

Beacon of Light

April—June 2022 • Volume 5 • Issue 2

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life." John 8:12



Pastor's Corner

"Pentecost: A Promise Fulfilled (Part I)"

*"The Church's one foundation
is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is his own creation,
by water and the Word.
From heaven he came and sought her
to be his holy bride;
with his own blood he bought her
and for her life he died."*

BOH # 545, vs. 1

Pentecost Sunday, the official birthday of the Church universal, was celebrated on June 5th. We all recall, of course, the miraculous gift of tongues recorded in the second chapter of Acts which inaugurated this momentous event. The eleven remaining disciples, and a handful of other female and male followers of Jesus, had specifically done what Jesus had asked them to do in the aftermath of his resurrection and ascension. They gathered in the upstairs chambers of a residence in Jerusalem and, in continued fellowship and prayer, waited on that which Jesus had promised: the gift of the Holy Spirit.

This gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (the occasion of a Jewish harvest festival celebrated fifty days after the observation of Passover) enabled those who had gathered in the Upper Room to speak in the languages of Jewish pilgrims now assembled in Jerusalem from all known parts of the world. It empowered this small band of Jesus followers to expand their witness of Christ across barriers of nationality, language, and race.

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Pastor's Corner *(continued from page 1)*

Today, some 2000 years later, the Church of Jesus Christ still stands. She has continued to do so despite countervailing periods of persecution, heresy, war and every other conceivable challenge pitted against her. We read about many of these challenges, ultimately spiritual in nature, in our study of Revelation. John, the author of Revelation, was instructed to write down a vision of what Christ had revealed to him concerning the nature of the challenges the Church and the faithful of God would face, and how best to withstand and ultimately overcome them.

Stay tuned for Part II of this series in which I will discuss more specifically some of the challenges and opportunities we, as United Methodists, face today.

Pastor Mark D. Venson



Inspirational Thoughts and Encouragement

Five Reasons To Serve God

Source: *Daily Hope*

“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”—Matthew 25:40 (NIV)

How do you serve God? By serving others. In the parable of the sheep and the goats, Jesus said, *“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me”* (Matthew 25:40 NIV). When you do something that makes someone else’s life better in some way, you’re serving God.

Some people serve out of guilt, duty, or pressure. But God wants you to serve out of gratitude for what he’s done for you. He made you, he saved you, and he’s taking you to heaven. Gratitude is the best motivator to serve.

Here are five things the Bible says about serving God:

Serving is one of your life purposes. Mark 8:35 says, *“Only those who throw away their lives for my sake and for the sake of the Good News will ever know what it means to really live”* (TLB). Until you learn how to serve, you’re not really living—you’re just existing. You make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give away.

Serving makes you more like Jesus. Matthew 20:28 says, *“Even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many”* (NLT). If you don’t learn how to serve others, you will never grow to spiritual maturity. In fact, you’ll be a spiritual baby your entire life.

Serving is the highest use of your time. 1 Corinthians 15:58 says, *“Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord”* (NIV). If you want to make an impact and leave a legacy, the highest use of your time is to serve God by serving others. Your service to the Lord is never wasted.

Serving is the secret to greatness. Matthew 20:26 says, *“If you want to be great, you must be the servant of all the others”* (CEV). True greatness comes from servanthood, not from living for yourself. The greatest leaders are those who serve the most.

Serving will be rewarded in heaven. Jesus said in Mark 10:29-30, *“I can guarantee this truth: Anyone who gave up [anything] because of me and the Good News will certainly receive a hundred times as much”* (GW). Ultimately, your real boss is Jesus. And he will reward you one day for everything you’ve done for him. That’s a guarantee!

How passionate are you about serving God? Could your enthusiasm use a boost? God wants you to think differently about serving and to *“never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord”* (Romans 12:11 NIV).

Talk It Over

- What is one way you are serving right now? What motivates you to serve in this capacity?
- How does it make you feel when someone serves you?
- When you help someone, you’re actually doing it for Jesus. How does knowing that impact the way you serve others?



KIDZ CORNER



CALENDAR OF FUN

PAST

Easter Holiday Fun: We hope all the children enjoyed their Easter Goodie Bags. The Children’s Ministry provided Easter Goodie Bags full of candy, snacks, and treats for all the children and youth, in addition to Easter treats provided on Easter Sunday at church!!!!

FUTURE

Virtual Sunday School: We will continue holding virtual Sunday School for the month of June and then take a break in July and August. Virtual Sunday school is held via Zoom on Sunday’s after EUMC Church Service at 1:00PM. Send a note to: aattware@aol.com if you want to participate!

Virtual Sunday School Bursts into Spring

During March, April, and May, Sunday School focused on the importance of prayer, discussed how prayer changes people and situations, and how prayer brings us closer to God.



Prayer

Prayer is a chance to spend time with God. To really understand the heart of God, you need to **pray**.

Talking with God develops a deeper relationship with Him.



Prayer helps us to understand what God wants us to do, and **not** do.



Our Bible verse for the lesson is, **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**, *Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*



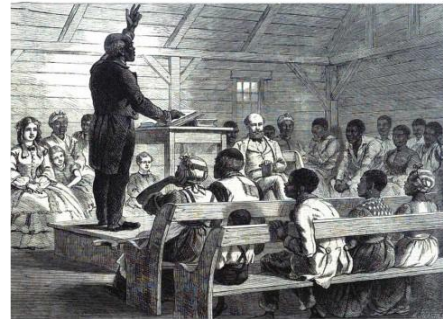
Prayer Meetings



A long time ago

Black preachers delivered sermons on the plantation to slaves. The black preacher must act as a peacemaker and could never preach against slavery or on topics that were not in agreement with slaveowners.

But the slaves held secret prayer meetings where they met to pray for better things and a better life.



Ebenezer United Methodist Church started as a prayer meeting

Around 1885, a group of former slaves were no longer happy worshipping in the segregated "white church". They wanted their own church.

A black woman, Ms. Jennie Key, started holding prayer meetings in her Lanham home.



(These pictures are only to portray a likeness of people of the era.)

Prayer Changes Things!!!!

When the "white church" built a brand new church they sold their old church for \$1.00 to Ms Key and the black people who met in her home. They rolled the old church down the street and onto property that had been given to them.

Our church was dedicated in 1888 and named Ebenezer Methodist Episcopal Church.

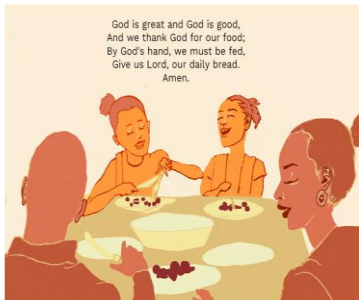


Ebenezer United Methodist Church started as a prayer meeting and look at us now!!



