



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 **Fall Edition 2023** issue are due by **September 3, 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.

SERENDIPITY

Serendipity is defined as an unplanned fortunate discovery. This is common during my devotional times in the morning. While in pursuit for something else, I found this gem/nugget scripture:

Isaiah 61:3 (NKJV)

“To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.”

This scripture gave me instantaneous joy because it directly speaks of joy. There is a direct exchange in this verse concerning God. Isaiah is told to console the people and let them know that a great exchange is on the way. Give them beauty for ashes, and the oil of joy in the morning. I would like to point out for you some of the benefits of obtaining joy and maintaining joy in your life.

Joy will assist with the following:

- **Enhanced well-being:** Joy can contribute to overall well-being, promoting positive emotions, reducing stress and improving mental and emotional health.
- **Improved relationships:** Joy is contagious and can positively impact your interactions with others, fostering stronger connections, empathy and a sense of community.
- **Increased resilience:** When faced with challenges, joy can act as a source of strength and resilience, helping you navigate difficult situations with a positive mindset and a greater ability to overcome obstacles.

Therefore, I say to you as your Pastor, find your joy, maintain your joy and guard your joy.

Summer Blessing for Families



By Sister Sylvia Tyson

May we make our homes places of relaxation,
joy, love, peace and safety.
May we be generous and considerate,
not thinking only about ourselves,
but helping others enjoy the blessings of the summertime.
Lord God, Creator of all things,
guide our steps and strengthen our hearts
during these months of summer and vacation days.
Grant us refreshment of mind and body.
May we constantly strive to make a meaningful difference
in the lives of our loved ones and in the world around us
as we enjoy the warm days of summertime.

Amen

I'M COOL WITH YOU CALLING ME CHILDISH

By Brother Tony P. D. Williams

Scriptures: Micah 7:18-19 (NIV) – (Old Testament) – ¹⁸Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. ¹⁹You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea. (Better known to us as the Sea of Forgetfulness.)

Matthew 18:2-3 – (New Testament) – ²He called a little child to Him, and placed the child among them. ³And he said: “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Throughout life we have all heard the terms “grow up,” “act your age” and “you’re acting immature.” Those terms were normally hurled at us by adult family members or authority figures when we did things that were not age appropriate. Most of us would agree that hearing those terms either made us angry or we took steps to change our bad behavior. However, in certain circumstances, **“I’m cool with you calling me childish”**.

On July 31, 2015, my wife and I met a little 4 year-old boy who would eventually become our adopted son. At that time, I was 47 years old. Once this little boy came into my life, I immediately thought about all the things that I could teach this young impressionable human. I pondered the things that I was taught throughout my life by a host of family members and friends. Fast forward about a month, my great plans and ideas were quickly dashed. I thought God put me and this child together for me to teach him how to act, but God had a totally different plan. During the last almost 8 years this child has taught me so many things. I would like to discuss one of the most important things that this young man taught me. That one thing is forgiving immediately and moving on.

There have been so many occasions that I can’t count how many times this little boy has made me so angry I was breathing fire. I would discipline and chastise him for his wrongdoings then I would be mad about the situation. A few minutes later or maybe an hour later this little boy would come hug me and say, in a sweet innocent voice like he had not just done a horrible thing and say “I LOVE YOU Daddy” or “Daddy do you want to watch a movie or play a game with me?” Mind you I’m still fuming with smoke coming out of my ears and this child has forgiven me and he has moved on. If I act like my son when it comes to forgiving and moving on, **“I’m cool with you calling me childish”**.

This child has the ability to forgive me for disciplining and chastising him, but here I am still upset. At first, I thought is this child using reverse psychology on me with the hug and saying “I love you,” or wanting to play a game or watch a movie. Then one day it hit me, here is a 4 year-old child who forgives immediately and moves on. At the same time, I was a 47 year-old man who couldn’t forgive immediately and move on. God revealed to me that you’re 47 years old, you still sin daily by thought, word and deed, but you expect a 4 year-old child not to mess up. God forgives us immediately and moves on so we should be able to do the same thing with our fellow humans.

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Our Old Testament scripture, *Micah 7:18-19*, point blank describes our relationship with God. We sin, He forgives and He forgets immediately. In other words, we mess up, He says its alright and He moves on. God doesn't stay angry with us. As a child my son had already developed the ability to forgive immediately and move on, I pray he continues to be that way. Again, **“I'm cool with you calling me childish”** if I'm imitating my son.

The New Testament scripture simply states, sometimes we must adjust and be like children. Being humble and not allowing your anger to continue is a great attribute that children have mastered. Children can be playing, then fighting and then back to playing before we know it. I'll reiterate, **“I'm cool with you calling me childish”**.

QUESTION: “Are you cool with me calling you childish?”



By Sister Janice Shields

Proverbs 18:21 NKJV – Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.

The old adage, “sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me” has survived for generations. While I understand the soft principle and spirit in which the adage was taught, I don't think we can ever forget the power of our words, good, bad or indifferent.

