

The Jabez Report

Greater Saint John Cathedral

11425 Old Marlboro Pike • Upper Marlboro, MD 20772
301.574.5100 • 301.574.5160 (fax) • www.saintjohn.net

Bishop Kevin V. Gresham Sr.
Senior Pastor/Teacher

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Magazine Ministry

Executive Editor

Bishop Kevin V. Gresham Sr.

Editor

Sylvia Tyson

Editorial Board

Bishop Kevin V. Gresham Sr.

Sylvia Tyson

Janice Shields

Pastor-in-Training Christina Williams

Photographs

Photography Ministry

Design/Layout/WEB Designers

Deaconess Wynnice Pointer-Napper

Minister Melissa Monroe

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Articles for inclusion in the **Summer Edition 2023** issue are due by, **May 28, 2023**. If you have an article to contribute; business advertisement; testimony or have reached a milestone in your life; i.e., retirement; birth of a child; graduations or other accomplishments, please forward this information to: thejabez_report@saintjohn.net.



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A Message from our Bishop

Bishop Kevin V. Gresham Sr.

What Are You Doing With The Opportunity?

There are constant questions that are seemingly appearing and reappearing in my life. Allow me to see if we share the same concerns:

1. Why is this happening to me?
2. Why is this happening to me now?

Have you ever pondered and wondered about these same questions?

I have recently been challenging myself to try to make sense of things that apparently make no sense. I have been trying to connect things that deceptively are unconnected.

If this year's theme is "My Spirit Will Make the Difference," then I am required to see things differently and respond differently. Serendipitously, in my devotions I found these nuggets and gems of Scripture.

Lamentations 3:22–23 (NKJV)

²²Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. ²³They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.

Colossians 3:12 (NKJV)

Character of the New Man

¹²Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering.

The ***Lamentations*** scripture tells us what The Lord has done for us, the ***Colossians*** scripture tells us what we need to do for the Lord. In hopes of not allowing this message to become elongated, let me get right to the point. Do we see our life's challenges as random things disconnected or unjoined, or do we see them as opportunities disguised as challenges?

If I am to be honest, I believe I have missed my opportunities because I did not see the opportunity, I only saw the challenge. Therefore, I did not get the profound benefit of the opportunity.

Paul encourages us in ***Colossians*** to put on mercy as we would put on a coat, a shirt or shoes. Therefore, it is not something that comes with us and stays with us because we are saved. It is something that we must put on daily. Then Paul goes one step further, he states "tender mercies", which denotes a style or a type of mercy that we must put on.

Allow me to close by saying put it on, because Jesus put it on when He encountered you. He saw the opportunity and not just the challenge.

The Blessings of Spring

*By Deborah Ann Belk
Submitted by Sister Sylvia Tyson*

There are many blessings,
That each new Spring brings
You can see it bloom about
And hear the song it sings.

With winter's bleakness over,
And brighter days ahead
Comes promises of new life
Springtime loves to spread.

As God unfolds the flowers,
And their buds begin to show
He gives to us the assurance
grace in our hearts will grow.

He sends us the robin's song,
With the promise to provide
A shelter under His mighty wings
Where in His love we can abide.

He melts the snowy covers,
And sends the refreshing rain
Sprinkling us with His mercies
To heal winter's ache and pain.

God's given to all His Son,
To shed upon us a new light
And the real blessing of Spring
Is keeping Jesus in our sight.

Song of Solomon 2:11-12

For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.

I am ADOPTED

By Deacon Anthony Simmons, Sr.

Galatians 4:4-7 – ⁴But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. ⁶And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” ⁷Therefore, you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

One of the funniest stories **Bishop Gresham** has ever told was the trick his cousins played on him by telling him he was not really a part of the family because he was adopted. In retrospect, you would have to admit that was funny. Somehow his cousins got others to play along with the joke. I’m laughing just thinking about it.

Now, I recognize the trauma this joke caused a young **Bishop Gresham**. The joke was so effective that it took a family intervention to convince him that he indeed was a full-fledged child of the family.

To be clear, there are children all over the world in orphanages waiting to be adopted. Unfortunately, some never get adopted and just age out of the system. One can only imagine the trauma those children face for the rest of their lives. They have never felt the love of a family.

James 1:27 says *Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.*

Due to the abuse in the adoption system, adoption comes with somewhat of a negative connotation. Children have to feel that they have to earn the right to be adopted by a prospective family. They are often destitute. I imagine they feel unsafe and unknown. They must wonder if anyone understands. There is someone who understands and His name is Jesus. After all, Joseph was not His paternal father.

When it comes to God, our Father and His Blessed Son Jesus, we can look at adoption from another point of view.

Adoption is the act of leaving one’s natural family and entering into the privileges and responsibilities of another. Once adopted, the adoptee is entitled to all the rights and benefits of a son/daughter. In Roman culture, the adoption was irrevocable.

Legal Adoption is believed not to be commonly practiced by the Israelites in the Old Testament. In fact, your standing in life was based on the birth mother. This is clearly demonstrated in the birth of Ishmael to his mother Hagar and Isaac to his mother Sarah. Both boys were fathered by Abraham (and Ishmael is the first-born) but Isaac is heir. That’s another conversation.

The New Testament culture was different. Adoption was common in both Greek and Roman society. There were laws and ceremonies for adoption in both Greek and Roman cultures.

Galatians 4:4-5 – ⁴But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. We have external

continue on page 4

security from sin. We have been redeemed, bought with a price. The Father loved us so much He sent His Son to pay the price for our sins. Because of the wondrous work of Christ, we have a Father; Father who knows and loves us. He will protect and care for us.

Galatians 4:6 – says *And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”* We don’t have to call Him master rather we can call Him “Abba”. He is such a Good Father because God loves us so. He sent His Son to pay our ransom, He sent His Spirit to help us call to Him. We have an intimacy with Him. He is with us, He is in us. We can go to Him boldly and He will receive us as His own. It is Jesus who gives us the invitation in the Lord’s Prayer to call His Father, “Our Father”. Since He is our Father, we can have the confidence to not whisper but cry out with confidence, knowing He hears and will answer us when we are in trouble.

Finally, we are not destitute but we have an inheritance. **Galatians 4:7** states *“So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.* God is willing to share with His adopted children. All that He has is ours. Scripture tells us, that the earth is the Lord’s. Most importantly, we have Him and He is Jireh (more than enough).

Lastly, my mind wanders as I imagine Brother Williams hearing his son Mehki calling him when he is in trouble. Just as our Father, Brother Williams would move heaven and earth to respond to his son’s cry. I see Mehki becoming the son of his Father with all the rights, responsibilities and privileges of a son. In addition, I see Mekhi in the future producing more sons of his Father.

