

Webber called from fighting fire to fight for God

By ELIZABETH STEWART
Staff writer

Rev. J. David Webber Sr., 59, stopped fighting fire after 30 years and God called him to fight for Him as pastor of New Way Baptist Church on N. Piedmont Ave.

The Kings Mountain minister retired in 2001 as Captain of the Shelby Fire Department and thought he'd sit back, put his feet up, fish and pitch horse shoes.

"Not so," said Webber, who accepted the call as Associate Pastor of Washington Missionary Baptist Church in Waco for four years.

He came to Kings Mountain last November as pastor of New Way Church, organized 15 years ago here in the former First Wesleyan Church building on N. Piedmont Avenue.

As a young boy growing up in Cleveland County, Webber said he never dreamed he'd become a firefighter or a preacher. God works in mysterious ways.

Webber applied for a job with the City of Shelby and the position open was in the fire department.

He graduated from Burns High School and took additional schooling at Gaston College, Cleveland Community College and Catawba College and from the National Fire Academy in Maryland. After receiving his call to the ministry he received his BA degree in Ministry from Columbus University in Maryland, completing the necessary requirements online.

Numerous citations are on his office wall, among them a meritorious award from the governor in 1979 after Shelby

firemen fought one of the biggest fires in downtown Shelby.

"I joined Washington Missionary Baptist Church in 1995 and served in numerous capacities, in choir, as Sunday School Superintendent, deacon, leader in Vacation Bible School and in the outreach and jail ministry," said Webber. He said he thanks God for allowing him to be of service in the church.

He preaches "all over the Bible," he says, but his favorite scripture is Matthew 11: 28-30, "Come unto me all ye that labor and I will give you rest."

His family members are all active in the church. He is the son of Claudine Webber and the late Arthur Floyd Webber and is married to Elaine Lawrence Webber and they have four children: Andre, John, Solomon and Christy Webber, the latter who directs the choir.

Webber has invited two dynamic speakers, Dr. Robert Abbott, formerly of Holy Trinity Baptist Church in New York, and Pastor Melvin L. Clark of Washington Missionary Baptist Church, to preach Fall revival, one day services, Sep. 27. Regular services at New Way are Sunday School at 10 a.m., morning worship at 11 a.m., mid-week prayer service on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. followed by Bible Study at 7 p.m. and intercessory prayer meeting every Saturday, except fourth Saturdays, at 10 a.m. He invites the public.

New Way Baptist Church is growing. With a congregation of 35-40 members the church has an active attendance of 25 members.



REV. J. DAVID WEBBER, SR.

NEIGHORLY LOVE



EMILY WEAVER/HERALD

OPERATION BACK PACK - Pictured are youth in the Kids Night Out program at East Gold Street Wesleyan Church with school supplies they collected recently in a church-wide outreach project. Back row, from left, Gregory Douglas, Mitch Frady, Tyler Lewis, Rev. Darryl Lewis, Kierran Parks, Ernie Lail and Iris Frady. Front row, from left, Youth Pastor Kyle George holding huge pencil, Kasey Batchler, Adam Wiggington, Matthew Baity, and April Parker.

Church gives back for back-to-school

By ELIZABETH STEWART
Staff writer

Kids Night Out is making a difference for scores of young people in Kings Mountain in a once-a-month program sponsored by East Gold Street Wesleyan Church.

The outreach program in its second year is drawing 50 or more youth making a statement in the community, according to Pastor Darryl Lewis.

Operation Back Pack, a back-to-school project coordinated by Earnie Lail and Iris Frady, is one example of how the youth are reaching out to others. They distributed over 50 backpacks and loads of school supplies to several areas in the community, going door-to-door and in the process witnessing to the families and inviting them to church and to their youth group.

"It was fun," said Johnathan Frady, who also leads Bible stories during the youth meetings. He dressed up as a Lion recently to tell the story of Daniel in the Lion's Den and as a whale to talk about the Biblical account of Jonah. His mother made his costumes which were a big hit with the group. Crafts, Bible study, food and games are all included in the monthly Kids Night Out. An upcoming event will be a big birthday party and all young people in the community are invited to call the church office to get in the fun at the Family Life Center.

"If the church closed its doors would the community know it?" asked the pastor as the youth boxed up more items to distribute to school children. Several youth answered at once. "They sure would and that won't happen."

Said Mrs. Frady, "Our intent is to reach the whole community with the good news about Christ."

DOWNTOWN

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The Battle of Kings Mountain, waged on a wooded hillside not far from here. It was a battle historians have coined to have been the "turning point" of the American Revolutionary War. The city carries the name and city officials often give credit to that battle, but does downtown fully recognize it?

Thirteen-year-old Steven Allen, who lives in Kings Mountain and attends Gaston Day School, said that he too would like to see more historical ties.

"I think the downtown area of Kings Mountain is great. There's a lot of history," he said, as he helped his parents man the family's new market on York Road after school last week. "A lot of customers stop in on the way to the (Kings Mountain National Military) park."

