

FROM THE PASTOR'S

DESK



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(March 2014)*

Greetings CBCGM! It seems that winter does not want to release us from its grips so that we might enjoy the renewal of spring. I hope and anticipate a nice transition to spring in the coming month of April. Nevertheless, we do thank God for the privilege of life, health and strength regardless of the weather! As you will see below the month of March has been loaded with meaningful activities and events. Time does not allow us to review all of the activities of the month but we can review some of the most important items of the month. Let's pursue them now without further hindrance.

Deacon's Council

At the monthly meeting of the Deacons' Council held on *Saturday, February 2, 2014* at 9 AM, there were three important outcomes: 1) the deacon council voted that the baptismal curtain should be solid red instead of portraying a particular scene, 2) the council also voted to purchase gold pins for the deacons with the word "DEACON" printed on the pin so that the deacons can be identified, especially for our visitors, and 3) the council voted and unanimously approved the nomination of brother Michael Staples as the new church engineer. He will replace CBCGM's long-time faithful holder of this office, Deacon Williams Ray Rosby. Let's show our appreciation for both brothers and also welcome brother Mike Staples to this new function. He has already been called upon by unanticipated events with church properties, such as, recently helping to stop pipe leaks, fixing furnaces (at the pastoral residence; thank you so much!), assisting with fixing the telephone issue that plagued us for two weeks, and other things that deserve our thanks.

Stakeholders Summit

At CBCGM's the first Stakeholders Summit held on *Saturday, March 1, 2014* at 10:00 AM approximately 10 church members attended besides the leaders who normally attend the Leadership Council. We hope to see marked improvement at our future meetings. Perhaps, it was the name change that may have confused some of our members. Since many members stated that they do not like "church business meetings", the Strategic Planning Committee decided to change the name and the focus of the church business meeting. Rev. Anthony Caples offered the name Stakeholder's Summit because it allows individuals committed to the church and its vision to stake their claim as supporters of the church and show that they are concerned about their "Father's business." We unanimously accepted this new title and pray that you do to, especially by attending future meetings. Below is a summary of this first Stakeholders Summit:

The *Ten-Year Strategic Plan Summary* was distributed for the membership who attended, which covered Strategic Pillars 1 – 3. The Three Pillars on the handout outlined the purpose for: 1) **Leadership Development**, 2) **Spiritual Growth** and 3) **Church Unity**. The handout also covered the *strategic goals* for the community and CBCGM congregation. After a brief overview of the Ten-Year Strategic Plan for the church by Pastor Williams, Brother

Willie Jude, chair of the Finance Committee, gave a detailed explanation of the state of the church's finances. He also provided viable suggestions for growth in our giving. His report covered the following:

- Tithes and offering summary
- The percentages of the members who gave regularly
- Church expenses

Bro. Jude also mentioned that church members can expect to start receiving quarterly statements of their giving in order for them to track their giving. Brother Jude also asked the leaders to be an example for other members in their own giving; stressing that all leaders should tithe/give regularly. It was agreed that instruction/teaching on tithing (in Bible Class or in a special teaching workshop) should be offered for the entire church because some members/leaders are not sure how much they should tithe and the spiritual principles regarding tithing. We endeavor to address these concerns in the near future.

Ten-Year Strategic Plan: "Prospering the Vision"

Our **Church Engagement Survey** was distributed during 7:30 AM and 10:30 AM worship services on Sunday, March 9th and Sunday, March 16th. An online version was also made available for the convenience of members. Your timely and honest input was important and you can be assured that you will receive [communal](#) feedback on your input in a timely manner. We thank you all for your honest and sometimes challenging assessment of the church's progress and impact. But some of the challenging comments we believe were designed to be helpful because the goal of the engagement survey is to provide our members with the opportunity and forum to express their concerns and hopes for the church. And also to have input about decisions that impact our Church life and our Community. The CBCGM stakeholder engagement process continues to encourage transparency, efficiency and consistency. In this way, we are striving to make your participation in this ministry meaningful. On behalf of the committee, I thank all of you who took the time to do the survey for your input.