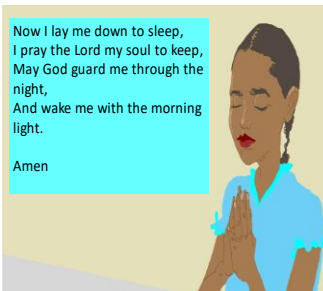
Thank you God for this new day. In my school to work and pray.
Please be with me all day long. In every story, game and song.
May all the happy things we do, make you Our Father happy too!

Pray before Meals



Pray Before Bedtime

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,
May God guard me through the night,
And wake me with the morning light.
Amen



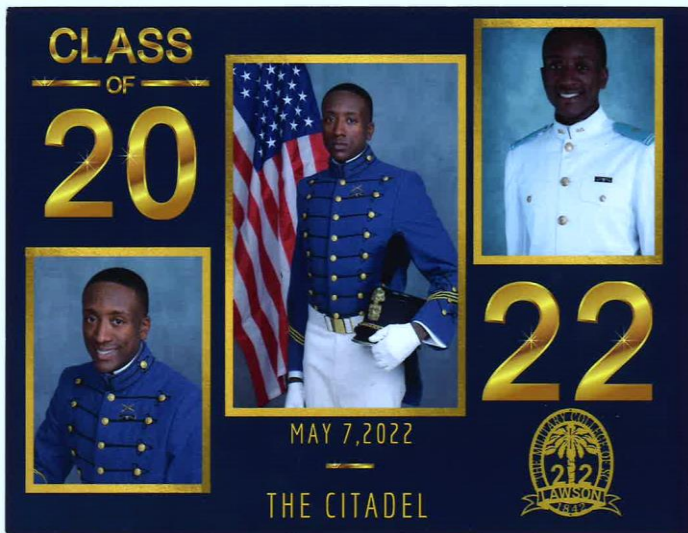
Pray before making important decisions



Submitted by Sis. Terri Ware



Graduating Class of 2022



These are the ones we do not hear enough about, Military College of South Carolina.

Brandon Marquis-Mundell Lawson graduated from the Citadel, Military College of South Carolina, School of Humanities and Security Studies with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Intelligence and Security Studies with a concentration in Counterterrorism, commissioning as a Second Lieutenant, United States Army.

Congratulations Brandon. We salute you on your outstanding achievements, and we pray God’s blessing upon you as you continue on life’s journey.

Love you, Aunt Shirley and Family.

Submitted by Sis. Shirley White



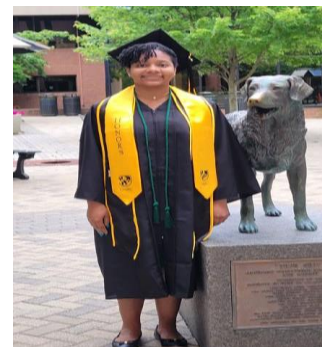
Dorothy and I have been blessed to have 3 college graduates for this year.

Our daughter, Rosalyn Poole and two of her children received their undergraduate degrees this May.



Rosalyn Poole graduated from University of Maryland Global Campus on May 22, 2022. She received a BS degree in General Studies.

Sarina E. Wilson, daughter of Rosalyn and granddaughter of Boyd and Dorothy, graduated from the University of Maryland Baltimore Campus on May 26, 2022. She received a BA degree in English, Cum Laude.

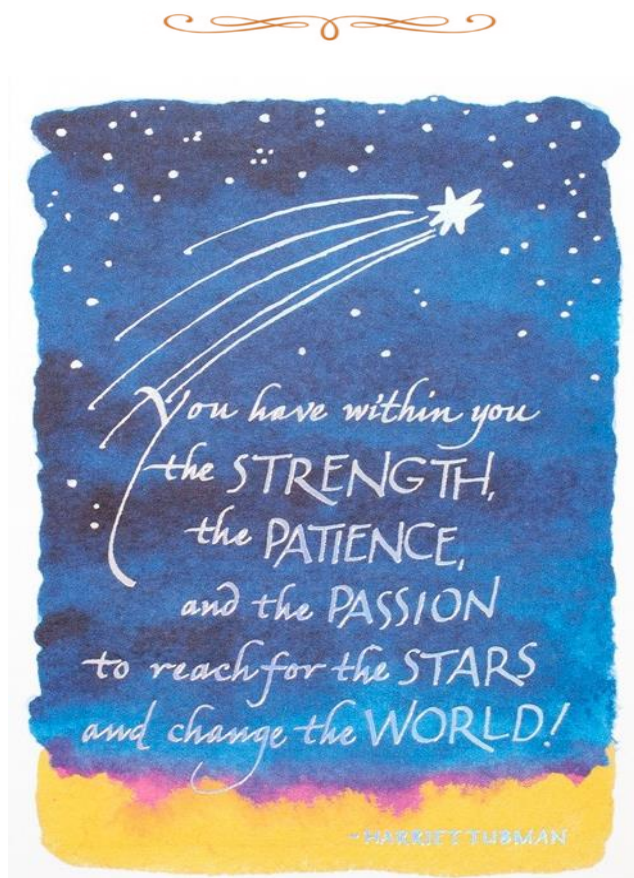




Brandon A. Wilson, son of Rosalyn and grandson of Boyd and Dorothy graduated from the University of Maryland Baltimore Campus on May 26, 2022. He received a BS degree in Computer Science and a Minor in Statistics. He will be attending graduate school next year at UMBC.



Submitted by Bro. Boyd & Sis. Dorothy Poole



Keeping You Informed

Sis. Butler Recognized – Administrative Professionals Day



On April 24, Sis. Stephanie Hazell, Chair of the Pastor Parish Relations Committee, recognized Sis. Butler with a bouquet of flowers and thank you card for her committed and dedicated service to Ebenezer. Sis. Butler brought smiles to the congregation with her lovely acceptance remarks.

Submitted by Sis. Daphne Fuller



Black Women Staffers Are Proudly Taking Up Space On Capitol Hill

TheGrio spotlights some of the senior and mid-senior level Black women staffers on the Hill doing the People's work on the heels of Black women's history--By Gerren Keith Gaynor, March 30, 2022



Black Women Capitol Hill staffers come together for a photo at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. on Friday, March 25, 2022. (Photo by Cheriss May for *TheGrio*)

Staffers on Capitol Hill are known for staying behind the scenes, supporting their bosses who've been elected to Congress in order to do the People's work. Hill staffers are the unsung heroes and sheroes who help members of Congress deliver necessary policy for their constituents.