But he suggests that the city might want to play on more than just the historical significance of that one battle. He said that he thought it would be neat if historical markers or notes could be placed downtown that would immediately transport a person back to a place and time.

For instance, a marker reading "on this very spot in (such a year) on (such a date) President Hoover gave an address on the commemoration of the Battle of Kings Mountain." That really happened, after all, on a plot on Mountain Street.

President George Bush rolled directly through downtown on a train when he was running for his second term of office. He didn't get that second term and several Kings Mountain folks have joked that it was because he didn't stop and talk in the city.

A marker already stands noting the old Central School, which once housed a nationally-accredited military academy in the 1800s.

The soil of Kings Mountain has also been the bearer of rich minerals over time. Several street names, including Gold and Silver, give

credit to that. Historians noted that before the California gold rush of 1849, there was a gold rush right here on the outskirts of Kings Mountain. The city's soil was also once the great bearer of the world's lithium deposits. Coal, tin, ore and other minerals have been harvested here.

"In order to know where you're going, you have to know where you've been," Allen said.

Every plot of land has a story to tell. Digging it up may be a challenge. Marking those moments in time may be a treasure.

Entertainment

Logeman said that she would also like to see more family-oriented activities in downtown that tie to history.

"I think entertainment is going to thrive the downtown area," Allen said, adding that if people drive by downtown and see a crowd or hear a concert they may be drawn by curiosity.

"I'd like to see more outdoor activities," said Steve Sisk, as he sat on a bench along Battleground Ave. last week.

He and the man sitting next to him, Billy Saap, agreed that they would like to see a big recreation park with maybe an outdoor skating rink and public swimming pool.

"We need some places for the young people to go. It's important for us to have a place in society," Allen said, adding that a fun park may be great.

But he added that whatever the attraction is, it should be unique - something that peo-



STEVEN ALLEN



An old view of downtown KM in 1948.

ple can't already drive to do in outlying cities. Once the Gateway Trail is complete and open to visitors, Allen said that he thinks it will be a great draw.

"Imagine that in the fall, with the trees," he said. "A lot of people travel to see the leaves in the fall."

Give me choices

Erin Dalton, who moved to Kings Mountain about two weeks ago, said that she would like to see more sit-down restaurants that are open later in downtown.

"Food brings people together," she said, as she sipped a coffee in J. Oliver's.

"I'd like to see more shops that sell a variety of clothing and sizes," said Ann Barrett, who came down to J. Oliver's for her lunch break.

The streets in downtown used to be lined with department stores years ago - Belk's, Plonk's Brothers and McGinnis'. Only McGinnis' remains today, with a storeroom half the size it once operated. But then, the shoppers don't come like they used to.

Living history program this weekend at KMNMP

The public is invited visit Kings Mountain National Military Park this weekend as living history interpreters present The 7th Royal Fusiliers Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

The 7th Royal Fusiliers will be encamped at the park's visitor center. Designated as an elite unit by King James II, the fusiliers were originally formed to escort artillery, enjoy a variety of military demonstrations and learn more about the history, weapons, tactics and the role of this elite force in the British Southern Campaign during the American Revolution. Weapon demonstrations will be held throughout the event.

The park is open from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. daily. The event is free and open to the public. For more information about this or other events, call 864-936-7921 or visit www.nps.gov/kimo.

'Pioneer Pathways' hot off the presses

A new book, "Pioneer Pathways," is off the press and will be presented to Jacob S. Mauney Memorial Library by Girl Scouts of the Pioneer Council Saturday, Sept. 26, at 11 a.m. A reception will follow to which the public is invited.

Adult Girl Scouts who have been registered members for more than 25 years completed the special project, which includes photographs and other memorabilia. Among those were Susan Goforth, a Girl Scout for 51 years and a leader for 24 years, trainer and archivist; Jane Talbert, a Girl Scout for 47 years, leader for 24 years and trainer and archivist; and Sylvia Holmes, past president of the Pioneer Council, past executive director of Pioneer Council and longtime Girl Scout and Girl Guide.

Mary's Grove United Methodist Church will hold Homecoming Day Sunday, Sept. 20.

The new pastor, Rev. Charlene Hutchings, will deliver the message at the 11 a.m. hour and Bill Mason, pianist, will lead the music. Brent Bingham will present special music and founders of the church, including H. S. Sellers, will be remembered.

Following the worship hour a covered dish luncheon will be served in the fellowship hall. Luis Orlandi,

chairman of the Historic committee, has a surprise prior to the meal and the Christian Clown Ministry from Laboratory United Methodist Church will entertain. A special display will include framed photographs of families of the church and all families are encouraged to take pictures.

Martha Fortenberry and the Adult Choir from Christian Fellowship Church will lead the afternoon song service. The public is invited.

Adam Hines, executive director of MPI, contributed to this report.