UNITY SUNDAY Worship

As is customary for me, I offer gracious thanks to God for the third UNITY SUNDAY of this Year! I can't express enough how much these combined worship experiences have blessed me and other members. I felt so inspired and enthused by the spirit-filled worship and congregational reception of the morning message: "**MORE THAN ENOUGH**" (EXODUS 36:3-7). This narrative (of which I offered a snippet) recounts Moses receiving instructions for building the Tabernacle from the LORD God Almighty, who instructed him to ask of the people to provide the resources (that God had already provided for them through the Egyptians) for its construction. What was of interesting note to me was that God performed miracles for everything else that had led his people to this point in their journey: ten plagues in Egypt, providing a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night for their protection, parting the Red Sea so that they crossed on dry ground, and miraculously feeding them manna and quail in the wilderness. BUT a key lesson in the narrative is that, **BUILDING AND CARING FOR GOD'S SANCTUARY, AND TAKING CARE OF THE LORD'S WORK DOES NOT TAKE A MIRACLE! It takes a willing heart!** Because this is all that is needed for the work the Lord has given to God's people! God has provided the resources, but God's people must be willing to share a portion of them for supporting God's work. There is always **more than enough** when the people of God share their God-given resources with a willing heart!

Milwaukee AIM Associate Clergy Consultation

The Milwaukee-AIM Associate Clergy Consultation was held on March 8, 2014 at 8:30 AM here at CBCGM. Rev. John K. Patterson administered a *Spiritual Gifts Survey* for the associate clergy. For many of them it was a time of great discovery when the survey indicated some spiritual gifts of which they were not even aware. For others, it was a confirmation of spiritual gifts that already had been known, honed and developed. In either case, the survey proved so helpful to many that I think it is worth providing it for the entire leadership, and even membership of CBCGM. Many of God's people have untapped and undeveloped spiritual gifts that await discovery and development. This sentiment was also expressed by CBCGM's Associate Clergy at a breakfast fellowship we shared together at the Machine Shed restaurant at our monthly meeting. We hope at some point in the future, to assist

more of God's people in discovery and developing their spiritual gifts and using them to strengthen the Body of Christ.

Sunday School News

We announced in last month's newsletter that Sis. Linda Caples will serve as our Sunday School Superintendent, a role and function in which she was already engaged and shared with Min. Charlotte Flowers on an interim basis. Now she had taken on the function as its leader. She has already charted a course for the development of the Sunday School ministry, of which a brief summary is provided below.

In the first one hundred days (March 2 – June 17, 2014) Sis. Caples has *Five Top Priorities*:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher Training Program (underway this month!) 2. Regular assessment of students 3. E-mail students throughout the week to encourage them and provide additional study materials (has already been done and will continue) 4. Acknowledge students who demonstrate (via assessment) a growing knowledge of the Word 5. Ensure that every class teaches the foundations of the faith 	<p><i>Secondary Goals:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grow the number of students 2. Develop more creativity in teaching 3. Identify and recruit a team to teach young adults 4. Develop a self-supported Sunday School 5. Prepare more qualified and able teachers 6. Find new Sunday School books 7. Find/create additional classroom space with maps and whiteboards 8. Structure more time for teaching 9. Have a class to team teach on Unity Sundays 10. Train the Sunday School children to be superintendents and teachers 11. Name the young adult class – College and Career class 12. Encourage teachers to study the lessons in more depth
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Let us encourage and support her in these endeavors for they will require our cooperative spirit and participation!

To encourage these goals and others, and to especially express our thanks to those teachers who have taught faithfully for years and for the newly engaged teachers, a *Sunday School Teachers Appreciation Luncheon* was held on March 16, 2014 from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM. While Sis. Caples was unable to attend and lead the program because her daughter was ill and spent the better part of the early morning at Children's Hospital; we thank Min. Charlotte Flowers for being ready and able to step in. After going over the format and schedule for the upcoming intensive teacher training program, I offered comment and encouragement to the teachers regarding our challenging and rewarding task as teachers. I reminded them of James 3:1 – *"Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers; because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly."* This is our theme scripture for teachers, and what is clear is that God expects quite a bit from God's teachers given the sacred nature of what we do – teach and represent the counsel of God (Acts 20:27). This is the guiding force that inspires the intensive teacher training program; that we might teach with accuracy and integrity. At the close of our small celebration, Min. Flowers presented each teacher with a small gift in token of appreciation for their services. We thank the Culinary Ministry for providing a delicious lunch, which made the atmosphere of fellowship and appreciation deeper and richer.

