

COMMUNITY FOCUS

SECTION C

North Carolina
Forsyth County
660 West Fifth Street
Winston-Salem, N.C. 27101

Winston-Salem Greensboro High Point

1974- Celebrating 25 Years - 1999

APRIL 1, 1999

COMMUNITY CALENDAR



Volunteer opportunities

Volunteer connections

Volunteers are needed for the Volunteers Connection Program. The United Way agency assists people with disabilities. Volunteers are needed to work with individuals with developmental, physical and mental disabilities. For more information call 759-9370 extension 238.

Assist Hospice Patients

Handy men and women are needed to help Hospice patients and families with occasional odd jobs. For more information about specific jobs call 768-3972.

Student Exchange

Families are needed to host a high school student from overseas starting in August 1999. For more information call Joyce toll free at (877)-846-5848.

Moses Cone Hospital Volunteers

Middle and High School students can get involved with the Teen Volunteer Programs at Moses Cone Hospital in Greensboro during the summer by picking up registration packets at the information center. Those interested in volunteering at Wesley Long Community Hospital can call 832-1745. For The Women's Hospital call 832-6661. Space is limited.

Ongoing Events

Senior Financial Care

The Winston-Salem Senior Financial Care service is available to all adults over 60 years of age who live in Forsyth County. A counselor can help a client with personal budgeting, balancing their checkbooks and writing monthly checks. For more information call the office at 725-1972.

Free Legal Clinic

The Legal Clinic for the Elderly at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center is accepting new cases. The clinic provides free legal services to people age 60 and over who meet certain financial guidelines. The clinic is open from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays in the J. Paul Sticht Center on Aging And Rehabilitation. To be screened for eligibility call (336) 713-8630.

Free Tutorial Program

The Children's Loft announces the opening of its Afterschool Tutorial Program. This program will run Monday-Thursday from 3:30-5:30 p.m. at Reynolds Temple CME Church, 2935 Glenn Ave. The Loft is sponsored by the Beta Alpha Chapter of Iota Phi Lambda Sorority. For registration information call (336) 724-7132.

Federal Tax Assistance

The IRS offers free help to taxpayers at the IRS office in the US Courthouse and Federal Building, 251 N. Main Street, Suite 16 from 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. on Saturdays. This service will run on through until April 10.

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By God's grace



Frances Mobbley, right, smiles as the congregation at Union Chapel Baptist Church on Sunday, gives her a standing ovation. Alderwoman Joycelyn Johnson read a proclamation declaring the day as Frances Mobbley Day. Mobbley will celebrate her 104th birthday in May.

Nearing 104, local woman and church feted for service

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

Relying on her niece's gentle hands for support, she walked slowly before the attentive congregation, flashing a dimpled-smile that has been seasoned by God's grace and the confidence that comes with a long, well-lived life.

While a bright sun peered down over spring-like conditions outside, the folks inside of Union Chapel Baptist Church were basking in the glow of their own star, Frances Mobbley, whose light has been shining for almost 104 years now.

They pulled out all the stops on Sunday to thank Mobbley for her nearly 60 years of service and dedication to the church and to celebrate her more than ten decades of life.

"We want to take this time to honor a young lady who has been around for quite some years," the Rev. Konnie Robinson, the church's pastor, said. "We want to give (Ms. Mobbley) her flowers while she is alive."

And a lively Mobbley accepted her flowers proudly as a church member displayed a bouquet of red, long stem roses before her and then passed them on to her niece, Martha Lewis, for safe keeping.

And the fresh white corsage — another gift from the church — that was pinned to her lapel, matched perfectly with Mobbley's neat three-piece black and gray suit.

The day belonged to her — literally.

Also on hand for the service were Joycelyn Johnson and Nelson Malloy, both members of the board of aldermen.

Citing her — more than 70 years as an upstanding resident of the city of Winston-Salem and her life-long commitment to helping others, Johnson read an official proclamation from Mayor Jack Cavanagh and the other members of the board proclaiming March 28, 1999 as Frances Mobbley Day.

"Ms. Mobbley is a living example of how good God is," Malloy said. "God's love is in our presence here this morning."

After receiving numerous standing ovations from the emotional congregation, Mobbley made a request to say a few words. Her request was immediately granted.

