

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

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UPCOMING EVENTS

SUN SEPT 20TH @ 10AM
160th ANNIVERSARY SERVICE

Guest Speaker
Rev. Dr. Quinton Robertson, President
Philadelphia, PA State Minister's
Conference

SUN SEPT 27TH @ 2:30PM
TAGE In Concert

SAT OCT 3RD @ 11AM
Men's Day Committee Fish Fry

SUN OCT 18TH @ 3PM
Rev. Shaun & Friends
"God's Word In Song"

LET'S STAY CONNECTED

IN PERSON

Worship Service

Sundays in Sept @ 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

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR



Greetings Vermont Avenue Baptist Church family. I know all had a happy and joyful summer. The church thanks members and friends for a successful Women's Day, May 15, 2026, and Men's Day Car Wash and Cook Out, August 15, 2026.

As summer is ending, we will be celebrating the 160-year Anniversary of the church on September 20, 2026. Let the church give thanks and praise to Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Vermont Avenue Baptist Church has experienced some challenging times in the past several years and I'm asking all members to come a special, Pray, Peace and Healing Service.

Sunday, September 13, 2026, is Holy Communion Sunday and I'm asking all members to please join in the service for **Pray, Peace, and Healing**. Please, let us put our misunderstandings aside with **Pray, Peace, and Healing** to the Lord for He has blessed **Vermont Avenue Baptist Church for 160 years in the same location. PEACE AND LOVE**

- Rev. Dr. Michael C. Miller, Interim Pastor

MINISTERIAL STAFF

Reverend Dr. Michael C. Miller – Interim Pastor
Reverend. Dr. Isaac A. Fox – Former Interim Pastor
Minister Jeanette M. Clyburn
Reverend Wayne Quick
Reverend Dr. Angela Fox Wheeler

SEPTEMBER HEALTH AWARENESS

Healthy Aging Month promotes strategies for older adults to stay active and maintain overall health, with resources from the CDC and Healthy People 2030 to support physical activity and wellness.

National Recovery Month raises awareness about mental health and addiction recovery, highlighting resources for substance use prevention and treatment.

National Sickle Cell Awareness Month educates communities about sickle cell disease, newborn screening, and support for affected individuals, with guidance from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

HIV/AIDS Awareness initiatives in September aim to increase understanding, prevention, and support for those living with HIV/AIDS.

National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month emphasizes mental health education, suicide prevention strategies, and community support programs.

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

A PRAYER FOR VERMONT AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH

Lord, we thank You for 160 years of faith, worship, service, and fellowship at Vermont Avenue Baptist Church. We are grateful for those who came before us, whose faith, sacrifice, prayers, and service helped build and sustain this church. We thank You for every pastor, minister, deacon, deaconess, missionary, leader, member, and friend who has contributed to the life and ministry of VABC.

