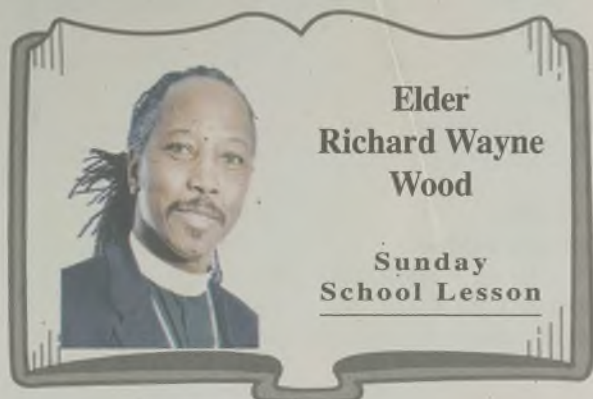


RELIGION



Jesus: God's Loving Promise

Scriptures: Luke 1:26-31, 2:22, 25-35

By the end of this lesson, we will

*Remember God's words of affirmation and comfort to Mary

*Consider the love and sovereignty of God revealed in Jesus' birth

*Share testimonies of how Christ's birth impacts our faith

Background: As part of the covenant with Abraham, God requires all male children be circumcised and named on the eighth day. Firstborns also had to be redeemed at a month old. All firstborns of Israel belonged to God and could be redeemed with an offering of five shekels to the priest (Exodus 13:2, 11-16 and Numbers 18:15-16). In Luke's writing he recounts a bit of history leading up to Christ being the fulfillment of God's promise to send a savior. He includes the fact that both John the Baptist and Jesus were circumcised and redeemed, along with encounters of Mary and Elisabeth.

Lesson: The lesson gives four areas of testimony: the testimony of God's favor, the testimony of God's faithfulness, the testimony of God's fulfillment and the testimony of prophecy.

The testimony of God's favor, Luke 1:26-31, God's favor is delivered in a message to Mary by Gabriel, a messenger angel whose name means God is Great. He spoke to Daniel to explain the vision, to Zacharias to tell him that Elizabeth would bear John the Baptist, and here to Mary. Mary is identified as a virgin and Joseph in the lineage of David. Gabriel greets Mary first: "Hail, thou art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women." He then calms Mary, who is disturbed either by his presence or his appearance, saying, "Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favour with God." He goes on to explain and includes the fact that she shall name him Jesus. Note that God names all who are used in His salvation plan.

The testimony of God's faithfulness is shown in His dealings with Simeon (Luke 2:22, 25-28). Simeon's desire was to see the Messiah before he died. Simeon referred to Jesus as "the consolation of Israel," which means the fulfillment of Jewish messianic hopes. The Holy Ghost spoke to Simeon confirming that he would indeed see the Messiah. Simeon was able to see Jesus as he was ceremonially presented to God in the temple. He not only saw him, he held him and recognized Jesus as not just the savior of Israel, but the world. Holding the salvation of the world, he sang a praise to God.

The testimony of God's fulfillment is in verses 29-32. Simeon was faithful to God's Word and the law of Judaism. Rather than speak, he sang a song of praise that was also prophetic. Verses 29-32 are themselves his song. Simeon prophesied that Jesus was sufficient for all - Jew and Gentile. His witness to Jesus for himself was so fulfilling that he was ready to die ... there was nothing else he desired in this world.

The testimony of prophecy (verses 33-35) by Simeon amazed Joseph and Mary. Though Mary had been told already, she was still amazed. Simeon foretold that Jesus would have a great and powerful affect on the world. Now his name, Jesus, Greek for Joshua, in Hebrew means, "The Lord is Salvation," makes sense. Joshua was limited salvation while the salvation of Jesus is limitless. Simeon's words certainly stirred in Mary and Joseph the teachings of a promised savior and made them realize that the baby they were entrusted with to raise and nurture had the future of the world in His hands. (The UMI Annual Commentary 2018-2019)

For your consideration: Simeon had his life's

See Lesson on B4

Well-known city church gets new pastor

BY TIMOTHY RAMSEY
THE CHRONICLE

United Metropolitan Missionary Baptist Church is one of the most well-known churches in the city of Winston-Salem. The congregation recently welcomed their new senior pastor to the church.

Rev. Dr. Alvin T Armstead Jr. is the new senior pastor at United Metropolitan. He arrived in October from his previous assignment in Richmond, Va. Armstead is replacing Rev. Prince Rainey Rivers, who served as senior pastor at United Metropolitan for 12 years. After an exhausting nationwide search, the church found their candidate in Armstead.

Armstead found out about the position at United Metropolitan from a friend who thought he would be a good fit for the position. After researching the church and giving it some thought, he decided to submit

his information.