If You Can't Say Sumptin' Nice

By Minister Melissa E. Monroe

"Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, Sweetness to the soul and health to the bones." – Proverbs 16:24 (NKJV)

Truth be told, my family tends to joke around a lot. We are always jabbing and poking with words, not in malice but in jest. I am learning though that such communication holds tiny prongs that stick in the heart of others. It seems innocent at first until someone's feelings get hurt. We insist we were only kidding and just having fun. I think sometimes the enemy convinces us that anything in fun is okay, but if it is at the expense of another is it really okay?

Kind words are like honey.

Our words hold power. They are established by the Breath of God that runs through every single human being ever created – believer or not. When we speak something enough – it will happen.

Have you ever said the wrong thing at the wrong time? Sometimes we ignore the filter and say things that hurt, offend or are not uplifting. It's not intentional. It just comes out. I think many of us are guilty of poorly chosen words or of saying the wrong thing at the wrong time. How many of us have heard the saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me?" Some of our parents tried to encourage us with those words. We have even said those words to our children. However, it is a lie – period. Words do hurt. **Proverbs 18:21** says "*DEATH and LIFE is in the power of the tongue.*" In the book of **James 8:3** it says "*but no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly EVIL, full of deadly poison.*"

So, you may ask, then how am I expected to mind my tongue if the word says I can't even tame it? Well, I'm glad you asked. One day we WILL be held accountable for every "idle" word that we speak (**Matthew 12:36**) including those we did not mean or when we were only kidding around. I do believe that God looks at the intent of our hearts when we say such things but I also believe that we must be accountable for our words and THAT begins in our hearts. In order to keep our tongues in check, we must pray daily that our hearts be purified. God will grant us a tender, compassionate, kind, caring, giving heart – the heart of Jesus.

Although we will never tame our tongue, we can learn to control it and use it better. We have a choice in the words we use each and every day. Some are spoken in the heat of the moment while others are well thought out. No matter when, what, or how we say something, once those words leave our mouths, they are out there in the atmosphere. It's very important that we choose wisely.

My Mom would tell us to mind what we say to each other because if you can't say sumptin' nice, don't say nuttin' at all. She would tell us don't say anything you will regret because we cannot take it back. Once it's released, you can never retract it. I can remember hearing say what you mean and mean what you say. In other words, don't say something that you have to ask for forgiveness for later. When you are mad, consider your words carefully. When you make a promise, think about it first. Words are important. They are the glue that binds relationships or the stones that tear them down.

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The hard part is not the forgiving--it's the forgetting or the letting go. I can forgive what you said to me time and time again but I cannot forget the words you spoke to me. It may not reside in the penthouse of my mind but it is there in the subbasement; lying dormant until the next time.

The words of our mouths give evidence of the contents of our hearts. Words do hurt other people. They can kill a relationship. The greatest commandment is to love one another. We must protect our connection with the people in our lives. God has called us to love even our enemies. Our hearts should project love in our words along with our actions.

Our job in this life is to bless others. Never curse them or cause them distress. We should be agreeable, sympathetic, loving, compassionate and humble which means even when someone does not show us the same respect – we keep doing what our Father has shown us. No exceptions and no retaliation.

Be a blessing...get a blessing.

God has given us great power when we asked His Son to be our Lord and Savior. We must use our words effectively and responsibly. Our words can CHANGE today and BUILD a better tomorrow. They can BREAK generational curses and MAKE lasting relationships.

It is important to speak kind words to others. It is also important to surround yourself with the kind of people who will speak kind words to you!

Look, we can't be people whose mouths are instructed by our culture, our own selfish motives or by Satan who would love to use our mouths for his own destructive purposes. Let us be people with the grace-filled, love-overflowing, life-encouraging, Spirit-instructed mouth! Let us embrace hearing what our hearts have to say about what words we should use. As we listen to this soul-nourishing instruction for our mouths, may we submit our hearts to be ruled and governed by the Holy Spirit of God. May God's instructions dominate our conversations, statements and answers so that others may be blessed. We should desire that others will be thirsty for the God who speaks through us and the Holy Spirit that dwells within us. Words used right ARE good and sweet to the soul! They ARE healthy for our bones!

So, remember my sisters and brothers, "JUST SAY SUMPTIN' NICE."

"Let the words of MY mouth and the meditation of MY heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer." - Psalm 19:14

Food for Thought - Words matter. Actions matter. We are called to LOVE in both WORD and DEED.

There Are No Areas Of Gray In Christ

By Sister Keturah Dubar

For many years, I had a calling on my life to serve the Lord but I was running. Every time someone tried to pull me in, I would take off running like Usain Bolt. I didn't fully understand what it meant to submit to God. I was afraid of leaving people behind, losing friends and family and most of all, I didn't want to let my music go. I loved to bop my head and rap along with Jay-Z, Nas and Kanye. I would rap along and take my mind off whatever was bothering me. I would get lost in the beat that seemed to engulf me with rhythm.

Over time, God had me pay closer attention to these artists and it made me think. Would I really want to listen to men who compare themselves to the Most High; i.e., Yeezus (Kanye), Hova (as in Jehovah) Jay-Z and Nas (God's Son). This is scary!

The Lord chases those He loves (*Proverb 3:12 and Hebrews 12:6*). Once God has chosen you, there is no one and nothing that will get in the way of Him having His way in your life. He will explain to you, in a way that you will understand, what your purpose in Him is and why other things don't really make a difference. One day, all of the things I was worried about the most just didn't matter to me anymore.