The role of making government work can often be a faceless and thankless job, and it can be particularly so for Black staffers on the Hill. Much like in Corporate America or private-sector industries, Black women can especially be few and far between in government, which is why *theGrio* decided to spotlight a few of the faces we don't often get to see.

Thirteen Black women staffers came together for a special photo shoot to highlight a pivotal and historic moment in Washington as a Black woman currently serves as vice president of the United States (Kamala Harris) and another is poised to be confirmed as the first Black woman to serve on the United States Supreme Court (Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson).

TheGrio was able to sit down with seven of the women to talk more intimately about what it's like being a Black woman taking up space in a predominantly white, male arena, the glass ceilings that are being shattered in U.S. government and what inspired them to work in public service.

Read their stories and see them in their Black Girl Magic glory below.

Black women staffers featured: **Antonia Hill**, Policy Advisor for House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer; **Leah Hill**, Legislative Director for U.S. Senator Cory Booker; **Harleigh Bean**, Operations and Strategic Planning Director for House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer; **Wendy Hamilton**, Outreach and Member Services Adviser for Assistant Speaker Katherine Clark; **Hope Goins**, Staff Director for the House Committee on Homeland Security; **Winded Parker**, National Security Adviser for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi; **Bernadine Stallings**, Deputy Communications Director for House Majority Whip James Clyburn; **Kayla Primes**, Legislative Assistant, U.S. Senator Jacky Rosen; **Gabrielle Howard**, Legislative Assistant and Acting Digital Director for U.S. Rep. Troy Carter; **Maya Valentine**, Maryland Press Secretary for House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer; **Melania Farrah**, Chief of Staff for U.S. Rep. Nakoma Williams; **Taylor Ware**, Education and Labor Legislative Aid for U.S. Senator Raphael Warnock; **Tamika Mason**, Director of Technology and Faith Outreach for House Majority Whip James Clyburn.

Kayla Primes



Kayla Primes, Legislative Assistant for U.S. Senator Jacky Rosen (D-IL) and President of Congressional Black Associates (CBA) poses at Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. on Friday, March 25, 2022.

Legislative Assistant, U.S. Senator Jacky Rosen (D-IL)

President of Congressional Black Associates (CBA)

Hometown: Cleveland, Ohio

Education: Howard University (B.A. in Political Science and Government/ Philosophy)

What does it mean to you to be a Black woman working on the Hill?

"Knowing that you are an important factor to creating change that you seek does definitely sound like a cliché, but when it comes to writing the policies and writing the laws, many people think it's just the members of Congress, but it's also a lot of people who are behind these members of

Congress who are coming up with these ideas — and there are Black women doing it too. So I enjoy it. I feel like I've always had a dream of being on the Hill for a very long time. So for me to be here is definitely truly a blessing. This role is very important to me. It has its ups and downs, but I'm very appreciative of the community that is present because I feel we do have a sisterhood and there is a very strong pipeline bringing Black women and men on the Hill. On the Hill, there are Black women senior staffers who want to mentor you and guide you through. There is no information that you can find online about how to maneuver the Hill. I'm definitely appreciative of the sisterhood here.

What are some challenges to being a Black woman staffer on the Hill?

"There's not many of us. Sometimes we do get stereotyped and it may be hard to maneuver through that. Many of us are all in predominantly white offices. Sometimes you feel like you can't be yourself, but then you have to realize if that's who I am, then that's who I am. I feel like that sometimes is challenging but when you have other people who can share your experiences it definitely gets better."

What does it mean to you to be a Black woman on the Hill during a time when the vice president of the United States and potentially the next Supreme Court nominee are Black women?

"It's empowering. It was a very emotional week as we saw the confirmation hearings for Supreme Court Justice nominee Ketanji Brown Jackson. It definitely was a rollercoaster of emotions, but overall, it makes me happy. It's like, OK, we're here, we're making these good steps, and it's great to have people that we can look up to like, OK, I could be in that seat. My friend could be in that seat. My colleague can be in that seat. So I'm really excited for what's to come. Black women, we run the world."

Where do you see yourself in the future?

"I actually want to run for office. I want to be a senator of Ohio. Just bring it back home, full-circle moment. So you'll be hearing more!"

Maya Valentine



Maya Valentine, Press Secretary for House Majority Leader, U.S. Congressman Steny Hoyer and Vice President, Congressional Black Associates (CBA) poses at Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. on Friday, March 25, 2022.

Maryland Press Secretary, House Majority Leader, U.S. Congressman Steny Hoyer Vice President, Congressional Black Associates (CBA)

Hometown: Los Angeles, California

Education: Simmons College (B.A. in Public Relations/Communications and Journalism)

What does it mean to you to be a Black woman working on the Hill?

"I think the best part is the humility that comes with it. Five, six years ago, if you told me I'd be working in an institution like Congress, I would have not believed you. I think it's empowering. Every day, you walk through the same halls to get to the same office, but you're doing different work and it's exciting and it's meaningful. For me, it's how I think I can make the greatest change for the people I care about the most. It's something special because I have to remind myself that I didn't get here without someone paving the way. I'm not ungrateful for that. There's a sense of responsibility, but also gratitude. I think that kind of shows in the work that I do, especially when you have moments like having the first Black woman vice president or having an upcoming Black woman sitting on the Supreme Court bench."

What made you want to work in public service?

“Growing up, my family faced its fair share of structural barriers to succeed. I saw that in my immediate family and broader family. I always kind of knew that from a young age. My mother would say as a Black woman you’re going to have it 10 times harder. And that stuck. As a young girl, I was being taught these things. I didn’t know what I wanted to do after college, but I knew I wanted to make a difference, and that’s what kind of got me here. There was sort of like magnetism to the Hill where you either really love it and you’re drawn into it and you stay or you don’t. And I was the former. I really loved what I did because I felt like every day I was coming in and the work that I was doing and the hours I was doing it meant something. It meant something for my boss and for the party that I work for, but more importantly, I could go back home and say, this is what’s happening and it matters to you and us because of these reasons, and that was special to me. I wanted to be able to articulate the sort of change that was happening at a greater level for people.”

What are some challenges to being a Black woman staffer on the Hill?

“The challenges are a bit nuanced. You know that you’re a part of a very small pool of very talented women, and that can sometimes be an incredibly special feeling, but also daunting because of the barriers you have to break to get to a place like this as a Black woman — they’re intense. You don’t just waltz into the Capitol and get a job. You have to work really hard for it. And there are systemic barriers that I think about all the time. Even like on a day like today, when you see only a handful of like Black women show up in these sorts of senior, mid-senior level roles. We got a lot of work to do.”

