

The Praise Report

The Newsletter of Ujima Village Christian Church

Rev. Dr. J.R. Norwood, Pastor
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Ministering Among the Persecuted Church

-By Pastor Norwood

This past Fall, Sister Norwood and I were blessed to be able to go on a mission to Myanmar, which is a country in Southeast Asia that used to be called "Burma." There is widespread religious persecution in Myanmar by Buddhist nationalists against both Christians and Muslims. I was sent by the "Timothy Two Project" to teach masters degree level students at the newly formed Myanmar Theological Seminary in the region of Yangon (which used to be called "Rangoon"). Timothy Two is an international educational ministry that places visiting professors in mission field seminaries around the world and is affiliated with the World Reformed Fellowship. While there, I was blessed to be able to preach at two churches, with the assistance translators. Both congregations conducted their worship services at religious schools, one also ministered to orphans that made up a wonderful youth choir. At the first worship, a Buddhist family that was attending a Christian worship for the very first time and had just learned about Jesus Christ.

While the Yangon area is a relatively safe area for Christians, my students came from areas of the country where there was heavy persecution, some having their lives threatened for preaching the gospel, others watching their colleagues being chased from towns after their church facilities were taken over by Buddhist militias or the police. There were also stories of the disappearance of their fellow missionaries, whom they were certain had been killed. Our host, the Rev. David Khobal, was focused on our safety, and had us escorted and driven wherever we wanted to go (and was quite concerned when he heard that we had taken a walk on our own).

I taught a course on pastoral care in missions to seven students, including two who were pastoring mission churches and one who was already an associate minister of his church. Their testimonies were powerful, almost to the point of being overwhelming in regard to the level of persecution they had experienced and the faithfulness and courage they had clearly exhibited in continuing to press forth the mission of the gospel in dire and dangerous circumstances. I was humbled to even be among them and felt as though they were teaching me as I taught them. The schools are supported by churches in the United States and elsewhere but are still in desperate need of help and support in the face of persecution and poverty.

During our stay, there was a celebration of the 100th anniversary of the first Burmese convert to Christianity, Maung Naw, under the ministry of the American Christian missionary Adoniram Judson, Jr. We visited not only the church where Maung Naw was baptized, but also the church he established and pastored afterward. Sister Norwood, who my students called "Mommy," and I received overwhelmingly warm welcomes by our Burmese brothers and sisters in Christ.

I praise God for this most humbling experience. I went to help them but returned feeling as though I was the one who had been helped and strengthened by the passion for the gospel that I saw among the Burmese Christians. This sentiment was shared by another American visiting professor, Rev. Norman "Stan" Hankins, who was there teaching. My prayers are for the Christians in Myanmar and that we American Christians might display their passion and commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



Pastor Norwood, Sister Norwood and students



Rev. Hankins, Rev. Khobal, Rev. Norwood



Rev. Khobal translating Rev. Norwood's sermon



Children's Choir of Orphans



Pastor and Sister Norwood at the Westminster Church of Yangon Myanmar

A Presentation: "The Persecuted Church in Myanmar"

- By Sis. Naomi Cullum

On the last Sunday of November-immediately following Morning Worship- Ujima's Pastor, the Rev. Dr. John R. Norwood, gave a magnificent presentation! The focus was the *persecuted church* in Myanmar (formerly, the country of Burma). The Pastor and his wife, First Lady and Deacon Tanya Norwood, had recently returned from that area after spending approximately two weeks there.

Immersed in another foreign culture, Pastor Norwood was in Myanmar to teach a seminar/course to college students, educators and pastors. Most of the time, he was blessed to have a translator present to help with communication in those classes. As is his custom, he brought back with him a wealth of information to share with his home church/family at Ujima.

Utilizing a multi-media platform, Pastor executed a most comprehensive account of the trip to this country. There were various photos of the region, the people, and elements of Buddhism that are so pervasive in the area. Additionally, he spoke on the "challenges" of the local cuisine, the hotel accommodations, the cultural dress and currency of the nation, and those ever-present lizards/geckos.

During this presentation, the pastor was surprisingly inundated with assorted questions- especially from the children. Adults had their questions also, but when one can motivate children to be interested enough to ask questions (about a topic that can easily overwhelm them) that, certainly, speaks volumes.

Pastor Norwood ended the presentation with sharing a desire/concern to help the nation of Myanmar; he suggested the possibility of Ujima partnering with others to help provide internet service to this land- noting earlier that they had no such thing there.

Indeed, Ujima was treated/exposed to yet another wonderful, educational and spiritual travel experience-as provided by the Pastor and First Lady.

UJIMA WOMEN'S ONE-DAY RETREAT-November 16, 2019

- By Kathy Rawls

The Ujima Women's One Day Retreat was very powerful with all the prayers, praise songs, and surrounded by strong Christian Women and Brother Ira playing the piano. It was a day to have that one on one praise with the God Almighty. It was a day of laughter, smiles, tears and worship. I enjoyed the day, worshiping the one true God. I felt very humble, I cried, smiled, and laughed. All the Sisters in Christ had a marvelous time praising and praying to Our Lord Jesus Christ. I can't wait to our next Women's One Day Retreat. Praying you will join us.