As I got closer and started to seek God more, I could no longer listen to the music I liked because it began to grieve my spirit. It was as if God had slowed down the music and allowed me to hear the lyrics and what they were rapping about. When I heard it clearly, I couldn't listen anymore because now I was afraid of offending the Holy Spirit. Choose this day whom you shall serve (*Joshua 24:14-15*). No one can serve two masters (*Matthew 6:24, Luke 16:13 and 1st Corinthians 10:21*).

The more I sought, the more God began to deal with me, my walk and how to invite the Lord to walk beside me each day. He said it's simple. There is no "gray" area in Christ. When I thought about this and digested it, it became very clear. The Word says that we should try the Spirit (*1st John 4:1*).

We make conscious decisions to serve the Lord, but we also make conscious decisions to do wrong. Now I know you're thinking, "we all sin." We can't use that as a guide to shade our wrongdoings in gray. As people say, "God's still working on me." However, are you meeting Him half way or trying to hang on to your old ways (*Mark 8:5*)? Every action you take should be held captive by the Holy Spirit (*2nd Corinthians 10:5*).

Would God approve of you? If the answer causes you to question yourself, pray to God To release you from the bondage keeping you from walking properly with Christ. Began to ask God to show you areas of your life that need help and ask Him to break the chains and strongholds that hold you captive.



“I THIRST”

By Minister Samaria Jackson

Over the last few months, I have experienced what I refer to as a low grade depression. Nothing was wrong, but everything seemed wrong. I was busy trying to manage teaching and mothering post pandemic. I was tired, drained emotionally and mentally. Taking in the sorrows of this world depleted. I was spiritually dehydrated. Water is vital to human life. Most of the human body is an average of about 60 percent water.

Water:

- Regulates body temperature
- Moistens tissues in the eyes, nose and mouth
- Protects body organs and tissues
- Carries nutrients and oxygen to cells
- Lubricates joints
- Lessens burden on the kidneys and liver by flushing out waste products
- Dissolves minerals and nutrients to make them accessible to your body

Water is vital to life. It is necessary for the proper functioning of every organ in the body. As such, your body has a way to signal to you when you are in need of water - thirst. In the natural, thirst is the desire to drink fluid. It is one of the body's ways of maintaining a healthy level of fluids. The level of thirst indicates that you need more or less fluid. Physical thirst patterns change based on your level of activity and diet. Major changes in thirst (excessive thirst or lack of thirst) may signal a disease or medical condition. Typically, by the time you feel thirsty you are in the beginning stages of dehydration.

Dehydration occurs when the amount of water leaving the body is greater than the amount being consumed. In addition to thirst, the symptoms of dehydration include, but are not limited to:

- blurred vision
- confusion
- fever
- chills
- malaise
- unexplained agitation
- nausea

Many parallels can be made between natural and spiritual thirst. Spiritually, thirst is the longing or desire for a connection with God. As water is vital for life in the physical man, so is a connection with God vital for the life of the spirit man. This symbolism is seen often throughout Scripture. In *Psalm 42:1*, the comparison is made between the deer panting at the brook and the man's very soul panting after, longing for and desiring the presence of God. When Jesus encounters the Samaritan woman at the well, He promises that if you drink the water that He offers you will never thirst again. That thirst is a longing, an emptiness that is found in the soul of every man until he is reconciled back to God through Christ Jesus.

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Spiritual thirst may also be experienced in the redeemed when we allow ourselves to be separated from God and the things of His Kingdom. I believe we see this in the fifth of the seven last words when Jesus, hanging on the cross, says “I thirst.” Although He is not operating outside of God’s plans or His will, He is, at that moment, feeling disconnected from God. His crying out “Why have You forsaken me?” shows that He did not feel a connection with or the presence of God.

Sin and disobedience separate us from God to be sure, but so does the busyness of life. The scriptures say that Jesus was given vinegar or sour wine in response. While the Bible says this was done in order that prophecy might be fulfilled, this also speaks to the insufficiency of what the world offers. Though Jesus’ thirst indicates a need for fluids, the fluid that was given would rob his body of hydration and make Him even more thirsty. Vinegar is a diuretic. By design it removes fluids from the body. While at first blush, being a fluid it would seem to meet the need. Thirst is a desire for fluid. Vinegar is a fluid. However, the nature of this particular fluid makes it impossible to satisfy thirst. It may meet the immediate need for moisture on a parched tongue. However, its nature is to remove moisture from the body, thus increasing not satisfying thirst.

The same can be said for all the things that are used as substitutes for the living water. No drug, drink, man, woman, toy, measure of wealth, level of power or degree of success – **nothing** – can fulfill that longing, that thirst for God. Like liquid on a parched tongue, they may provide immediate, yet temporary relief. They appear to quench the thirst. However, the very nature, purpose and design of what the world offers is likened to a spiritual diuretic. It will only further separate you from God – His will, plans and purpose. What the world offers can only create a greater void and a deeper longing.