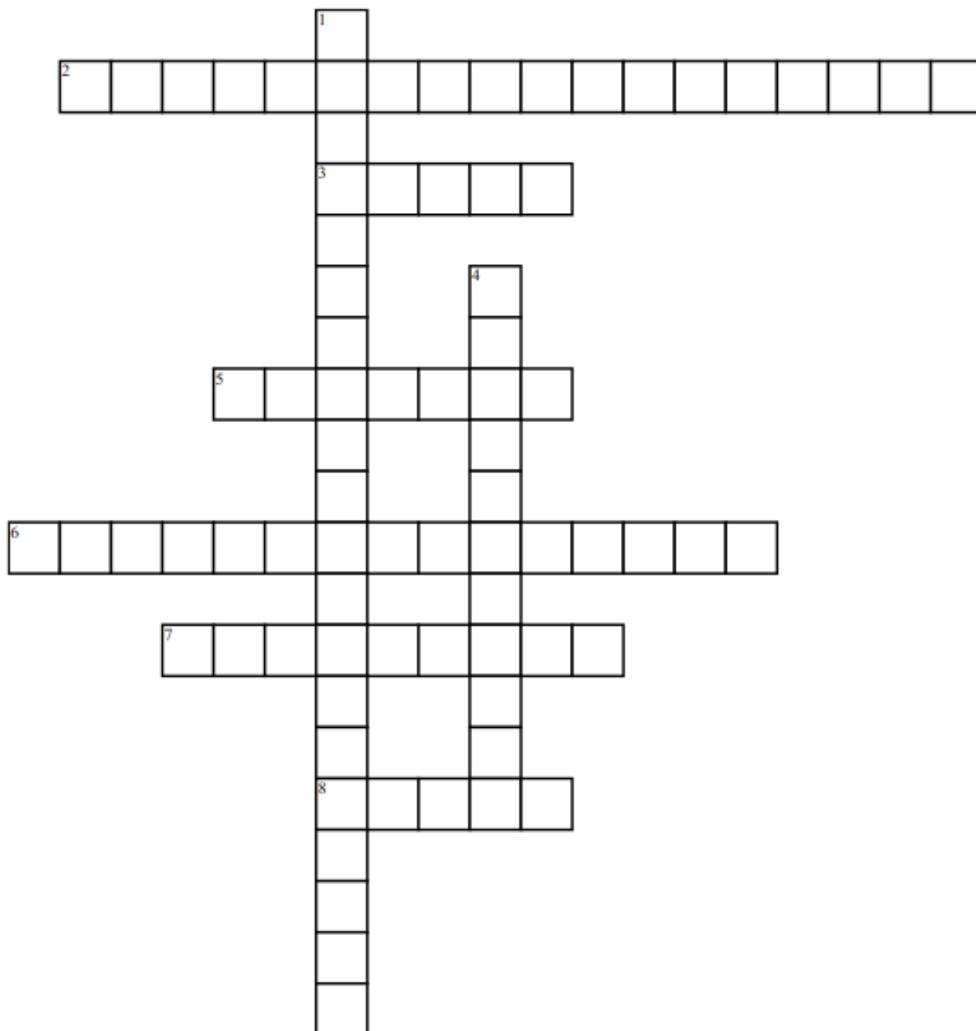
As we celebrate this milestone, help us not only to remember where we have been, but to remain faithful to the work You have called us to do today. Unite us in faith, love, and purpose. Help us to reflect the heart of Jesus in our words, our worship, our service, and the way we care for one another and our community.

Strengthen VABC to continue being a light of hope, a place of fellowship, and a witness for justice, mercy, compassion, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Help us honor the legacy entrusted to us while faithfully preparing the way for generations yet to come.

May the same God who has sustained VABC for 160 years continue to guide, strengthen, and use this church for Your glory and the building of Your Kingdom.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