The 2019 Women's Retreat : "A Day of Prayer"

-By Sis. Naomi Cullum

The focus of this year's Women's Retreat was, "A Day of Prayer"- and that is exactly what transpired! What a blessing it was to have such a beautiful gathering of Ujima members (and guests) to participate in this year's event. Throughout the morning and afternoon, there was quite an interesting format which utilized practically every female member of Ujima! The following provides a glimpse at the day's activities:



The day started with the provision of a wonderful, hot breakfast in the Fellowship Hall. Then, participants moved to the sanctuary where they were graced with songs of praise and worship by members of Ujima's choir. An opening prayer followed, as well as an opening hymn.

The program continued with the categorization of six core themes presented in segments over the morning and afternoon hours. The themes were: "Our Sin and Christ's Forgiveness," "Our Mental and and Emotional Pain," "Our Families," "Our Worship" and "Our Need to Evangelize." Corresponding to the respective themes, each segment included these: A Scripture Reading; A Sharer (one who provided a personal connection and/or visualization); Psalter (Psalm reader); Praise Through Song; A Scripted Prayer and a Choral Praise.

About midway into the service, a break was taken to enjoy an appetizing lunch. During this time, there was a great opportunity to engage in conversations and get to know some of those in attendance. Ending the day's service was a marvelous closing prayer- with all in a circle holding hands. Emotions ran high as each person offered their individual prayer requests. The closing song, "This Little Light of Mine," was sung by all as "The Day of Prayer" ended on such a lovely note.

"Women of Nia"- Another Year, Another Blessing

-By Sis. Naomi Cullum

Heading into the new educational year, Ujima's "Women of Nia" excitedly met on the second Friday of October. This gathering proved to be truly informative, inspirational and productive.

The ladies engaged in conversations which enabled others to understand some of the personal challenges of womanhood-both emotionally and physically. Surely, the Lord blessed all to open up about issues that may not be so safe to express anywhere else. There was such a consolation and freedom in sharing those various aspects of each other's lives. There were great moments of hearty laughter-and the flow of a few tears- as the women compassionately listened to each other's stories.

Also discussed were the plans to continue purchasing items needed to benefit the homeless population in the area. Multiple hygienic supplies and some food products have already been secured. However, provision of other essentials-such as new hats and gloves-is also appreciated by anyone wishing to contribute to this worthy cause.

Additionally, for the fellowship, was the availability of an assortment of refreshments which the attendees brought. Enjoyed were: sesame teriyaki chicken wings, a green bean/turkey bacon dish, deviled eggs, pretzels, chips, cake, chocolates and beverages.

Needless to say, everyone had a most wonderful time...in fact, such a good time that all track of time was lost!

Ps./ With this educational year, "Women of Nia" evening fellowships are scheduled for the second Friday of each even-numbered month. Feel free to come out and participate!



The "BUSY BEES" Ministry

- By Kathy Rawls

We are very blessed to have everyone who donated to the Busy Bees Building Fund Club loose change jar. We collected \$320.47 in coins and \$86.00 dollars... for a total of \$406.71 back in October 2019. We are still collecting for the improvements for the church. Thank all who donated and may God continue to bless you!

“Service of Lights & Remembrance and Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church”

-By Sis. Naomi Cullum

During the first Sunday in November, Ujima celebrated “*All Saints Day*” with a somber-yet victorious- service recognizing saints who had passed on. Additionally, special prayers were offered on behalf of the *Persecuted Church* in connection to the international effort. Officiating in these two ceremonies were Missionary Linda Rogers for “*The Service of Lights and Remembrance*” and Deacon Caleb Collins for “*The International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church*”-respectively.

In the “Service of Lights,” those (now gone on) who exemplified Christ in their lives, inspired and encouraged were remembered. Missionary Rogers patiently read ninety-five names that were submitted for this occasion. As each name was called, a candle was lit in their honor-representing the light of Christ exhibited in that life.

As for the “Prayer for the Persecuted Church,” Deacon Collins read an explanatory passage and led an humble prayer for those around the world who are targets of animosity- because they take a stand for Jesus Christ. Often times, these saints live in nations/areas where Christianity is not the dominant religion. As a result, their lives have been subject to persecution and danger because of their Christian faith and the desire to practice and share this faith with others.

Interestingly enough, Ujima’s own pastor, the Rev. Dr. John R. Norwood, happened to be absent that day because he was serving in such a nation (as described above) during the time of Ujima’s ceremonies. He had been serving as a visiting professor- in the Asian country of Myanmar (formerly known as Burma). Specifically, he taught a course there at a new theological seminary in the town of Yangon. [later, Pastor Norwood did a fabulous presentation at Ujima on his (and Sis. Norwood’s) travel to that area].

In the absence of the Pastor and First Lady, the home church appreciated both Missionary Rogers and Deacon Collins for all their fine efforts...certainly, they came through with strong deliveries.

Spotlight on : “Wisdom Keeping”

-By Sis. Naomi Cullum

Not to be missed each Sunday morning at Ujima Village Christian Church is a beautiful ministry entitled, “*Wisdom Keeping*.” During this time, children (aged twelve and under) are instructed in a particular spiritual concept by an adult. Beckoned to the front of the sanctuary, the children engage in a lively, interactive session for approximately ten minutes or under.

Although the lessons (both scripted and/or freestyle) are designed for children, the rest of the congregation also benefit from these concepts/ideas. There are also those priceless, unexpected moments of spontaneity that elicit a smile or chuckle from the audience.

