

Historic Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church

# The Beacon



February 2020      [www.HistoricBethelStPete.org](http://www.HistoricBethelStPete.org)      St. Petersburg, FL



**Rev. Kenneth F. Irby**  
Pastor

## Servant's Corner The Fragility of Life

*Tomorrow is not promised!*  
<sup>1</sup> *Man/Woman, who is born of woman, Is short-lived and full of turmoil.*  
<sup>2</sup> *Like a flower he comes forth and withers. He/She also flees like a shadow and does not remain.*  
<sup>3</sup> *You also open Your eyes on him And bring him into judgment with Yourself.*

### Job 14:1-3 NASB

Now, for some, just this passage alone is enough to thrust one into an exploration of self and GOD.

Kobe Bryant, one of the greatest basketball players of all time — whom Hall of Famer Earvin “Magic” Johnson called the “the Greatest Laker EVER!” — was killed in a helicopter crash in Calabasas, Calif., last Sunday at age 41.

Kobe, known as “the Black Mamba,” a beloved and at times maligned star who mesmerized NBA fans during his 20 legendary years as a Laker, was gone just like that.

With such shock, it’s even harder to fathom that his 13-year-old daughter and protégé Gianna, “GiGi” died alongside him, as did seven others: college baseball coach John Altobelli, his wife, Keri, and daughter, Alyssa; Christina Mauser, an assistant coach of a girls basketball team at the Mamba Sports Academy; GiGi’s teammate Payton Chester and Payton’s mother, Sarah Chester; and Group 3 Aviation pilot Ara Zobayan.

Little did I know how apropos my Holy Spirit-inspired Sunday sermon entitled “GOD Knows” would be for such a time as this. The grief of loyal fans and caring people poured out for these five Southern California families. You see, I personally joined in with global roundball fans everywhere asking the rhetorical question, “How could this be?”

And for me, it was even more personal. I connected with Kobe’s basketball “Dear Basketball” jones. I, too, once lived to play basketball, and my wife and I were blessed to raise four daughters. Yeap, I’m a #GirlDad, through and through and know what it is like to always be outnumbered in my home by the female forces at hand.

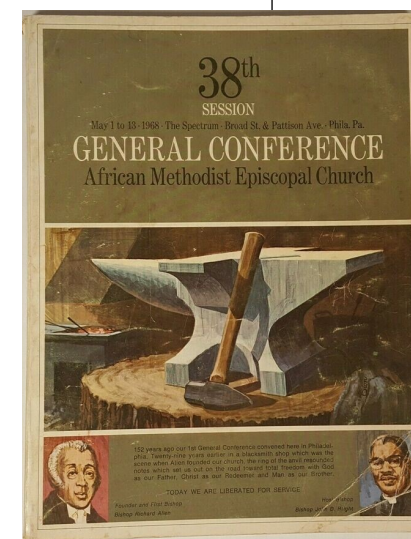
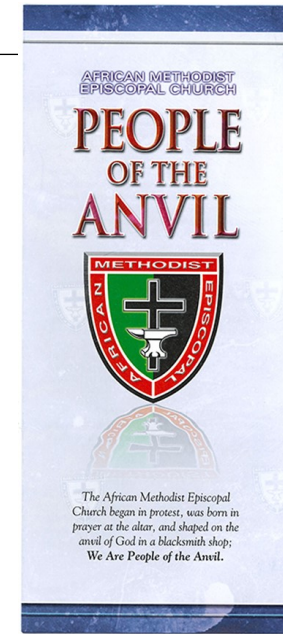


Here's a chance to show what you know. Answer the following questions and turn them in to the church office or to *Beacon* editor Joyce Pink by Friday, Feb. 21\*. We will tabulate the answers and publish the names of those who participated in the March edition. The last question is just for fun; there's no way to really know!

