

# VERMONT AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER



VERMONT AVENUE  
— BAPTIST CHURCH —  
— est. 1866 —

1630 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
Rev. Dr. Michael C. Miller, Interim Pastor

CHURCH OFFICE: 202-667-1078  
[www.vabc.church](http://www.vabc.church)

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PUZZLE KEY

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### AUGUST INSPIRATION

8/2 - Sister Karla Abney

8/9 - Volunteer Choir

8/16 - J. R. Wheeler Men's Chorus

8/23 - Brother Shawn Ruffing

8/30 - The Instrumentalists

### DEACON JAMES E. STUCKEY

#### CAR WASH & BBQ

Saturday, August 15<sup>th</sup>

11AM – 4PM

### 160<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY SERVICE

Sunday, September 20<sup>th</sup>

(Dinner Tickets Are Available)

## LET'S STAY CONNECTED

### IN PERSON

#### *Worship Service*

Sundays in August @ 10:00AM

Communion on 2nd Sunday

For more opportunities to  
serve, programs, and worship  
services, check Our Social  
Media, Take One Box, or  
Website

### VIRTUAL

#### *Sunday School*

Sundays at 8:30 AM

ZOOM Meeting ID: 659 757 9095

Passcode: Vermont

#### *Social Media*

YouTube/ TikTok - @VABC1630

FaceBook/X - @VABC1630

Instagram - @VABCD1630

Website - [www.VABC.church](http://www.VABC.church)

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR MINISTERIAL STAFF

I greet you in the matchless name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

In the book of Isaiah 61:7, God promises restoration, joy, and a double portion of blessing to the people of God to replace the disgrace and trouble they previously suffered. I pray that you will experience a double portion of strength, health, and protection.



Hold fast and stand on the promises of God. Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross. Lift high His royal banner; it must not suffer loss. From vict'ry unto vict'ry, His army shall He lead, till ev'ry foe is vanquished and Christ is Lord indeed.

Have the assurance that God will always be near, and know that He is ready, willing, and able to help. Remember that we are heirs of His salvation, purchased by God, born of His Spirit, and washed in His blood.

We serve the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. We are the royal family of God. We are princes and princesses of the Most High. So continue to serve with a smile. Pray without ceasing. Let the Holy Spirit abide in you and with you.

**Matthew 28:18** says, *"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."* So, no matter what those in earthly power are doing, remember that our Heavenly Father has it all under control. His Son, Jesus, came down from heaven to seal the deal. We are going to make it through.

*"The Light of God directs me. The Power of God protects me. Wherever I am, God is. Wherever you are, God is. Yesterday God blessed me, and today He did the same. How long will this continue? Forever! Praise His name! Thank You, Jesus. Thank You, Jesus. Thank You, Jesus."*

Keep being beacons of light for Jesus. May God bless and keep you.

- Shared by the Family of Rev. Dr. Cleveland B. Sparrow, Sr.

### MINISTERIAL STAFF

Reverend Dr. Michael C. Miller – Interim Pastor  
Reverend. Dr. Isaac A. Fox – Former Interim Pastor  
Minister Jeanette M. Clyburn  
Reverend Wayne Quick  
In Memoriam: Reverend Cleveland B. Sparrow, Sr.  
Reverend Dr. Angela Fox Wheeler

### AUGUST HEALTH AWARENESS

- **Children's Eye Health and Safety Month** with the National Eye Institute Trusted Source
- **Gastroparesis Awareness Month** with the International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders
- **National Breastfeeding Month** with the U.S. Breastfeeding Committee
- **National Immunization Awareness Month** with the CDC Trusted Source
- **Psoriasis Action Month** with the National Psoriasis Foundation
- **Spinal Muscular Atrophy Awareness Month** with Cure SMA
- **Summer Sun Safety Month** with the American Cancer Society Trusted Source
- **National Minority Donor Awareness Day (August 1)** with The Alliance
- **World Lung Cancer Day (August 1)** with multiple organizations
- **World Breastfeeding Week (August 1 to 7)** with the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action

#### A PRAYER FOR THE BODY OF CHRIST

Lord, we lift up the Body of Christ to You and ask that You unite us in faith, love, and purpose. Help us to reflect the heart of Jesus in all that we say and do, serving You together with humility, grace, and compassion.

Strengthen Your Church to be a light in a world that longs for hope. Bless pastors, ministers, deacons, deaconesses, missionaries, and every believer as we proclaim the Gospel and care for those in need. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit so our lives reflect Your love, mercy, and truth.