PUZZLE TIME – VABC CELEBRATING 160 YEARS OF FAITH & FELLOWSHIP



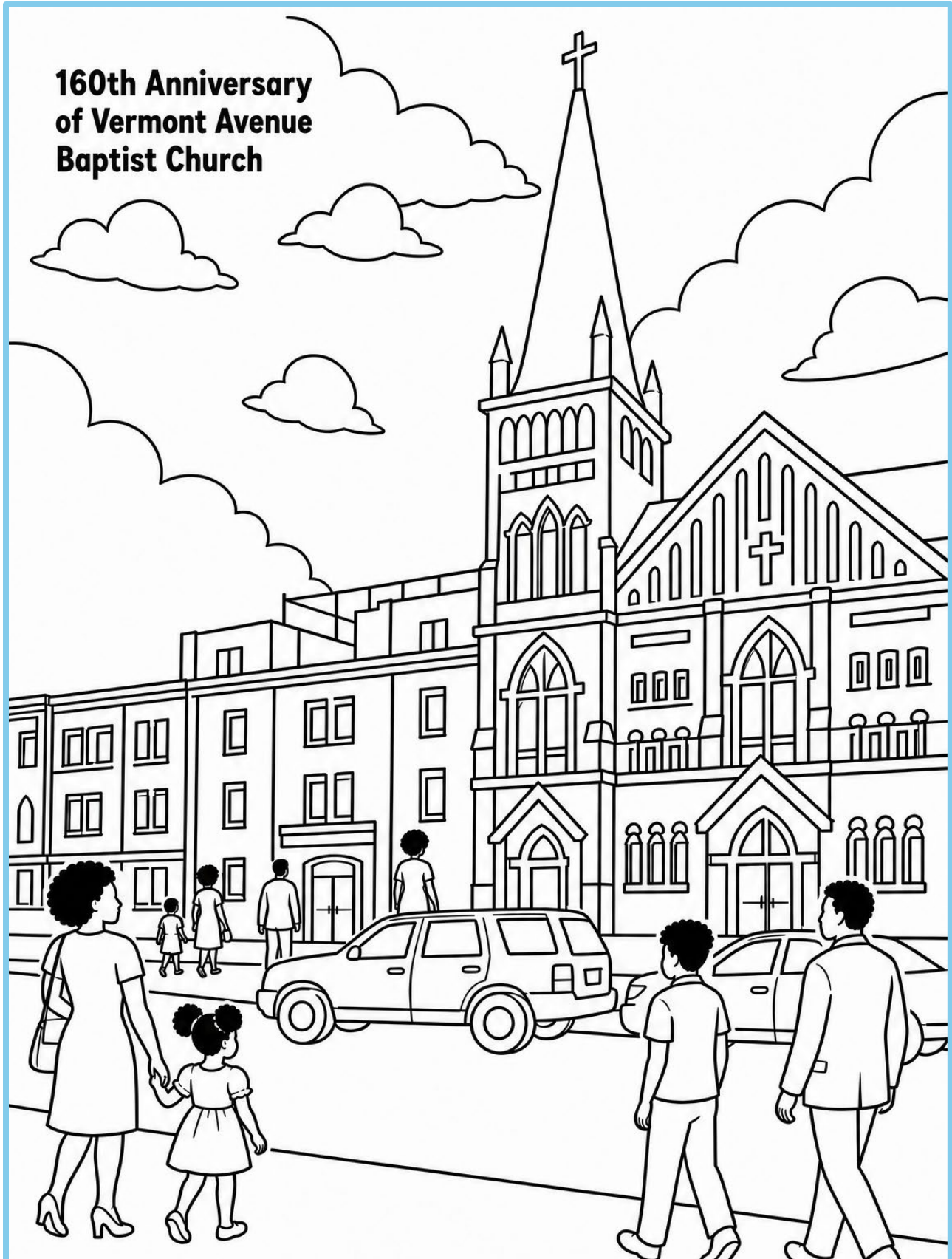
Across

2. We are celebrating 160 years of
 3. The organization whose meetings were held at VABC during the civil-rights era
 5. A prominent feature added during George W. Lee's pastorate
 6. Our first Pastor

7. The couple whose home hosted the early worship gatherings
 8. The first African American president to speak at VABC

Down

1. She spoke at VABC in January 1935 at an NAACP DC Branch meeting
 4. VABC sits in the area once known as



DID YOU KNOW?

Reverend Chasteen Theophilus Murray (1929 – 1969)

The Lord blessed Vermont Avenue Baptist Church with its fourth pastor, Reverend Chasteen Theophilus Murray, whose forty-year pastorate spanned one of the most transformative periods in African American history. Beginning in 1929, Rev. Murray led the congregation through the Great Depression, World War II, the modern Civil Rights Movement, and the changing social landscape of the 1960s.

As African Americans faced economic hardship, segregation, discrimination, and limited opportunities, the Black church continued to serve as a place of worship, fellowship, education, and community strength. Under Rev. Murray's leadership, Vermont Avenue Baptist Church experienced unprecedented numerical and

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We proudly welcome the Howard University Department of Music/Chadwick A. Boseman College of Fine Arts as they use our facilities for classes during renovations to their music building.

We also welcome Washington Performing Arts' Adult and Children of the Gospel, as well as the DC Choral Union Chapter of the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses (NCGCC).

These organizations are more than partners, they are family. As VABC celebrates 160 years of faith, music, and service, we give thanks for the longstanding connections we share. Howard University, established in 1867, and Washington Performing Arts, which began Children of the Gospel in 1987, have both maintained meaningful relationships with Vermont Avenue. The NCGCC, founded in 1932, also has a special connection to our church. From 1929–1932, Rev. Cleavant Derricks worshipped here under watch care and wrote the beloved gospel song “Just a Little Talk with Jesus.”

For generations, Vermont Avenue has been a place where faith and music come together to inspire, educate, and reach the world. As we celebrate 160 years, we are grateful to welcome family back home. God is good!

spiritual growth. He reorganized the church and established numerous clubs and auxiliaries, strengthening the congregation's ability to serve its members and the surrounding community.

His pastorate also witnessed historic milestones in the struggle for African American equality. During these years, the nation saw the growth of the modern Civil Rights Movement, including the Brown v. Board of Education decision, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the March on Washington, the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the leadership and ministry of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. These events challenged the nation while inspiring Black churches and their congregations to remain engaged in the pursuit of justice, dignity, and equality.