- 1) Who was the first Southern Bishop of the A.M.E. Church?  
 (a) Henry McNeal Turner (b) William Paul Quinn (c) John M. Brown
- 2) Who wrote the original A.M.E. Church motto?  
 (a) Richard Allen (b) Daniel Alexander Payne (c) Absalom Jones
- 3) Who was NOT one of the "Four Horsemen" of the A.M.E. Church?  
 (a) Richard Allen (b) William Paul Quinn (c) Benjamin Tucker Turner
- 4) What is the first college owned and operated by African Americans (it's also an A.M.E. institution).  
 (a) Wilberforce University (b) Allen University (c) Paul Quinn College
- 5) Name five "Conferences" (administrative meetings) of the A.M.E. Church  
 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
 4. \_\_\_\_\_  
 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) What is the supreme body of the A.M.E. Church?  
 (a) Judicial Council (b) General Conference (c) Council of Bishops
- 7) Name the Episcopal District \_\_\_\_\_  
 Conference \_\_\_\_\_  
 and Presiding Elder District \_\_\_\_\_  
 to which Historic Bethel belongs.
- 8) What happens at the General Conference, which is held every four years?  
 (a) Election of Bishops (b) Legislation is voted on (c) Election of General Officers
- 9) Name at least three notable/celebrated members (other than Bishops) of the A.M.E. Church.  
 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) What do you think are the three most popular A.M.E. Church names?  
 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. \_\_\_\_\_

**YOUR NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

\* You may submit a copy. We don't want you tearing up the *Beacon*!



TEST YOUR A.M.E. KNOWLEDGE

## Noon Bible Study Blossoms Into a Midweek Community

Drop by Historic Bethel in the middle of the day in the middle of the week and you'll find a small group of dedicated Bible students, led by an instructor who was "led by the light."

In 2009, Odessa Banks had "a hunger and a thirst for the Word" that prompted her to call churches in search of a midday Bible study. One day, while walking in her neighborhood, she noticed a car with its lights on. The car, which belonged to Mrs. Fannie Thomas, was parked at the home of Bethel disciple J. Birice Packer. "I told Birice to tell Mrs. Thomas that her lights were on," which led to more talk, said Mrs. Banks. They started talking about creating a Bible study such as the one she was looking for, and Mrs. Packer suggested that Mrs. Banks start one. Today, they laugh about Mrs. Banks being "led by the light" to create the Midweek Bible Study.

Attendance is at 10 to 12, says Mrs. Banks, who became an exhorter in 2017, and is a much-sought-after speaker. Group discussions cover a range of topics. "We started out covering whole books of the Bible." The study of Leviticus ended with students receiving certificates. "We've covered Romans and Revelation." Study also aligns with the calendar. "At Easter, we examined the six miracles of Calvary." Christmas study went beyond the Nativity



and into the significance of circumcision on the eighth day after birth.

While studious, the group enjoys bits of levity. "We laugh, we have fun. But everything we do is Scriptural. If you say, 'the Bible says,' you have to be ready to show where it is so the discussion can proceed."

A question with an unsatisfactory answer and a left-on car light led to a needed study group that continues today.

**Above and at left, instructor and students gather for Midweek Bible Study.**



### Prayer and Meditation Ministry Seventh Anniversary Celebration SAT, March 7 • 9 AM



Guest Preacher  
Rev. Manuel Sykes  
Bethel Community  
Baptist Church

#### "God Can Do Anything"

*"And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19*

Gospel Jazz Brunch featuring saxophonist Hank Ashwood immediately following worship

Attire: African-Inspired Garments or Casual

## Principal Shares the Vision That Guides His Daily Life



Reuben Hepburn, left, principal of Gibbs High School, offered a powerful message entitled “Lesson From a Blind Man” with Mark 10:46-52 serving as the reference Scripture during the 15th Annual Men of Vision worship celebration presented by the Lay Organization. Below, Steve Scruggs leads the Sons of Allen Choir.



Above, Rev. Kenny Irby is surprised as he learns he is the recipient of the inaugural Man of Vision Award. At left, the congregation affirms the power of God through the preached word.



*You will find photographs and video of this and the many activities that take place at Historic Bethel. Like us. Follow us. Join us.*

## The Fragility of Life

So I grieved this tragedy real hard and casted my cares up-on the LORD in fervent prayer trusting in **Matthew 5:4** which states, *"Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted."*

And I confided and prayed with my wife.