This truth is seen most dramatically in addicts. When an addict first begins using a drug, he feels euphoric. Over time the same drug in the same quantity has little or no effect. Either more of the drug or a new more powerful drug must be used to get the same exuberant feeling. Soon the addict is chasing a feeling he no longer receives. His longing is greater; the desire is deeper. Yet, satisfaction is elusive.

Hold one, I hear you thinking that this doesn’t apply to you because you don’t drink or do drugs. That doesn’t mean you’re not addicted. What did Solange say? I’ll paraphrase. You’ve tried to drink it away, smoke it away, buy it away, sex it away, sleep it away, work it away, mean it away, lie it away, hide it away, dress it away, to no avail. It is the nature of the “sour-wine” offered by this world. It cannot, will not, is not intended to soothe the soul or satisfy the spirit.

The more you drink of the “sour wine” that the world offers, the more spiritually dehydrated you will become. As things in nature often mimic or parallel things of the spirit, the symptoms of spiritual dehydration are similar to those of natural dehydration. Vision may become blurred. Lies begin to look like truth. Confusion may take hold. Confusion is defined as a loss of the sense of time, place and identity or to be displaced from normal position or relationship.

When God is removed from His proper place, it is impossible for man to truly know who He is. Confusion sets in. You are displaced from the normal (intended) position or relationship. We see this in the parable of the prodigal son. Since he has forsaken his proper position and relationship with his father, in his confusion, he chooses to dine among swine. In his confusion, he is unable to appreciate the provision, protection and pleasures of his father’s palace.

Malaise is another symptom of dehydration. Malaise is a vague sense of physical or mental uneasiness, an unidentified sense of illness. Nothing seems quite right. Nothing satisfies. Nothing soothes. Apart from God, everything is vanity.

Streams of water or flowing water symbolize God’s spirit. **John 7:37-39** states: “*On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He who believes in Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.*” When we are reconciled with the Holy Father through Christ Jesus, we receive His Holy Spirit. That void, the emptiness of soul and spirit are filled with His Holy Spirit. However, it is a daily undertaking. We must be intentional about refreshing our spirit routinely, regularly and consistently to allow the living waters to flow over, in and through us. It is vital to life and spiritual living. It is the only way that we will be able to provide living waters for this dry and thirsty land.

Amen.



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 Theresa Jennings

*Even to your old age, I am He, and even to gray hairs I will carry you!
I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you. Is.46:4*

Lord God Almighty, we exalt you and praise your holy name. As Seniors, we are grateful for your grace and mercy. Thank you for your faithfulness and unfailing love over the years that you have allowed us to become Seniors. We pray for continual wisdom and guidance as we journey through life.

Thank you for giving us a satisfying life that is filled with good things around us. Keep us healthy and strong in mind, body and spirit that we may continue to be useful in Your Kingdom. We pray that our minds will be renewed daily as we read, meditate and trust Your Holy Word.

We declare and decree that we are covered by Your protection and that no weapon formed against us shall prosper. We will not worry or be anxious for anything because we know that You, Jehovah Jireh, will provide us our daily bread and there is no lack or want.

This is our prayer in the precious name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.



LET US PRAY!

A Prayer for the Family *By Sister Dorothy Fairweather* **The Senior Connection**

The Senior Connection has been praying for you and your family. During this time, we just want to remind you that God loves you. Out of His love, He can strengthen, encourage and love you in your walk with Him. If there is anyone you desire to share the love of God, through Jesus Christ, invite them to church. We will remind you of scriptures to use in doing so. It is our responsibility, as Christians, to share the Gospel with others so they too will receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Thank you for spending a few minutes out of your busy day to read the following scriptures.

Because of God's love, He sent His only begotten Son to die on the cross for the sin of the world. ***John 3:16***

Adam and Eve's sin of disobedience to God in the Garden of Eden caused us to be separated from God. ***Genesis 3:15*** and ***Romans 3:23, 6:23***

God provided Jesus Christ to take our sins and because of Him we are able to receive the love of God in our lives. ***1 John 5:11-13; Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:3-6*** and ***John 14:6***

Receiving Jesus Christ in our heart as Lord and Savior is an individualized experience. We cannot depend on our parent's salvation. We must get our own to be able to experience God's unconditional love and plan for their lives. ***John 1:12-13; Ephesians 2:8-9; Revelation 3:20; John 3:1-8*** and ***II Corinthians 5:17***

You may be asked what is the meaning of salvation? It means that forgiveness is given to us for sins, known and unknown, which separates us from God and faith to trust and believe God's word. Following are more scriptures that you may read – ***Romans 10:9-10*** and ***1 Timothy 2:5***.

Prayer for Bishop Gresham and First Family

By Sister Theresa Jennings

The Senior Connection

Father God, we come before you interceding on behalf of our Pastor, spiritual father and prophet Bishop Kevin V. Gresham Sr and family. First Father, we thank you for calling and sending him to shepherd the Greater Saint John Cathedral church family. We thank you for his anointing and guidance in equipping your children for the works of service to build up the body of Christ.

We ask that you continue to give him strength in the spirit and in his physical body, mind and soul. We pray that you will keep a hedge of protection around him that no weapon will form against him and that the current attack on his body be healed. We pray that Bishop Gresham will walk in peace knowing that you are with him and will never leave or forsake him.

