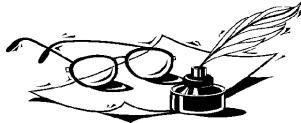




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From Pastor Paul's Desk.....

A-B NEWSLETTER

• ALBRIGHT-BETHUNE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH •

Rev. Paul R. McReynolds, Pastor

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Blannie Bowen, Editor; Volume 30, Number 1, January 2023

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, the Healer of the Soul, and our Everlasting Redeemer. I am so excited about what the Lord has in store for us at Albright-Bethune. We have an amazing opportunity to be a bridge in the community by mending their souls with the word. Engaging their hearts in stewardship and prayer. All of this is done by a Beloved Community engaging in planting the seeds of Jesus Christ, our Hope. Building Bridges of connections throughout the community. (Matthew 25:34-36, Luke 4:18-19).

Family, I pray all is well with each of you!! As we have entered the new season of a New Year, keep our church family in your prayers. Let us be in continued prayer for the Peagler family as well as for Ms. Cheraine Stanford and her family. Let us also be in prayer for Mother Ireen Jones and her brother.

We have some exciting endeavors happening in the New Year. Please be there. On Saturday, January 14, we are going to have conversations around pathways to discipleship with Pastor Kevin Witt and they will start at 10 a.m. We will be mapping out how we will move forward. On January 15, we will be participating in the FOBA MLK banquet. For tickets and table arrangements, please reach out to Dr. Michelle Torregano. I hope to see you there! Also, on January 23, we will be working with Pastor Kim Shockley on the second part of our clarity day. This is important to the vitality and future of this church. Please be in attendance.

Lord Jesus, Master of both the light and the darkness. Send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for the Christmas season. We who have so much to do and seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day. We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us. Amen. **Pastor Paul McReynolds**

• **MLK BANQUET** - The 48th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr., banquet will be held on January 15 at the Bryce Jordan Center beginning at 5 p.m. Our church will again purchase one or two tables. Please contact **Michelle Torregano** if you want to purchase a ticket. You can reach her at metorregano2010@gmail.com. The banquet is conducted by Penn State's Forum on Black Affairs (FOBA) faculty and staff organization.

- **P**ATHWAY TO DISCIPLESHIP SESSION - Our next Pathway to Discipleship session with Kevin Witt will be held on Saturday, January 14, from 10-noon at Albright-Bethune. The purpose of this session is to help clarify and chart a future direction for our congregation. Kevin will lead a brainstorming session so our members, worshippers, and leaders can share their thoughts and ideas about areas and topics that our congregation should target. The goal is to achieve consensus on a manageable number of areas and topics. Please check your calendar and plan to attend. This session is a follow-up to the session that Kevin conducted with our congregation on December 19. See Pastor McReynolds or Jackie Peagler if you have questions about this session.
- **E**VC MEETING - On November 14, several of our members and worshippers held an important congregational meeting with Kim Shockley, our Equipping Vital Congregations (EVC) advisor. During this meeting, we discussed where we have come from and where we want to go as a church. We clarified that our church's mission and vision is to create a space where others experience God's love through our actions as we equip individuals to walk with God! We also clarified some of our church's core values and some of our aspirational values or behaviors and attitudes that we should develop to live out our mission. Our church is completing the second year of the EVC program and our congregation is receiving monetary and other support to strengthen and expand our programming. Our next congregational meeting with Rev. Shockley will be held on January 23 at 6:30 p.m. See Pastor Paul or Jackie Peagler if you have any questions about the EVC program and our church's involvement.
- **C**ONDOLENCES - All in the congregation extend their condolences to Cheraine Stanford and her family on the loss of her father last month. Cheraine still worships with us virtually after relocating to the Washington, DC, area after leaving her position with WPSU.
- **B**IRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES - Congratulations to these individuals who celebrate a special day this month: January 1 - **Ireen Jones'** Birthday; January 23 – **Walter Jones'** Birthday; January 29 - **Ocean Williams'** Birthday; January 30 - **Mark Dyreson's** Birthday; and January 30- **Pastor Paul McReynolds'** Birthday. Also, belated congratulations to **Michael Weaver, Jr.**, who celebrated his birthday on December 21. Give Blannie your special dates (call/text 814-777-6550 or email blanniebowen@gmail.com) so we can honor you on your special day.
- **S**OUPEL BOWL SUNDAY - If you watch the Super Bowl on February 12, think about sharing your snacks. In 1993, a single prayer led a senior high school youth group in Columbia, SC, to create a simple, yet powerful idea to fight hunger and poverty in their city. The Souper Bowl of Caring calls youth to action. And individuals, civic organizations, and schools are making a difference through this movement. Various religious groups, including the UMC, promote the concept of souper bowls to share food with the hungry. On this day, give to the Food Bank, share with individuals who are less fortunate, or make a special gift.
- **A**LBRIGHT-BETHUNE COOKS - Our congregation is expanding its Men Who Cook concept by creating a virtual **Albright-Bethune Cooks**. The concept is patterned after what Dylan Dreyer uses on the **Today Show** to teach her son (Cal) how to cook. Pastor Paul will do the filming, editing, and posting -- and teach others how to do it. We are planning for our episodes to be 5-10 minutes. Jo Ferrell created our first episode about her famous sticky buns and it's posted on Facebook. You can view it at: https://www.facebook.com/watch/?ref=search&v=597816918698281&external_log_id=a4708ae5-2174-4d78-bfd9-d97dd7fc4697&q=albright-bethune%20united%20methodist%20church. Our second episode will feature Blannie Bowen baking his southern pecan pies. If you wish to share one of your dishes, please contact Pastor Paul or Blannie to discuss your idea.

