was planted to the glory of God. From November 8 through 17, the Cross Ministries, in partnership with Go World Missions, and with the support of New Sardis and Eudora Baptist Churches (in Memphis and Eudora, MS respectively), embarked upon a mission to endeavor to strengthen and plant churches in the Western and Central regions of Ghana.

I had left a week earlier to lay the groundwork for the team from the USA, led by Rev. Gordon Montgomery, founder and president of Go World Missions. When they arrived in Accra, we left the same day for Abuesi, where the Cross Ministries had planted the first church in 2001. That evening we had worship service with the saints at the Abuesi Church, strengthening and challenging them to become a mission church to support the other churches planted by the ministry. The next day, we joined them for morning service in the newly constructed church building (thanks to the generosity of Eudora Baptist Church and others). It was a joy to behold men and women in exuberant worship to the living God. And it was heartwarming to see these poor folk (by western standards) come forth giving their tithes and offerings to the Lord. Praise the Lord.

From Abuesi, we drove from Shama to Botodwina (notoriously called Abbot by the locals because missionaries, who had come the village more than 50 years ago to reach the village and others beyond, aborted the mission because of difficulties). Again at Abbot, we had worship and later a fellowship lunch over the fruits and coconut that the church members gave to the team (Gordon Montgomery, Pastor Steve Albonetti, his two daughters; Glory and Lacy; and brothers Joe Gillespie, Phillip Lewallen, Robert Quinley and Bill Moyer).

After fellowshipping with the Abbot Church, we left for Mampong – the highlight of mission endeavor. For the next 30 minutes, as our bus wound its way through the jungle, I prayed not only for the Lord's favor for open door ministry and the salvation of souls; but also for the protection of the team members. We were entering an uncharted territory, an area notorious for demonic activity and occasional human sacrifice.

Something noteworthy is that since Abbot was the last point in the jungle of the Shama District where the foreign missionaries had aborted the gospel mission, villages beyond Abbot had not been reached. In fact, the next village after Abbot, Essumankrom, is a Muslim enclave. Although a year earlier we had our sights set on Essumankrom, the Holy Spirit prompted me to bypass it and go on to Mampong.

In Mampong, we went straight to the chief's palace to announce our presence and to express our appreciation for the hospitality offered the advance team sent from the Abbot church earlier. The chief and his elders welcomed us. The chief made a pledge that if even five souls in the village gave their hearts to Christ, he would donate land for a church to be built. Later, After Pastor Steve Albonetti had shared the gospel, the chief and his elders, all five of them, gave their lives to Christ. Praise the Lord! It was a beautiful and heavenly sight to behold when these men were presented with Bibles. Later, after one-on-one witnessing, we showed the Jesus movie, narrated in a Local Ghanaian language – Twi. What joy, what praise, what glory to know a place at the ends of the world – Mampong – had its first Gospel witness and a church was planted in the darkest of places!



## MISSION TO AFRICA

The next day we left for Axim – another stronghold, where the inhabitants avowedly don't welcome strangers, don't appreciate churches, and don't like pastors. Axim, an oil town in the Western Region of Ghana, is where the Cross Ministries planted its third church. Pastor Thomas Kwofie, despite open opposition that included witchcraft activity against him personally, and the stabbing of his 12 year old daughter in the neck, managed to host a two-day gospel crusade. Axim holds a lot of promise as a springboard to other French-speaking West African countries (Cote D'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Togo, and Benin). Because of the civil war in Cote D'Ivoire, there are a lot of Ivorians in Axim; Pastor Thomas – who speaks French – settled in Axim after he returned from Cote D'Ivoire. Pray for Axim to become a bastion of Gospel advance to Cote D'Ivoire and beyond.

From there we left for Cape Coast, the intellectual capital of Ghana and the first administrative capital of then Gold Coast (Ghana's colonial name). Interestingly, Cape Coast has the notorious moniker as the town with 77 gods, and much like Athens in the Apostle Paul's day, it is notable for its intellectual prowess (the first public education for indigenous Africans of the then Gold Coast was started in Cape Coast in the 1800's and the top high schools in Ghana are located in the town). It is reported that there is a god in every nook and cranny of the town.

At Cape Coast, we went to the Cape Coast Polytechnic (a tertiary institution of higher technical education) and had fellowship with Apostolic Students Christian Fellowship. Pastor Steve Albonetti clearly elucidated the simplicity and the imperatives of the Gospel to the students, some of whom committed their lives to Christ for the first time, and many of whom rededicated them to the work of the ministry.

The next day, we split the team into two groups. One group went to the Cape Coast ocean front, where fishermen and fishmongers congregate on a daily basis to ply their trade. The other group went to Golden Treasures Preparatory, a private pre-k to junior high school, whose proprietor, who doubles as a pastor, assembled the 700 students to a morning of worship and gospel ministry. It was indeed a blessing to witness children from two years to mid-teens engage in more than thirty minutes of intercession, worship and praise. Brother Gordon inculcated in them the importance of sharing the gospel with their family and friends. The other members of the team; Lacy, Robert and Phillip, shared testimonies of their conversation.

## MISSION TO AFRICA

The other team that went to the Cape Coast has a powerful story to tell also. After the initial reluctance to open up, as the team – made up of Pastor Steve, Joe, Bill and Glory – began to share the gospel tracts; men and women soften up and started to give their heart to Christ. So enthusiastic was the response that three people were saved and baptized, and wanted to start a church then and there.

In the evening, we went to the farming village of Eduma, where we planted a church a year ago. When we arrived, the villagers were just returning from the farms and preparing their evening meal. Announcements were made for the church to assemble for the evening service. Soon, the saints started arriving in the small room used as a chapel. When we finally began, more than 20 men and women, and a number of youth had assembled. While the children were being ministered to outside the building, I led the adults in the basics of using the Bible – locating the books of the Bible, finding chapters and verses. After that I taught them from various books of the Bible to strengthen their faith and assured them of the love of God and the veracity of their salvation. It was a joy to behold the gathered saints read from the local Fante Bible – some (thanks to people who had donated funds to purchase the Bibles) for the first time. The chief of the village and his father actually sat in the Bible Study. What joy, what celebration that a year ago there was no church in Eduma, but today there is.

Later in the evening, we culminated our mission endeavor with a gospel crusade at a suburb on Cape Coast. With hundreds gathered at a busy intersection, where traders plied their wares; and food sellers sold the evening meal; and young men and women hung around in the typical city fashion; we showed The Passion of Christ movie and later shared the Gospel. Many gave their hearts to Christ. The next morning we left for Accra, where Brother Gordon and the Go World Missions Team enplaned and left for the USA. Thanks be to God for His unsearchable riches, and thanks to the churches and individuals who gave to make this mission possible. PRAISE THE LORD!

