

# The Voyager

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MARCH 2011

## A Letter to Young People: Anchors and Sails for Life's Voyage

by Sister Barbara Hilliard



In this age of constant, strong peer pressure and other issues that confront today's youth, there is a calling for all of us to "build a nation fit for all children." So says Marian Wright Edelman in her book *The Sea is so Wide and My Boat is so Small*. She calls upon leaders, teachers, the faith community, parents, grandparents and future generations to "end the epidemic and spiritual poverty afflicting millions of children. We can leave our children with a better, safer, and fairer world if we care enough. And we can--and must--do it now."

A leading children's advocate, Ms Edelman reminds us that young people need authentic role models. They need individuals to teach them how to deal with the complexities of life. She offers suggestions to various groups in the form of letters, for she, too, acknowledges that "it takes a village to raise children." There are letters to parents, teachers and educators, neighbors and community leaders, and to women--especially mothers and grandmothers. Her letter to young people contains what she feels is important, and she hopes they "find useful as you set out to navigate the exciting sea of life". What follows is a summation of her letter.

*--You are far more than any test can measure. No test can predict the quality and worth of your life or the contributions you can make. In this era of No Child Left Behind, standardized tests, and college admissions stress, I want you to remember that no test can measure many of the most important strengths you may have and need to succeed. While it is important to try to do as well as possible on tests, they do not measure your motivation and work ethics; your character; your courage and perseverance; your honesty, manners, and follow-through; or your caring, kindness and willingness to serve others. Find your gifts--however few or many they may be--and build on them.*

*--You do not always have to win. Sometimes losing is winning and sometimes winning is losing. How you win can be as important as what you win. If you have to lie or cheat to win, you lose. If you have to humiliate or demean your opponent to win, you lose. If you have to violate core principles to win, then you might want to weigh carefully whether winning is worth it.*

*--Do your part, however small. A friend commented that "the world is held together by the compassion and commitment and talent and love of a very few people. What more could you or I ask than to be one of them?"*

*--Give a good day.*

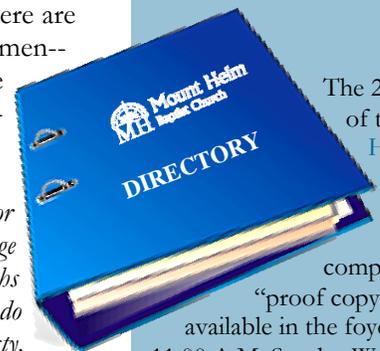
*--Be a sower. Keep planting and watering seeds of hope and help. Don't let others discourage you.*

*Continued on page 4.*

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### THE END IS NEAR!



The 2011 edition of the Mount Helm Church Directory is nearing completion. A

"proof copy" will be available in the foyer after the 11:00 A.M. Sunday Worship Service on March 6 and on Wednesday, March 9 (Ash Wednesday) for review. Each member is asked to review his/her entry and make any corrections needed.

The anticipated date for distribution is **Sunday, March 20, 2011.**

In order to be good stewards of our resources, we ask that you limit copies to one per household.



# JACKSON: A Beloved Community *by Pastor C.J. Rhodes*



*"The end is reconciliation, the end is redemption, the end is the creation of the beloved community." —Martin Luther King Jr.*

In 2009 I returned to the [City With Soul](#) on a mission. My theological vision of a better world was affirmed during my three years at Duke Divinity School, and I was ready to put my faith to work in Jackson. Call me crazy, but I believed that God was up to something in our capital, and I wanted to be a part of it.

When I shared with family and friends my desire to return to Mississippi and to participate in something great here, I was understandably greeted with their skepticism. How they yearned for me to be successful in some cosmopolitan Promised Land far away from the land of my birth. Too many years of backward thinking, racial politics and status quo leadership convinced them that if I moved back home, my vision would soon become a nightmare. But I came home anyway, being led by the Spirit to a place that shaped me more than I desired to admit.