Then, on Monday evening, I joined attended our Grief Share session. With 13 others, we shared our pain and supported one another with our respective burdens. Among the household of faith we are called to, *"Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ."* **Galatians 6:3**

Given the fragility of life, we all should live each day to its fullest. An when we suffer such loss, our church needs be a safe haven and respite center. You see, death never schedules appointments, which requires our trust and faith in the Almighty and affirms the need for effective mental health resources and partnerships between clergy and clinicians.

For example, those wondering why Rev. Irby cares about a person that he never met.

### Why We Grieve People That We Never Met

- Their work helped us get through a difficult time in our lives.
- Their work inspired our dreams and goals.
- They modeled possibility.
- Their death triggers out grief of pervious loss.
- Their passing activates our fears/concerns around death.

This comes from [www.melaninandmentalhealth.com](http://www.melaninandmentalhealth.com).

There is no, question that Kobe Bean Bryant lived a tre-



At a recent meeting of the Grief Share group, members brought pictures of their loved ones and shared stories. "For me, it helps me stay connected, said Jennifer Goodlow, at left. "We uplift each other. Now, I remember pleasant times without the tears."

mendous life in his 41 short years. He leaves a momentous legacy for his family, the National Basketball Association and the world.

My heart pains for his family as he leaves behind his wife, Vanessa, and three daughters — Natalia, 17, Bianca, 3, and Capri, 7 months.

I loved him as a human being, "Big" Baller and a father.

**I**  **BETHEL**

**FEB 23 | 10:30 a.m.**  
Rev. St. George Andrew Pink,  
preaching

### This Month at Historic Bethel (and beyond)

**FEB 3 | 6:30 p.m.** Official Board Meeting

**FEB 6 | 11:45 a.m.** The Gathering

**FEB 8 | 4:00 p.m.** West Coast Conference Lay Organization  
Scholarship Gala "Afternoon Delight"

**FEB 9 | 10:30 a.m.** Founders Day Observance

**FEB 14 -15 |** Black Heritage Weekend, Jacksonville

**FEB 18 | 6:30 p.m.** Quarterly Conference

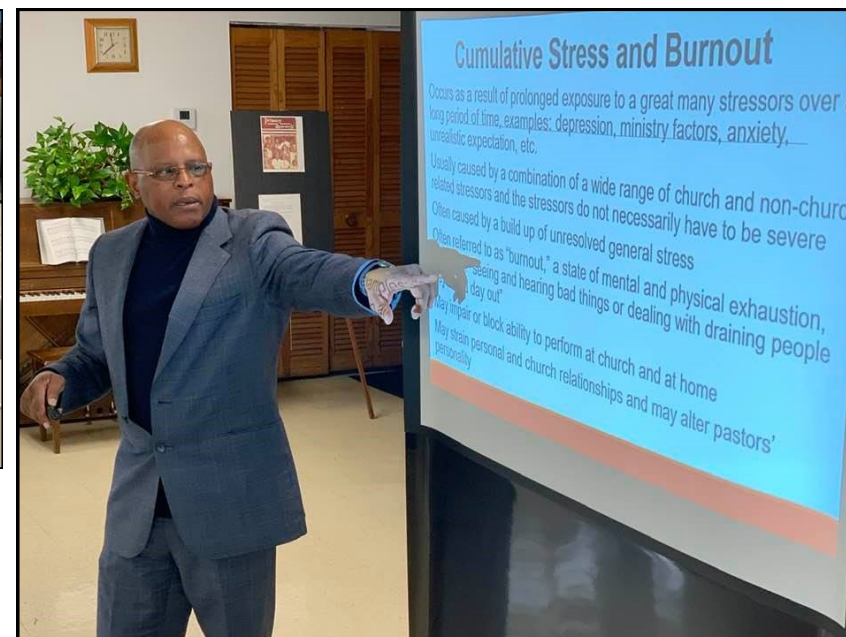
**FEB 28-29** Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Organization Retreat,  
Fort Lauderdale

