

FROM THE PASTOR'S

DESK



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Greetings CBCGM! The month of February seems to move faster than other months of the year. What a difference two or three days can make. Despite the brevity of its days compared to other months, February is Black/African American History/Heritage month in the US. While black history is celebrated during this month, it should be a part of our daily experience through study. This February (this winter!) has been one of the coldest in 20 years, which included several days with sub-zero temperatures. We can be thankful that as the days pass we will move into spring and the hope for warmer temperatures. But I still thank God for all things! What a blessing to be here to experience the chill! Now to the business at hand. This installment of the newsletter covers some pivotal events for the life and mission of our church. As you read, being thinking about how you can participate in the work our Lord has given us to do.

Deacon's Council

At the monthly meeting of the Deacons' Council held on *Saturday, February 2, 2014* at 9am, there were three important outcomes:

1. Funds were allocated to bring the properties at 4314-16 up to the City of Milwaukee codes per the inspectors report from December 2013. The Brotherhood submitted a budget to do the work and it was approved and the work has been completed. Be sure to thank the Brotherhood and Brother Jude and Staples for their labor and leadership in this work.
2. The diaconate discussed what would be needed to do to reinstate some of the prior outreach ministries: the clothing bank, food bank, breakfast for the homeless and needy, and other ministries to develop evangelism and serve the needs of our community.
3. The diaconate discussed what would be needed to have our church as an available option for the City of Milwaukee to use during extreme weather condition (hot/cold temperatures). Given the winter we have been experiencing, such outreach in extreme weather would further connect the church to our community by serving those less fortunate than ourselves.

While these initiatives are in the early planning stages; if you wish to learn more about these initiatives, please contact one of the Deacon Co-Chairs.

Leadership Council

At the Leadership Council held on *Saturday, February 2, 2014* at 10:30am the council engaged in the first session of leadership training. My presentation began with a quote from a leading author/pastor on the topic of church leadership, John Maxwell (*A Leader's Heart: 365-Day Devotional Journal* [Nashville: Countryman, 2003, 2010], p. 3). What follows is the conclusion to a much longer quotation, but it is a fitting summary of the whole. Maxwell states: "The strength of any organization is a direct result of the strength of its leaders. Weak leaders = weak organizations. Strong leaders = strong organizations. Everything rises and falls on leadership." This is the reason for initiating this year **Strategic Pillar #1 – Leadership Development** and **Leadership Strategic Goal 1**: training, equipping and preparing the current and next generation of *Christ-Centered Leaders* for their roles and responsibilities. I am convinced that "Getting God's House in Order" must begin with leadership!

This means that CBCGM leaders must take this initiative seriously, if they expect to remain in leadership! In this regard, I must salute brother Floyd Herron who exemplified the kind of commitment to the Leadership Council that is desired. Since he knew that the Leadership Council was meeting on the aforesaid Saturday morning, he attended the wake of a family friend that Friday night so that he would be accounted and present at the leadership meeting. If all of our leaders take this same approach and commitment, we will develop a strong leadership foundation. I expect leaders to know that I take their presence and/or absence at the Leadership Council seriously. If you recall my sermon on January 5th of this year (UNITY Sunday), *‘The Power of Cooperation’* (Genesis 11:1-9), we discovered that the Genesis narrative of the building of the Tower of Babel could be read as positive in terms of its organization. To be sure they had: **1) A Common Purpose, Goals and Vision** (vv. 3-4); **2) Unity** (v. 6); and **3) Effective Communication** (vv. 1, 6).

In order that these three essential items might be cultivated at CBCGM, I distributed a letter to the leaders of CBCGM that clarifies my expectations. Here are the main headings in summary:

- Faithful and timely oversight of ministry assignments (especially, Deacons and Ministers)
- Each ministry leader’s meeting agenda should include a review of the leadership council’s outcomes and also the ministry leader should encourage their ministry group’s participation in and cooperation with the church’s vision
- Supporting, by regular attendance, the church’s teaching ministries (Sunday School and Bible Class; and any special targeted training (for example, teacher’s in-service, leadership training, or clergy consultations, etc.)
- Regular attendance at the Leadership Council (and especially, Leadership Training)
- Faithful support of church events (Annual Days/Afternoon or Evening Programs, etc.)
- Faithfulness in giving/tithing in support of the church’s mission and ministries

I am certain that with the full cooperation of the leadership in the church’s vision plan, we can move increasingly forward toward “Making our Faith MORE Effective” in our church and in our community.