May we encourage one another, faithfully use the gifts You have given us, and bring glory to Your name as we build Your Kingdom. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

- **National Health Center Week (August 4 to 10)** with multiple organizations
- **World Breast Cancer Research Day (August 18)** with the Tower Cancer Research Foundation
- **Contact Lens Health Week (August 19 to 23)** with the CDC Trusted Source
- **National Grief Awareness Day (August 30)** with the American Psychological Association
- **International Overdose Awareness Day (August 31)** with the Pennington Institute

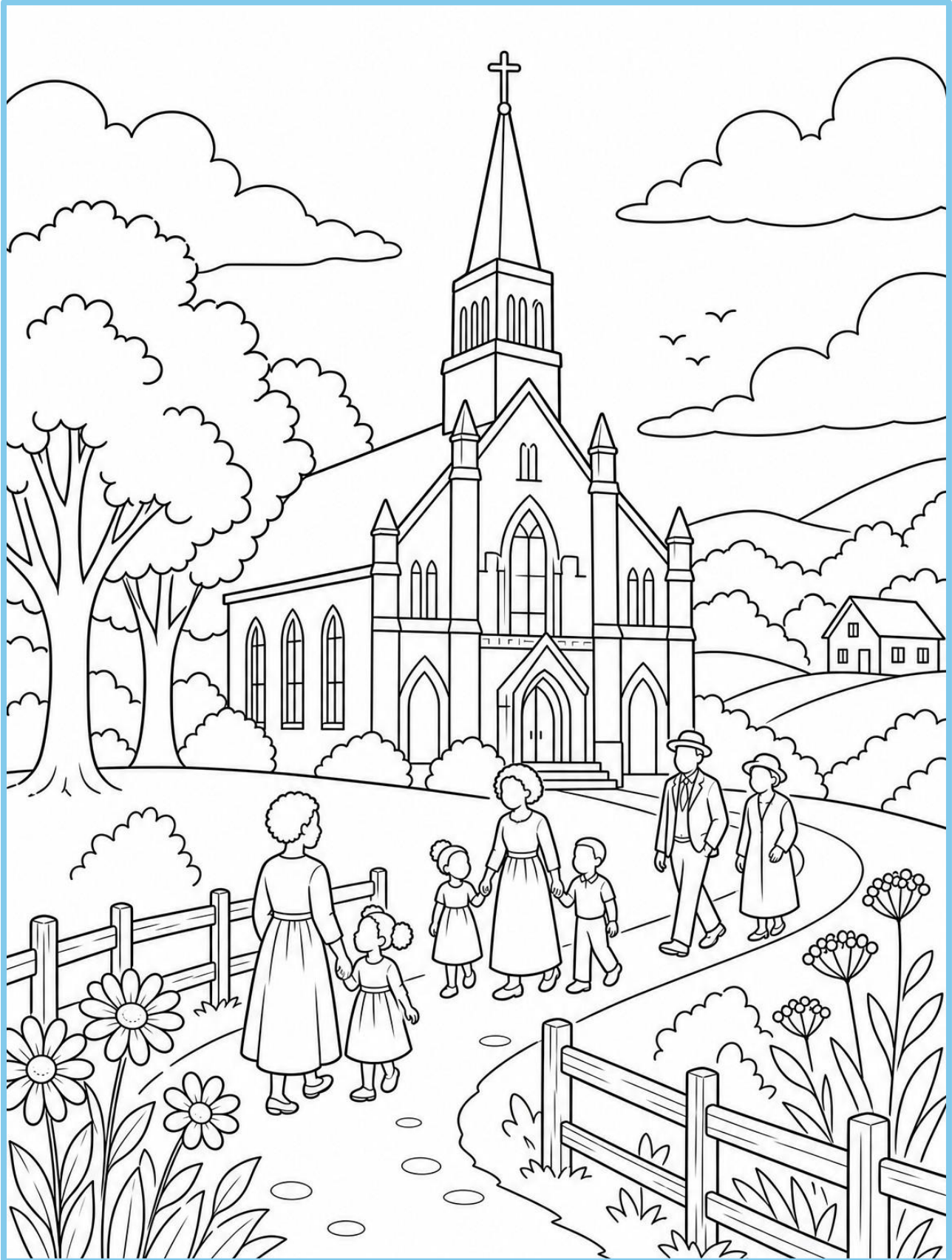
*For more information check out our Health Awareness Board on the first floor.*

Identify as many photos as you can!



**GUESS WHO?**

See "Answers" for complete rules, deadline, and prize details.



## DID YOU KNOW?

### Reverend James Edward Willis (1911 – 1928)

Reverend James Edward Willis, affectionately known as "Little David," became the third pastor of VABC in 1911. Gifted with a powerful preaching ministry and a warm pastoral spirit, Reverend Willis faithfully guided the congregation during a period of tremendous change for both the church and the African American community.