"When I read up on United's history, core values and what they believe, it really lined up with my personal mission and vision," said Armstead. "As far as churches go, they really have a great sense of direction as to who they are as a congregation and what their mission is in the community. So, all of those things really attracted me to their ministry."

Armstead's mother is a minister and his father is a deacon, so he grew up in the church. He did not get his personal call to the ministry until his college years. The Philadelphia native says when he was in college, he became connected with a church and became very involved.

"In my mind I had mapped out this path of becoming a financial advisor. Little did I know I still would be doing advising; but just not from a financial standpoint," he said. "That's just how the Lord worked in

my life to where meeting and caring for people that I thought would come in the financial sector, happened in the church instead."

Armstead said he realized in seminary school that his secular work really worked hand in hand with the call that God had upon his life. He initially did not see the connection, but soon saw how beneficial his financial background assisted in church administration duties.

When he received the call that he had been selected as the new pastor, Armstead says he was very humbled.

"I was very honored to be selected to lead such a great church, with a rich history and a stellar reputation in the community," he continued. "I am excited about the opportunity, but very conscience of the responsibility of leading a congregation such as United."

"I trust that with God's help, I

See New on B4



Rev. Armstead

Church sells socks for outreach ministries



Photo by Timothy Ramsey

There were a wide variety of socks for shoppers to choose from during the Sock Sale.

BY TIMOTHY RAMSEY
THE CHRONICLE

The Parent Body Missionary Society of Goler Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church held their annual Holiday Sock Sale on Dec. 13-14. This is the sixth year of the sock sale and the event has consistently grown every year, organizers say.

The purpose of the sock sale is to raise money for the Parent Body Missionary Society, which governs all missionary

groups in the A.M.E. church. The various missionary groups use the funds for their outreach ministries throughout the year.

Gladys Phifer, member of Goler Memorial, came up with the idea for the sock sale. Her employer, Royce Too, markets and sells socks, so she went to the president of the company and presented the idea of the sock sale. The company already donated socks, but Phifer had a better idea that could serve the

greater good.

"I went to the president and asked, 'Instead of donating socks to the community, can we [Goler] be the hub that donates to the community, as well as sell them'," said Phifer. "That way, we could use the funds to do some of the things in the community that we want to be able to do."

"Our president thought it was a great idea and all of the executives that we have at Royce Too support me. They know that we do

a lot of good things in the community," she continued.

Phifer said the sock sale has continued to grow over the six years it has been held. The repeat customers are the most important thing for Phifer, because it allows her to fellowship and minister, along with serving the community.

"We continue to get some of the same people come out every year," she

See Socks on B4

CALENDAR

TODAY, Dec. 20

Christmas for the City 2018

Christmas for the City 2018 will be Thursday, Dec. 20, 4-9 p.m. at the Benton Convention Center, 301 W. Fifth St. It is a free event for the whole family. The venue will be packed inside and out with activities for all ages including: a variety of community-wide choral and instrumental groups, kids room with toy workshop, arts and crafts projects and Santa Claus. Multiple performance areas will be throughout the Benton Convention Center and out onto Cherry Street. There will be a poetry slam featuring local artists and musicians and opportunities throughout the building to connect with nonprofits and ministries of Winston-Salem. For more information, go to <http://www.christmas-forthecity.com/>.

Dec. 21

Last chance Sock Sale

Annual Holiday Sock Sale on Dec. 21 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. There will be a huge selection of packaged first quality socks. All socks are \$1/pair. The sale is sponsored by Goler Memorial Parent Body Missionary Society. Proceeds to help with charitable work in the community. For more information, call (336) 529-2928 or e-mail gphifer@roycetoo.com.

Dec. 22

Cantata

The Ephesus Seventh-Day Adventist Church, 1225 N. Cleveland Ave., will present a cantata, "Why Does He Love Me So?" The program will be presented during the morning service on Saturday, Dec. 22 at 11 a.m. The worship service is free and open to the public. Pastor Allen Baldwin presides. For more info, call

(336) 724-0491.

Dec. 23

Christmas musical

On Dec. 23 at 3 p.m., Calvary Hill Church of Greater Deliverance and T.U.R.N Inc., (Tutoring and Enrichment Program) are proud to present a Christmas musical, "Who Would Imagine A King?" Christmas dinner will be served afterward. Santa Claus will be on site for pictures. The church is located at 4951 Manning Street, where the host pastor is Bishop Claude C. Turner. The public is invited to attend.

Jan. 1-7

Spiritual Renewal

New Hope A.M.E. Zion Church, 7000 Shallowford Road, Lewisville, will celebrate its "Seven Days of

See Rel. Cal. on B4