YES, I’M ADOPTED!

Amen

A Reflection of Gratitude

By Deaconess Sharon Wilder

“Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.” – Malcolm X

As we approach the 60th Church Anniversary of the Greater Saint John Cathedral (GSJC), I’d like to share thoughts and give thanks for one of the many great ministries at our Church, the Scholarship Ministry.

On April 8, 1995, **Bishop Gresham** graciously gave his blessings to start the Ministry with the mission to provide financial assistance, guidance and spiritual support to Disciples enrolled in an institution of higher learning. By God’s grace, the **Scholarship Ministry** has served over 125 students recurrently with \$50 per month during their entire enrollment in college or a training program. This has amounted to well over \$250,000 in stipends and scholarships to GSJC students which most of whom graduated from over 42 institutions! The services offered are SAT and financial aid workshops, touring over 30 campuses and sponsoring numerous fundraising events.

Other roles of the **Scholarship Ministry** include the Summer Youth Employment Partnership Program where local businesses agree to hire our students and only pay ½ of the salary while GSJC pays the other half! We have also given back by consistently supporting the **Helping Hands Ministry, SHARE Program and School Uniform Drive**. These tasks could not have been accomplished without the “faithful few Disciples” of the Scholarship Ministry. I thank our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for their energy and teamwork in utilizing their knowledge, skills, experience and just plain old good work ethics to carry out the mission.

I sincerely pray the Lord’s blessings over the team and the new chairperson Sister Celeste Vision for continued dedication in assisting our Greater Scholars. The bond we’ve formed is forever engrained in my heart! For each student that the **Scholarship Ministry** served through the years, our prayers have been that something was said or done to make a positive impact on your life and future.

I would be remiss not to acknowledge our Shepherd, **Bishop Kevin V. Gresham, Sr.** who wholeheartedly supported the vision from the very beginning. You granted us autonomy to flourish to the greatest potential that we’ve achieved! Thank you, **Bishop Gresham!** To the Greater family and friends, you have been more than generous with your patronage of the various fundraising events. You demonstrated to the generations behind us on what it is to be loving, giving and Christ-like to make a difference in the students’ lives and achievements. I believe this is what our ancestors prayed for and you are appreciated more than you know!

As I reflect on gratitude, I use a paraphrase of my late sister, Valerie Joyner, “The mind is business, but the heart is personal; the mind cannot protect the heart.” The **Scholarship Ministry** has been personal and from my heart. It’s also business because reaching out to others is always on my mind.

To God be the Glory for the great things He has done!



I Got This, But Do I Have To?

By Sister Janice Shields

Last fall, I listened in on a panel discussion by a group of young women professionals discussing mental health. While all of the young women were dynamic and impactful, months later, I can't shake one of the comments from one of the panelists. The comment has resonated with my spirit!

The discussion focused on self-care and how as women, we often put everybody and everything in front of our wants and needs either on purpose or by accident or circumstance.

This was not a revelation. I know this! Every woman in the world knows this! However, for me, the aha moment was what the young panelist titled her mental health discussion, "Watering Me!" (*bing, bing, the bells went off in my head*). For the last five-six months, I have been "Watering Me" by intentionally being more attentive to me, the girl in the mirror!

As we approach the spring season, where God's garden comes to life, think about "Watering You!" Don't allow yourself to burn out.....I'm not, not anymore!

I Got It!

I have said this a million times in response to someone asking if I needed help. My response is, no, I go it! But could I have used the help?

I recently shared with my children, that as men and women, we often think that we have to do it all. Even when this thing called "life" gets really hectic and sometimes overwhelming in good and not-so-good ways.

The good news is that we don't have to do it all by ourselves. God has placed people in our lives (*even if it is just for a reason and not a season*) who care enough about us as a person who they would jump at an opportunity to talk, laugh, cry, listen or do whatever with us.

The question is, are we open, honest, humble, confident and secure in ourselves to "ASK"? God didn't desire us to be alone in this journey.

So, yes, you got it.....but do you have to?

Repairing Damaged Walls

By Minister Samaria Jackson

Nehemiah 2:17-18 – Then I said to them, “You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach. And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king’s words that he had spoken to me. So they said, “Let us rise up and build.” Then they set their hands to this good work.

Nehemiah was tasked with rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. The walls of Jerusalem gave the City its identity. They set it apart and established the boundaries of the nation. In addition, the walls protected the nation, providing a sense of security and a form of belonging. They clearly established and identified where home was.

In the book of Nehemiah, we find the children of Israel post Babylonian captivity—a captivity caused by the people’s disobedience to God. Let’s be clear, the condition Jerusalem finds itself in is a direct result of their own actions. They put themselves in a position where they could be taken into captivity and abused by their enemies. They were complicit in their own brokenness. So it is with the Church today. Look at what the world thinks of Christianity, its church and leaders. After praying to God and receiving his instructions from God, Nehemiah went to Jerusalem to assess the damage.

Now reflect on when, where, how and why we have and continue to be complicit in our own brokenness. What have we presented to the world? Have we used our power and our might to oppress and subjugate those who are different from ourselves but nonetheless whom God loves? Have we turned a collective blind eye to systematic victimization of the innocent? What must we do to rebuild and reestablish the Christian Church? How can we repair our walls; reestablish our identity; set ourselves apart from the World and yet still be useful to God in serving, loving and redeeming the lost?

First we must each go inward and assess your walls. Take an inventory of the damage to your personal spiritual walls. Be honest about what role you played in their damage. What thoughts, habits and mindsets do you labor under that have damaged and continue to damage your spiritual walls? What will it take to begin the process of repair? The first thing Nehemiah did was to acknowledge that both his father’s house and he had sinned against God. Are you ready to turn to God and confess your sins? Those things that you knew you ought not have said, done or allowed. Let’s also acknowledge those things that we did not say or do but should have. Acknowledge the times we allowed jealousy, resentment, envy and spite to put us into a position to block the moves of God. Assess your spiritual walls.

Once we have made an honest assessment of the damage, one done in spirit and in truth—the work of restoration can begin. We can begin to return to God and keep His commandments. That is when, as He has promised, He will gather the captives – those who have been cast out – and bring them back to the place which He has chosen as a dwelling for His Name.

That is when the work of Repairing Damaged Walls will begin. That is when the Church will no longer be a reproach – a source of shame – before the World. That is when the hand of God will be upon us. Let us Rise up and build. Set our hands to this Good Work. The God of Heaven Himself will prosper us.

Amen



Did You Keep Your Promise?