• **PASSES EXAM** – Congratulations to **Evan Buckner** who passed his Qualifying Examination for his PhD last month. Evan is studying Plant Pathology at Penn State. He is from Arkansas and is one of our worshippers and an excellent musician.

• **COLLEGE PRESIDENT - Harriet Nembhard**, one of our former worshippers and a former Penn State faculty member, has been named the next President of Harvey Mudd College, one of the seven Claremont Colleges that are located in Southern California. The Claremont Colleges include five undergraduate liberal arts colleges and two graduate institutions. Harvey Mudd is a premier engineering, science and mathematics institution. Harriet will start her new position next June. Since June 2020, she has been the dean of the College of Engineering at the University of Iowa. From 2016-20, Harriet was the head of Oregon State University's School of Mechanical, Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering. You can congratulate Harriet at hnembhard@uiowa.edu.

• **HUMAN RELATIONS DAY** – The UMC will celebrate Human Relations Day on January 15, and how will you help celebrate this important day? Turn on the news or drive around the outskirts of your town and you will find what Jesus called “the least of these.” Those living in the margins of society, struggling to survive. People like:

- An immigrant teenager in Texas' poorest county, being recruited by a local gang;
- A father struggling for sobriety in Little Rock, Arkansas; and
- An Oklahoma woman recently released from incarceration looking for work.

Over and over Jesus served and embraced people like these. And that's what we want to model as the people of the UMC. To continue the ministry of Jesus, the UMC established Human Relations Day as a Special Sunday and asks churches to help all of God's children realize their potential. Please make a special offering on this day (From UMC Giving.Org).

• **UMC SCHOLARSHIPS & LOANS** - United Methodist Church high school seniors and those enrolled in college who are also active in their church and/or in the conference may apply for a Fall 2023 scholarship offered through the United Methodist General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. Students must apply online between **December 15–March 30** at <https://www.gbhem.org/loans-and-scholarships/scholarships>. Student loans are also available at low interest rates (with a credit worthy co-signer). Funds for these scholarships come from offerings taken on United Methodist Student Day, World Communion Sunday, and Native American Sunday. Please share this information with students who qualify for this support.

• **CHURCH DISAFFILIATIONS** - Much is in flux in The United Methodist Church as 2022 came to a close. What's clear is that the denomination's long, gradual numerical decline in the U.S. has accelerated due to local church disaffiliations. The UMC is experiencing a separation after decades of internal division about the role of LGBTQ people in church life. Thus far, slightly over 2,000 churches in the U.S. have cleared the necessary hurdles under church law to leave the denomination with property. That translates to about 6.6% of U.S. congregations withdrawing since 2019 when the church's disaffiliation provision took effect. Almost 1,700 of the disaffiliations are in the Southeastern and South Central UMC jurisdictions. Many of the congregations that have left are small, but the denomination also has seen the departure of some megachurches. The withdrawals still leave more than 28,500 United Methodist congregations in the U.S. (From UM News Article by Heather Hahn and Sam Hodges).

• **CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE** - Our Albright-Bethune Christmas Eve service was held at 5:30 p.m. on December 24. The service included a beautiful and joyful tradition of lessons and carols about the wondrous good news of great joy. The service ended with the singing of *Silent Night* while the lights were lowered.

- **AAUW SCHOLARSHIPS** - The AAUW State College Undergraduate Scholarships for Centre County Women application process is now open. AAUW will select four recipients for scholarships that range from \$3,000-\$7,000 depending on the financial need and circumstances of the recipients. Female adult learners enrolled for the 2023-24 academic year are encouraged to apply. Scholarship information and criteria for eligibility can be found at <https://aauwstatecollege.org/scholarships>. **The application deadline is March 1.**

- **FINANCE CORNER** - Our December offerings and collections totaled \$4,071.81. See Cathy Bowen if you have questions about our church’s finances.

Also, free tax return preparation is again being offered this year. The Penn State VITA (volunteer income tax assistance) will again be offering free tax preparation and e-filing for income eligible individuals/households. If your income is \$58,000 or less, and you do not have any special circumstances, the volunteers will complete and e-file your tax return at no cost. To schedule an appointment, please visit www.PSUVITA.org starting mid-January. The site is located at 325 Boucke Building (across from the HUB) on the PSU campus. Hours of operation are Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays 4:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., and Saturdays 9 a.m. – 12 noon. Opening day will be February 1. Submitted by Cathy Bowen

- **YOUR ITEMS** - Send, email to blanniebowen@gmail.com or give your items to **Blannie** by the **20th** of the month. Send your birthday, awards, church presentations, writings, etc.

Calendar	
January 9	Penn State Classes Begin
January 10	Albright-Bethune Administrative Council Meets, 7 p.m.
January 14	Pathway to Discipleship Session With Kevin Witt, 10-noon
January 15	Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday FOBA Martin Luther King, Jr. Banquet, Jordan Center, 5 p.m.
January 23	EVC Clarity Session With Kim Shockley, 6:30 p.m.
February 14	Albright-Bethune Administrative Council Meets, 7 p.m.
February 22	Ash Wednesday
March 3	World Day of Prayer
March 5-11	Penn State Spring Break
March 12	Daylight Savings Time Begins
March 14	Albright-Bethune Administrative Council Meets, 7 p.m.
March 19	UMCOR Sunday (Formerly One Great Hour of Sharing Sunday)
April 7	Good Friday
April 9	Easter Sunday
April 11	Albright-Bethune Administrative Council Meets, 7 p.m.
April 28	Penn State Classes End
May 5-7	Penn State Commencement Exercises
May 9	Albright-Bethune Administrative Council Meets, 7 p.m.