What does it mean to you to be a Black woman on the Hill during a time when the vice president of the United States and potentially the next Supreme Court nominee are Black women?

“In those rare moments where you see other Black women make history, it really kind of puts what you do as a Black woman on the Hill in a bit of context. We’re fighting for a reason. We’re fighting so people can look up to us in those same sorts of ways. I’m also on the board of CBA as its vice president and that’s important for me to represent a community of Black Hill staffers as a Black woman because for me it was about leadership and it was about making sure that the community that I serve, both internally and off the Hill, know that Black women can ascend and be at the highest pillars of what they do.”

Where do you see yourself in the future?

“I’d love to eventually be a comms director. I know a lot of women in my office and generally on the Hill who have dominated that profession, and I aspire to be like them. I could also see myself eventually going back to school to become a lawyer. A part of my long-term dream is to be sort of a legal analyst or a policy analyst on a media network like CNN and MSNBC.”

Gabrielle Howard

Gabrielle Howard, Legislative Assistant and Acting Digital Director for U.S. Congressman Troy Carter (D-LA) and Communications Director, Congressional Black Associates poses at Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. on Friday, March 25, 2022.

Acting Legislative Director and Digital Director, U.S. Congressman Troy Carter (D-LA)
Communications Director, Congressional Black Associates

Hometown: McKinney, Texas

Education: DePaul University (B.A. in African and Black Diaspora Studies/Clinical Psychology and M.A. in Public Policy)

What made you want to work in public service?

“In college, I double-majored in psychology and African and Black Diaspora studies, and in all my classes, the professors would always talk about statistics for racism. Black people and other minorities always came with negative connotations around them. And then in my African and Black diaspora studies classes, I learned more about the history of our country and the history of Black people and that a lot of the reasons why we’ve had to struggle is because of the policies that have been put in place. I thought that the best way to help Black people was to be where the policies are being made so that I could try and change them.”

What does it mean to you to be a Black woman on the Hill during a time when the vice president of the United States and potentially the next Supreme Court nominee are Black women?

“It’s really a blessing, and it’s amazing to see Black women in those leadership roles that they’ve never been able to be in before. To be here in this moment with the first and knowing that they are going to be more after them is very inspiring to be here during this time.”

Where do you see yourself in the future?

“For the future, I hope to be doing what I came here to do, which is to make the world a more equitable place, especially for Black people and other minorities.”

Melanee Farrah



Melanee Farrash, Chief of Staff for U.S. Congresswoman Nikema Williams (D-Ga) poses at Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. on Friday, March 25, 2022.

Chief of Staff, U.S. Congresswoman Nikema Williams (D-Ga)

Hometown: Queens, New York

Education: University of Maryland College Park (B.A. in Government and Politics), George Washington University (M.A. in Public Policy and Education Leadership)

What does it mean to you to be a Black woman working on the Hill?

“It’s an honor and a responsibility. To be a Black woman on the Hill is to proudly do the work of service with the responsibility of paving the way for more people that look like me to be able to do the same work. So you are doubly conscious of your work, the outcomes and the impact that you’re having, not just on the

people in your office, but the people that you work with, the people in your community, your constituency. It’s a big deal.”

What made you want to work in public service?

From the time I was 5 or 6, I’ve been involved in rallies and motivating people to come out to vote. I had a distant relative, who was a local assemblywoman in New York, and our every day was making sure everyone understood the value of civic education because politics touches everything that you and I do. It behooved me, even at 6 years old, to tell you that it matters that you vote because when you vote you have more control over the decisions that you make every day. I started young, passing out placards and getting people interested in different candidates. From that point, I just stayed involved through high school and college. I was a CBCF intern many years ago, and so to be back here almost 20 years later is a big deal for me. It’s a full circle.

What are some challenges to being a Black woman staffer on the Hill?

“One of the primary challenges, I think, is the assumption of people’s version of who people think Black women are. We are not a monolith. We don’t all think the same. But I can say from my experience — and every Black woman on the Hill that I know — I’ve had the benefit of knowing

how hard we work as a collective to fight against any preconceived notions of who we are. We are not all angry. We are not all full of attitude. We are proud of who we are. We are proud of how we look. We are proud of our hair. I am not ashamed to be a Black woman and I want to carry that through to every intern or staffer who comes through my office to know that this is the best thing happening — and not just right now. It's been that way, but everybody's just finding out."

What does it mean to you to be a Black woman on the Hill during a time when the vice president of the United States and potentially the next Supreme Court nominee are Black women?

"It is the culmination of everything that I've worked for and it is the ideation of the people that I've worked with. I proudly work for Congresswoman Nikema Williams, so I serve in the office of a Black woman who has been doing this work and has been knocking down firsts as the first Black woman chair of the Democratic Party of Georgia. Seeing us represented by Vice President Kamala Harris and seeing us represented through Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson is the dream come true. It's what we ideated in actuality. It's amazing and it gives me goosebumps just as much as it peeves me to see people treat [Judge Jackson] that way during the confirmation hearings. At the end of the day, though, it's not something that we're not used to hearing or experiencing, it's just something that everyone else is getting to see. It is the demonstration that we have to fight for our dreams to come true, but also the confirmation that our dreams still do come true."

Where do you see yourself in the future?

"As a chief of staff, you just don't see yourself beyond the person you're fighting for. You are in the moment living the dream. And right now, for me, I see my career path working to take my member to the next level to leadership. I'm on this ride and we're on our way up."

Taylor Ware



Taylor Ware, Education and Labor Legislative Aid for U.S. Senator Raphael Warnock (D-GA) poses at Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. on Friday, March 25, 2022.

Education and Labor Legislative Aide, U.S. Senator Raphael Warnock (D-GA)

Hometown: Prince Georges County, Maryland

Education: Washington University in St. Louis (M.A. in Legal Studies), Penn State University (B.A. in Political Science and Government/African Studies)

What does it mean to you to be a Black woman working on the Hill?

"This has been something I've always wanted to do, probably since middle school. I found it really important for people to be engaged with the government. And so as a Black woman, I think a lot of that means just demonstrating to the public that Black voices matter on the Hill and that Black voices deserve to be represented

on the Hill. Being able to take up a space that's so influential means a lot, and to now be someone that folks tend to see as leadership, at least on the staff level, is a huge honor and privilege."

What made you want to work in public service?