By Minister Deborah Williams

1 Samuel 1:8-28 NKJV

The word promise kept ringing in my ear when I read this passage of scripture. When you really want something so much from God, sometimes it causes us to make a promise.

In this passage of scripture, Elkanah had two wives – Hannah and Peninnah. Peninnah had children but Hannah was barren. This was troubling for Hannah. When they went to the city for yearly worship and sacrifice to the Lord of hosts in Shiloh, Elkanah would give portions to Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. However, to Hannah he would give a double portion because the Lord had closed her womb.

Year after year, Hannah was being provoked by Peninnah and it made her weep and not eat. Elkanah asked why do you weep, not eat and your heart grieved? Am I not better to you than ten sons? Hannah arose after eating and drinking in Shiloh and her soul felt bitter. She prayed to Lord and wept in anguish. Then she made a vow and said, “O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but give me a male child, then I will give him to You all the days of his life and no razor shall come upon his head.” Now that is the promise.

Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the Tabernacle of the Lord. Eli thought she was drunk and asked how long will you be drunk? Put your wine away from you. Hannah responded No my lord; I am a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have poured out my soul before the Lord. Eli responded go in peace and the God of Israel will grant your petition which you have asked of Him.

Hannah and Elkanah arose early in the morning and worshipped before the Lord and went to their house in Ramah. It is something about when you worship! It happened! Hannah conceived and bore a son. She kept her promise to the Lord. After weaning the child for approximately 3-1/2 years, she took him to the house of the Lord as promised.

When you asked the Lord to bless you with a new job making more money so you can give more to the church, did you keep you promise? When God provided you the vehicle you asked for so you can get to church on time did you keep your promise? When God delivered you from drugs or alcohol and you said you would not go back, did you keep your promise? When God took cigarettes away from you and you said I will never smoke again, did you keep your promise?

We tend to say the devil is on our track. We need to ask ourselves, “Did you keep the promise instead of blaming the devil?”

There is a song that people would sing at my former church, and I thought it was so nice “I made a vow to the Lord, I promised Him I’d go every step of the way, I made a vow to the Lord.” When the going got rough and tough, did I keep my promise?

Hannah was barren but she did not stop praying and did not stop believing. It is hard not to keep your promise when God has worked a miracle in your life. Hannah kept her promise.

Did You Keep Your Promise?

Amen.



IT COULD HAVE BEEN ME

By Minister Karla Austin

Luke 17:11-13: ¹Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. ²Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. ³And they lifted up their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”

John 9:1-3: ¹Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. ²And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.

On June 22, 1990 Walter Hawkins and the Love Alive Choir released a song name “**Thank You**”. How do those particular lyrics relate to who we are, what we have or what we may have been going through? Let’s break it down.

“It could have been me” is a phrase that we often hear in times of tragedy, reflection and empathy. It’s a reminder that the misfortunes that happen to others could easily happen to us. It’s a call for us to be grateful for the blessings that we have and to empathize with those who are suffering.

For the past 20 plus years, there have been children killed in school massacres, starting with Columbine. The last 3 years COVID has killed millions of people and yet there is no cure.

In the last 2 years, the economy has been on a roller coaster ride. There have been labor shortages and supply chain chaos; where it’s taking almost a year for people to get something they ordered. Instead of right now, it may be a few months to a year.

The pay isn’t going up for the workers because of inflation and it seems the economy is out of control. However, for

me all I can say is Thank You Lord for all you’ve done for me because it could have been me.

People are losing their homes every day due to foreclosure and/or eviction, even churches are being foreclosed. There are more people living on the streets now than there have ever been. Due to mental health, some would rather stay homeless because they are afraid to go back inside because in their minds they are saying that it’s just going to happen again.

People are on drugs. I’m a living witness every day because this is my job. Addicts tell me that they are trying to get the monkey off of their back but they can’t.

There are car jackers who walk up to you to steal and kill for no reason. We feel we aren’t safe.

Through all of this, God has been our protection because we are still here. I have 3 questions: do we thank God only when we see evidence of things going right; do we thank him in the midst or do we thank Him for His presence?

Do we look down on, judge or turn our nose up at people who are not as fortunate as we? We must remain mindful not to judge others who fall short of God’s expectations because we could easily be in their shoes. It is our duty to pray for them and provide support. Remember, we all are part of the same family regardless of race, creed, color or religion. Since we are family, we must show love, kindness and empathy towards each other.

I say all the time it could have been me, I could have been addicted because with all the stuff that has happened in my life I could have been one step away from that life. On my grandfather’s side of my family most of them died, especially the women. of cancer before the age of 50. I

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turned 55 on March 11th and woke up crying as I did at 50. I said to myself, “it could have been me Lord, but I thank you because my mother died at 49.”

I could have not had a job once COVID hit, but I was required to go in to work every day thus I was exposed to COVID. When I did catch it last November, I was in pain for one day. Otherwise, I had no cough, fever or pneumonia. A lot of people didn’t survive especially those who had preexisting conditions as I. God has been my protection every step of the way because it could have been me.

Those of you who really know me, and don’t know my heart, think I’m mean and stand offish, but once you know my heart you see me in a different light. Why does it have to come to that? It’s the same thing as in **John 9:2b** when the people were asking who sinned - this man or his parents? The people were judging when sometimes life just happens. It’s not our fault and it’s not for people to judge. If I can be honest, whereas people thought I was being judgmental in the past, I wasn’t. I just didn’t know how to relay what I was saying.

For my birthday, the nurses in my office wore a purple shirt with my picture on it with WWKD (*What Would*

Karla Do?). All I could do was cry. My co-workers saw past what others thought of me. They recognized that I am striving to be more like Jesus and the shirt is proof positive that they see the God in me. On that same day, we went in for evaluations and my supervisor wanted to know why they had the shirts on. Their response was “I’m striving to help people and be patient just like Karla.” I thought “ok, what would Karla do in this instance?” All I could say was “Thank you, Lord, for all you’ve done for me.” It could have been me treating the patients mean like they treated me, but now I’m in a position to lead.

Lastly, if you are stand offish, look down on people or are downright nasty or a bully, realize that God made things that conspire against us. Take a back seat because where at one time you could not have handled it, with God you can. So, in the middle of all the nonsense that surrounds you, keep your eyes on the Prize which is God.

Why you may ask? Greater is He that is within me than he who is in this world. Even though the world comes at us, we are still standing. Be grateful for the blessings that we have and show compassion towards those who are struggling. Let’s pray for God’s guidance and protection over the life He has given us, those around us and trust Him to use all things to work together for His good.