The structure usually consists of the following: an opening statement or question, a mini-lesson and a circle prayer- loudly repeated by children and adults. The final aspect of their duration of time is the children’s offering to the church. On occasion, treats are also provided to the young people. However, to minimize potential distractions, they are either kept by the parents or distributed at the end of the morning worship service.

Previously, the “*Wisdom Keeping*” was handled by various women of the church. Now, as of this past year, members of the Men’s Ministry (“The Brotherhood of Mighty Men”) have offered some powerful presentations as well. It’s really quite interesting to see their unique perspective and dynamic in play.

Certainly, at the end of all the lessons, both children and adults are left with some amazing spiritual wisdom/inspiration to ponder and remember.

What an extraordinary job done with this ministry- by **All** the teachers!

Christmas Potluck and Cookie Exchange Fellowship

-By Sis. Sandy Baez

This year’s Potluck and Christmas Cookie Exchange Fellowship was another successful event. The potluck meal consisted of three different types of meatballs made by Sis. Pat and Deacon Andranette, fried chicken, green beans, Sis. Sandy’s empanadas, Sis. Kathy’s potato salad with devilled eggs, macaroni salad, green salad, bread and drinks.

After the main course 1st Lady Tanya opened up the Cookie Exchange presentation with Sis. Naomi’s delicious chocolate brittle cookies; Sis. Kathy’s delicious cranberry filled cookies; Sis. Pat bought home baked oatmeal raisin and peanut butter cookies; and 1st Lady Norwood bought macaroons.

It was a great fellowship with both the young and not so young members of our Congregation filled with lots of love, fun, and grub!

Ujima Youth Ministry

Christmas Play

-By Sis. Sandy Baez

Praise be to our Lord, Jesus Christ for Deacon and First Lady Tanya Norwood and the youth and young adult ministries for blessing us with yet another great performance. The Ujima congregation and guests were blessed to see the reenactment of the celebration of the birth of.



Jesus. Miracle Santiago and Jordan Everett played the roles of Mary and Joseph. Johnnie Weeks played the role of the Innkeeper. Malayna Cherry, Adriane Roach, and Kathy Rawls (in place of Nelson Ruiz) played the roles of The Three Wise Men. Charles Newton, Matthew Newton, and Bryant Council Jr. played shepherds. Christopher Weeks, Isaiah Hardwick, and Jaden Hardwick recited their recitations

Ujima's Single Women's Ministry- "Highlighting the Christian Walk and Talk"

-By Sis. Naomi Cullum

Also embarking on a fresh, educational year was the "Single Women's Ministry of Ujima." The women meet on the third Monday of each month. So, on that third Monday of October, ministry leader, Deacon Pamela Hill, enthusiastically led this class-once again-in a powerful study.

Included in the study and discussion was the oral reading of a lengthy chapter from the book, "Me and My Big Mouth" by Christian author, Joyce Meyer. The focus of the chapter was evaluating the level of "salvation" one's mouth has in relation to one's Christian walk and/or call...how there needs to be a match to be effective. Referenced was an ideal from Proverbs 8:8, which states that, "All the words from my mouth are righteous; there is nothing contrary to truth or crooked in them."

Also observed were the Biblical figures of Moses, Isaiah and Jeremiah when it came to perceptions of their mouths/words.

Moses was conscious of his speech impediment and thought himself too inarticulate to speak for God. However, it is known that God planned to use him anyway- with God, Himself, being with Moses' mouth. [see Exodus 4:11]

Isaiah perceived himself as "a man of unclean lips" just before they were touched by a live coal and cleansed from iniquity/guilt. He later heard the voice of the Lord asking, "Who shall I send?" Isaiah responded, "Here am I; send me." [see Isaiah 1-9]

Jeremiah was viewed as one who had appeared somewhat hesitant to be used of the Lord- just because of his youth/age. "Ah, Lord God! Behold I cannot speak, for I am only a youth." Jeremiah went on to say that the Lord put forth His hand and touched his mouth saying, "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth." [see Jeremiah 1:4-10]

Finally, the author noted that Jeremiah, Isaiah and Moses "all realized that God had to change some things about their mouths to fulfill their divine call." (and the same would apply to us).

What a great lesson and session!

Encouraging all single females to clear their schedules and join in on the beautiful scriptural insights and growth opportunities afforded by this dynamic ministry!

Celebration for Brother George Randolph

-By Missionary Linda Rogers

On November 9, 2019 the Saturday Bible Ministry group at Ujima Village Complex gave Bro. George a "going home" party. He is moving back to Prentiss, Mississippi. He came up north over 46 years ago to find work and decided to stay. A faithful member of Christ Church, he was also faithful at our Bible study on the 1st and 3rd Saturday for over five years. We will miss him, but we know that he is happy to be back home.

God's Miracles of Healing at Ujima

- by Sister Sandy Baez

According to Dictionary.com, the biblical definition of a miracle is "an effect or extraordinary event in the physical world that surpasses all known human or natural powers and is ascribed to a supernatural cause. Such an effect or event manifesting or considered as a work of God." (Dictionary.com). The Holy Bible captures numerous accounts of divine healing which occurred through God, Christ, prophets, or apostles. Yet based on the definition above, in today's society is there such a thing as divine or miraculous healing? Can healing be attributed solely to medical science? Was it the medication, the surgery, the treatment or a combination of all three that heals? As a Christian I would have to say 'Yes' – I believe that even today divine and miraculous healing continues to exist. Yet, healing comes from God, just as all medicines, surgeries, and treatments come from a compilation of God's grace and wisdom bestowed upon physicians, scientists, and the medical community as a whole.