# Historic Bethel Opens Doors to District Conference

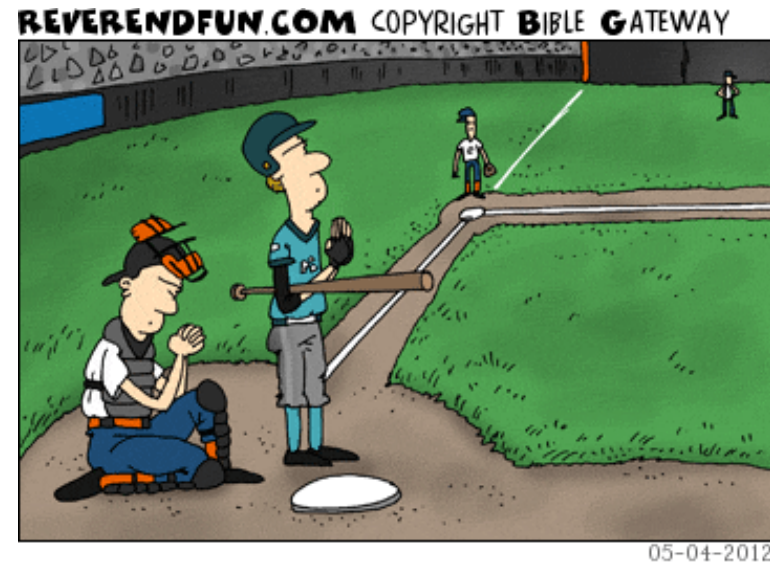


Clergy and laity respond with passion to Presiding Elder Joyce J. Moore as she preaches at the Evening Worship Service on Friday. Her sermon, "Where Are You Headed?" was taken from Jonah 1:1-3. In addition to Friday night's celebration of the Holy Communion, there were two Hours of Power, one preached by Exhorter Nadine Mack of St. James, Clearwater and another by Rev. R. Girard Dixon, pastor of Greene Chapel.

Bethel disciples "represented with distinction and grace," said Pastor Irby. At right, Jennifer Goodlow, Ernestine Freney and Artie Carr are among culinary staff members who were saluted. At far right, disciples wait the benediction.



Tracy A. Daniels, right, used technology to engage and teach the clergy about mental health and burnout. Other topics of the one-and-a-half day conference included social justice and A.M.E. Church knowledge. There were three worship services



THE PRAYER STANDOFF LINGERED ON

**Rebus:** This is a saying/phrase made up of a display of words or pictures. Try to figure out the well-known

	1	2	3
A	UNDERSTANDING MISS	OFTEN OFTEN OFTEN OFTEN	NOT $\frac{1}{4} \frac{1}{4} \frac{1}{4} \frac{1}{4} \frac{1}{4}$
B	bad bad	B B A A R R	uPLATm
C	OWT ONE <sup>2</sup>	REST PLACED	R+I/S-K
D	BIB ALL ALL	YREGRUS	3, 5, 7 END 9, 11, 13 END 23, 25 END

**Sudoku:** The rules are quite simple. Fill in the blanks so that each row, each column and each of the nine 3x3 grids contain one instance of each of the numbers 1 through 9.

5		6			
	1		7	8	3
	7	3	4		
			5	9	
		9			
8	6	1	7		4
			3	2	1
		5		6	7
4				5	9

**Match Game: The One Puzzle**

Move 2 and remove 1 matchstick to make the answer one.



Hap py February Bir thdays!

Courtney Webb (1st); Doris Bizell, Gregory Whitfield (2nd); Andrew Pink (3rd); Alonzo Harris and Lolita Brown (7th); Kendrick Sheppard (9th); Mazaria Flowers (10th); Omonigho Imeokparia (11th); Josephine Persha (14th); Mary Styles-Williams (16th); Cambric Lawson and J. Birice Packer (18th); Phylicia Lee and Sontosha McNair (19th); Johnny Jones (20th); Renee Brown, Bernard King Jr. and James Lawson (21st); Deon Brooks and Ira Lewis (23rd); Jessica Takdari and Shawana Williams (24th); Dieumerci Ufitimana and Jarret Roberts (26th); Patricia Taliaferro, Connie Monix and Thyron Williams (27th)

**BETHEL A.M.E. CHURCH**

912 Third Ave. N  
St. Petersburg, FL 33705  
(727) 822-2089 (Office)

**Mailing address**

P.O. Box 16423  
St. Petersburg, FL 33733-6423

**Email**

historicbethelstpete@gmail.com

Prayer Line (6 to 6:20 a.m.)