THE SENIOR CONNECTION

By Facilitators Min. Minnie P. Rascoe and Sister Theresa Jennings

The Senior Connection is an idea of Bishop Gresham. During the pandemic, he wanted to give seniors an opportunity to communicate with other seniors without having to leave home. We meet by phone every Thursday from 12:00pm - 1:00pm. During this time, we have praise time, scripture, opening prayer, song, devotion, words of encouragement, testimonies and closing prayer. Our seniors range from ages 55-92. Each senior is given the opportunity to participate in the program.

We have seniors calling in from New York, Georgia, Virginia, Washington DC, Greensboro, NC, Windsor, NC, Roseville, NC and South Carolina. Sister Theresa Jennings, one of the facilitators for the Senior Connection, connected with a 90 year old senior, who resides in a health facility, and gave her the opportunity to participate with us. Her name is Mrs. Jones and she is appreciative.

The Senior Connection would like to thank each and every person who has given of their time and talent to bless our group.

The call-in number is: 1(712) 432-0190 • Access code:274522#



A Prayer for the Senior Connection

By Sister Isa Lee Nedd

Scripture Verses 2 Chronicles 7:14, Matthew 6:9-13 and Ephesians 3:20-21

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on Earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil...”

Father, we come to you today in the name of your Son Jesus in gratefulness for your many blessings on our lives, the lives of our families and our Country. We come to you today with a special prayer request.

Recognizing that you are aware of the gun violence in America, we thank you for your mercy in protecting us from stray bullets. We ask that you would change hearts and instill a desire for young and old men and women to be law abiding citizens.

Allow hearts to be touched by the glorious Gospel so that change will come. Allow us to be light in a darkened world so that you will be glorified in heaven, resulting in souls coming to a saving knowledge of you and your will for their lives.

Believing “Now unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.

We submit this prayer in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

LET US PRAY!

*By Dorothy Fairweather
The Senior Connection*

Friends and neighbors, the Senior Connection has been praying for Seniors and their families locally, nationally and internationally. Please join us as we come on one accord, in the love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to pray. If there is a time we need to pray, it is now. The happenings of the day have driven us to pray at a continuum. **1 Thessalonians 5:17-18** says ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Praying in Agreement – **Matthew 18:19-20** says ¹⁹Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.

Praying in Accord – We read in the Acts of the Apostles that the first church prayed in accord. **Acts 2:42** And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. We pray because of the love of our Father who sent forth His only begotten son to die for our sins.

John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Romans 8:5 – But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Prayer of Salvation – If your question today is what shall I or we do to be saved? The answer is - **Acts 16:31** Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.

Father as Seniors we have come a long way with you through all types of conditions and have experienced victories in the name of Jesus Christ. We pray that sin, sickness and disease be totally eradicated from us, our families, friends and neighbors.

We cry out to you for the removal of humanitarian bondages in all segments of society and that the remedy in your words will provide healing. **Exodus 2:25** where you looked upon the children of Israel and had respect unto them when they cried unto you.

Father, we come under the covering of the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord recognizing that He gave his life for our sins and defeated enemy territory. **Colossians 1:14** – In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. Jesus defeated the powers of darkness on our behalf. **Colossians 2:15** – Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Our petitions today claim Christ's victory over the kingdom of darkness and all kinds of negative manifestations for God's glory. We believe that our petitionary prayers can change negative situations to positive in the name of Jesus. We hallow God's name and believe that His Kingdom is more powerful than all other kingdoms in the name of Jesus.

Amen!

Prayer for Bishop Gresham and First Family

By Elder Minnie P. Rascoe, Facilitator

The Senior Connection

Our Father in Heaven, Hallowed be Your name, Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Give us what we need, Heavenly Father, to complete today’s assignment. We thank You in advance. You are our Shepherd; therefore, we should not want for anything, but just come to You and let our petitions be known. You are our Shepherd, we shall not want because You make us lie down in green pastures, You lead us beside still waters, You restore our soul, You lead us in the path of righteousness for Your name sake, You anoint our head with oil, our cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our life and we will dwell in Your house forever.

Heavenly Father, we come to You today lifting up the name of **Bishop Kevin Gresham Sr.** and his family. We thank You for planting them at Saint John Free Will Baptist Church. We thank You for using Bishop to take the church from Benning Road, to Brightseat Road then to Upper Marlboro (1) and (2), while blessing other churches along the way.

We thank You for his bold spirit, his infectious enthusiasm for learning and his uncanny ability to bring out the best in people. Thank You for his transparency during Bible Study when teaching, counseling and preaching. Thank You for giving him the boldness to walk by faith and not by sight.

Heavenly Father, continue to bless, protect, lead and guide **Bishop, First Lady Denise**, their older son **Minister Kevin, Kevin’s wife Callece**, their daughters; **Kallie V.** and **Klark**, and their younger son **Dishon**.

We call on Jehovah Jireh: The Lord will provide. We call on Jehovah Rapha: The Lord who heals. We call on Jehovah Shalom: The Lord our peace. We pray **Isaiah 54:17** over the **Gresham’s** that *No weapon formed against them shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against them in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, And their righteousness is from Me, says the Lord.*

We pray **Philippians 4:13** over the **Gresham’s**: *They can do all things through Christ who strengthens them.* We pray **Proverbs 3:5** over the **Gresham’s**: *They will trust in the LORD with all their hearts, And lean not to their own understanding.* We pray **Genesis 26, Psalm 1, 9** and **103** over their life, daily. We thank You for the **Gresham’s** LORD and we want them to know that the Greater Saint John Cathedral Family loves them unconditionally.

Thank You God for the Gresham’s being Loaded and strong.

It’s in the matchless name of Jesus we pray and say Amen.



Prayer for the Church

By Sister Christine Anderson-Payne

The Senior Connection

Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

Father, I come before You in prayer for Greater Saint John Cathedral and Your churches all over the world. Please bless Your children wherever they reside as the gospel is being preached to strengthen their churches. I also ask that you bless the leaders charged with preaching and spreading the Word around the world.

Father, I thank you for our Pastor and leader Bishop Kevin V. Gresham Sr., First Lady Denise Gresham and their family for preaching and teaching the gospel to the Disciples of Greater Saint John. I thank you for the love and care that they give to us all.

Father, I pray that we stand strong in Your Word because You said in **Matthew 16:18** “*you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” Please allow us to remember that we can trust in You and Your Word. You are faithful to Your church and its Disciples. God let the fruit of Your Spirit continue to strengthen and bless the church always. For the kingdom, power and glory is Yours forever.

In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

Prayer for Marriages

By Elder Gloria Hyman

The Senior Connection

Father, in the name of Jesus, I come to you right now to thank you for all marriages. Thank you for life, health and strength. Thank You for being Lord over our lives. Thank You for blessing all married couples.