Continue to give Bishop Gresham wisdom, clarity and understanding of your Word as he studies, prepares and delivers your Word to your disciples each week.

Surround him with willing laborers in ministry who will follow the vision you have already ordained for the body of Christ and Greater Saint John Cathedral family in particular.

We pray Your blessings over the Gresham Family as a whole. Bless and strengthen 1st Lady Denise as she stands with Bishop Gresham supporting him in ministry; recognizing that she witnesses the highs and low of ministry and sharing her husband as a Pastor’s wife. We pray that you will bless the entire Gresham Family and those connected to them for generations to come. Please bless them with the desires of their heart and that their every need will be met.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.



A Prayer for Healing

By Pastor Ruth Whitehead

The Senior Connection

Almighty and Powerful God, Jehovah Rapha, The Lord Who Heals, we say thank You Lord. We are so thankful. You loved us enough to give Your only begotten Son so that we can have life and have it more abundantly. We thought it was not robbery to come reminding You, Father that You said in **Matthew 4:23–24 (NKJV)** - ²³*And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.* ²⁴*Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them.*

2 Chronicles 7:14 (NKJV) – ¹⁴*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 I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*

Psalm 103:1–5 (NKJV) – ¹*Bless the Lord, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name!* ²*Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits:* ³*Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases,* ⁴*Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,* ⁵*Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagles.*

So, Father, we ask You to heal diseases and this Nation from corruption. We need an almighty healing throughout the land. Thank You for the blood that Jesus shared for us, the Holy Spirit that speaks to us, and the Guardian Angels who watch over us.

I pray this prayer in the Mighty Name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Prayer for Marriages
By Minister Minnie P. Rascoe
The Senior Connection

We thank God for giving Bishop Kevin V. Gresham Sr. this platform which the Senior Connection uses, on the first Thursday of the month, to pray on different topics. Today, I will be praying for marriages.

Dear Heavenly Father, Lord God Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, as it reads in **Psalm 24:1** – “*The earth is the LORD’s, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.*” Since we belong to You, then You are the one we seek with our concerns. According to statistics, the divorce rate in the U.S. is 45.1 percent. I know that I am not telling You something that You don’t already know because You are omnipresent, everywhere at the same time.

Father, we are praying for all marriages, whether they have been married 5 minutes or 65+ years. **Genesis 2:24** says “*Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*” Heavenly Father, help the couples to keep the sacred vows they made on their wedding day as they stood before You and confessed their love one to the other. Help them to bring love back into the equation as they pray together and seek Your guidance. Help them seek godly counseling and not just anyone speaking in their ears. Help the husband and wife to grow closer to You and to each other.

Help them in their daily walk in the fruit of the spirit as found in **Galatians 5:22** – “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness.*” Help them walk in love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Help couples to work together as one. Let them become as one as the Bible has stated. Help them draw on each other’s strengths and not point out their weaknesses. Heavenly Father, bless their holy commitment with courage, strength, tenacity and most of all with JOY.

Proverbs 18:22 tells us “*He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the LORD.*” Help the husband practice **Ephesians 5:25** which says “*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.*” Also, place on their minds **Ephesians 5:33** which reads “*Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*”

Heavenly Father, I am asking You to give married couples the wisdom and discernment to recognize the works of the flesh immediately that’s found in **Galatians 5:19-21**, which reads “¹⁹*Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: [a] adultery, [b] fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹envy, [c] murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*”

We decree and declare that no weapon formed against these marriages shall prosper. Heavenly Father, I leave this petition with You today and give You thanks for the answered prayers.

In the name of Your Son Jesus I pray.

Amen.



Gospel Humor
I'm a Senior

(To the tune of "Jesus Loves Me")

Submitted by Sister Dorothy Brooks

*Verse 1: I'm a senior this I know. Fore my body tells me so.
Aches and pains to me belong. Head to toe, they hurt so long.*

Chorus Yes, Advil helps me. Yes, Gas X helps me. Yes, Ben Gay helps me.
For my doctor tells me so.

*Verse 2: I'm a senior, that's my stride. On the tour bus I will ride.
Hotels, motels let us in. I am ready, you say when.*

Chorus Yes, Aspirin helps me. Yes, Centrum helps me. Yes, BC helps me.
For my doctor tells me so.

*Verse 3: I'm a senior with gray hair, wrinkles, age spots everywhere.
In retirement, I will spend time with grandkids with a grin.*

Chorus: Yes, Clairol helps me. Yes, Fade Cream helps me. Yes, Ensure helps me.
For my doctor tells me so.

*Verse 4: I'm a senior this I know. For my mirror tells me so,
Off to Vegas I will go. Play the slots and see the shows.*

Chorus: Yes, Zoloft helps me. Yes, Depends help me. Yes, Actonel helps me.
For my doctor tells me so.

*Verse 5: I'm a senior, aches will stay - bladder weakness day by day.
I just thank God I am here. When I pray, here's what He'll hear:*

Chorus: Thank You for Zoloft. Thank You for Depends. Thanks for my Heavenly home.
I'll be there and You know when.