During his pastorate, the church expanded its physical facilities with the construction of the rear portion of the main sanctuary, including the choir loft and pulpit. These additions reflected the church's growing membership and its increasing role as a place of worship, fellowship, and service in the nation's capital.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT** is at the heart of who we are at VABC. Events like our ***Deacon James E. Stuckey Car Wash & BBQ*** provide an opportunity to connect with neighbors, strengthen relationships, and serve our community in a welcoming and meaningful way. We will also have a Bake Sale, Arts & Crafts, and Live Music!!! Whether you're stopping by for a car wash, enjoying great food, or simply spending time with friends, we invite everyone to come fellowship with us as we build community one conversation at a time.

**SAT AUG 15<sup>TH</sup> 11AM – 4PM**

*See the Take One Cart in the Lobby, our website, or social media for more information*

Rev. Willis ministered during a pivotal era in American history. As the Great Migration brought thousands of African Americans from the rural South to cities such as Washington, D.C., Black churches became vital institutions that offered spiritual guidance, educational opportunities, and community support. His ministry also coincided with the founding of the (NAACP) in 1909 and the heightened struggle against racial injustice, segregation, and disenfranchisement. During this period, African American churches served as centers of hope, leadership, and civic engagement, helping communities confront the challenges of the Jim Crow era.

Following the end of WWI in 1918, many African American veterans returned home expecting greater equality and opportunity, only to face continued discrimination. Churches like Vermont Avenue Baptist responded by strengthening their ministries and providing encouragement, stability, and a renewed sense of purpose to their congregations.

Reverend Willis faithfully served until his sudden passing in 1928. His ministry left VABC spiritually stronger and physically prepared for future growth. His legacy remains one of faithful preaching, steadfast leadership, and unwavering commitment to advancing the mission of Christ during a defining chapter in both church and African American history.



**CHILDREN'S BOOK LIST (Ages 3 – 10)**

**THEME:** Learning About Faith, Courage & Kindness

1. God's Very Good Idea by Trilla Newbell
2. The Donkey who carried a King by R.C. Sproul
3. The Ology by Marty Machowski
4. Tiny Truths: Wonder & Wisdom by Joanna Rivard & Tim Penner
5. Why Do We Say Good Night? By Michelle M. Adams

**REFLECTION:** *How can I show kindness and courage this month?*

**YOUNG ADULTS BOOK LIST (Ages 11 – 18)**

**THEME:** Identity, Faith & Purpose

1. Seen by Priscilla Shirer & Annie F. Downs
2. Set Apart by Sadie R. Huff
3. Own Your Everyday by Jordan L. Dooley
4. Live Fearless by Sadie R. Huff
5. Made For This Jennie Allen

**REFLECTION:** *What gifts has Yahweh given me to use this school year?*

***Be strong and courageous... for Yahweh your God will be with you whenever you go***  
**Joshua 1:9**



**ADULT BOOK LIST**

**THEME:** Spiritual Growth, Healing & Wisdom

1. None Like Him by Jen Wilkin
2. The Deeply Formed Life by Rich Villodas
3. Find Your People by Jennie Allen
4. Discerning the Voice of God by Priscilla Shirer
5. Emotionally Healthy Spirituality by Peter Scazzero

**REFLECTION:** *What is Yahweh teaching me in this new season?*

Provided by Sis. Nikita Campbell Woodward (Push a Book or 2 Ministry)

## Club / Organization / Ministry Highlight

### BIRTHDAY FELLOWSHIP – CONNECTING HEARTS

*"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."*  
**Romans 12:4–5 (KJV)**

The Birthday Fellowship of VABC was initiated by our fourth pastor, Rev. Dr. Chasteen T. Murray. He understood the importance of creating opportunities for members to connect in ways that transcended social and economic differences. Rev. Murray envisioned a tangible expression of the truth that we are one church, regardless of education, occupation, or life circumstances. From that vision, the Birthday Fellowship was born.

Each month, one or more Birthday Fellowship groups plan and host a program and meal, providing opportunities for members to share their talents while enjoying meaningful Christian fellowship.

That vision was further strengthened under the leadership of Rev. Dr. John R. Wheeler, who made the Birthday Fellowship an important part of welcoming new members into the life of the church. He would often remind new members that they were automatically members of the Birthday Fellowship for their birth month. It was his way of ensuring that everyone immediately had a place to belong, people with whom they shared something in common, and an opportunity to begin building relationships as they prayerfully discovered where God was leading them to serve through the church's ministries and organizations.