"Funny enough, I did a report on Condoleezza Rice back in the fourth grade. I didn't know who she was and I didn't know much about what she did, but I knew that she was able to make a difference in her community. I knew her access and closeness to power being appointed to a

secretary position, and being a Black woman and being able to go from a community where not many folks would acknowledge that potential is there and being able to rise to that type of position. It really inspired me. She majored in political science and that's how I chose my major. And from there, everything just kind of fell into place with interning on the Hill in high school and just progressively making my way deeper into the Capitol Hill complex."

What are some challenges to being a Black woman staffer on the Hill?

"I think we saw it with the Supreme Court nominations and just seeing how much work it takes sometimes for Black women, very highly-qualified Black women, to claim the spaces that they should occupy. And as a staffer, it's just constantly a reminder of the fact that, while I'm not getting grilled on the national stage, these are sometimes the attitudes that are held by members of the body that I work for. There's just constantly this reality that while I might not directly experience these things, these attitudes exist and that in many ways I have to perform in such a way that I live up to the expectations or exceed the expectations. Meeting the expectation is not an option. You have to go above and beyond as a Black woman on the Hill. And while it's something I'm happy to do and I love the work, it can be tiring sometimes."

What does it mean to you to be a Black woman on the Hill during a time when the vice president of the United States and potentially the next Supreme Court nominee are Black women?

"I would certainly say it empowers me more. Beyond the realization that both of these positions are attainable for someone like me, it also just underscores the need for Black women to be staffers in these spaces and understand the value and perspective that we bring to these spaces and the fact that there are Black women who worked to support the nomination hearings and there are Black women who have worked on Capitol Hill who are now supporting Vice President Harris. It really underscores the importance of persevering and staying in this space and owning the power that we have in this space."

Where do you see yourself in the future?

"The short answer is I have no clue (laughs). I think about this question all the time, but definitely somewhere where I can be impactful on education policy more broadly, but Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have been something that I've been very fortunate to work on in most of the offices that I've worked in. My father is an HBCU graduate and so being able to influence policies for that community is really meaningful to me, and I would love the opportunity to continue doing that throughout my career."

Bernadine Stallings



Bernadine Stallings, Deputy Communications Director for U.S. Congressman James Clyburn (D-SC) poses at Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. on Friday, March 25, 2022.

Deputy Communications Director, House Majority Whip
U.S. Congressman James Clyburn (D-SC)

Hometown: Detroit, Michigan

Education: Wayne State University (M.A. in
Communications/Journalism), University of Michigan
(B.A. in English)

What does it mean to you to be a Black woman working on the Hill?

"I take great pride being a Black woman working on the Hill because you don't see a lot of us, especially in top staff roles. It means a lot, especially at this moment working at the same time as we have a Black and Asian American vice president and seeing a Supreme Court nominee who looks like me. It makes

me proud to know when I drive up to the Capitol every day that I'm working in this institution that has been the pinnacle of our democracy and in our country's history. I am a part of history just being involved in so many things like being able to be on the House floor when they gavelled in The Crown Act as a woman wearing locs; or being on the floor when they're passing bills that will impact my people back home. It just means a lot to be here 'in the room where it happens,' and work for the majority whip who is always making history and doing what's in the best interest for Black people and all people...I'm just proud and excited to be a part of that."

What made you want to work in public service?

"Before I came to the hill, I was working for Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. as their communications specialist, and annually we would have our legislative conference on the Hill — Delta Days in the Nation's Capital. Attending all the events, hearing great speakers and political leaders come to really galvanize not just Delta women, but also our community, was inspiring. The more I became politically aware and Hill savvy, the more I began to really understand that every decision here impacts what goes on at the local level. It amazed me to see that and reinforced why it's so important that we all get out there and vote — and take seriously who you vote for — because you want people who will work for your best interests. Yes, Washington, D.C. might be far away for a lot of people, but everything that happens here, in these hallowed halls impacts what happens in education, in homelessness, in health care, in election administration and other areas affecting the Black community. That's what really makes me excited about working in public service."

What are some challenges to being a Black woman staffer on the Hill?

"One challenge is having imposter syndrome when you first come to the Hill knowing that you're working with a majority of white male colleagues in some rooms and they've studied political science, and they're studying to be lawyers or are lawyers. Not to downplay my own education, but have a degree in English and I had no interest in studying political science at the University of Michigan. When I first came here, I felt like I was an imposter, until I began to realize that they don't know any more than I knew. I really built up my confidence in knowing that I can do this job and that I am worthy to be here. That's the lesson I like to stress to other Black women and Black people in general, including interns, who are new to the Hill — you are worthy to be here. The other challenge is trying to break into leadership roles. I was blessed to come in as a comms director, but everyone isn't as fortunate. Before working for the majority whip, I wanted to try to work for the Senate. I was told it's hard for African Americans to get comms director jobs in the Senate, especially when just two years ago or at the start of this Congress, there were only 10 Black comms directors out of probably 100 or more. That's a low number, and those are the current odds that you have to deal with being Black and a Black woman."

Where do you see yourself in the future?

"I just want to work in a place where my opinions are respected, where my work and my knowledge are respected. I love doing communications and I hope that I'm not the last and that there can be more Black women that come behind me in leadership roles. It's important that we have a diverse staff. I've been blessed to work for three members of Congress who all had diversity in their staff. When you have that diversity at the table, you learn a lot, but you also don't become tone-deaf to the needs of others. So that's my goal for the future in my career — and to have peace and enjoy doing what I do."

Tamika Mason



Tamika Mason, Director of Technology and Faith Outreach for House Majority Whip U.S. Congressman James Clyburn (D-SC) poses at Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. on Friday, March 25, 2022.

Director of Technology and Faith Outreach, House Majority Whip U.S. Congressman James Clyburn (D-SC)

Hometown: Capitol Heights, Maryland

Education: Bowie State University (B.A. in Computer Technology)

What does it mean to you to be a Black woman working on the Hill?

"It is a true honor. In my 14 years here, I have watched this place transition, if you will. When I first started my career on Capitol Hill in 2007, there were

not many Black women here. At that time, there was an organization called, African American Women on the Hill Network. Its purpose was to connect current and former Hill staff in order to support each other's professional goals and objectives. We would meet regularly and I believe it played a tremendous role in the success of Black women on Capitol Hill and helped increase the presence of Black women on Capitol Hill. There was a time when I would be the only Black woman in the room. Now you can almost bet that there will be, at the very least, two other Black woman in the room. It's an absolute honor to see that history change over time and to see the number of organizations that are helping promote Black women and our success here in this political world. Black women are continuing to make an impact in history."