In retrospect, prayer is an essential element to healing, for to worship and pray to our Savior on behalf of others is one of many obligations that Christians must fulfill and obey. It is a power that the saints have as a form of witnessing to others about God's greatness and majesty. Scripture asks "is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven." James 5:14-15

Today hundreds of accounts of miraculous healing occur. However, as Christians we are taught that healing occurs at the Cross – when you submit completely to the Lord and accept Him as your Lord and Savior. We must acknowledge, with our mouths and in our hearts, His death on the cross, and His resurrection. We must hold to this truth so that we can be transformed by the renewing of our minds, which allows us to be submissive to God. Realize that human conversion and submission is greater than physical healing because it brings forth eternal life.

As humans in a progressively wicked world, God continues to show His mercy. At His discretion alone does He choose to heal some or not heal others because ultimately all healing or non-healing are for His divine purpose. We must always remember that the Lord will not give us more than we can bear and that all sufferings and afflictions are for God's purpose. Jeremiah, in his 30th chapter, 17th verse reminds us that God "will restore you to health and heal your wounds," declares the LORD". So we should not concern ourselves primarily with physical illness or weakness, but rather spiritual immortality.

At Ujima Village Christian Church, saints have undergone battles with illness and long suffering. We have also undergone the loss of member saints who have gone Home to the Creator. While a few of our members continue to battle with illness, they remain steadfast in their belief and faith that God is the greatest physician of all time and they will praise HIM all the same. Following is an interview and testimony from Brother Darryl Rawls who suffered a terrible accident on July 19, 2019. This is evidence that God is still in the miracle healing business at Ujima Village Christian Church!

1. Sandy: Can you provide me with the date of your accident? What happened?

Darryl: It was July 19 and I got stung by bees. I was told that I was unconscious for 10 minutes. They used my epi pen to revive me but it was out of date so they used other medication in the ambulance.

2. Sandy: How long was your stay at the hospital? What happened while at the hospital?

Darryl: I stayed at Princeton Medical Center for a little over a month and then I was transferred to JFK Rehab. At the hospital I was placed into an induced coma for three days. The venom from the bees travelled through my body so a coma was the only way the doctors could flush it out and not cause damage to my other organs. My body needed to rest. When I was taken out of the coma and awakened I was lethargic with memory loss. I couldn't remember what happened nor why I was hospitalized. A couple weeks later I developed blood clots in my lungs so I remained in the hospital for treatment. By mid-August I was transferred to the rehab center where I had to learn how to walk, get in and out of bed, regain my memory and strengthen my brain function, and I also had speech therapy because my speech was slurred. I was finally released and arrived home on September 13, 2019. **[continued on page 7]**

[“God’s Miracles of Healing,” continued from page 6]

3. Sandy: How did you feel when you didn’t get better and other ailments started to surface?

Darryl: I felt lethargic and helpless. My speech was slurred, I couldn’t get out of bed and I really couldn’t remember anything, except my family. I had to depend on my brothers, mom, and dad. My older brother shaved my head and beard.

4. Sandy: There were reports of you being agitated and borderline angry. Why?

Darryl: It was terrible at Princeton. Unless my family was with me, the nurses and doctors were not attentive. My case worker took two hours to see me. There was no hospitality. At JFK Rehab it was round the clock care. I felt more comfortable and relaxed and I knew I was closer to getting home.

5. Sandy: What did you learn from this experience?

Darryl: I felt alone but I knew God was there with me. I had to trust God because I knew that God had more for me to do. God didn’t have to save me but He did. He gave me rest so that I could commune with and get closer with Him. I wanted to get back home with my family and my Church family. My children were very supportive. I knew that I had to concentrate on getting myself together, and let God lead the way and direct my heart.

6. Sandy: How did you feel when you learned that your church family, etc. came to visit you while you were in the hospital and in a coma?

Darryl: It was heart-warming and I could feel the power of Jesus. I had a smile of happiness.

7. Sandy: How did you feel when you learned of the prayer warriors praying for you?

Darryl: I felt Jesus – it was all the power of the Holy Spirit. I was humbled and praised God for all who cared for me and loved me enough to pray.

8. Sandy: What lesson did you learn if any?

Darryl: The power of God was upon me because I could have been dead. I know that God has a plan for me. I have to trust it and trust God. I can’t do anything on this earth without God. God is the only one that could pay that “bill” and I am saved by his grace. I/ we need to focus on Him and listen to what His plan is.

9. Sandy: How has your life changed?

Darryl: For the betterment. I am awaiting what God has in store for me.

10. Sandy: What will you keep doing/do differently?

Darryl: Keep going to Church and Bible study; still take care of my parents. I’m going to strive to be less angry and not carry an attitude. I want to seek counseling, stay humble, and use the fruits of the spirit when dealing with challenges. I am going to work on forgiving others and trust in God. I will continue to love Jesus.

11. Sandy: What is your new purpose if any?

Darryl: Stay focused on God and trust God even more. I want to work on the church; maintain my connection with God; stay covered in the blood of Jesus; and follow the will of God.