Whether you are a lifelong member or have recently joined our church family, your Birthday Fellowship offers an opportunity to build lasting friendships, share your gifts, and celebrate the unity we have in Christ. Together, we can continue this cherished tradition and ensure that it remains a vibrant expression of fellowship for generations to come.

**Save the Date!** Join us on Sat, Dec 5th, for a special Birthday Fellowship celebration. Be sure to watch the VABC Newsletter for additional details in the coming months.

Shawn E. Ruffing, Leader  
VABC Birthday Fellowship

## PRAYER FOR OUR SICK AND SHUT-IN

*"The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.."*

— Psalm 34:18 KJV

Heavenly Father, we lift before You all who are sick and shut-in. Thank You for being our refuge, comfort, and ever-present help in times of need. Bring healing to those who are ill, strength to those who are weary, and peace to every anxious heart.

Lord, surround them with Your love and remind them that Your presence is with them each day. Bless their families, caregivers, and all who minister to them with wisdom, patience, and compassion.

May Your unfailing love encourage their hearts, renew their hope, and sustain them with Your grace. In Jesus Name we pray, Amen.

### BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

Wishing all those celebrating birthdays in August a joyful and blessed birthday month. May God continue to guide, strengthen, and bless you with peace, love, and happiness throughout the year ahead. Happy Birthday!

**Let us pray.** Lord, we thank You for the blessing of another year of life for those celebrating birthdays this month. We praise You for Your faithfulness and the many ways You have sustained them. Grant them renewed strength, joy, and hearts filled with hope. Lead them in Your perfect will, surround them with Your peace, and bless them with Your grace and unfailing love. In Jesus Name we pray, Amen.

### MOTHER/FATHER

VACANT

*(For More Information Contact: Brother Shawn Ruffing)*



**Official Flower:** Gladiolus. It means beauty, strength of character, love, marriage and family.

**Official Colors:** Light green, reflecting the color of the birthstone peridot.

**Birthstone:** Peridot, which is a yellowish-green to greenish-yellow gemstone. The color symbolizes growth, prosperity, and love. Peridot is known for its unique olive-green hue, which can vary depending on its iron content.

**Historical Name Origin:** The eighth month of the Gregorian calendar was named for the first Roman emperor, Augustus Caesar, in 8 BCE. Its original name was Sextilis, Latin for "sixth month," indicating its position in the early Roman calendar.

## YOUNG ADULT CORNER

*"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."* — Proverbs 3:5–6 KJV

Being a young adult today requires courage. Every day brings new challenges—making important life decisions, pursuing education or career goals, managing finances, caring for family, and navigating a world filled with uncertainty and constant distractions. For many young African American adults, these responsibilities are often come with the desire to succeed while overcoming barriers that generations before them worked tirelessly to remove.

Yet your story is not defined by the obstacles you face. It is shaped by the God who walks beside you. The same Lord who sustained your parents, grandparents, and ancestors through seasons of struggle and triumph is the One who continues to strengthen you today. Their legacy of faith, perseverance, and hope reminds us that with God, every challenge can become an opportunity for growth and purpose.

Never underestimate the influence you have. Your words can encourage, your actions can inspire, and your faith can impact your family, your church, and your community. Choose integrity over shortcuts, compassion over criticism, and hope over despair. Continue to grow spiritually, seek godly wisdom, and

boldly use your gifts to serve others. God is preparing you not only for success, but for significance in His Kingdom

### OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

If you are interested, see the following for more information on how you can serve.

#### A/V Ministry

Trustee Solomon Sparrow

#### Culinary Ministry

Trustee Selena Anderson

#### Missionary Ministry

Minister Jeanette Clyburn

#### Nurses Unit

Deaconess Norma Jean Taylor

#### Youth Empowerment Committee

Sister Cynthia Milanez

#### Music Ministry

Trustee Solomon Sparrow

**Let Us Pray.** Heavenly Father, thank You for the young adults in our families, churches, and communities. Lead them with Your wisdom, strengthen their faith, and give them courage to follow the path You have prepared for them. Protect them from discouragement, surround them with godly influences, and help them shine as examples of Your love and truth. In Jesus Name we pray, Amen.

*Young Adults, we want to hear from you... we invite you to share your reflections, social commentary, words of encouragement, or faith-filled insights for possible publication in our newsletter. Email submissions to [cmsocialmedia@vabc.org](mailto:cmsocialmedia@vabc.org) or see any member of the Communications Ministry.*

## SENIOR'S CORNER

### *How to Protect Yourself from a Smartphone Scam*

Most of us rely on our cell phones every day, but they can also become targets for criminals. One growing scam is called **SIM swapping** or **SIM hijacking**. A warning sign is suddenly losing cellular service for no apparent reason. If your phone only works when connected to Wi-Fi, someone may have transferred your phone number to another SIM card that they control. Once they have your number, they may be able to intercept security codes and attempt to access your bank accounts, credit cards, email, and other sensitive accounts.

