



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Reverend Dr. Demetrius K. Williams, **PASTOR**

Community Baptist Church of Greater Milwaukee

2249 North Sherman Boulevard Mailing address: 4311 W. North Avenue (53208)

www.cbcm.org

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We give thanks and praise to God for the close of the old year and the arrival of the New Year. The old year did not depart without a struggle. Winter is finally upon us! And it arrived with a grand entrance – 9 inches of wet heavy snow and high winds. But we are grateful for the privilege of being able to enter into a New Year and a new start. This is usually the time of year where people take stock of the past year and promise to do better for the coming year. We have done much in the past year to be proud of: we've worked together as a community of faith to complete the first part of a major phase of our strategic plan to have handicap accessibility before the close of 2015 and we did it! What makes it even more rewarding is that we did it without bank loans or other outside assistance – we did it with our own sacrificial giving. With this strong close of the old year we can enter the New Year on a high note and with momentum to complete the remaining work of renovation. On the other hand, we must take stock of our inability to “fill the house” – not even with CBCGM's own members! We have made access available but we have not been as intentional in another aspect of our strategic plan: “**Spiritual Growth.**” Perhaps this is why I felt led to initiate the following theme for the coming year of **2016 – ENGAGING OUR ASSIGNMENT: Making Disciples** (Matthew 28:18-20). Before we go “into the highway and hedges” we must learn what it means to be disciples. By God's grace we shall engage that task.

As always – Be Present. Be Prayerful. Be Positive. Be Impactful.

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

We convened on Saturday, December 5 at 10:00am. Below is a summary:

- At the start of the meeting we prayed and read scripture.
- The minutes from the previous meeting were read.
- The Following Ministry Reports were given:
 - Sis Bessie announced that the youth would be feeding the hungry on the following Saturday.
 - Min E announced the Senior Luncheon taking place on Saturday the 19th that will allow more seniors to attend due to the completion of our elevator!
- Administrative Updates included:
 - The introduction of the 2016 Church Calendar. Corrections were to be submitted by December 14th. Any New Calendar Items such as a program, activity, event or fundraiser. Must be presented in writing at least 90 days in advance and have Deacon Advisor Approval along with Pastor Approval.
 - The Opportunity For Involvement Booklet was also presented as a method of keeping everyone abreast of our many ministries, when they meet and who the contact person is. This will be a yearly publication available at the start of each year in addition to being handed out to our New Members to aid in them selecting an area of service.
 - Our 1st Leadership Retreat was announced, which will take place the 2nd weekend in January at the St Iakovos Retreat Center. The purpose of this retreat is to leave any and all issues behind and press forward into the New Year with transformed hearts and a deeper commitment to serving.
 - In an effort to demonstrate our pillar of **Church Unity**, we were shown samples of branded clothing that included a light blue dress shirt, a brown jogging suit and a sand polo shirt. Because possibilities are beyond infinite when it comes to branded apparel, our plan is for the leaders to start off purchasing the polo shirt that will have our logo embroidered on it. We will then branch off to design other items in various colors and offer them for purchase to the entire congregation.
- Pastoral Observations
 - Pastor emphasized the importance of attending our Leadership Retreat. Changing culture is difficult and resistance is natural, but we can do better by laying aside attitudes in order to reach peak effectiveness. We were encouraged to read 3 John chapter 6.

TEN-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN: “PROSPERING THE VISION”

Our last meeting of 2015 took place on Tuesday, December 1st with a grand feast of holiday goodies contributed by the entire team. We had a guest speaker, Mr. Michael Beal of the National Association of Black Veterans, come to speak to us on the needs of veterans and how our church could help. He gave us a wealth of information to pray over as we seek to determine where to focus our efforts in establishing a CDC. There are so many groups that need help and it’s critically important for us to weigh the pros and cons of each scenario. This will be one of our main charges for 2016. We also discussed our need to have a mission statement for our CDC, which we plan to create within the first quarter of the year. If you have any experience or can offer assistance, please contact our strategic coordinator.