What made you want to work in public service

"Funny story — I was not inspired to work in public service (laughs). I was temping at a lobbying firm, after being out of college for about a year and had plans of running my own web development company. I did web development for a while; it wasn't kicking off the way that I needed it to financially. I needed steady work with some benefits. One day at work, the President of the lobbying firm brought me to the Capitol for a meeting in the Majority whip's office, where I met my chief of staff. At that time, the staff assistant was leaving, so they were looking for a replacement. My chief of staff mentioned the position to me, and I honestly didn't even know what I was getting into. I knew this was the federal government, which meant steady income and good benefits (laughs). I said, sign me up and I'll figure it out if given the opportunity. He gave me the opportunity, and I grew from there.

I was a staff assistant for two years. Then, the director of technology at that time left, and so my chief of staff remembered that I had a technology background. He asked me if this was a role that I was interested in and I said absolutely. That's how I became the system administrator. For me, it was great because now I'm able to use my degree in technology while also doing policy as the director of outreach. As the director of faith outreach, I'm able to meet with national faith and community leaders to work on different policy issues. It's amazing how it all works out because, you may think that you have a path set for yourself but then the Lord will be like, 'Oh, that's what you thought you were doing?' So, I kind of entered public service by happenstance. But, I'm grateful to be here because I have been able to learn so much about this institution and this political world. Like the Capitol building, how it was built, by whom it was built and making sure that history is accurately reflected for generations to come. Then to work for the highest-ranking African American in the House, Congressman Clyburn, I'm like, wow God is so good! It was absolutely nothing that I had any control over."

What does it mean to you to be a Black woman on the Hill during a time when the vice president of the United States and potentially the next Supreme Court nominee are Black women?

“It brings my heart so much joy. It makes me so excited to see it all happening. I’m 40 years old and when I was a young girl, when we would talk about a Black person being president, it was unheard of. You would hear people say all the time, we would never have a Black person be president. It was just the craziest thing to imagine. And then, President Obama became president, which was mind-blowing, and it stirred up so much joy and pride in the Black community. It changed the way we look at our future as a community. My nieces and nephews will never have the mindset that a Black person could never be president or vice president because they have witnessed it. If there wasn’t an Obama, we probably would not have had Vice President Harris. For her to be sworn in as vice president makes me feel like the work that I have seen being done here on Capitol Hill is impacting the community. So, coming from Vice President Kamala Harris to now having Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson being nominated is just a phenomenal feeling. It’s no better time in history to be here and see it up close.”

What are some challenges to being a Black woman staffer on the Hill?

“As we have seen with the questions asked of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson during her hearing, Black women are made to appear as if they are never qualified enough for the position. We continue to be pushed above and beyond what others must do to succeed. We’ve overcome a lot, but we still have barriers to climb. And because we know that, we put more pressure on ourselves.”

Where do you see yourself in the future?

“Honestly, I have not figured that out yet. I feel like that can be a good and a bad thing. People tell you that you should always have a five-year plan. I agree, but then when I look back over my life, that plan was altered once before. So, I don’t necessarily have a specific direction that I want to go in, but I set goals to ensure that I progress to the next level. The good thing that I would say about the position I have now is that it has allowed me to have flexibility. I can do technology or I can do community outreach. I’m enjoying doing both right now. If there comes a point where I feel like I have to choose, I will have a hard decision to make.”

Submitted by Sis. Terri Ware



6 Things You Need to Know About Long COVID

Old symptoms can linger and new symptoms can develop months after a coronavirus infection

Millions of people who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past year have reported new or lingering — and sometimes unusual — symptoms of illness, long after their initial infection. In fact, it's become so common that clinics have popped up all over the country to study the phenomenon and help these so-called long-haulers get back to normal.

Here's what we know so far about what doctors are calling “long COVID” — and what we are still hoping to learn.

It can happen even if you have a mild case of COVID-19

When the faculty at the George Washington (GW) University School of Medicine & Health Sciences launched its COVID-19 Recovery Clinic late last summer, they did so with hospitalized patients in mind, knowing that those who were severely ill would likely have a longer road to recovery. What the clinic's founders didn't expect, however, was that post-COVID problems were “just as profound” in people who had mild to moderate cases of the disease, says Monica Lypson, professor of medicine at GW and co-director of its COVID-19 Recovery Clinic.

"Right now, the majority of our patients have not been hospitalized," she says.

This is not unique to GW's clinic. Jennifer Possick, medical director of Yale's Post-COVID Recovery Program, notes a similar trend — and so does Greg Vanichkachorn at the Mayo Clinic.

"We certainly do have some patients that had severe illness or were even in [intensive care], but that's not the majority of our population by any stretch of the imagination," says Vanichkachorn, an occupational medical specialist who leads the Mayo Clinic's COVID Activity Rehabilitation Program.

A handful of studies support what health care providers are seeing — that the virus can haunt people who were hardly affected by its initial infection. For example, a July 2020 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that 20 percent of previously healthy 18- to 34-year-olds who had COVID-19 and were not hospitalized still weren't back to their usual state of health two to three weeks after testing positive for a coronavirus infection.

Swedish researchers discovered that 26 percent of young and otherwise healthy health care workers who had mild COVID-19 had at least one moderate to severe symptom for at least two months after their infection; 11 percent had at least one symptom that lasted eight months. Similarly, a pre-print study looking at health records in California found that 27 percent of people who were never hospitalized for COVID-19 reported ongoing symptoms after 60 days.

Long COVID is not uncommon

It's hard to pinpoint exactly how many people experience new or persistent symptoms after a coronavirus infection, says Mark Avdalovic, a pulmonary and critical care specialist at University of California Davis Health. But it's something researchers are hoping to better understand.

An early study published on long COVID found that more than 87 percent of 143 hospitalized patients with COVID-19 reported at least one persistent symptom following their initial diagnosis. Other reports, however, show that the population affected is likely much smaller. A U.K.-based survey found that 13.7 percent of more than 20,000 participants who tested positive for COVID-19 continued to experience symptoms for at least 12 weeks after the infection. Other experts estimate that about 10 percent of the population who had COVID-19 have lingering symptoms.

Common Long COVID Symptoms [Source: CDC]

- Tiredness or fatigue
- Difficulty thinking or concentrating (sometimes referred to as “brain fog”)
- Headache
- Loss of smell or taste
- Dizziness on standing
- Fast-beating or pounding heart
- Chest pain
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Cough
- Joint or muscle pain
- Depression or anxiety
- Fever
- Symptoms that get worse after physical or mental activities.