#### How to Protect Yourself

- ✓ Use strong, unique passwords for all important accounts.
- ✓ Turn on two-factor authentication whenever possible.
- ✓ Never share passwords, PINs, or one-time security codes by phone, text, or email.
- ✓ Limit the personal information you post on social media.
- ✓ Check with your wireless carrier to see if they offer SIM lock or SIM protection features.

#### If You Think You've Been Targeted

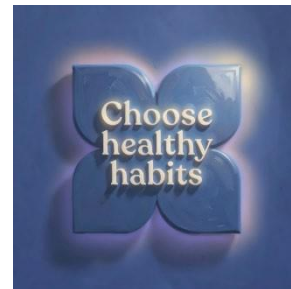
- ✓ Contact your bank and credit card companies immediately to protect your accounts.
- ✓ Notify your mobile phone carrier so they can help restore your phone service and secure your number.
- ✓ Report the incident to local law enforcement or the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center.

A few simple precautions today can help protect your identity, your finances, and your peace of mind tomorrow.

***"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Proverbs 4:23 (KJV)***

*Family Features #17978*

*For more advice to protect against smartphone scams, visit [Verizon.com](https://www.verizon.com)*



### VABC PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

While this section of our newsletter typically highlights the ministries and programs of VABC, we pause to celebrate Sister Marie Campbell, who was honored during the Whittemore High School Class of 1956's 70th Class Reunion, held on July 18, 2026, in Conway, South Carolina.

Sister Campbell's story is one of faith, excellence, and perseverance. As the Valedictorian of the Class of 1956, she distinguished herself through academic achievement, discipline, and determination, setting a standard of excellence that has continued to characterize her life.

Her accomplishment is even more meaningful when viewed through the history of Whittemore High School. Established during Reconstruction, Whittemore became the educational cornerstone of the African American community in Horry County. For many years, it was the county's only public high school for Black students, preparing generations of young people to excel despite the limitations and inequities of segregation. More than a school, Whittemore was a center of learning, leadership, and hope, where educators challenged students to pursue excellence and to use their gifts in service to others.

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 12*



The Class of 1956 graduated during a period when opportunities were often limited, yet their aspirations remained limitless. Their perseverance helped pave the way for future generations, proving that determination and education could overcome barriers that society attempted to impose.

Among those graduates stood Marie Campbell, whose academic excellence earned her the distinction of valedictorian. Her success reflected not only her own dedication but also the enduring spirit of a community that believed education could transform lives. Those same qualities continue to be evident today.

Here at VABC, Sister Campbell is known for her steadfast faith, gracious spirit, and faithful presence. Through her quiet example, she has demonstrated that a life of Christian discipleship is measured not only by what we achieve, but by how faithfully we serve God and encourage others along the journey.

As classmates, family, and friends gathered to celebrate seventy years since the Class of 1956 graduated from Whittemore High School, we join them in giving thanks for a woman whose life continues to reflect excellence, humility, resilience, and faith. Sister Campbell embodies the enduring legacy of Whittemore High School while reminding us that the greatest accomplishments are those that continue to bless others. May God continue to bless you with health, joy, and peace in the years ahead.

*"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matthew 5:16 (KJV)*

**(Sister Marie Campbell is on the far left in the photo above)**

### ANSWERS

Submit your best guess! Place your entry in the designated box located in the church lobby. **All entries must be received by 1PM on August 30<sup>th</sup> to be eligible.**

### THE PRIZE IS A TICKET TO OUR 160<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY DINNER!!!!

The winner(s) will be announced in the September newsletter. In the event of multiple correct entries, a drawing will be held to determine the winner(s).

### COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY

**[CMSocialMedia@vabc.org](mailto:CMSocialMedia@vabc.org)**

TEAM LEAD: Sister Lanita Sparrow SOCIAL

MEDIA: Sister Cynthia A. Wheeler

NEWSLETTER: Rev. Dr. Angela Fox Wheeler

BULLETIN BOARDS: Sister Debra Campbell

PHOTOGRAPHER: Trustee Solomon S. Sparrow

PROJECT MANAGER: Trustee Renata Miller

WEBSITE: Sister Lanita Sparrow/Stephanie Scott

LIASION: Trustee Alfred Martin