



# News from <sup>the</sup> Brook

115 Maddox Road

June 2008

## Greetings,

It has almost been a year since we began our journey together in ministry. I thank God for the opportunity we have had to be a witness in South Jackson. God has used us, *The Brook*, to make a difference in South Jackson. As we began to plan for the future, we must first give God the praise and honor for what He has already done.



- We give God the credit for our membership increase. The Brook has received thirteen new members this year and one young adult rededicated their life to Christ.
- This year by the grace of God we have also seen our monthly giving increase. Members were encouraged to make pledges for 2008. They were asked to pray about tithing or increasing their giving from last year.
- The Brook has witnessed the birth of our new Praise Team. This was a vision given to Ms C. Wade. Our church and children have truly been blessed.
- The children and youth have increased their role in the worship service. We welcome the addition of the Bohannon's to our music department.
- The Brook and Forrest Hill started a pew exchange this year. About seven members of each church visited the other church for morning worship service. When we worship together God smiles.
- The older adult ministry has organize and meeting twice a month. They are currently working on arts and craft. Past activities include fellowship, speakers, going to a baseball game and much, much more. Ms R. Pennington accepted the chair of this group a few months ago and God has continued to bless them.
- Ms Pennington has also been involved with our new worship committee. She has been named the Administrate Assistant to the pastor, for worship. Our worship committee has great plans for the year.
- Ms J. Morris has been named Administrate Assistant to the pastor, for office matters. She will be working at the church two days a week. It is a

blessing to the church when members volunteer their time. I thank God for Ms Pennington and Ms Morris.

- This year five members of the Brook went to Jamaica, NY. The trip was paid for by Strengthen The Black Church (SBC21). They went to visit and learn from a sister church. The group is working with the worship committee to help meet your spiritual needs.
- Our worship service has already experience the use of PowerPoint. We began by using it twice a month. They are hoping to continue it use for future services.
- The Visionary Leadership Team met the first Sunday in June. This group will meet each week using, The Discovery Church Journey, as a guide. Pray that God will use them to lead us into tomorrow.
- Community of Shalom is coming to the Mississippi Conference. Shalom was started as a response to the riots after the Rodney King beating. I pray that the Brook will be one of those Community of Shalom, bring communities together.
- You are able to read this article due to our Newsletter that the Lord has blessed us to produce. This began as a vision given to Ms Edmonson. She shared it with the church and it was birthed into reality. God is Good.
- A Communication Team has been formed to help with the Newsletter, PowerPoint, emails and other special printing.

The past year at the Brook has been very exciting. I am thankful to God for the role that each of you have played. I realize many others activities could have been added such as fun night Shine your light, spring clean up, etc. etc. Let us stop and Praise God for all the He has done before we began to plan for tomorrow.

*To God be the glory,*

*Peace and Love*

*Rev. L. Fitzgerald Lovett*



## *Love Thy Neighbor*

**Howard Edmonson**  
(Lay Leader /Member)

Over the last few months we have been studying why the mainline churches, particularly the United Methodist Church, have been losing members, specifically African American members. African American membership is 2% of the overall membership (2% of 8 million, or 160,000).

Now there might be a variety of reasons why the United Methodist Church as a denomination has been losing members, but the reasons for individual local churches losing or gaining members tend to be specific, such as:

### a. Lack of Vision:

Local church leaders and members are responsible for developing and articulating the vision for their local church. In some denominations, the Pastor takes the lead in developing the church vision. However, in the United Methodist Church, because of the "Itinerant ministry" system, that is, Methodist ministers are subject to appointment at a new church every year, if

the local church followed the "Vision" of each new pastor, things could become quite confusing.

### b. Vision Fundamentals:

One of the fundamental qualities that the vision must have is Love of self. That is, the local church members must Love, Comfort, Care for, Respect, Support and try to Understand each other.

We all seek support in one form or another. It might be Emotional (love, understanding, encouragement, validation, comforting, etc). We as a church must provide these fundamental qualities for each other. If we do, we will grow and prosper. When we have these qualities, we will tell our friends and neighbors who "live their daily lives in quiet desperation" where they can find solace, and they in turn will tell others.

By the way, these are all biblical principles. This fundamental quality may seem selfish, but remember, before you can help any one you must help yourself.

Middlebrook Church Leaders and members, how do you see our church vision measuring up?

## *Older Adult Ministry*

The Older Adult Ministry met on March 23<sup>rd</sup> with Mr. John Neal, Director of Community Relations, Hinds County School District as Guest speaker. The topic of Mr. Neal's presentation was "*TIPS FOR THE ELDERLY ON HEALTH AND SAFETY*".

Even though the message was directed to the elderly, some of the topics covered, such as "protecting yourself against fraud, making good decisions on how to spend your money, Scams and sales tricks, etc. would have been of benefit to everyone.

Mrs. Edmonson also suggested some craft projects that could be completed by the Christmas season such as wreaths, dolls, mini quilts, and pine cone trees. Refreshments were served.

Ms. Janice Morris stated that she was working with the senior's outreach, has received some donations for various ministries and will continue calling for donations.

## *News From Clifton Whitley*

I became a grandfather for the second time as Jordan Whitley was born to my son Kassa and his fiancée, Davetta Young, on February 13, 2008.