"I thank the Lord for being here," was her simple, eloquent

response to all of the attention.

Born on May 15, 1895 — a mere 30 years after the end of the Civil War — in Chester County, S.C., Mobbley's eyes will have seen three different centuries come the year 2000.

But in a little more than 40 days, Mobbley will reach another milestone: birthday number 104.

Her age itself may seem unbelievable to some, but take it into consideration with the events she has lived through and it's even more astonishing.

Mobbley was born one year after Nicholas II, the last czar of Russia, ascended to the throne, and one year before the landmark Plessy versus Ferguson decision was issued by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Before she was five, Henry Ford developed his two-cylinder Model T automobile, Wilbur and Orville Wright soared into the history books in Kitty Hawk and President William McKinley was hoping for widespread citizen support for the newly commenced Spanish-American War.

She came into the world during the last years of the Victorian Age, while Queen Victoria, the longest reigning monarch in England's history, was still on the throne and while words like "imperialism" were being tossed around, as the United States and nations in Europe were snatching up small, powerless countries left and right.

Mobbley has been witness to The Great Depression, two world wars and 17 American presidents.

Although the dates have become fuzzy over the decades, Mobbley and her family agree that she moved to Winston-Salem in the mid to late 1920s.

Mobbley married but never had children. But she did adopt a child.

She didn't work for money or acclaim. Instead, she spent her time helping those who were in need by providing them with a soft bed, a hot meal or just encouraging words.

She joined Union Chapel in the early 1940s, when it was still in its infancy. Some members still remember when Mobbley



Angela Graham, a member of Union Chapel since the 1980s, poses with the church's newest member, 2-month-old, Erin Alexandra, her daughter. Graham's husband Markel is also a member.

was a nurse at church.

Those who know her describe her as a proud, caring woman who has relied heavily on her faith in God.

"In the 14 years that I have been the pastor here, I have never heard her complain one time," Robinson said.

Her great-nephew, Dennis Lewis, recalls a woman who never let a day go by without drinking eight glasses of water, who always has "words of wisdom" to share with anyone who will listen and who has remained active even in old age.

"She was old when I was young, and she was still running around chasing us," he laughed.

Mobbley's keen sense of humor also has not diminished as the years fly by.

"What can I do?" she said after the service, alluding to her grand age. Then after a few seconds had passed, she answered her own question with a loud chuckle:

"Nothing, but eat."
Mobbley rarely misses Sunday service; she has become a weekly fixture at Union Chapel, like the pulpit or the organ.

"It's fine," Mobbley said, describing the church from her unique perspective. "It is just fine."

For some time, Mobbley has lived with her nieces, Lewis and Mattie Marshall, but she has remained a free and independent spirit.

She roams freely around the house and dresses herself each morning, Martha Lewis said. And with the aid of her eyeglasses and a magnifying glass, she still methodically reads the newspaper.

"I thank God for her," Martha Lewis said. "When I was coming up, they always taught me to do all you can while you can."

It might seem strange that the members of Union Chapel Baptist Church chose to honor Mobbley a month and a half before her birthday, but the church saw Sunday as a way to celebrate two glorious occasions on a single day.

Union Chapel had a birthday of its own, although at 70-years-old, it is a mere child compared to Mobbley.

"Seventy years is a long time and we thank God for this blessing," Robinson said to a chorus of "amens" from the packed sanctuary. "If we forget our history, we will soon be forgotten."

History played a big part in the service on this particular Sunday.

While a church member read brief bios on the church's founding fathers, youngsters enthusiastically held up large, framed black and white pictures of the men. The portraits will hang in the Fellowship Hall and "will connect the entire ministry of the church," Robinson said.

Starting in a small house on Derry Street in the early 1940s, the church was initially called Union Methodist Church. It was founded by John Smith and most of the kids in the neighborhood at the time simply referred to the church as "Mr. Smith's Church." In the summer of 1933, the name of the church was changed to Union Chapel Baptist Church, with the Rev. W.P. Clark taking the helm as its first minister.

A new church was constructed at the corner of Derry and Belo streets in 1940 after the floor of the original structure gave way during a program.

The church's second pastor, the Rev. W.L. Davis, headed the church soon after the new edifice was constructed. After Davis' death in 1961, the Rev. James Monroe Lewis Sr. took over the church.

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