Possick says that since Yale's Post-COVID Recovery Program launched last summer, she and her colleagues have seen “a lot of traffic” — nearly 500 patients to date. But “that's still a very small number,” considering more than 32 million Americans have tested positive for COVID-19 and many of them could be battling unrelenting symptoms.

“The majority of people with COVID are never hospitalized, and a lot of them are younger, they're working age. And so even if only a small fraction of those people has persistent post-COVID conditions, mathematically it's still a lot of people,” Possick says.

The symptoms of long COVID vary

There's really no singular symptom that defines long COVID. People who experience it have reported a range of problems — sometimes multiple symptoms at a time — from shortness of breath to joint and muscle pain.

The most common condition “by far” that Vanichkachorn sees in his patients at the Mayo Clinic is fatigue, where people who were previously active get exhausted after ordinary activities, like walking the dog.

Another frequent symptom among long-haulers is “brain fog,” or difficulty thinking.

“And unfortunately, of all the symptoms that patients find interfere with their lives, this is the one that is the most interfering, because it usually shows up in the workplace — patients are not able to do the things they normally do and end up getting written up or having a performance improvement plan. And that's quite stressful for the patient,” Vanichkachorn says.

GW's Lyson has noted elevated heart rates, persistent cough, and unexplainable numbness or tingling in her long COVID patients. Heightened anxiety is another prevailing problem, she says.

A recent study published in *The Lancet Psychiatry* found that as many as one in three COVID-19 survivors experience a mental health or neurological disorder within six months of a coronavirus infection, and that anxiety is among the most commonly reported symptoms.

Some of these ailments, such as brain fog and fatigue, are expected in patients who spend a long time in the hospital with any type of life-threatening illness. But what's puzzling health experts is that they're popping up in people who never needed treatment in the first place.

UC Davis' Avdalovic says he occasionally sees symptoms stick around after other viral infections. For example, a flu patient might have fatigue that "seems to linger a little bit longer than it should. But not to this degree," he says. "How frequently we now see [ongoing symptoms in people who had COVID-19] is, I think, somewhat unique."

Experts still don't know what causes long COVID

"We have theories at this point," but no definitive answer for why some people experience long COVID, the Mayo Clinic's Vanichkachorn says.

One idea is that the body gets stuck in a hyperimmune state and starts to "fight itself, fight its own nerves, and that leads to all of these complaints," Vanichkachorn explains. Organ damage from the coronavirus infection may also be to blame for long-term health issues.

Knowing the root cause of long COVID, Lypson says, could make it easier for health care providers to identify patients who are more susceptible to the chronic symptoms, and potentially prevent them from happening in the first place.

People can recover from long COVID

At COVID recovery clinics, multidisciplinary teams of specialists and therapists work with patients to help them overcome their ongoing symptoms. People with prolonged fatigue, for example, work to build their endurance with low-impact activities such as yoga or recumbent exercises.

"We find this is a situation where, if someone pushes themselves too hard and tries to get better in the wrong fashion, that can actually do some damage," Vanichkachorn says.

Experts have found that making small adjustments, such as writing things down more frequently, can improve day-to-day functioning in individuals with brain fog. And breathing exercises, led by a pulmonologist, can help alleviate lingering lung problems.

The therapies may take several weeks or months to work, but Possick says most long COVID patients do get better. The important thing is that people who experience lingering symptoms after COVID-19 seek treatment, and that family members, health care providers and employers take the syndrome seriously.

"These post-COVID conditions are real," Possick says. "And we need to acknowledge them as being a real entity and something that is affecting a lot of people in really significant ways."

The vaccine could put an end to long COVID

The best way to avoid long COVID is to avoid getting a coronavirus infection in the first place through preventive efforts — such as masks and social distancing in public — and a COVID-19 vaccine, Possick says.

So far about 34 percent of the U.S. population is fully vaccinated, CDC data show. And if more people roll up their sleeves for the shot before the virus has a chance to mutate “out of the current vaccine repertoire,” Avdalovic is hopeful that COVID recovery clinics will be a thing of the past.

"I think if we're successful, then this time next year we're not going to be talking about long-haulers or post-COVID syndrome," he says. "I'm all for putting me out of business."

But in the meantime, patience is key while researchers race to find answers.

"What I've noticed a lot is that patients are really anxious, and they're nervous, and they're scared. And it's understandable; they come to the doctor and there's no specific answer," Avdalovic says. "And so I like to reassure patients that as long as they're slowly feeling a little bit better, and we're taking the time to try and understand what's going on with them, that we are going in the right direction, even if it doesn't feel as definitive as they would like."

Rachel Nania writes about health care and health policy for AARP. Previously she was a reporter and editor for WTOP Radio in Washington, D.C. A recipient of a Gracie Award and a regional Edward R. Murrow Award, she also participated in a dementia fellowship with the National Press Foundation.



What Is Monkeypox?

Rarely seen outside Central Africa, the disease is turning up in Europe and the U.S. Here's what to know.



While the COVID-19 pandemic has us all more alert to viral outbreaks, health officials are treating the latest monkeypox outbreak as a “concerning situation” even as it poses a “very low risk” to most individuals, according to Rosamund Lewis, head of the Smallpox Secretariat of World Health Organization (WHO) Emergencies Program. “The important thing to realize right now is this outbreak can be contained with contact tracing and isolation,” she said at a recent news briefing.

Health officials suspect more than 250 individuals — primarily men in their 30s — have contracted monkeypox over the past month, including at least one confirmed case on May 18 of a Massachusetts resident who had recently traveled to Canada by private transportation. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is aware of at least five other individuals who are presumed to have monkeypox, pending blood tests to confirm the infection. CDC is also tracking multiple clusters that have been

reported within the past two weeks in countries that don't normally report monkeypox, including Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Monkeypox is endemic in Central Africa, said Lewis, who noted that cases are being reported in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria and Cameroon. WHO estimates thousands of cases occur in the region annually.

Health officials are urging people who suspect they may have monkeypox to see a physician and get tested. "Many of these global reports of monkeypox cases are occurring within sexual networks. However, healthcare providers should be alert to any rash that has features typical of monkeypox. We're asking the public to contact their healthcare provider if they have a new rash and are concerned about monkeypox," Inger Damon, M.D., director of CDC's Division of High-Consequence Pathogens and Pathology, said in a statement.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control recommended all suspected cases be isolated and that high-risk contacts be offered a smallpox vaccine. The U.K. is offering high-risk contacts the smallpox vaccine and recommending anyone who might be infected to isolate until they recover. The U.S. has 1,000 doses of a vaccine approved for the prevention of monkeypox and smallpox, plus more than 100 million doses of an older-generation smallpox vaccine in a government stockpile, the Associated Press reported.

What is Monkeypox?

A relative of smallpox and cowpox, the monkeypox virus was first discovered in 1958, when two outbreaks of a poxlike disease occurred in colonies of monkeys kept for research, according to the Center for Genome Sciences at the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases. The first human case was recorded in 1970 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The largest U.S. outbreak of monkeypox occurred in 2003, when 47 cases were reported in the Midwest among individuals who became ill after having contact with pet prairie dogs that had been housed near a shipment of small mammals from Ghana. Tests confirmed that among those mammals, two African giant pouched rats, nine dormice and three rope squirrels were infected with monkeypox virus, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

What are the symptoms?

Monkeypox symptoms typically begin about a week or two after infection, according to the CDC.

Early symptoms include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Backache
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Chills
- Exhaustion

Soon after experiencing a fever (typically within one to three days, but sometimes longer), people infected with monkeypox develop a rash, often beginning on the face, then spreading to other parts of the body. As with smallpox, pimples form that become pus-filled and leave pockmarks upon healing. Most infections last two to four weeks.

How does it spread?

You can get the virus through exposure to an infected animal or person. “Animal-to-human transmission may occur by bite or scratch, bush meat preparation, direct contact with body fluids or lesion material, or indirect contact with lesion material, such as through contaminated bedding,” the CDC reports.

Human-to-human transmission is thought to occur primarily through large respiratory droplets inhaled during prolonged face-to-face contact. “Other human-to-human methods of transmission include direct contact with body fluids or lesion material and indirect contact with lesion material, such as through contaminated clothing or linens,” according to the CDC. However, the latest outbreak “has been transmitted primarily by close skin-to-skin contact,” according to the WHO’s Lewis.

Am I at risk?

Unless you are traveling outside the U.S. or come in direct contact with an infected person, you are at little risk of developing monkeypox, according to health officials.

Still, there are things you can do to reduce your risk if you plan to travel in west and central Africa, according to the United Kingdom’s National Health Service:

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Eat only meat that has been thoroughly cooked.
- Don’t go near wild or stray animals, either alive or dead, or animals that appear sick.
- Don’t touch meat from wild game.
- Avoid people who are sick or who may have monkeypox, and don’t share beddings or towels with them.

Peter Urban is a contributing writer and editor who focuses on health news. Urban spent two decades working as a correspondent in Washington, D.C., for daily newspapers in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Ohio, California and Arkansas, including a stint as Washington bureau chief for the Las Vegas Review Journal. His freelance work has appeared in Scientific American, Bloomberg Government, and CTNewsJunkie.com.



BIRTHDAYS

April	
Ella Mae Atkinson	1
Maudie Goodrum	2
Madison Walker	2
Gabrielle Patrick	10
Stella Oluokun	12
Elijah Davis	13
Patricia Boone	13
Joyce Kamara	17
Christine Freeman	17
Kathleen Jones	18
William Butler, III	18
Flossie Branch	20
Denise Lynch	22
Letitia Ross	22
Kimberly Jones	24
Michelle Finney	24
Kenneth E. Bowman	25
Shavaughn Scott	28
Robert Neal	30

May	
Micaela Miles	1
Ezekiel Davis	2
Jeff Miles, Jr.	3
Philip Hazell	3
Mel Jenkins	4
Shamario Scott	8
Jade Winbush	10
Ishmael Kamara	12
Shirley Scott	15
Lynn Pittmon	18
Wayne Fells	20
Thomas Proctor	20
Leonard Sledge, Jr.	23
Daryl Barber, Jr.	25
Tina Brown	26
James Trent	30



June	
Deborah Butler	1
Barbara McIntosh	4
Taylor Wright	10
Reginald Miller	11
Brooke Roberts	13
Simone Dixon	16
Barbara Barnes	20
Helen Plater	21
Donald Jackson	22
Harry L. Laury	24
Daryl Barber, Sr.	26
Susan Walker	27
Taylor Ware	27
Charmaine Van Dyke	30



ANNIVERSARIES

HAPPY
Anniversary

Wesley & Deborah
Brown
May 16, 1981
[41 years]

Angelo & Caprice
Brown
May 17, 1997
[25 years]

Doug & Carolyn
Jackson
June 15, 1963
[59 years]

Thomas & Joan
Brown
June 11, 1966
[56 years]

Harry & Cylestine
Laury
June 11, 1966
[56 years]

Daryl & Joanna
Barber
June 24, 1995
[27 years]

From the Newsletter Editor

The History of the Hymn, “It Is Well With My Soul”

Source: *The History of Hymn Singing as Told Through One Hundred & One Famous Hymns* by Charles Johnson

Horatio Gates Spafford, author of *It Is Well With My Soul*, was born in North Troy, New York, and moved to Chicago in 1856. He established a successful legal practice and became professor of medical jurisprudence of Lind University. He was also active in YMCA work and a Sunday school teacher for his Presbyterian Church. In 1870 he visited England and Scotland and became very interested in Bible archaeology. Returning to Chicago, he bought a great deal of real estate on the lake front. Then tragedy struck repeatedly.

First, the Chicago fire of 1871 wiped out his real estate holdings. Then in 1873, upon the advice of his wife’s physician, he planned a family vacation in Europe. Spafford sent his family ahead aboard the ship *Ville da Havre*. Out on the high seas, the *Ville da Havre* collided with the *Lochearn* and sunk. Mrs. Spafford was saved, but their four daughters perished. Spafford took the next boat to meet his wife in Cardiff, Wales where the survivors had been taken and while sailing past the spot where daughters perished, he wrote “*It Is Well With My Soul*.” After their son also died an untimely death in 1880, the Spafford’s decided to pursue their interests in the Holy Land; and with a group of friends, left Chicago to establish the American Colony in Jerusalem in 1881.

While in Chicago, Horatio Spafford was a close friend of evangelist Dwight L. Moody. Ira Sankey and Philip Bliss, who upon hearing of the tragedy, wrote the music to Spafford’s poem, *It is Well With my Soul*.

*When peace like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well, with my soul.*

*Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.*

*My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought—
My sin— not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul.*

*And, Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll,
The trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend,
Even so, it is well with my soul.*

*It is well (it is well)
With my soul (with my soul)
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

Sis. Ellalene Barnaby



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“Jesus called in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out'. The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, 'Take off the grave clothes and let him go.'”—John 11:43

From the cocoon comes forth the butterfly. When told that Lazarus had been dead for four days, Jesus merely said, "Take me to him". It doesn't matter how long we have been away from God. We can have life once more.

Source: Morning Whispers