After the interview I got on my knees and prayed and gave thanks to the Lord for He still is in the Miracle Healing Business at Ujima. Brother Darryl has always been a devout Christian and despite this unexpected event he continued to PRAISE JESUS. One can only guess that Brother Darryl’s prayer was synonymous with Isaiah 38:16-17 - "You restored me to health and let me live. Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish. In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back."

As for me, I continue to be a prayer warrior for God is worthy to be PRAISED AT ALL TIMES! To my family at Ujima Village Christian Church I leave you with this quote from 3 John 1:2: "Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well." Amen!





Bryant Council Jr, Christopher Weeks, and Matthew Newton

Youth Baptisms!

-by Pastor Norwood

On January 26th, I was blessed to be able to baptize three boys who presented themselves for baptism and catechism training. Christopher Weeks, Bryant Council Jr, and Matthew Newton. Christopher is the son of Eddie Weeks and grandson of Deacon Pat "Ma" Weeks. Bryant Council Jr. is the grandson of Sister Patricia McCoy Panniell and Rev. Henry Panniell. Matthew Newton began worshipping with us as a guest of the Panniells. All three boys have been faithfully attending to the "means of grace" and are a joy to have in our congregation.

May the Lord continue to bless their Christian journey of spiritual growth and may the Holy Spirit draw others through their testimony of faith!

The Charitable Focus of the Mighty Men and the Congregation at Large

The Brotherhood of Mighty Men have an annual drive to provide support to various international Christian relief efforts. For 2019, through their support of World Vision International, they were able to provide: \$1500 worth of Medicine and Life Saving Supplies; \$700 in Hunger Relief; \$250 for Refugee Children; and \$200 toward International Child Protection Initiatives. The Mighty Men would like to thank everyone who supported their efforts.

Additionally, in the Fall, the congregation responded to the Hurricane Dorian crisis in the Bahamas by requesting that members send immediate support through the Red Cross and also sent special offerings for the relief efforts through UNICEF.

In November, as the church participated in the International Days of Prayer for the Persecuted Church, a special offering was sent to support Christians under persecution through "Open Doors USA."

May the Lord continue to enable us to provide relief to our brothers and sisters in need around the world!



LIFE-SAVING MEDICINES AND SUPPLIES



REFUGEE CHILDREN'S CRISIS FUND



PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN



WHERE MOST NEEDED—HUNGER

Congratulations, Jayda!

-By Sis. Naomi Cullum

Congratulations are certainly in order for one of Ujima's own, **Sis. Jayda Hinds!**

We, at Ujima, are so happy to announce that this young lady, who is a second- year college student, recently had a deserving recognition of her beautiful and powerful written work. Her submission of both a prose piece and a poem were accepted for publication in a literary magazine. Those works are entitled, *"Not Speaking Spanish Doesn't Make Me Any Less Latina"* and *"Colors Are Mad"* respectively. Below, are the selections:

Not Speaking Spanish Doesn't Make Me Any Less Latina

BY JAYDA HINDS

There I was-- minding my business at a coffee shop, sipping my caramel soy latte, when a white man started talking to me in Spanish. Excuse me?

He asked me, in Spanish, where my family was from. I told him, in English, that they were from Trinidad and Puerto Rico. Then, I asked where his family was from- assuming that perhaps, they could very well be from a Spanish speaking country. But he told me, "Oh, I'm just white, but I've been taking Spanish lessons since middle school."

Assuming someone's language is a microaggression- plain and simple. It's essentially judging someone based on their appearance and nothing more.'

Why are you walking up to me, a complete stranger, and assuming my native tongue? The white man in the coffee shop thought he had some sort of authority over Latinx culture because he spoke Spanish. In doing so, he tried to discredit my own Latinx identity because I did not speak Spanish, despite my actual Latinx heritage. People assume that being Latinx and speaking Spanish go hand in hand, but speaking Spanish is usually taught during a child's early developmental years. Growing up, it was difficult for me to feel like I "belong" in Latinx culture because I did not have a language tie. Doctors recommended my household not to use Spanish at all, because it could further affect my brother's severe learning disabilities. Growing up, I couldn't understand the novelas my mother would watch or the conversations my grandparents would have with each other.

But even more so, I was constantly reminded that I didn't speak Spanish by others. People, both in the Latinx community and outside, have tried to have a conversation with me in Spanish. When I couldn't reciprocate the language, I would (almost always) hear, "Well, aren't you Latina?"

"Yes." I'd sav.

"Well, why don't you know Spanish?" they'd (almost always) ask.

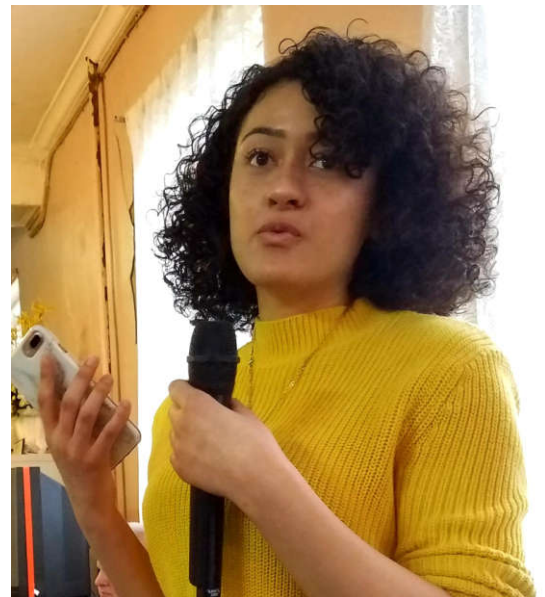
And time and time again, my Latinx identity would become ripped away from me because I only know English.