Congratulations

CLASS OF 2023

College Graduates



IMANI WILLOUGHBY

- Graduated from Towson University
- Bachelor of Science in Sports Management and Business Administration
- GPA: 3.0
- Girls Basketball Manager
- Girls Softball Manager
- Favorite Scripture: Isaiah 41:10



LEE KNIGHT

- Graduated from American International University
- Bachelor of Science Degree
- GPA: 3.5
- Greater's A/V Ministry
- Favorite Scripture: Phils. 4:15

High School Graduates



ANTONIA CARR

- Graduated from CMIT High School
- GPA: 3.67
- National Honor Society Member
- School Gaming Club
- PG Police Department Youth Citizen Police Academy
- Ten Years Girl Scout
- Daughter of: Anthony & Renee Carr
- Favorite Scripture: Psalm 19:14



SYDNEY JACKSON

- Graduated from College Park Academy Public Charter School
- GPA: 4.1
- Principal's Honor Roll
- Advance Placement Scholar
- Lady Phoenix Dance Team
- Senior Class Secretary
- Zelophehad's Daughters
- Future: North Carolina A&T
- Daughter of: Min. Samaria Jackson



LORIN NAPPER

- Graduated from St. Charles High School
- GPA: 3.25
- Principal's Honor Roll
- Attending: Southern Maryland Community College
- Future: University of Maryland
- Son of: Keisha Napper & DeWayne Murray
- Favorite Scripture: John 3:16



NIA MOORE

- Graduated from Maurice McDonough High School
- GPA: 3.43
- Attending: Tallahassee Community College/Prenursing
- Future: Florida A&M University/ Nursing/Neonatologist

Congratulations

CLASS OF 2023

Grade Progression

Micah Carroll	Entering 11 th grade	Trinitee Ford	Entering 8 th grade
Jacobe Clark	Entering 11 th grade		
Wisdom N. Peterson	Entering 11 th grade	John Jackson	Entering 7 th grade
Anthony Simmons Jr.	Entering 11 th grade	Corinne Vinson	Entering 7 th grade
Logan Smith	Entering 11 th grade	Mehki Williams	Entering 7 th grade
Naveah Woodland	Entering 11 th grade		
		Alyssa Jackson	Entering 6 th grade
Nicholas Armstrong	Entering 10 th grade	Bailey Jordan	Entering 6 th grade
NáShayla Cusseaux	Entering 10 th grade	Haley Rogers	Entering 6 th grade
Kaylah Howard	Entering 10 th grade	Kennedy Smith	Entering 6 th grade
Kaitlyn Palmer	Entering 10 th grade	Kristian Smith	Entering 6 th grade
Taylor Rogers	Entering 10 th grade		
LLoy Smith	Entering 10 th grade	Elijah Cox	Entering 5 th grade
		Xavian Cusseaux	Entering 5 th grade
Taja Davis	Entering 8 th grade		
Khylah Kenon	Entering 8 th grade	Avalyn Osorio	Entering 2 th grade
Keonie Lucas	Entering 8 th grade		
Makenzie White	Entering 8 th grade	Nolan Osorio	Kindergarten

Congratulations to all of the Class of 2023 graduates from nursery school, elementary school, middle school, high school and college.

You Did It!

Your Greater Family wishes you much success in the next chapter of your life.

May God bless and keep you.

Congratulations

CLASS OF 2023

The Greater Christian Community Daycare Center



BENJAMIN CLARK



AIDEN COOK



TYLER COOPERWOOD



RICHARD DUNN



EIL ELHAGE



CALEB FREDERICK



CONRAD TAYLOR-MONK



MELODY RONE



ARIA SHAW



ELLA TOUSSAINT



BYRON TIBUE

*Congratulation to the
2023 Graduating Class of
Greater Christian Community
Daycare Center.*

Let's Eat – Strawberry Recipes

Strawberry Tiramisu



YIELD Serves 9	PREP TIME 1 hrs.	COOK TIME 0 mins.
--------------------------	----------------------------	-----------------------------

This delicious Strawberry Tiramisu is brimming with strawberry flavor! It has layers of fluffy ladyfingers dipped in strawberry syrup, topped with the creamy Mascarpone Filling, Strawberry Jam, and chopped strawberries.

5. If you don't have a thermometer, simply stop cooking the jam once it is dark and thick.
6. Remove the jam to a bowl, place a piece of plastic wrap directly on the surface of the jam and let it cool down. Refrigerate for a couple of hours before using.

Mascarpone Filling

1. In a large bowl, beat the mascarpone cheese with 1/4 cup of powdered sugar, the lemon juice and the vanilla extract using an electric mixer at medium speed. The mascarpone can be straight from the fridge, no need to let it become softened. Beat just until combined. Set aside.
2. In another bowl, whip the cold heavy whipping cream with the remaining 1/4 cup of powdered sugar for 2 to 3 minutes, or until slightly stiff peaks form. Don't over whip.
3. Add half of the whipped cream to the mascarpone and fold to combine.
4. Then add the remaining half of the whipped cream and fold again.

Strawberry Syrup

1. Mix the jam and the liqueur (or juice if substituting). Whisk until combined. Set aside.
2. You can use strawberry juice, orange juice, or Grand Marnier instead of strawberry liqueur.