My dream was neither deferred nor denied, thank God. I arrived to a Jackson that was being blessed by a kind providence. A lot of good was happening, and a discernable excitement abounded in the streets and in hushed conversations around the city. There were many problems still plaguing the capital city, to be sure, but I sensed the Lord was up to something marvelous.

I still believe that. The city's urban renaissance and beautiful people of good will have granted me sustained hope in that not-yet-seen something that compelled me to return nearly two years ago. Jackson is changing, being renewed day-by-day, and I'm humbled to say I'm here at such a time as this. And though this chocolate-vanilla swirled city has the usual litany of problems of comparable metropolises, too many of us have an indefatigable faith, hope and love for Jackson to be great. We have glorious days ahead. We will see the best of Jackson.

But before we pour the celebratory wine (or grape juice, for the prohibitionists out there), we must understand that there

are things that could indeed defer our dream of a better, more blessed Jackson. I am admittedly afraid that all our development will make us blind to the need for us to cultivate community—beloved community. The only way to sustain our growth is to make Jackson increasingly safe for dreamers of a better world.

As a Christian preacher, I am always concerned about the least of these, those whose backs are against the walls. I'm concerned about absolute gentrification that treats poor brothers and sisters like lepers needing to be quarantined. I'm concerned with sinful racism, sexism and classism continuing to limit our collective vision of the somebody-ness of all God's children. I'm concerned with the dearth of visionary, moral leaders who will inspire diverse peoples to imagine together a just and open society for everyone who will call our city and our state home

This isn't liberal romanticism, a utopian dream. The hope for a beloved community is the solution to preventable but potential chaos. Love, truth and justice are as important—no, more important—than rehabilitated houses and new businesses downtown. We need our tribalism to give way to a deep sense of interdependence, a sense that we need each other to survive and thrive.

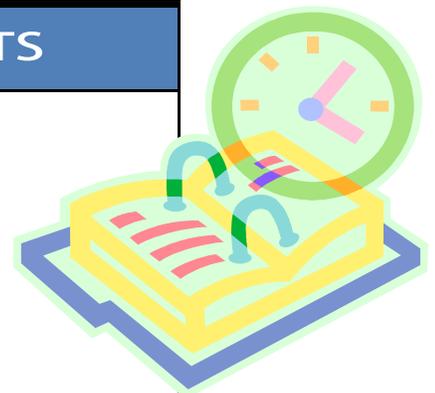
This new way of living together as strangers-turned-friends will come about not by sheer inevitability but through sincere intentionality. We have to be co-creators of the community we want to see in Jackson. God willing, we'll do just that. If we don't, the [City With Soul](#) just may lose its soul.

My prayer is that all of us, especially those of us in religious communities, will see the greater need for a human renaissance in Jackson. My prayer is that we will lead with civility, compassion and courage toward a more perfect union, starting in our own backyards. May God hasten the day when all God's children will dwell together in unity, in the bond of peaceful sibling-hood. On that day, the world will look upon Jackson and see the kingdom come to earth. They will see, in flesh and blood reality, the beloved community.

Reprinted from the January 26, 2011 edition of the *Jackson Free Press*

## On the Horizon: MARCH EVENTS

- 9** Ash Wednesday (The first day of Lent)
- 13** Ollie Love Bible Class Anniversary Celebration  
Daylight Saving Time Begins (Set clock ahead one hour.)
- 14** Brotherhood Bible Class Monthly Meeting
- 14–18** Spring Break (Metro Jackson Area Schools)
- 17** St. Patrick's Day
- 20** First Day of Spring
- 27** Annual Green Tea--Colley Missionary Society--12:15 P.M.





## We Salute . . .

### MEMBER PROFILE:



*We are proud to salute*

*Lauren Ashleigh Davis,*

*Member of the Month.*

**Lauren Ashleigh Davis**, the younger of two children of Tony and Brenda Davis, is a very active member of Mount Helm Baptist Church. Her willingness to accept tasks and work diligently in the Youth Church has caught the attention of her youth leaders and her peers. Born July 15, 1997, Lauren is an eighth grader at Clinton Junior High School.