We started with Your blessings and we will remain in Your will. Teach us how to grow strong in Your will. Bless our intimacy and let it remain stronger in You. Let there be no misunderstanding between us and when we do, let love abide. Let our union prosper and set good examples for our children and others who may be looking to see our union in You.

Teach us forgiveness, patience and trust for one another as we live in You. When difficulties arise, teach us to love and support one another unconditionally. Bless these marriages heavenly Father as we walk closer to you. We pray for wisdom and direction for all as we follow the divine roadmap that has been set before us.

Teach us how to follow You and not stray from that path. Teach us to love each other more and more each day.

Thank You, Lord, for hearing this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.



Prayer for Better Gun Control Regulations

By Deaconess Christine Creighton

The Senior Connection

Ephesians 3: 14-19 – ¹⁴For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, ¹⁶that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— ¹⁹to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

I bow on my knees before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to pray that He would grant us, according to the richness of His glory, strength through His Holy Spirit. May Christ dwell within our hearts through faith, so that we may be rooted and grounded in love and be able to comprehend the width and depth of the love of Christ and that we be filled with all the Fullness of GOD.

Heavenly Father, we give you honor, glory, praise and the worship that you so richly deserve. Please forgive our sins of omission and commission. We give you the highest praise of Hallelujah!

Today, we are praying for more and better Gun Control Regulations from state and local governments. We are praying for more collaboration between students, teachers, parents and counseling groups between them and policing officials.

We pray that parents communicate with their children and try to know their outside activities in order that the useless killing of our children stops. We don't want to lose any more young people to violence.

Seniors have been here long enough to know that prayer works and GOD is in control.

In the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen



Mental Health Awareness

“How To Handle Your Mental Health”

Submitted by Brother Anthony Simmon, Jr.



Let's Eat – Recipe

Lemon Blueberry Pound Cake



A buttery-rich pound cake with fresh lemons to add a citrusy flavor to the batter and fresh (or frozen) blueberries to embellish every slice.

YIELD	PREP TIME	COOK TIME
Serves 12 to 16	30 min.	1 hr. to 1 hr.-15 min.

Ingredients

- 3 sticks (12 ounces) plus 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, divided
- 8 ounces cream cheese
- 6 large eggs
- 3 cups plus 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour, divided
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 large lemons, divided
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 cups fresh or unfrozen frozen blueberries (about 10 ounces), divided
- 1 cup powdered sugar

Directions

1. Place 3 sticks of the unsalted butter, 8 ounces cream cheese, and 6 large eggs on the counter. Let everything sit at room temperature until the butter and cream cheese are softened, 1 to 1 1/2 hours.
2. About 30 minutes before the butter is ready, arrange a rack in the middle of the oven and heat the oven to 325°F.
3. Place the remaining 1 tablespoon unsalted butter in a small microwave-safe bowl and microwave until melted, 20 to 30 seconds. Add 1 tablespoon of the all-purpose flour and mix to form a smooth paste. Brush the paste on the inside of a 10-cup Bundt cake pan, making sure to thoroughly coat the tube and all the crevices.

4. Place the remaining 3 cups all-purpose flour, 1 teaspoon baking powder, and 1/2 teaspoon baking soda in a large bowl and whisk to combine.
5. Finely grate the zest from 1 of the large lemons (about 1 tablespoon). Juice the lemon until you have 4 tablespoons; remove and reserve 2 tablespoons of the juice for the glaze. Add 1 tablespoon vanilla extract to the remaining lemon juice.
6. Place 2 cups granulated sugar, 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt, and the lemon zest in the bowl of a stand mixer (or large bowl if using an electric hand mixer) and rub together with your fingers until combined and fragrant.
7. Add the butter and cream cheese. Beat with the paddle attachment on medium speed until lightened in color and fluffy, 4 to 5 minutes, using a flexible spatula to scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition.
8. Add the lemon juice-vanilla mixture, beating well and scraping down the sides and bottom of the bowl as needed. Turn off the mixer, add the flour mixture, then mix on the lowest speed until the batter is smooth and combined, 1 to 2 minutes.
9. Transfer 1 1/2 cups of the batter into the pan and spread into an even layer. Add 1 cup of the blueberries into the remaining batter and fold until combined, then transfer into the pan. Scatter the remaining 1 cup blueberries evenly on the top of the batter, then smooth out the top.
10. Bake until the top is golden-brown and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 60 to 75 minutes. Place on a wire rack and cool for 30 minutes in the pan, then invert the cake out of the pan and onto the rack. Let cool completely, at least 2 hours.

Make the Glaze

1. Use a zesting tool to zest the remaining 1 large lemon for garnish. (Alternatively, use a vegetable peeler to cut a 1 1/2-inch-long strip of zest, then julienne the zest.)
2. Place 1 tablespoon of the reserved lemon juice in a small bowl, add 1 cup powdered sugar, and stir until thick, smooth, and just barely pourable, adding more lemon juice 1 teaspoon at a time as needed. You may not use all of the lemon juice. Spoon the glaze over the cake and sprinkle with the zest. Let sit until the glaze is set, at least 15 minutes, before slicing and serving.

Recipe by: *Kitchn*

GREATER SAINT JOHN CATHEDRAL

WE'RE BACK!

SUNDAYS AT
9:30AM

WEAR A MASK.
SOCIAL DISTANCING

IN
THE

Sanctuary



STREAM LIVE VIA  YouTube

youtube.com/c/GreaterSaintJohnCathedral

Bishop Kevin V. Gresham Sr. & Lady Denise Gresham

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60TH CHURCH ANNIVERSARY

GREATER *En Blanc*

...THE STREAM BEAT VEHEMENTLY AGAINST THAT HOUSE,
AND COULD NOT SHAKE IT, FOR IT WAS FOUNDED ON THE ROCK. LUKE 6:48

FRIDAY | JUNE 2 | 6PM

Israel Tour

Your partner
2023

November 6-16



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TRANSPORTATION**

\$4,365

(FROM JFK AIRPORT)

PER PERSON/DOUBLE OCCUPANCY

\$995 SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

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LEONARDO HOTEL IN JERUSALEM

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BREAKFAST AND
DINNER DAILY

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NOW!**

CONTACT: LADY DENISE GRESHAM
admin@saintjohn.net
1.301.574.5100

Greater Saint John Cathedral

Bishop Kevin V. Gresham Sr., Senior Pastor

GREATER CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY DAYCARE CENTER

CARING FOR CHILDREN AGES 2 YEARS OLD THROUGH 5 YEARS OLD

MSDE LICENSED CENTER



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**Enroll
Now!**



The Greater Christian Community Daycare Center is now enrolling for our 2023 - 2024 School Year. Spaces are available in our 2, 3 and 4 year old classrooms. Tours are scheduled daily. Please call the Center on 301-574-0935 to schedule a tour or check us out at gccdc.saintjohn.net.