To assemble

1. I used a 9x9" pan. You can use a 8x8" pan, or a 11x6". You can use smaller pans if you have more than one.
2. Dip each ladyfinger in the Strawberry Syrup, and lay them on the bottom of the pan one next to the other.
3. Top the ladyfingers with half of the Mascarpone Filling. Use a small offset spatula to spread the filling evenly.
4. Drizzle about 1/2 cup of jam on top of the mascarpone. If the jam is too thick and not spreading easily, simply add a bit of water or strawberry liqueur until the jam has a spreading consistency.
5. Sprinkle chopped strawberries evenly on top of the jam.
6. Now make another layer of ladyfingers on top of the chopped strawberries.
7. Dip each ladyfinger in the syrup and place on top of the layered dessert. Push down gently on the cookies as you place them on top of the strawberries.
8. Top the cookies with the remaining half of the Mascarpone Filling.
9. Let the tiramisu sit in the fridge overnight.

Ingredients

Strawberry Jam

- 4 cups quartered strawberries 600 grams
- 1 cup granulated sugar 200 grams

Strawberry Syrup

- 1/3 cup strawberry jam
- 1 cup strawberry liqueur read notes for substitution

Mascarpone Filling

- 2 cups mascarpone cheese 452 grams
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar divided (62.5 grams)
- 3 tbsp lemon juice 45 ml
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1 3/4 cup heavy whipping cream very cold, 420 ml

To Assemble

- 3/4 cup chopped strawberries 112 grams
- 28 ladyfinger cookies

For the top

- 1/2 cup whipping cream very cold
- 1 cup freeze dried strawberries 28 grams

Directions

Strawberry Jam

1. Add the chopped strawberries, sugar, and lemon juice to a saucepan.
2. Cook the strawberries, stirring occasionally, at medium-high heat.
3. When the strawberries come to a boil, turn the heat down and continue to cook at medium-low heat.
4. Cook until a thermometer reads between 200° and 220°F. The jam will be dark and thick. If it starts to stick to the bottom of the pan, turn the heat down even lower.

continue on page 19

To serve

1. Before serving, make the whipped cream for the top. Simply whip the heavy cream for a couple of minutes at medium-high speed, or until stiff peaks form. Place it in a piping bag. This is optional, you only have to top the tiramisu with whipped cream if you wish to do so. You can get creative and do a different decoration.
2. Pulse the freeze dried strawberries in a small food processor until they become a fine powder.
3. Sift the freeze dried strawberry powder on top of the tiramisu. Pipe whipped cream around the edges, and top with fresh strawberries if desired.
4. Slice and serve.

Storage

This Strawberry Tiramisu will store well in the fridge for up to 3 days.

Recipe Notes

Strawberry liqueur: You can substitute the strawberry liqueur for orange juice, strawberry juice or other types of liqueur such as Grand Marnier which is an orange liqueur.

Balsamic vinegar: add about 2 teaspoons of balsamic vinegar to the strawberry syrup if desired, the tangy flavor of the vinegar goes really well with the sweet strawberry.

Ladyfinger cookies: the amount you will need might depend on the size of the pan you are using.

Pan size: I used a 9x9” pan. You can use a 8x8” pan, or a 11x6”. You can use smaller pans if you have more than one. One batch of this recipe can be divided between two 6x6” pans.

Strawberry jam: you can use store-bought if you don’t want to make your own jam, it will turn out just as delicious!

Mascarpone cheese: you can substitute it for cream cheese, but it simply won’t be as light, it will be more dense. Also, you have to make sure the cream cheese is softened when using it in the recipe, while the mascarpone doesn’t have to be.

Recipe twists: add a bit of orange zest or lemon zest to the mascarpone filling to brighten up the mixture.

Recipe by: *Pies & Tacos*

Sweet Southern Strawberry Iced Tea



Sweet tea is a staple in the south. Not only do most southerners know how to brew the perfect pot of sweet tea, but they know how to make it even more special by adding fruit. This sweet strawberry iced tea recipe is what to serve at your next summer get-together, party or holiday like Memorial Day, Labor Day or July 4th. Or today, just because.

YIELD	PREP TIME	COOK TIME
Serves 12	10 mins.	10 mins.

Ingredients

- 10 cups water (divided)
- 6 family-size teabags
- 1 cup granulated sugar (or to taste)
- juice of 1 lemon
- About 12 large strawberries, cleaned and chopped
- Small strawberries, for serving (optional)

Directions

1. Bring 3 cups of water to a boil in a small pot. Add the tea bags, turn off the heat and let it steep 10 minutes. Remove the teabags, add the sugar and stir to dissolve.
2. Put the strawberries into a blender or food processor and puree.
3. Put 7 cups of water into a drink pitcher. Add the sweetened tea, stir and add the strawberry puree and lemon juice. Stir. Serve over ice with additional strawberries in the glass.

Recipe Notes

Try this fruit-flavored iced tea recipe with other berries like raspberries, blackberries and blueberries.

Adjust the sugar to fit your tastes. If you’re concerned about the amount of sugar, start with 1/4 cup and add more as needed.

Recipe by: *30 Seconds Food*

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Greater Saint John Cathedral

Bishop Kevin V. Gresham Sr., Senior Pastor

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MSDE LICENSED CENTER



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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.