The Church family continues to witness Lauren's devotion and service to God. Her Sundays begin with her responsibilities as Sunday School secretary. She is frequently called upon to deliver the lesson review for her class. She is very involved in Youth Services on the first, second and fourth Sundays and in every program that is presented. She participates without any fuss, never seeking any praise for her dutiful service. Lauren is a shining example of Christ's words in Matthew 18:3: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

Lauren is as active in school activities as she is in church. A consistent honor roll student, she has been involved in athletics most of her life. For the past six years, she has played soccer. She began first as a member of the Clinton City Soccer League. She now plays on the junior varsity league for Clinton Junior High School. She is a versatile player who excels in the positions of forward and mid-fielder outside. Recently, she joined the cross country track team. Additionally, she is a budding pianist who is being instructed by the renowned Earnestine Ross. Indeed she keeps her parents busy transporting her to her events.

## Ollie Love Bible Class Celebrates 71 Years

*by Sister Valeira Fluker*

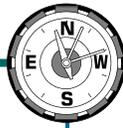
The Ollie Love Bible Class, organized in 1940 by a group of enthusiastic women as an extension of Sunday School at Mount Helm Baptist Church, will observe its seventy-first anniversary on Sunday, March 13, 2011, at 11:00 a.m. Pastor C. Edward Rhodes, II is the featured speaker.

Named in honor of Sister Ollie Love, the class agreed on five objectives as the focus of their ministry. They are as follows:

- *To be faithful in Bible study and prayer;*
- *To win souls to Christ through the sharing of His word;*
- *To show our love for the Lord by showing love to others;*
- *To play an active role in the spiritual and social needs of mankind;*
- *To express our Christian beliefs in our daily lives.*

Other founding members are Sister Amnease Heard, Sister Lillian Taylor, Sister Mamie Triplett, Sister Annie Mae Williams, Sister Earline Collum, and Sister Luvenia Williams.

Current members of the Ollie Love Bible Class are encouraged by the founders' examples as they seek to gain a deeper understanding of what is required of Christian women and equip themselves to carry out that mandate.



## Contact Mt. Helm Baptist Church

### MAILING ADDRESS:

300 E. CHURCH STREET  
P.O. BOX 11098  
JACKSON, MS 39283-1098

### STREET ADDRESS:

300 E. CHURCH STREET  
JACKSON, MS 39202  
601-353-3981 PHONE  
601-353-7411 FAX  
ADMIN@MTHELM.ORG

## STAFF

Sister Barbara Hilliard, Editor  
Sister Olivia Thomas, Associate Editor  
Sister Arva Fuller, Writer  
Brother Charles Holmes, Staff Writer  
Sister Angela Norwood, Staff Writer  
Brother Jason Thompson, Staff Writer

DEADLINE FOR THE APRIL EDITION  
MARCH 28, 2011

To be good stewards of our resources we are seeking to keep printing/reproduction costs for the newsletter to a minimum.

The newsletter will be available online at [www.mthelm.org](http://www.mthelm.org) as a downloadable pdf on the Monday following the first Sunday of each month. Printed copies will be made available to our sick and shut-in members and to those who do not have internet access. Please inform Sis. Hilliard if you require a printed copy.

Articles, photographs and notices of special events may be submitted to Sister Hilliard or to Sister Olivia Thomas. We look forward to expanding and increasing *The Voyager* and we thank you for your assistance and support.

*The Voyager* is a monthly newsletter published by Mt. Helm Baptist Church, Jackson, Mississippi.

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www.mthelm.org

## Anchors and Sails for Life's Voyage

Continued from page 1.

---Just do the work and don't worry about the credit.

--Be humble and grateful for life.

--Struggle, struggle, struggle to develop a nonviolent heart in our violent culture and world.

--Learn to be still and listen to the silence within you.

--Live as if you like yourself. It just might happen. Live as if you like others. It just might happen.

--Be prepared to sacrifice and persevere for what you believe.