**Hours of operation:
Monday ~ Friday
6:00am to 6:00pm**

BEFORE AND AFTER CARE PROVIDED

**NON-REFUNDABLE REGISTRATION FEE: \$75.00 FOR 1 CHILD
10% DISCOUNT FOR TWO SIBLINGS AND 15% FOR THREE OR MORE
BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND SNACK PROVIDED**

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Phone: 301.574.0935 • 301.574.5160 (fax)



**GREATER CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY
DAYCARE CENTER**

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• • • **INQUIRE AT** • • •

GCCDC@SAINTJOHN.NET OR 301-574-0935

**LOCATED AT: GREATER SAINT JOHN CATHEDRAL
11425 OLD MARLBORO PIKE, UPPER MARLBORO, MD 20772**



Fresh START PRAYER CALL

TUESDAYS
6:00AM



Join our Google Classroom to Get Connected!
bit.ly/freshstarttuesday

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S A I N T J O H N . N E T

https://bit.ly/TheACT_Form

INTERCESSORY PRAYER, FRONTLINE, LIFE LETTERS, LIFE ENRICHMENT, MESSAGE BOARD



THE **ACT** INITIATIVE WITH
BISHOP KEVIN V. GRESHAM SR.

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." - Jeremiah 29:11

#OFFENSENOTDEFENSE #ATTACKINGCANCERTOGETHER #FIGHTLIKEACONQUEROR

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The **A.C.T. Initiative** (Attacking Cancer Together) is continuing to intercede on behalf of those suffering from cancer; cancer survivors; caregivers; family members of cancer patients and those who support them. If you would like to be included on the prayer list, please use the link shown to complete the form. Information is on our website at saintjohn.net. This prayer opportunity is open to everyone. Please ensure the office has contact information for anyone on the prayer list who wants to receive personal prayer and wellness checks.

PRAYER PRAISE & STUDY LIVESTREAM

TUESDAYS
7PM
f 

Watch

**Prayer, Praise
and Study**

On Tuesdays @ 7pm
via YouTube.

*Don't forget to
subscribe and Hit the
Like Button.*



TRANSFORMING
Marriages
THROUGH PRAYER

STRONGER TOGETHER MARRIAGE MINISTRY
Prayer Call with Bishop Gresham

WEDNESDAYS | 6AM
After the First Sunday

https://bit.ly/marriedcouples_prayercall



VIA
GOOGLE
CLASSROOM

VIRTUAL

Sunday School

ADULT CLASS

8am - 8:45am

REGISTRATION

<http://bit.ly/GSJCSundaySchool>

Senior Connection

Calling All

Seniors (young at heart) are invited to join us on Thursdays at 12 noon for prayers, testimonies, and a sermonette.

The call-in number is 712-432-0190
access code 274522#.

GREATER SAINT JOHN CATHEDRAL

Senior CONNECTION ONLINE GATHERING

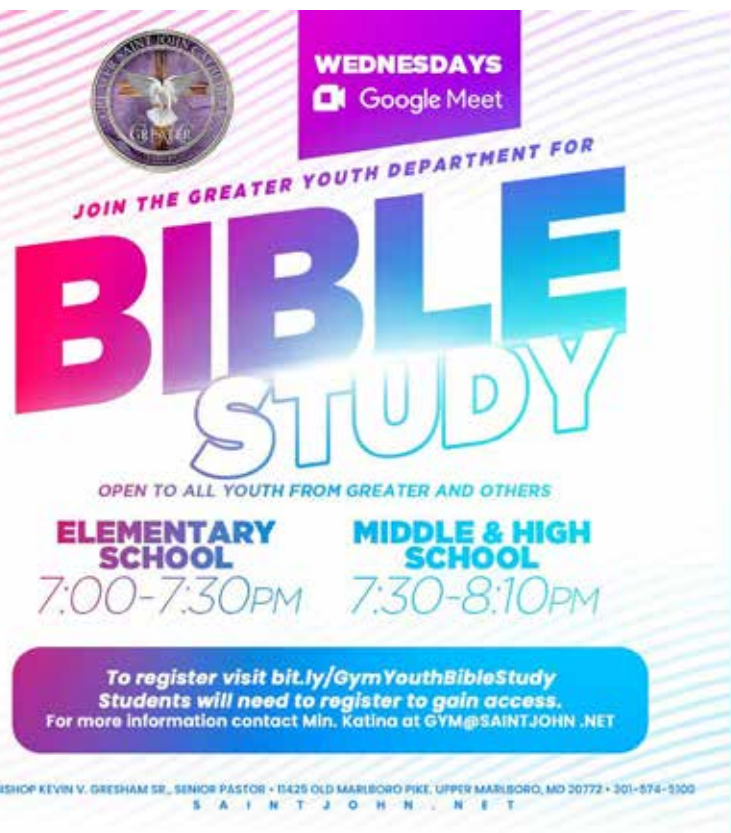
THURSDAYS AT 12NOON

*All seniors (young at heart) are invited
to join us for prayer, testimonies and a sermonette*

DIAL 712-432-0190 ACCESS CODE: 274522#

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S A I N T J O H N . N E T

Please join the **F.A.M. Young Adult Ministry** for our monthly prayer call at 6:30 a.m. on Wednesdays, featuring our own **Bishop Kevin V. Gresham Sr.** The call-in number is (712) 432-0190 and the access code is 274522#. Mark your calendars and set your alarms! You do not want to miss out on prayer with our Bishop!



Join our **Greater Youth Ministry's Bible Study** on Wednesday nights. Elementary from 7:00pm-7:30pm, Middle & High from 7:30pm-8:10pm, please register your youth at **google meet**. Please click on the link: <https://bit.ly/gymYouthBibleStudy>. This bible study is open to Greater Youth as well as others. Please feel free to contact **Minister Katina** if you have any questions at: gym@saintjohn.net.

Women's Prayer Call

Join us for our

Women's Prayer Call on Thursdays at 6am.
The call-in number is 712-432-0190 access
code 274522#.



Global Men's Prayer Call

Join us on

Fridays at 6am for the Men's Prayer Call.
Please use your phone to scan the QR code
or click on the following link to join our
Google Classroom to get Connected!