Ten-Year Strategic Plan: “Prospering the Vision”

Explaining and informing the congregation on the various elements of the strategic plan was initiated this month. On each Sunday of this month, the bulletin included one aspect of the strategic pillars and goals, and also one member of the Strategic Core Team offered an oral elaboration on the particular pillar or goal. Our purpose was not only to inform the church body of the basic elements of our strategic plan, but moreover to inspire you, the church body, toward active participation in the plan. To this end, copies of the strategic plan were distributed at the ***Stakeholder’s Summit*** held yesterday and will also be available today (or you may request a copy from the church office). The next step in the process will involve your active and thoughtful input. Our ***Church Engagement Survey*** will be distributed during 7:30am and 10:30am worship services on Sunday, March 9th and Sunday, March 16th. An online version will launch on March 10th. The due date is set for **Monday, March 24th**. Your timely and honest input is especially important and you can be assured that you will receive communal feedback on your input in a timely manner.

UNITY SUNDAY Worship

As is customary for me, I offer gracious thanks to God for the second UNITY SUNDAY of this Year! I felt inspired and enthused by the spirit-filled worship and congregational reception of the morning message: “BUILDING A WINNING TEAM” (1 Samuel 22:2; 1 Chronicles 11:1-3). This title was appropriate in that it was “Super Bowl Sunday” and many NFL team owners spent an inordinate amount of money to “build a winning team.” King David, however, was able to do this by virtue of God’s favor and his personality, which attracted individuals who could get the job of kingdom building initiated and accomplished. He attracted some important thinkers and discerners, the *sons of Issachar* (1 Chron. 12:32)– “who understood the times and knew what Israel ought to do”. They knew a change was coming and they knew how to adjust with the change; they had insight and knew what to do! King David also attracted some *Mighty Men of Valor* who could use their left or right hand in casting stones, which meant that these men were flexible and diligent. He attracted men who were willing to traverse the waters of the Jordan, even during flooding (1 Chron. 12:15); to be sure, they were dependable!

Most importantly, King David was able to garner the support of individuals who were in the upper tiers of service and ability. For example, the armed forces today have many levels of leadership and service. For the sake of argument,

consider the following: **Generals** – individuals who are gifted, committed and proven (or tried with tenure and experience); **Lieutenants** – individuals who are gifted and committed, but not proven; **Sergeants** – individuals who are committed and proven, but not gifted; **Privates** – they are usually younger and have a 9:00-5:00 mentality. They will only do what they need to do; **New Recruits** – are individuals in boot camp, which means you have to stay on top of them: get them up in the morning, put them to bed at night, and meticulously order and structure their day. You must yell and intimidate them to get them to do almost anything. **AWOL** (“absent without leave”)– are those individuals who abandon their duty. And finally, **Traders and Assassins** – these are individuals who are subversive and will hurt you when you turn your back. The reality is that **you can build successful churches with only the top three categories of service! You cannot build a winning team for the church with the bottom four! But it seems that the church is full of individuals who are in the bottom four categories!** This is the reason why a significant stress is placed on leadership development so that committed individuals may move into the upper tiers of leadership to “Build a Winning Team” for advancing the Kingdom of God! With God’s help and with clarity of vision and cooperation of service, we can move successfully in the direction of kingdom growth success.

Celebration of Service

During our February UNITY Sunday worship, several deacons were emeritized (“retired with honor”) for their faithful service to CBCGM. Please join with me in congratulating and thanking for their faithful service: **Deacons Joseph and Lavern Barber, Deacons George and Melva McBeth, Deacon James Gore, and Deacon Kenneth Martin**. We also emeritized one of our associate clergy, **Evangelist Eve Thompson**. Because of an untimely accident we were not able to share this honor with **Deacon Raymond Twitty**. He is still recovering from his injuries and we will keep him in our prayers. We will honor and celebrate Deacon Twitty and also **Deacons James and Karen Watson-Simmons** (who also could not attend because of medical restraints) in the coming months.

Finance Committee News

We also honored **Deacons Debra and Ray Rosby** for their faithful service on the finance committee. Sister Rosby served for four years (2010-2014) as finance chair and the church is encouraged to offer our thanks to her and husband Ray who worked diligently for the church and with this wife. Not only did her service as chair result in keeping the church’s finances and financial obligations afloat during a very difficult turn in the economy that effected many institutions (and especially churches nationwide), her financial management also included paying off significant debt during this same challenging economic period. We applaud her for:

- Negotiating the payoff for lawyer fees from the former building project for several thousand-dollars less than initially charged.
- Negotiating the sale of the land on Good Hope Rd., which significantly reduced our land mortgage with the Bank. In addition, she saved the church money again by writing up the sale papers herself!
- Negotiating the significant reduction in cost for old and costly contracts for the copy machines.
- Having new carpet installed in the sanctuary primarily through donations from our church deacons and church members.
- Acquiring a new piano for our worship.