My mother cooked arroz con pollo and sanchoco nearly every week. I have all the words memorized to possibly every Marc Anthony song, because my family has coined him as our "go-to road trip artist". I will forever have the memory of awkwardly learning how to dance bachata and salsa with my grandmother when I was 6. Here in college, cooking is my therapy. It gives me a small taste of home, especially after the minimally (and I mean, minimally) flavored food in the dining hall. My dorm floor is well-versed in the scents of sazón, sofrito, and ajíes dulces- after months of me cooking so often.

Latinx people also speak other languages than Spanish, and shouldn't be placed in a linguistic category. Portuguese, French, Mayan and Quechua (the language of the Incas) are also spoken. So no, I do not speak Spanish- but Latinx culture is so much more than a language. It is food, it is music, it is dance, it is art, it is happiness.

I may not know my mother's tongue- but that does not make me any less Latina.

[more on page 10]



[“Congratulations Jayda,” continued from page 9]

Colors are mad by Jayda Aliyah Hinds

raw,
yes.
I ordered my steak raw inside.
well-
more like “medium rare”,
but all I see
is the Red on the plate
staring back at me.

the Blue is outside-
on the sky and on the birds.
I see it through these windows
but I know it in my head too.
the doctor keeps telling me
my heart is Red and beating.
but I know
its Blue like snow.

well-
more like
“Medium rare”.
maybe my heart is
involved in an affair.
I know that it’s beating inside my body.
yet the beats
beat so oddly.

I pick up the knife and fork. sad.
I am sitting alone in this restaurant.
the steak is decent at best.

should I have stayed in Trinidad?
I wonder.

the waiters rarely even smile here
and the mashed potatoes could use more butter
and salt
but i come back so much
because i feel so Blue.

I am sitting alone smiling at no one tugging at my
sleeves

should I have stayed in Trinidad?
I’m thinking.

The sun is smooth and Yellow there,
and it’ll glaze over your face.
The sun is rough and Yellowish here,
and it leaves me with a bitter taste.

like this steak.

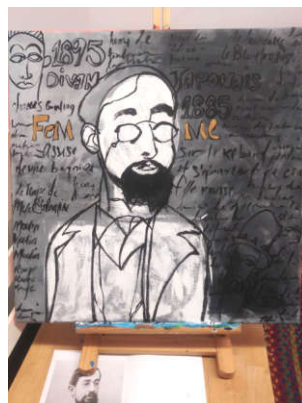
I miss the Brown rum cake.
I want the Yellow sun to look at my face.
I want the waiters to smile.
I want the food to taste good.
I miss the peppers and onions
with fish from the rivers.

I am sitting alone. talking to no one. looking outside
the window. thinking of rolling up a jo-

“Do you need anything?” the waiter asks me.
“Maybe a bit more butter and salt.”

She smiles this time.
I saw it.

Artwork by Nashae Flowers





Congratulations to the Choir on their new choir robes! Wear them to the Glory of Jesus Christ as you sing His praise!



On October 6th we praised God for the blessing of our animal companions.

February 16, 2020 is our 28th Anniversary

The Ujima Village Christian Church developed from a youth outreach ministry formed by Sister Tanya Norwood under the pastorate of her husband, the Rev. Dr. John Norwood. In May of 1991, at the Grant Chapel A.M.E. Church of Trenton, Sister Tanya Norwood and Pastor John Norwood began to minister to the youth in the surrounding community through a new non-denominational outreach as an extension of the Norwood's parish ministry. Called "The Ujima Youth Ministry," it focused on showing the love of Christ through youth outreach and evangelism activities. "Ujima" (a name selected by the children of the ministry), is a Swahili word which refers to the collective life of a community working together and assuming responsibility for one another.

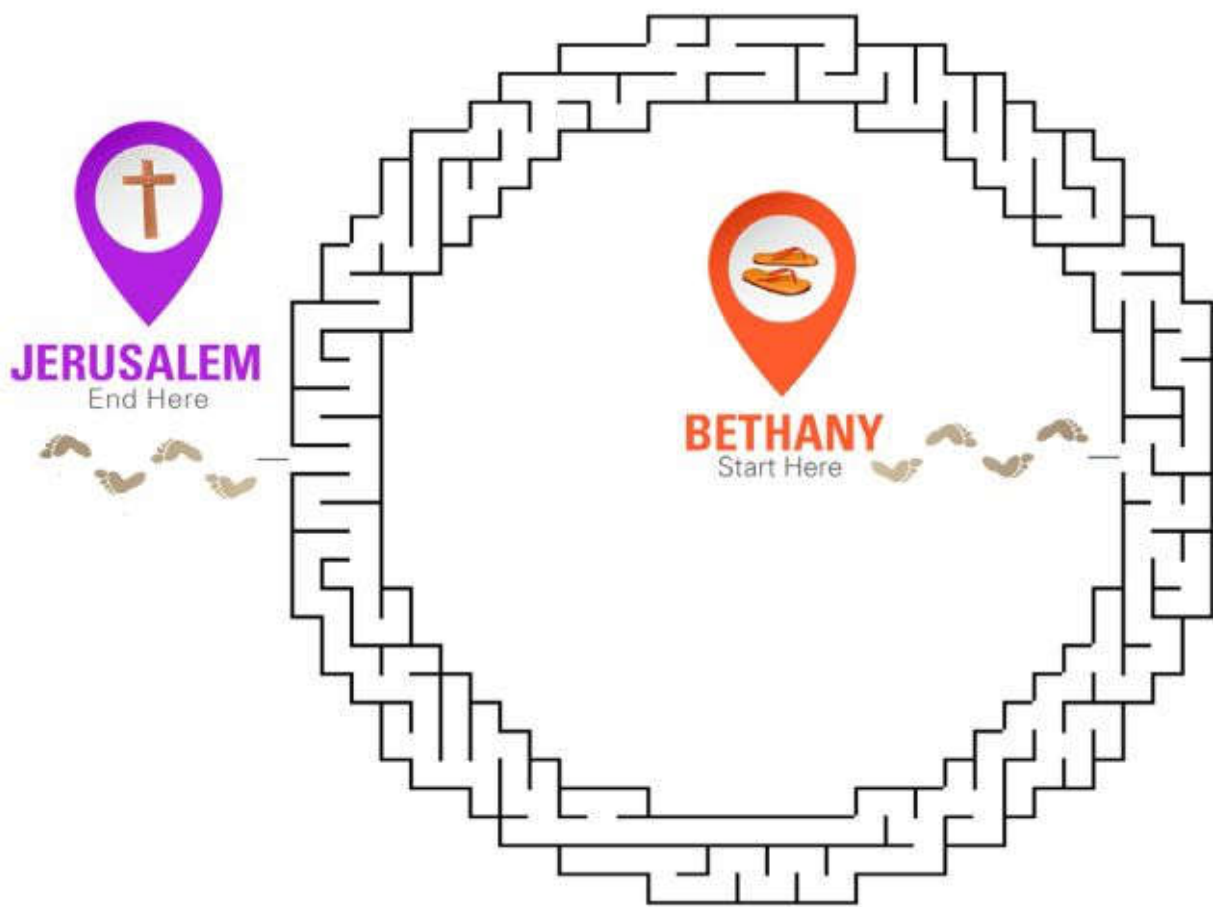
The independent non-denominational approach of the ministry reflected Pastor Norwood's growing sense of calling to non-denominational Christian outreach. While disheartened over points of growing disagreement with his beloved denomination, Pastor Norwood also began to sense the promptings of the Holy Spirit to start a new congregation. While at the closing worship of a denominational conference, and in earnest prayer over the moving of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, he boldly asked God for some sign so that he would know what to do. When he came to himself and refocused on the worship service, the passage being read was *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty"* (2 Corinthians 6:17-18). From that moment, God continued to confirm the fact that a new congregation was to be planted on the principles of scripture with the aim of glorifying God through obeying Christ's commands to go make disciples and to love one another.

On Wednesday, January 26th, 1992 the people who would form the new congregation began to meet weekly for prayer and study at the Harmony Lodge on Warren Street in Trenton, New Jersey. The preparation of hearts culminated in the birth of the "Ujima Christian Church," with its first worship, on Sunday, February 16th, 1992. The name was taken from the youth ministry named by the children it had served, from which the congregation had formed. The congregation grew and started to meet at the Trenton YMCA on Pennington Road, then finally settling at its current facility, originally the "Odd Fellows Home," in November, 1994, which was renamed the "Ujima Village." The congregation added "village" to its name and is known as the "Ujima Village Christian Church."

The Ujima Village Christian Church has become known for its outreach efforts addressing the problems of the impoverished and disenfranchised throughout the area. Biblical in doctrine and mission, Ujima upholds the orthodox teachings of the Christian Faith as proclaimed in the Holy Scriptures and commits itself to spreading the Gospel of Christ through word and deed. Ujima's mission is to, "Convert the Lost, Make Disciples of the Converted, and Make Disciple-Makers of Disciples, all to the glory of God". Ujima remains a biblically based non-denominational congregation embracing a covenantal view of Scripture consistent with Reformed Christian Theology

#4 JESUS

Jesus' entire ministry only lasted three years, and he was never more than 30 miles from his hometown during that time! Be he sure covered a lot of ground. There are at least 27 different cities, villages, regions, deserts, suburbs, shores, and wilderness plains mentioned where Jesus stopped by before entering Jerusalem (for the second time!). Go with Jesus on his a-maze-ing journey, from his start in Bethany, where he was baptized and called his first disciples, to Jerusalem, where he died and was resurrected:



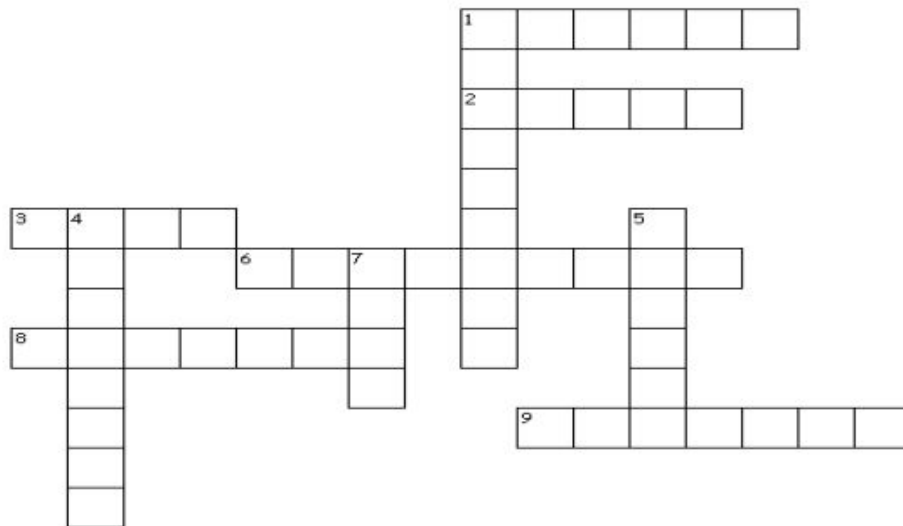
Places where Jesus visited: Bethany, Cana, Capernaum, Judean Desert, Nazareth, Sychar, Jerusalem, Jordan River, Bethsaida, Nain, the Gerasenes, Bethabara, Caesarea, Philippi, Decapolis, Ephraim, Jericho, Magadan, Mount Hermon, Nazareth, Perea, Samaria, Sidon, Tyre.

Psavory Psalms

CROSSWORD #3 PSALM 13

*Learn one of the best-loved Psalms by answering questions about it in the crossword puzzle below.
Read the Psalm first!*

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1 How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?</p> <p>2 How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and
day after day have sorrow in my heart? How
long will my enemy triumph over me?</p> <p>3 Look on me and answer, Lord my God. Give
light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,</p> | <p>4 and my enemy will say, "I have overcome
him," and my foes will rejoice when I fall.</p> <p>5 But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart
rejoices in your salvation.</p> <p>6 I will sing the Lord's praise, for he has been
good to me.</p> |
|---|--|



Across:

1. Day after Day I feel this.
2. Give this to my eyes.
3. God has been this way for me.
6. We will trust in God's love that is...
8. I do this with my thoughts.
9. Will you forget me for this amount of time?

Down:

1. My heart rejoices in God's...
4. Our enemies will say we have...
5. God, look at me and....
7. These people rejoice when I fall.

Announcements

BIBLE-LYMPICS on Wednesday, February 19, at 6:30PM

CHURCH ASSEMBLY MEETING on Wednesday, March 4, at 8PM.

THE LIGHTHOUSE MINISTRY IS PRAYING FOR NEW MEMBERS! Interested persons should see First Lady Norwood, Missionary Linda Rogers.

2020 CHURCH-WIDE RETREAT AT SPRUCE LAKE IN THE POCONOS - July 5-9, 2020. The final payment is due no later than Feb. 23rd.

ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP is on Wednesday, February 26, at 6:30PM. Bible Study to follow.

THE BUSY BEES MINISTRY IS RAISING FUNDS to purchase a 40ft ladder and supplies to make repairs to the exterior of the annex and also plan to purchase a equipment for interior upkeep. Please make your donation in the change jar to support their efforts.

THE CHOIR REHEARSALS ARE ON THE 2ND AND 4TH SUNDAY'S after Time for Truth studies.

"WHO ARE YOU?" CHURCH INVITE CARDS are available in the vestibule. Take a few, give them out, leave them wherever you go.

GOT CHANGE? DONATE YOUR LOOSE CHANGE to meet building needs. A change jar is available on Sundays in the sanctuary vestibule.

THE SUNDAY PREACHING SCHEDULE is posted on the church website and around the building.

CHECK FOR NEW ISSUES OF "NORWOOD'S BIBLE STUDY NOTES" in the Sunday Bulletins, the sanctuary vestibule, and on the church website under "Resources."

THE SENIOR USHERS MEET EVERY 3RD SUNDAY after Time for Truth Studies.

UJIMA'S MIGHTY MEN MEET for a breakfast fellowship on the first Sundays at 9:30AM in the Lighthouse Café. This is an Outreach Opportunity!

SINGLE WOMEN'S MINISTRY ...See Deacon Pamela Hill for details.

IF YOU DON'T USE AN ENVELOPE, YOUR OFFERING OR TITHE CAN NOT BE CREDITED TO YOU. Please fill in the information on the appropriate envelope and use it in order to have your donation recorded.

PASTOR NORWOOD'S RECENT SERMONS can be downloaded or streamed online at www.UjimaChurch.org or at www.facebook.com/RevNorwood

Upcoming Events:

2020 Church-Wide Retreat at Spruce Lake in the Poconos 7/5-9

Worship at New Mt. Carmel Baptist Church of Trenton 6/28 at 4PM

Upcoming 2020 Holy Days and Special Observances: Church Anniversary 2/16; Ash Wednesday 2/26; Palm Sunday 4/5; Maundy Thursday 4/9; Good Friday 4/10; Resurrection Sunday 4/12; Mother's Day 5/10; Ascension Day 5/21; Pentecost 5/31; Father's Day 6/21; Blessing of the Animals 10/4; Reformation Day 10/31; All Saints Day 11/1; Thanksgiving 11/26; Advent Begins 11/29; Christmas 12/25; Watchnight 12/31