(605) 313-6236

Access Code: 292841 #

The Right Rev. Adam J. Richardson Jr.  
Bishop, 11th Episcopal District

Mrs. Connie S. Richardson  
WMS Episcopal Supervisor

Rev. Joyce J. Moore, Presiding Elder

**Rev. Kenneth F. Irby, Pastor**

**Ministerial Staff**

Rev. Gwendolyn Williams  
Rev. Dr. Kevin Wardlaw  
Rev. Andrew Pink, Itinerant Deacon  
Rev. Nevada Wardlaw, Local Deacon  
Sis. Maria Scruggs, Exhorter  
Sis. Odessa Banks, Exhorter  
Dr. Delceda G. Walker, Exhorter

**Media**

The *Beacon* newsletter:  
Joyce Pink, editor

HistoricBethelBeacon@gmail.com

Facebook: Bethel AME St. Petersburg

Website: HistoricBethelStpete.org

Wi-Fi: BethelAME2020

Bethel was built in 1894. Made initially of wood, it was altered several times and moved across the street so that the larger masonry church, known as the "Stone Church," could be built in 1905.

In 1922, construction began on the present brick building, which is based on Mother Bethel in Philadelphia. It was literally built right over the existing masonry church. Records show that only one Sunday service had to be suspended because of construction.

Bethel was designated a local historic landmark in 1988.

The cross in the choir loft is made from pieces of the original trusses rescued during a roof repair.

In 2019, Historic Bethel celebrated its 125th Anniversary.

# First Lady Honored In Memory of Another



The Steward Board took the lead in following the wishes of Pastor Tyrone "Tony" Evans after the death of his beloved wife, Lois Irene Evans, due to cancer in late December.

"We are grateful for your thoughts and prayers," the widely syndicated radio and television broadcaster and pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas wrote. "Many have asked how to help during this time. In honor of Lois, I would also love for you to consider sending flowers this week to your pastor's wife. Lois loved receiving flowers but she also loved giving them. Because her passion was ministering to pastors' wives and making sure they felt loved and cared for, your gift of flowers in her

memory would be a gift to us as well."

So on Sunday, Jan. 12, First Lady Karen Irby was surprised with a bouquet of colorful flowers, greeting cards and much-deserved words of appreciation.

Beyond her devotion and service to her family, Mrs. Irby also serves as a Stewardess, Doorkeeper and Bible Discovery instructor.

She said she was, "holding back tears" as a beautiful poem was read and thanked her Bethel family for the tribute.

Above, she stands with Rev. Kenny Irby, whose soiled and tattered robe was used to visually illustrate that day's sermon: "God's Got You" from Zechariah 3:1-5.

## Answers to puzzles that appear on Page 7

### Rebus

- A-1 Misunderstanding
- A-2 More often than not
- A-3 Close Quarters
- B-1 Too bad
- B-2 Parallel Bars
- B-3 Platinum
- C-1 Back to Square One
- C-2 Placed Under Arrest
- C-3 Calculated Risk
- D-1 Bib overalls
- D-2 Back Surgery
- D-3 Odds and Ends

### Sudoku

3	5	8	9	6	1	4	7	2
4	9	1	5	2	7	8	6	3
6	2	7	8	3	4	1	9	5
7	1	4	3	8	5	9	2	6
5	3	2	4	9	6	7	8	1
8	6	9	1	7	2	3	5	4
9	7	5	6	4	3	2	1	8
1	8	3	2	5	9	6	4	7
2	4	6	7	1	8	5	3	9

### Match Game:

