



Joniece Pledger shows off the award she accepted on her mother's behalf on Friday, Jan. 1.

Imani
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the scenes. Members of the church performed as the characters of the play during a reading of the play's excerpts.

According to Piggott-Long, she wrote the play

for the church's MAAFA celebration, which she explained is an epic voyage tracing the history of the African holocaust, which she said is the darkest human tragedy as African-Americans. She said this is a way to experience and connect with African-

American ancestors who were aboard the slave ships. Even though present African-Americans were not there, at times "we still feel enslaved," she said.

Mildred Peppers is a deacon at Emmanuel Baptist and was the "Sunday School Lesson"



People in the audience eagerly await the start of the Kwanzaa event at Emmanuel Baptist Church on Friday, Jan 1.

columnist for The Chronicle from 1999 until late last year. Peppers' absence was because she endured a cancer treatment procedure earlier in the week and was not feeling up to attending. Pledger stated that her mother was really thankful to receive

this acknowledgement and was appreciative to everyone.

Patricia Sadler, member of Emmanuel Baptist stated, "On the occasion of Imani, which is faith, we wanted to recognize someone who personifies faith

in their daily life. Deacon Peppers has been an active member of church, as well as throughout the community, and having been an educator, she has influenced many young people so she is so very deserving of this recognition."

Lesson
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solid love to be a hallmark of a marital relationship." (David C Cook, Bible Lessons Commentary, 2015-16). King Solomon has fallen in love with a "black woman" who is not royal or high born but a country girl. She is brought to the palace to become wife to Solomon. Leading up to the actual scene of the lesson there is in the poem a cluster of five meetings of the lovers; courtship, their wedding, the consummation of their love in marriage, and later occasions in which they renew their love. The poem also contains three sources of speeches: the bride, her attendants (daughters of Jerusalem) and the groom. Some of the previous scenes of love from chapters 1 through 4 occurred before marriage and were blissful and joyous anxiety, and pride after the wedding. After the wedding procession, their personal frailties are

revealed in a dream about her feelings of guilt and inadequacy. It's after the dream that Solomon offers her a tribute. Solomon compares her beauty to that of the most renowned cities. He says she is breathtaking, her allure is awe-inspiring. He is captivated by her eyes and has to turn from them. Her hair is graceful and shimmering with flowing movements. She has perfect teeth (none missing). She has crimson cheeks that shone through her veil. All of these comparisons were made to objects of great physical beauty, imagery and qualities. As if that is not enough, Solomon compares this black beauty to all of his then 60 queens and 80 concubines and all the women of the royal court, counting her beauty, intelligence and stamina above them all. To show that this is not just the opinion of a love-stricken husband, her friends the daughters of Jerusalem claimed her majestic as the morning "dawn," luminous as the "moon," radiant as the "sun," and glorious as the "stars." It's clear that

Solomon was drawn to her entire personality as well as to her beauty. If we read further, we see that their understanding of love matured and their affection would endure beyond the flames of passion.

Life's Application: As long as we obey God's basic ethical guidelines, we can enjoy love as much as we want. God's love for us provides a model that should make Christians the best example of affection and compassion. It pleases God to bless us with the gift of love. Solomon was not hesitant in declaring his love and complimenting the beauty. He was very aware of her attributes... we can take a page from his book and point out the positive things about our spouses and see the flaws diminish in our estimation. There is beauty in all of God's creatures - we just have to look to see it.

Eric J. Sadler, DDS

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