Also in February, as the "captain" of my precinct for the Democrats, I organized our precinct caucus and was elected a delegate to our county convention. In March, I was elected as a delegate to represent Hinds County at the second congressional district Democratic convention as an Obama delegate where I ran unsuccessfully to become a delegate to the national Democratic convention. I was elected to the executive committee of the Hinds County Democratic Party.

I attended the first congressional district Democratic convention and helped my mother in her successful effort to become a delegate for Barack Obama at the national convention. She was also elected to the state executive committee. I will be traveling with her to attend the national Democratic convention in Denver, August 23-28. I will also travel to attend a Whitley family reunion in St. Louis, Missouri, June 27-30.

## *Worship Committee* – Ms. Roberta Pennington

Items discussed :

Monthly schedule of Worship Leaders Acolytes,  
Holy Communion, schedule for setting up and serving,  
Choir's opening and closing music,  
Weekly Bulletin cut off time for printing  
Ushers and Greeters

Members of the Committee and their Duties:

CD Music – Cheryl Haynes  
Ushers – J.D. McAdory and Brenda Little  
Choir – Carrie Wade and Marie McLaurin  
Children Ministries – Rebecca Harrell  
Communion Stewards – Ruby Lovett and Ruby Roby  
Acolytes – Whitney Wade  
Worship Leader – Roberta Pennington  
Bulletin – Patrick Phillips and Alice Emmanuel Phillips  
Lay Leader – Howard Edmonson

During the next 3 months, we hope that you notice an improvement in our worship service.

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### *Visionary Leadership Team*

Team members have committed to a *DISCOVERING GOD'S CHURCH JOURNEY*, a 13-week program to transform the church. Included on that journey, is a 4-part Bible Study. At the end of the journey, we should know where we are and where we want to go. In the meantime, we're asking church members for their prayers as we embark on this journey.

Team Members are:

Rebecca Harrell, Cheryl Haynes, Tiffany Sutton, Rhoda Barnes, Eligah Killebrew, Steve Seeley, Carrie Wade, Darnita Wheeler, J.D. McAdory, Roberta Pennington. Pastor Lovett and Rhoda Barnes are Co-chairs.

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### *Thanks*

Roberta Pennington and family would like to thank the Middlebrook Family for their gifts and prayers during the time of their Mother, Mrs. Ruth Curtis's HomeGoing

## *Congratulations*

The Youth Sunday School Class (The Believers) congratulations to the Graduates:

Jasmine Haynes, Dillard and  
Gerald Lovett, Jackson State University

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### *Pushing the Comfort Zone*

Although as Christians we know that Jesus commands us to witness on His behalf, many of us find that act to be way out of our comfort zone if it includes witnessing to strangers. The idea of going up to someone's door and telling them that God loves them just seems too difficult. The situation is not helped any by our experiences with certain religious witnessing groups that often come around neighborhoods knocking on doors, bearing tracts and promoting their own brand of religion.

The NOW (Nurture, Outreach, Witness) committee at Middlebrook has a plan of neighborhood witnessing, the "Shine Our Light Ministry," that is simple and less intrusive than our experience with those "other" groups. It involves carrying a small gift with some Christian meaning, introducing ourselves as from Middlebrook and simply telling people that God loves them. If they want to know more we invite them to the church, otherwise we wish them a good day and move on. The gift has been a candle and a small card with the church name and address and scripture reminding us that "Christ is the Light of the World". The Saturday before this past Easter we went out carrying the gift of a small cross and a card bearing scripture (John 11: 25-26) and the message that "Christ died for you".

I feel very uneasy about going up to a stranger's door and even bringing the simplest message of God's love, but pushing past the fears, I found the reward to be great. Often times we were greeted with skepticism, but once they understood we were not selling something and our "free gift" was really free (as is God's Grace), we were most often greeted with a smile or a thank you. I invite you to join us the next time we go out. You might find that going a little beyond your comfort zone with Jesus as your guide brings great joy.

*Steve Seeley*

## WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

### Sundays:

**8:30 AM** – Philippian Church Worship

**9:00 AM** – Middlebrook Sunday School

**10:30 AM** – Middlebrook Morning Worship

**Wednesdays: 6 PM** – Middlebrook Prayer and Bible Study

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### *June Birthdays*

June 2---Ciara McMilliam

June 11--Berenda Johnson

June 21--Gerald Fitzgerald Lovett III

*Pastor Lovett's 20th year as United Methodist Pastor*

Middlebrook UMC  
P.O. Box 22658  
Jackson, MS 39225-2658

## *June Calendar*

**Sunday, June 8 thru Tuesday June 10** – Mississippi Annual Conference

**Thursday, June 12** (11 a.m. – 1 p.m.) – Older Adults Craft Activity

**Sunday, June 22** – Administration Board Meeting

**Tuesday, June 24** (11 a.m. – 1 p.m.) – Older Adults Craft Activity

**Sunday June 29** (5 p.m.) – South Jackson Cluster Gathering, at Alta Woods United Methodist Church

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## PURPOSE

This News Letter is the third issue from the Nurture, Outreach, and Witness (NOW) Committee. We hope that these news letters will help keep the congregation informed as to the hope, vision, and progress of the church, without having to attend all the meetings (a right that the Book Of Discipline gives every member).

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact your Class Leader, Lay Leader or the involved church official.

# MIDDLEBROOK

**United Methodist Church**

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