In addition, we looked over the business & occupation slips we had the congregation complete in November. We discovered quite a bit about what God has placed here on the corner of Sherman & North. We have about ten business owners whose services include catering, bookkeeping, printing, beauty services, and podiatry. In addition, we found that occupationally speaking; we have a vast variety of careers and industries. The category that stood out by far was Education. From students to teachers to test examiners to counselors to professors to principals to assistance superintendents to deans; we are a people who believe in education! Armed now with the knowledge of the gifts and talents of our people, we will diligently seek to work with you in the kingdom of God to increase His house & **make disciples**.

We are ever so hopeful as we look forward to doing more of God’s work in 2016!

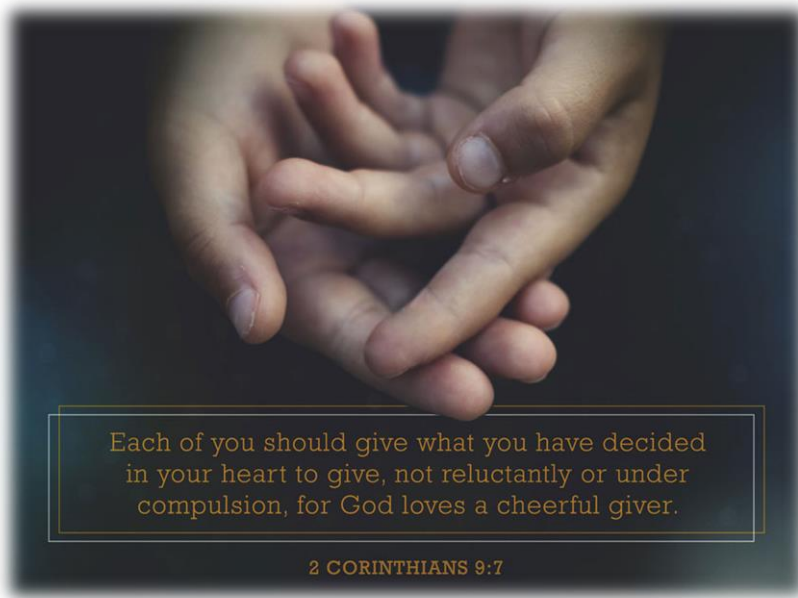


FINANCE UPDATE

As we come to the close of another year and the dawn of a New Year the Finance Ministry and Pastor Rev. Dr. Demetrius Williams want to thank each of you for your support and dedication to the financial growth of CBCGM in 2015. We begin 2016 with the knowledge that God will do for us only what we are willing to do for ourselves. We can do all things through Christ who strengthen us. He will give us the strength to conquer the impossible and overcome the many obstacles that come before us if we keep the faith.

The Finance Ministry will continue to work closely with our Pastor, Associates, Deacons, Ministry Leaders, Core Team and most of all, the members of CBCGM to promote the three Strategic pillars of CBCGM. Our three pillars are: 1) **Leadership Development**, 2) **Spiritual Growth** and 3) **Church Unity**. We must continue to keep our Motto in mind as we continue to move forward... **“One Voice—One Vision—One Vocation.”** When we make up our mind to move as one body the Devil gets worried.

Thanks be to God, we were able to complete phase one of our special projects with the sacrifice of our members that worked very hard to pay the \$1000.00, or whatever they could to complete the project. We know that all things are possible in Christ Jesus, but we have to make up our minds to Trust that God will do what He says. While we have completed the major project, we have several smaller projects that we continue to work on; therefore, we need you to continue to give. We are asking each member to pledge an extra \$50 per month above your tithes and offerings to complete the remainder of the renovations and repairs. In 2016, we want you to truly do what you can. With the help of God, we will complete the projects before us without borrowing. Can we do it? Yes we can!!! Once again, the Finance Ministry wants to thank each of you for your ongoing support as we continue to move forward in Christ Jesus.



Note: Your Financial Contribution statement will be mail on or before January 15, 2016.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

December was a busy month as we all prepared for Christmas and year end. The CBC Wealth Creation/ Debt Reduction Bible Study course was suspended during December as previously announced. If there is sufficient interest we will schedule classes in January. I will consult on an individual basis with anyone who wants to reduce the worry they may currently have regarding their finances. To schedule an appointment or to schedule a class contact Rev. Mike Robertson at 508-561-3921 or email at emmyandmike@verizon.net.

A class was conducted describing "How Our Free Enterprise System Works" to 8th grade students at Hi-Mount School thanks to Alex Hardy. We will have to wait to see if this had the intended impact. We will consider some way to expand economic literacy within our neighborhood and congregation and we open to any suggestions. We are continuing to explore the possibility of CBC sponsoring the Good News Club program at Hi-Mount as well as at Obama.

The **Love Kindness** program awarded the first Kindness award during unity worship and this event was reported in the Milwaukee Times. Please record any acts of Kindness you observe, perform or receive and deposit your observations in The Love Kindness box at the back of the sanctuary. Bumper stickers, buttons and window signs are available in the back of the sanctuary. Hi-Mount is awarding Kindness awards each week and have installed a large bulletin board to give credit to the winners. A second school, the Sherman School, plans to begin a Love Kindness program in their 2nd and 3rd grades in January. If you know of a school that might want to consider introducing a Love Kindness program please let Alex Hardy or me know and we will contact whom you recommend.

We continue to explore with the Men's Network how we can support a program regarding Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking in Milwaukee. There are many organizations in our immediate neighborhood that we can partner with if the members of CBC want to be involved. My New Year's prayer is that we can be truly effective in those areas that we decide to become involved in as a church community. Empowered by the Holy Spirit and working together there is no limit to what we can accomplish!



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



SUNDAY SCHOOL:

A teacher appreciation luncheon was held at the Parish House for Sunday School, New Members and BLAST teachers. It was a great time of fellowship and food thanking the teachers for their commitment and dedication as they labor to encourage discipleship growth for this congregation.

December 20, 2015 we held our Sunday School Advent Celebration, in collaboration with the music department. Sister Jessica Adesuyi led the shoebox initiative for Sunday School. BLAST and Sunday School representatives bought, sorted & wrapped **76 shoe boxes** with candy, games, toys and fruit. We had enough shoeboxes to give to our children, including those who were visiting. We also included gospel tracts in some of the shoe boxes; planting the seeds of salvation where it may be needed.

In 2016, We Will Celebrate 5 Sundays Of Advent & Have A Christmas Cantata Service!!!

BIBLE STUDY:

As we close out 2015 and prepare for the opportunities in 2016 the evening and afternoon classes have been studying "Celebration of Discipline" which looks at inward, outward and corporation disciplines that Jesus and the Disciples practice as well as great preachers and evangelist from the past. Our theme for 2016 is "**Engaging our Assignment: Making Disciples**". It's not too late to attend these classes we will resume in January 2016. This is your opportunity to get ready to go as commanded by Jesus.

NEW MEMBERS:

Our purpose and goal for 2015 was to the fill the house, yet there certainly is still room. The intake number for 2015 was 60; 6 were children who were baptized, 1 relocated, 3 never returned or responded to attempts to contact them, 3 haven't completed because of work schedule, 4 are in process. One third has complete New Members Class and are actively engaged in ministry, some will not commit to a ministry and the others are limited due to their work schedule but are willing to help when available.

***REMINDER: ANYONE WHO JOINS THE CHURCH AND ARE EIGHTEEN OR OLDER MUST COMPLETE NEW MEMBERS CLASS. ANY EXCEPTIONS MUST BE DISCUSSED WITH (Minister C. Flowers; Director: New Members Ministry) AND OKAYED BY PASTOR.**

UNITY SUNDAY

The sermon text and title for UNITY Sunday was **“Longing for Peace”** (Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19). This was the second Sunday of Advent, theme of which is PEACE. Of all that was said in the sermon, my driving theme and point was that “peace must be made – it does not grow on trees like fruit.” If we are going to have peace, it must be an intentional act and practice. Indeed, Jesus said that we must be “peace makers.” Indeed, the prophets have described Jesus, the Messiah or Christ of Christmas, as the “Prince of Peace.” In a world of violence and living in communities of conflict, we must become peacemakers. This is one of the joyful realities of Advent announced by the angels –

**“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace,
goodwill toward humankind.”**





In Memoriam



Finally, we dedicate this section of our newsletter to the beloved souls that have passed from our congregation and also the family members of our CBCGM sisters and brothers. We sincerely offer our prayers and condolences to the bereaved families of everyone who has lost a loved one this year.

For it matters not
how much we
own, the cars, the
house, the cash.

What matters is
how we live and
love and how we
spend our DASH