Community Outreach and Evangelism

Reaching our to Families in the Community

Many members may not be aware of this bit of information but CBCGM hosted the repast for Corey Stevenson Jr., the six-year old kindergarten student at Clarke Street School, who was accidentally and tragically killed in a car accident on 41st and North Avenue on February 20, 2014. About 80 family members, school administrators, teachers and friends attended the repast. We thank Deacon Brenda Hagler for initiating and spearheading this

outreach effort for the bereaved family. We also thank Deacon Hardy for his role too in this outreach initiative. Deacon Hagler, Sis. Powell and myself met with Corey's mother, Ms. Janada Barr, in preparation for the repast and she expressed her deep appreciation for our offer and outreach. We thank the deacons, ministers, brotherhood and other church members that were available to assist with this event. We cannot forget the Culinary Ministry who assisted the family in serving the food. To be sure, it is our goal and prayer that we might be able to continue on a consistent basis to engage in community outreach and evangelism. Hope is on the horizon with the initial efforts of forming a mission ministry to engage some of the needs of the community. Please be prayerful and make yourself available for these efforts.

Home Improvement Initiative Celebration

We must also express our appreciation for the outreach efforts of the Men's Network's Home Improvement Initiative. I have met with and interacted with several of the young men and women who have been taught various skills through this initiative. While CBCGM members have also benefited from either participating as a student or having the students provide services for them, the majority of the students are from the community, and this ministry provides them with skills that can lead to employment opportunities. We are grateful for the remarkable attendance and support from both the community and the church members. The food was great and the fellowship hall (which received noticeable aesthetic improvement via the Brotherhood/Men's Network and the Home Improvement Initiative!) was immaculate! Let's keep moving in the right direction with our evangelistic/outreach efforts.

Bible Study

The Lenten season is still upon us and we have been studying lessons from, *Waiting for Water*. I have been tremendously blessed with each lesson and I hope the entire Bible Class has been too. I offer my gracious thanks to our Associate Clergy who led the lessons for Lent. Please note that our last lesson was held this past Wednesday (4/2/14) since in the coming week we will have our Pre-Anniversary Worship Celebration from Tuesday –Thursday (4/8 – 4/10) at 6:30 PM nightly. Please come out & show your support! Please note the following week (4/14 - 4/18; Monday –Friday) is Holy/Passion Week, which culminates with our MKE-AIM Good Friday Worship at Tabernacle Community Baptist Church. We will resume our regular study text, *The Power of REAL*, on **Wednesday, April 23**.

Special Note of Thanks

On behalf of CBCGM members I would like to acknowledge and thank Brother Michael & Sister Kasheena Morgan for submitting a letter to the church requesting the privilege of purchasing the baptismal curtain for the church. I cannot help but think that this request was made in response to the UNITY SUNDAY message, "**More than Enough**," because the letter was submitted at the end of this service. I thank them for their "willing hearts" to go above and beyond their regular giving to make this special offering for the church. I also applaud them because they made the offer and wanted to remain anonymous but I requested that they allow me the privilege of publically acknowledging their private offer. My reasons are based upon the Exodus text, which mentions by name for all posterity a few of those with willing hearts who made special offering for the building and construction of the Tabernacle. In keeping with that spirit of gratitude, I thank them both as well as all of you who by your continued giving of time, talents and treasure contribute to the upkeep of God's house. May blessings be multiplied to you all!

In Memoriam

Finally, let us remember the beloved souls that have passed from our congregation and also the family members of our CBCGM sisters and brothers. We offer our prayers and condolences to all.

Let us lovingly remember those who have passed:

Charles Hill
Dr. W. G. Johnson
Robert Smith