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Greater Saint John Cathedral

Bishop Kevin V. Gresham Sr., Senior Pastor

The **new Theatre Arts Ministry** of Greater is looking for you. We are currently looking for a director preferably with experience in **producing and/or directing productions**. We are looking for **actors, costume/wardrobe specialists, carpenters, and stage crew**.

Please contact **Brother Michael Smith**,
Minister of Music & Fine Arts at gsjcworship@gmail.com
for any further information or questions.



Greater Saint John Cathedral

Bishop Kevin V. Gresham Sr., Senior Pastor

The LaNetra E. Jones Breakthrough Ministry

Do you feel you need a breakthrough
for the Lord...

Well the Breakthrough Ministry
is looking for youth ages 6 to 18
to become a part of this dynamic ministry.

Rehearsals are held on Thursday evenings, at 7p.m.
Please contact the Administrative Office if you have
any questions.

Come Ready To Get Your
Breakthrough On!

Greater Saint John Cathedral

Bishop Kevin V. Gresham Sr., Senior Pastor

FRESH ANOINTING DANCE MINISTRY



Fresh Anointing is inviting anyone
who is interested in joining
the ministry.

It is a great way to start your
morning with praise and worship
to God through dance. We hope
to see you on Saturday! If you
are interested, contact
Sis. Cree Williams at 301-706-1889.

MEDIA MINISTRY

Greater Saint John Cathedral's **Media Ministry**, which consists of both **Audio and Video**, is looking for Disciples who are tech savvy or want to become tech savvy. If you are interested and want to work in a great environment, please let us know.

Please contact **Sister Renee Carr** at rpeacecarr@gmail.com for more information.

Greater Saint John Cathedral
Bishop Kevin V. Gresham Sr., Senior Pastor

SHARE MINISTRY



The **Share Team** is in need of many “**Angels**” to help our church disciples and community during this pandemic. The Share basic packages are \$25 each month. Also, we gladly accept can or dry goods for the baskets as a welcome addition to the nutritious food that will go on the table for many families in our community! All orders are on a first come first served basis until we run out. You may purchase as many packages as you want! Place your order by email at: share@saintjohn.net or text 301-254-2795.

We thank you in advance!



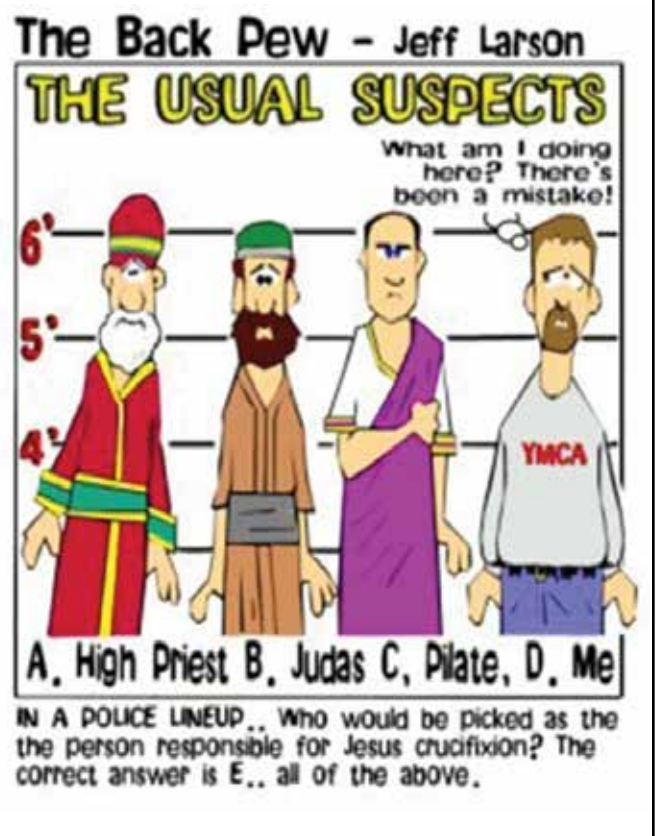
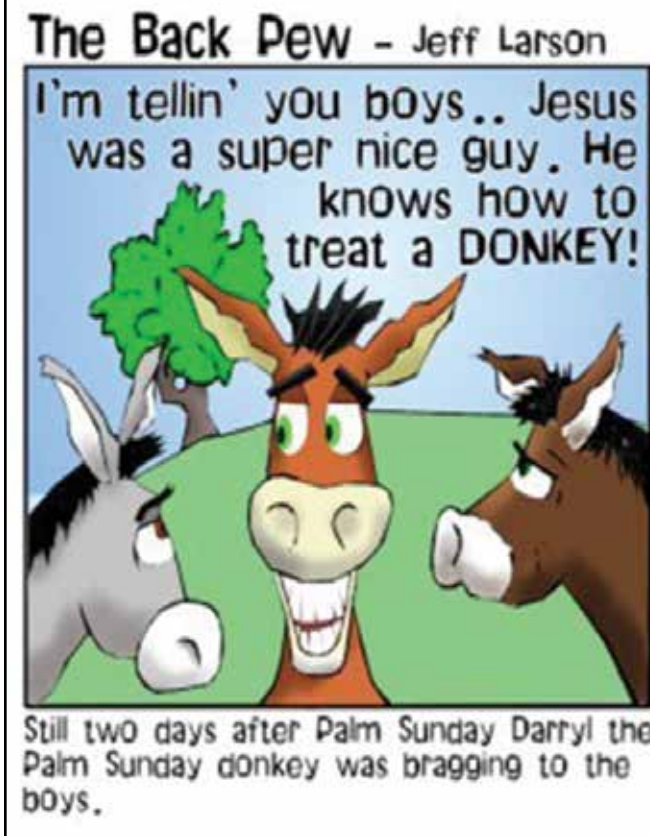
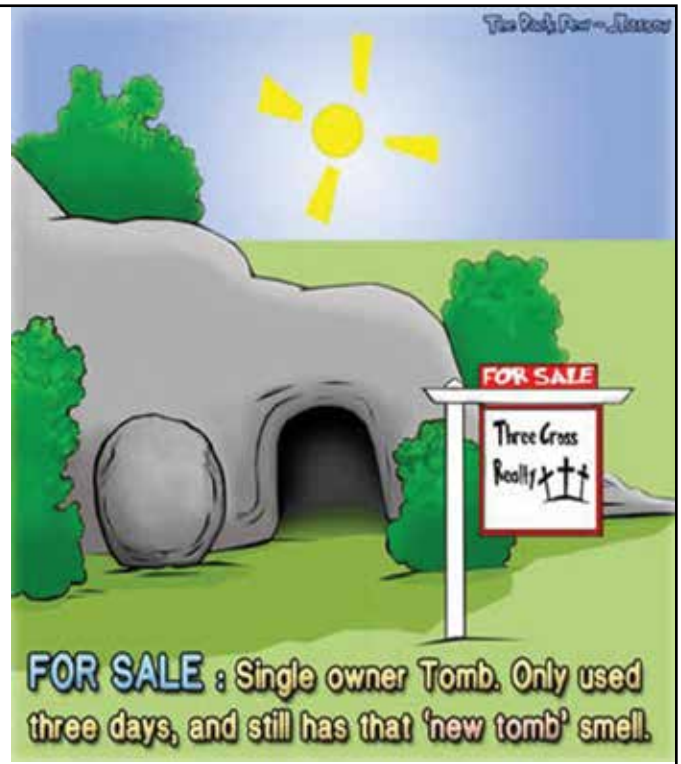
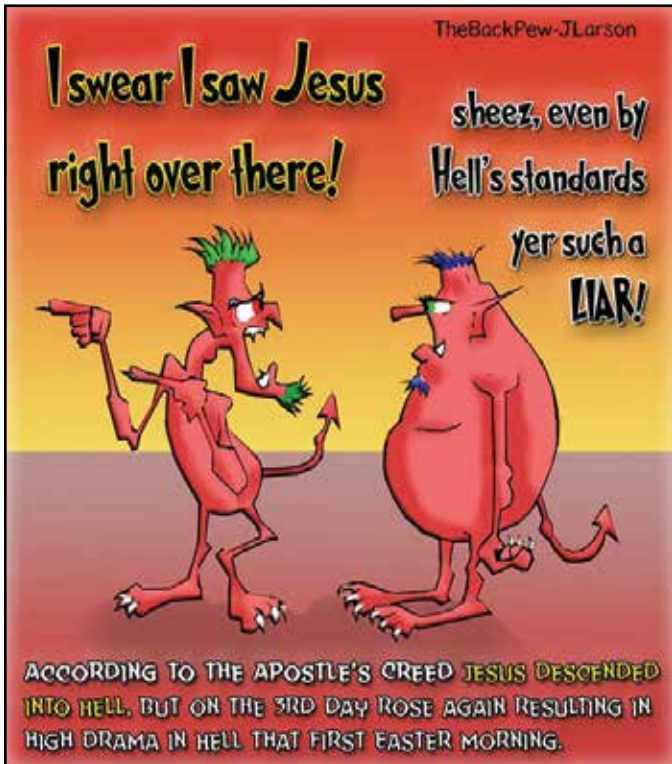
Be Of Good Courage