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Phone: 301.574.0935 • 301.574.5160 (fax)

A background image of two young children, a girl and a boy, smiling and looking towards the right. The girl is on the left, wearing a light blue shirt, and the boy is on the right, wearing a red shirt. The background is a warm, yellowish-orange color with colorful, abstract shapes in blue, pink, and green.

**GREATER CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY
DAYCARE CENTER**

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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

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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 #FIGHTLIKEA CONQUEROR

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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



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

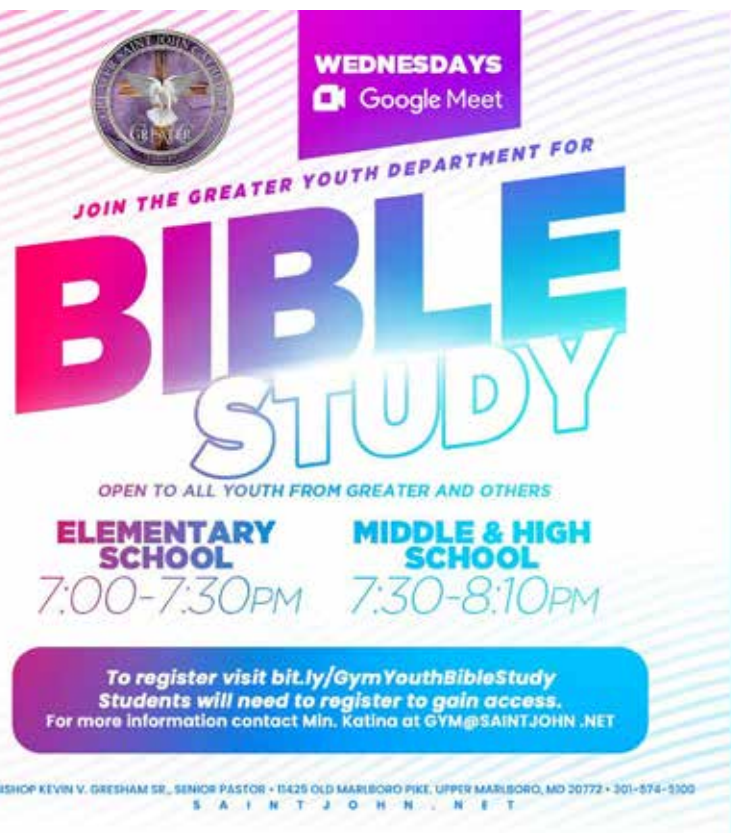
THURSDAYS AT 12NOON

*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.

Greater Saint John Cathedral

Bishop Kevin V. Gresham Sr., Senior Pastor

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’s disciples and community. 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!



HOUSE

All the words are hidden vertically, horizontally or diagonally—in both directions. The letters that remain unused form a sentence from left to right.

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

WORD LIST				
ARCADE	COLONNADE	FLOOR	KITCHEN	STUDIO
BATHROOM	CORRIDOR	FOUNDATIONS	OFFICE	TURRET
BEDROOM	DOORSTEP	GARAGE	PATIO	WALL ANCHOR
BEDSTEAD	DORMER WINDOW	GUTTER	SHUTTER	WELL
CEILING	DRAINPIPE	HAT RACK	SITTING AREA	WINDOWSILL
CHIMNEY	FIRE ESCAPE	HOLLOW WALL	STOVE	

FUN ZONE

Buster and Lily Fields on their way to church always.. **DRESSED TO THE NINES.**

lookin' good..
feelin' good.



Larson - THEBACKPEW.COM

.. your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit .. You are not your own. (so don't go lookin' shabby). **1 Cor 6:19**

I got a 67! You mean I miss going to Heaven by 3 lousy % points.



There is No Entrance Exam to Heaven ..and if there was it would use a very 'Graceful' curve. **Ro 10:9-11**

Good Grief.. does that preacher fella think I came to church to **LIP READ** his sorry sermons?



Larson - THEBACKPEW.COM

Once again Norman's hearing aid batteries died just in time for church.

The weekly race to the **SUNSHINE SENIOR CENTER** Lunch Buffet became known as **CHARIOTS OF FIBER**

Better what the eye sees than the roving of the appetite. This is chasing after the wind!

MOVE IT.. or LOSE IT.

Ecc 6:9



THEBACKPEW.COM - JLarson



Mark Your Calendars EVENTS



AUGUST

6th – Pastor’s Appreciation Sunday

SEPTEMBER

10th – Super Sunday
23rd – Greater Youth Ministry Back to School Event
24th – Founders’ Day

THEME FOR 2023



.....
Think on This:

Your time is limited, so don’t waste it living someone else’s life. Don’t be trapped by dogma – which is living with other people’s thinking. — **Steve Jobs**

Everybody wants to be famous, but nobody wants to do the work. I live by that. You grind hard so that you can play hard. At the end of the day, you put all the work in and eventually it will pay off. It could be a year or 30 years. Eventually, your hard work will pay off. — **Kevin Hart**

I have missed over 9,000 shots in my career. I have lost almost 300 games. Twenty-six I have been trusted to take the winning shot and missed. I have failed over and over again in my life. And that is why I have succeeded. — **Michael Jordan**

WAYS TO **give**

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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.