To be sure, the work required much time and commitment and she did this while also maintaining a demanding full-time job in sales. This is why we must also commend Deacon Ray because he not only assisted his wife in her duties, but also faithfully carried out his own tasks:

- Weekly bank deposits (in good and bad weather!)
- Faithfully serving on the counting team (for both worship services!)
- Serving as CBCGM Property’s Coordinator

For these and other tasks that time does not permit us to share, we thank you both.

Allow me now to introduce our new finance chair, **Brother Willie Jude, Jr.** We are grateful that he, after much prayer and consideration, has accepted the charge and responsibility to assume the management of our church’s finances. He serves now as chair of the CBCGM Brotherhood ministry, is an active member of the CBCGM Men’s Network, and is a deacon in training. But it is his background in administrative leadership as a longtime Principal in Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) and managing multimillion-dollar budgets that commends him for this new leadership function. Let us

commend and also work cooperatively with him as he assists the church in fulfilling the vision of “*Getting God’s House in Order*” through financial management!

Milwaukee A.I.M. Teacher’s In-Service Training

The AIM Teacher’s In-Service training was held on Saturday, February 8, 2014 at Christ the King Baptist Church from 8:30am to 1:00pm. The adult education session was led by Rev. James M. Ivy, Pastor of the New Zion Baptist Church of Beloit, WI. He taught on “Meaningful Strategies for Lesson Preparation and Student Engagement in Christian Education.” Rev. Ivy was well prepared, enthusiastic and passionate, enlightening and engaging. Many of his insights will be adopted and appropriated in light of their relevancy and practicality. Those who missed this session missed out on some significant strategies for Androgogical (leading adults) and pedagogical (leading children) improvement.

Allow me to stress how important it is for a CBCGM teacher to attend these sessions and also for quality teaching to take place in church, where we handle the Word of God. This is why I attend regularly CBCGM’s monthly teacher’s Sunday School Lesson reviews and other teacher training sessions, AND I EXPECT OTHER CBCGM TEACHER’S TO DO THE SAME! (Coming soon will be a forthcoming letter to CBCGM teachers that will clarify roles and expectation.) We must all be on the same page and teach the same thing in terms of church doctrine. This does not stifle one’s creativity in teaching the lessons. As a matter of fact, the meetings produce creative ways of teaching, and also help to clarify our doctrine and strategies for instruction. Come teachers and be blessed and so that you might be a blessing through your teaching!

Finally, per our strategic plan, we had a goal of vetting all teachers to aide in ensuring quality teaching. This involves a number of aspects including a formal application process for the identification and selection of the next Superintendent of Sunday School. The process was followed and we want to announce our new Superintendent of Sunday School, **Sis. Linda Caples**. We are grateful for her interim service in the role along with Min. Charlotte Flowers over the past year. She currently serves as the Strategic Plan Coordinator as well. It is her background in administration, higher education and Christian service with experience in curriculum and instructional design that will serve us well in this position.

Black History Program

I commend the Scholarship committee under the leadership of sister’s **Mia Golden** (chair) and **Patricia Greer** (co-chair) on another successful Black History Program. It was their insight to have this program as a Unity Sunday event and it proved to be an excellent idea. It was quite a beautiful sight to see so many of us dressed in our African attire, from full outfits to kente cloth stoles draped over our shoulders. **Sis. Tawana Harper** did a great job as worship leader as did everyone else on the program. We must commend also **Deacon Alexander Hardy** for his inspiring and insightful Black History program talk. It was apparent to all that he engaged in research and reflection on the topic of black history month and the father of black history, Dr. Carter G. Woodson. Let’s remember his encouraging words that exhorted us to celebrate black history month all year!

Bible Study

The Lenten season is upon us. This means that we will suspend our study of *The Power of REAL* and engage the Lenten study, *Waiting for Water*, continuing with the other five lessons in this text from this work we studied last year. We will have our Lenten Service (Ash Wednesday) on this coming **Wednesday, March 5, 2014 at 6:15pm**. We invite all to come out & prepare for Resurrection Sunday through the introspective & sacrificial season of lent.

In Memoriam

Finally, let us remember the beloved souls that have passed from our congregation and/or also the family members of our CBCGM sisters and brothers. We offer our continued prayers and condolences to all. Let us lovingly remember those who have passed:

Arverdison Hailstock Sr.
Eleanor Franklin
Lorene Hutchins
Robert Smith
Corey Stevenson Jr.