Psalm 27

U	K	U	H	S	F	L	W	A	I	T	E	L	T	D	W
M	C	C	R	E	W	I	A	G	U	R	E	D	N	G	N
M	O	G	D	C	U	G	N	E	I	G	E	S	L	O	I
E	R	D	P	I	I	H	Z	U	A	R	U	X	I	O	K
R	B	J	R	F	W	T	Q	R	I	D	M	L	V	D	Q
C	E	D	A	I	A	N	U	S	Q	D	I	O	F	N	J
Y	L	W	I	R	I	O	E	C	O	V	I	S	E	E	K
Z	I	E	S	C	C	D	O	H	A	C	V	U	P	S	I
G	E	L	E	A	E	N	T	P	E	O	H	G	V	S	Y
I	V	L	S	S	F	G	S	A	L	V	A	T	I	O	N
O	E	Z	W	I	N	C	H	A	Y	D	T	G	M	F	B
W	D	P	D	E	Q	L	D	E	N	T	E	E	N	X	L
N	Q	E	R	R	R	A	E	H	A	S	U	T	A	I	G
C	N	T	E	S	V	F	A	C	E	R	W	A	F	C	S
T	S	E	L	C	A	N	R	E	B	A	T	E	E	I	H
T	E	M	P	L	E	Y	M	L	E	A	D	F	R	B	L

WORD LIST				
ANSWER	DWELL	LEAD	PRAISES	STRENGTH
BEAUTY	FACE	LIFE	ROCK	TABERNACLE
BELIEVED	GOODNESS	LIFTED	SACRIFICES	TEACH
CONFIDENT	HEAR	LIGHT	SALVATION	TEMPLE
COURAGE	HEART	MERCY	SEEK	VOICE
DESIRED	INQUIRE	PAVILION	SING	WAIT

FUN ZONE





Mark Your Calendars EVENTS



MAY

14th – Mother’s Day

JUNE

2nd – Greater En Blanc
11th – Academic Sunday
18th – Father’s Day

THEME FOR 2023



.....

THINK ON THIS:

“Throughout life people will make you mad, disrespect you and treat you bad. Let God deal with the things they do, because hate in your heart will consume you too.” – *Will Smith*

“Success depends upon previous preparation and without such preparation there is sure to be failure.”– *Confucius*

“You are the sum total of everything you’ve ever seen, heard, eaten, smelled, been told, forgot - it’s all there. Everything influences each of us and because of that I try to make sure that my experiences are positive.” – *Maya Angelou*

“Be a bush if you can’t be a tree. If you can’t be a highway, just be a trail. If you can’t be a sun, be a star. For it isn’t by size that you win or fail. Be the best of whatever you are.” – *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

WAYS TO **give**

IN-PERSON
OR MAIL-IN



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CASH APP



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S A I N T J O H N . N E T

Greater Saint John Cathedral

BISHOP KEVIN V. GRESHAM SR.

LADY DENISE GRESHAM

JOIN US FOR Online WORSHIP SUNDAYS AT 9:30 VIA YOUTUBE

YOUTH BIBLE STUDY

WEDNESDAYS VIA ZOOM

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	MIDDLE + HIGH SCHOOL
7:00PM - 7:30PM	7:30PM - 8:10PM
MEETING ID: 736-7333-6219	MEETING ID: 784-6981-6376
PASSWORD: 094494	PASSWORD: 077172

COMMUNION SERVICE

FIRST SUNDAY EACH MONTH

SENIOR CONNECTION

THURSDAYS AT 12 NOON

CALL IN 712-432-0190 | ACCESS CODE 274522#

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT GREATER@SAINTJOHN.NET

GREATER SAINT JOHN CATHEDRAL | BISHOP KEVIN V. GRESHAM SR., SENIOR PASTOR
11425 OLD MARLBORO PIKE, UPPER MARLBORO, MD 20772 | SAINTJOHN.NET | 301-574-5100

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to proclaim the Good News of the gospel and teach godly principles for a Greater Life.

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is to have an abundantly blessed ministry that is both Supernatural and Spirit Filled.