As the congregation grew, so did its need for space. During Rev. Murray's tenure, the C. T. Murray Extension Center was erected, providing additional classrooms, a larger cafeteria and kitchen, expanded church offices, and a multipurpose Roof Garden for outdoor activities and fellowship.

After forty years of faithful service, Rev. Murray announced his retirement. In keeping with his commitment to the continued growth of the congregation, he recommended Reverend John R. Wheeler as his successor. Rev. Murray's legacy remains one of growth, organization, service, and steadfast leadership through four remarkable decades of change.

CHILDREN'S BOOK LIST (Ages 4 – 12)

THEME: GROWING IN FAITH, PEACE & EMOTIONAL AWARENESS

1. What Is God Like? by Rachel Held Evans and Matthew Paul Turner
2. The Garden, the Curtain and the Cross by Carl Laferton
3. Listening to My Body by Gabi Garcia
4. Breathe Like a Bear by Kira Willey
5. Ruby Finds a Worry by Tom Percival

REFLECTION: *How can I care for my faith, my feelings, and others this month?*

YOUNG ADULTS BOOK LIST (Ages 13 – 18)

THEME: Faith, Identity & Emotional Wellness

1. Live by Sadie Robertson Huff
2. Own Your Everyday by Jordan Lee Dooley
3. Get Out of Your Head by Jennie Allen
4. The Self-Love Workbook for Teens by Shainna Ali
5. Mindfulness for Teens in 10 Minutes a Day by Jennie Marie Battistin

REFLECTION: *What is one healthy practice that can strengthen both my faith and my well-being?*

“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.” 3 John 1:2 NKJV



ADULT BOOK LIST

THEME: Spiritual Growth, Rest & Whole-Person Wellness

1. The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren
2. The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry by John Mark Comer
3. Discerning the Voice of God by Priscilla Shirer
4. The Gifts of Imperfection by Brené Brown
5. Rest Is Resistance by Tricia Hersey

REFLECTION: *What is God inviting me to strengthen, release, or renew in this 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. 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

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”— Psalm 46:1 KJV

Heavenly Father, we lift before You all who are sick, recovering, hospitalized, or unable to join us in worship. Bring healing to those who are ill, strength to those who are weary, comfort to those in pain, and peace to those who are anxious.

Remind them that they are surrounded by Your love and remain a cherished part of our church family. Bless their families, caregivers, and medical professionals with wisdom, patience, and strength.

Sustain us with Your grace, renew our hope, and help us trust Your presence through every circumstance.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

Wishing all those celebrating birthdays in September 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. Heavenly Father, we thank You for the gift of life and for each person celebrating a birthday this month.

As they begin another year, guide their steps, renew their strength, and fill their days with joy, peace, purpose, and new opportunities to serve You and others. May they continue to grow in faith, walk in Your grace, and experience Your loving presence throughout the year ahead.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

MOTHER/FATHER

Sister Barbara Brown

(For More Information Contact: Brother Shawn Ruffing)



Official Flower: Aster. It is known for its star-like blooms symbolizing love, wisdom and faith.

Official Colors: earthy autumn colors: rusty orange, red, and deep blue.

Birthstone: Sapphire which is admired for its striking blue color and rich symbolism. Sapphire is linked to wisdom, loyalty, and nobility. People believe sapphire can bring good luck, protection, and help gain some deeper insight.

Historical Name Origin: The name September comes from septem, the Latin word for seven. Although it's the ninth month of the Gregorian calendar, it was originally the seventh month under the Roman calendar, which began with March.

YOUNG ADULT CORNER

"Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity." — 1 Timothy 4:12 ESV

As we celebrate 160 years of Vermont Avenue Baptist Church, we honor generations of faithful men and women who prayed, served, sacrificed, worshiped, and worked to make this church what it is today. But an anniversary is not only about looking back. It is also about recognizing those God is calling to help carry the ministry forward.

Young adults, you are an important part of VABC's present and its future. You bring new ideas, experiences, gifts, perspectives, and energy that our church needs. The same God who sustained those who came before you is equipping you to serve faithfully in your generation.

The legacy you have inherited was never meant simply to be admired. It was meant to be continued. Learn from those who came before you, but do not be afraid to help VABC grow, adapt, and reach people in new ways. Use your gifts, ask questions, accept responsibility, build relationships across generations, and find your place in the work God is doing through this church.

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

For 160 years, others have carried the ministry forward. Now you are part of that continuing story. We need your voices, your leadership, your faith, and your willingness to serve today so that generations yet to come will inherit a church that is still proclaiming the Gospel, serving the community, and sharing the love of Christ.