--Do not die before you die.

--Try to follow rather than simply admire God's messengers.

--Don't be selfish and forget those left behind.

--Do the best you can with what you have.

--It's okay to say 'I don't know'.

--Life is not just or mostly about happiness.

--Be kind.

--Don't be afraid to leave comfortable shores. Life's a very big and beautiful sea even if it does get scary sometimes.

--Keep saying the truth and holding on to your beliefs even if it appears no one is listening.

--Don't give up too soon or before you have done your best and even better than your best.

--Aim high and work very hard to reach your goal.

--Serve. Do something for others.

--Choose work that promotes life not death.

--Do not fear criticism or let others define you.

--Recognize that you are a global citizen and must compete with peers from China, Japan, India, and all around the globe. Inform yourself about our world and its people. We are interdependent.

--Dream beyond the moment. Faith and doubt are twins.

Do not give in to that which is easy or convenient. Live intentionally and mindful of the impact of your actions on others.

## My Reflections on Black History Month by Charles Holmes

All of us brothers and sisters should be well-aware that February is designated as Black History Month. As of today, February 19<sup>th</sup>, I have attended three memorable religious events.

Tougaloo College observed its Annual Religious Emphasis Week, February 7-9, 2011. Chaplain Larry Johnson usually invites a highly, respectable theologian Felder of Howard University Divinity School and Reverend Edward Wimberly of Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) of Atlanta. The theologian, the Reverend Doctor Lee H. Butler of the Chicago Theological Seminary, graced the campus of Tougaloo College.

To prepare students, interested faculty and staff, Dr. Johnson had preordered copies of one of Dr. Butler's books: Listen, My Son: Wisdom to Help African American Fathers. To further invigorate the students, Dr. Butler had sessions devoted to selected chapters of his book to mainly sex segregated audiences. The chapter "Sirehood vs. Fatherhood: Conflict and Change" was for males, although a few females also attended. For females only, there was a discussion of the chapter "Who Gives This Woman to Be Wed: Nurturing the Daddy-Daughter Relationship." For the general student body, Dr. Butler spoke in the historic Woodworth Chapel to acknowledge and reflect on how we as a people have been sustained and nurtured by the grace, mercy and love of God. The occasion also served to remind "us" that faith in action compels "us" to courageously examine and speak truths to the great issues of the day.

The second selected event that related to spiritual and moral issues I attended was at Jackson State Univer-

sity featuring Dr. Cornell West who, among other degrees, also has a degree in Divinity. Although entertaining and dynamic, he did touch upon a few spiritual issues in his dynamic fire and potpourri typical style. He reiterated the Socratic admonition that "an unexplained life is not worth living"; we should have the courage to examine the dark corners of our lives. We should stop sleep walking, refuse to be complacent to the great current moral issues. Moreover, we should search for truths predicated on love. Additionally, he emphasized that there are many young people wrestling under spiritual depreciation and moral malnutrition. All of us need to learn how to empathize with the problems of others, emphasize gratitude and humility. "Be prisoners of hope."

The third activity I attended was the first day of a two day event celebrating the National Conference on the subject "Islamic West Africa's Legacy of Literacy and Music to America and the World" held at the Jackson Convention Center, Saturday, February 19<sup>th</sup>. The keynote luncheon speaker was Iman Plemon El-Amin who spoke on the topic "The American Muslim Cultural Identity: Its Debt to Iman Warith Deen Mohammed; El-Hajj El-Shabazz (Malcolm X); and Muhammed Ali". He opened his talk by mentioning the theologian Howard Thurman's Jesus and the Disinherited emphasis on the fear, hypocrisy and hate experienced by the three aforementioned Muslims.\* Mohammed rejected hate and encouraged his followers to love and embrace everyone regardless of race and denomination. Malcolm demonstrated sincerity, integrity, and honesty. Muhammed Ali refused to be hypocritical; spoke truth to power.

\*For more information, see *The Mt. Helm Herald*, vol. III, issue 4, May-June, 1982.