Let Us Pray. Heavenly Father, we thank You for the young adults of VABC and for the gifts, voices, ideas, and leadership they bring to our church. As we celebrate 160 years, help us encourage them, listen to them, and make room for them to serve and lead. Give them wisdom, courage, and a strong foundation of faith as they honor the legacy of those who came before while helping shape the ministry of today and tomorrow. May they boldly use their gifts for Your glory and the continued work of Your Kingdom. 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 or see any member of the Communications Ministry.

SENIOR'S CORNER

Brain Health: Stay Connected

Staying socially connected is an important part of maintaining brain health, especially as we age. Research involving hundreds of thousands of older adults found that people who remain socially engaged have a lower risk of dementia, while loneliness is associated with a significantly higher risk.

There are many simple ways to stay connected:

- join a church
- take a class
- volunteer
- join an exercise group
- schedule regular calls or visits with friends and family
- participate in activities with others
- use technology such as video calls or text messages when getting out is difficult



If feelings of loneliness or isolation persist, talking with a healthcare provider can help connect you with additional resources.

The important message is simple: connection is good for the **mind, body, and spirit**. Make time to reach out, spend time with others, and stay involved in your community. Social connection isn't just good for your emotional well-being—it may also help protect your brain.

“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor.” — Ecclesiastes 4:9 (NKJV)

*Summary from Greater Good Health
Clinician's Corner: Brain Health Tip – Stay Connected*

VABC PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

What do you get when the VABC family comes together with a common purpose? A whole lot of hard work, laughter, fellowship, good food... and a beautiful demonstration of what it means to work together in unity and harmony!

The recent Deacon James E. Stuckey Car Wash and BBQ sponsored by the 2026 Men's Day Committee was truly a team effort. Inside and out, members stepped up to serve wherever they were needed. And the community responded also! Volunteers from Central Mission and youth groups worked side by side. Everyone contributed their time, talents, and energy to make the day a success.

David, usually known for serving as a security guard, traded his security post for a place behind the grill. Lanita put her accounting skills to work collecting funds, while Theresa Cook helped keep things organized and moving efficiently.

And while the parking lot was bustling, there was plenty happening throughout the church. The Women's Day Committee had a Bake Sale, and we even had Arts & Crafts in the Lee's Chapel. Howard University music

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



department provided hours of live music that kept us moving. What made the day especially meaningful was the spirit in which everyone worked. There was no “this is my job” or “that's someone else's responsibility.” Instead, there was a willingness to help wherever help was needed. It was a collective effort.

Men’s Day Chair, James S. Sparrow (Deacon in Training) said the day was scripture in action, quoting, **2 Corinthians 13:11 ESV**, *“Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.”*

That verse, along with the Men’s Day theme of “Men Working Together in Unity and Harmony,” seemed to describe the entire day. By 4:00 p.m., the work was done. But what remained was a sense of gratitude and appreciation for what can happen when the VABC family works together.

The Car Wash and BBQ was more than a successful event. It was a reminder that ministry takes many forms. Sometimes it looks like washing a car. Sometimes it looks like serving food, moving a table, collecting money, preparing a dish, welcoming someone, or simply stepping in when there is work to be done.

And sometimes, it looks like a church family coming together, each person doing their part, and discovering just how much can be accomplished when we work in unity and harmony.

As **Psalm 133:1** reminds us, *“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”*

Check the board on the 1st Floor for more photos

SEPTEMBER ANSWERS

1. Nannie Helen Bourroughs
2. Faith And Fellowship
3. NAACP
4. Hell’s Bottom
5. Steeple
6. John Henry Brooks
7. Slaughter
8. Obama

Winner(s) of August Photo Contest:

Sister Pamela Greene-Holland (awarded prize)
Sister Cynthia Milanez

1. Trustee Irving Washington
2. Sister Yvette O’Neil Dill
3. Trustee Lila Williams
4. Rev. Rutherford Cooke
5. Sister Berdine Felder
6. Sister Ann Cooke
7. Rev. Carlyle Wheeler
8. Trustee Orlean Baylor
9. Sister Ethel Williams
10. Trustee Betty Holden

COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY

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 Sparrow

PROJECT MANAGER: Trustee Renata Miller

WEBSITE: Sister Lanita Sparrow/Stephanie Scott

LIASION: Trustee Alfred Martin