



September 2020

VOL. XXIII Issue 3

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JUNETEENTH

Freedom Day



*J*uneteenth is a day of remembrance and commemorates June 19, 1865 when Major General Gordon Granger and Union troops reached Galveston, Texas with news of the Civil War's end. *Two and a half years after* Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, the people of Texas were informed of the end of slavery. The most popular theories of why it took so long for the news to reach Galveston involve the idea that "there weren't enough Union generals who could get over there; white slave owners wanted to maintain hold on enslaved people by not alerting them; and slaveholders wanted to get one more crop out of enslaved people." Some details about the origins of Juneteenth were lost to history and became more widely known later on. The Juneteenth legislation is a call for freedom, but it also reinforces the history of Black Americans who fought for this country, made some discernible strides, but are still the victims of sharp disparities. The black neighborhoods reflect that they've been denied the same opportunities for housing,



Many a good man has failed
because he had his wishbone where
his backbone should have been.



*Be strong and of good courage; be
not afraid, be thou dismayed: for the
LORD thy God is with thee
whithersoever thou goest.*

Joshua 1:9

(Continued on Page 2)

education, jobs, and access to healthcare. The glaring disparities are evident today as we continue to suffer through the COVID 19 pandemic. As a global conversation about race has continued amid the protests that have followed the ghastly deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor, several prominent companies have declared and are also observing Juneteenth as a company holiday. Additionally, the protests throughout this country and the world, exhibit unified people of all races are demanding positive changes to influence the eradication of racism, inequality and injustices for all races. Governor Ralph Northam proposed a paid holiday for the state of Virginia and expects a declaration of this matter when the Virginia General Assembly resumes its in-person session in early fall. Advocates are pushing for more awareness of Juneteenth and hoping for the declaration of a national Juneteenth paid holiday comparable to July 4, Independence Day.

The Tulsa Race Massacre, also known as the Tulsa Race Riot, the Greenwood Massacre, or the Black Wall Street Massacre of 1921 occurred over 18 hours on May 31 and June 1. A white mob attacked residents, homes and businesses in the predominantly black Greenwood District in Tulsa Oklahoma. The event remains one of the single worst incidents of racial violence in American history. The attack carried out on the ground and from private aircraft, left as many as 300 people dead and destroyed more than 35 square blocks of the wealthiest black community, also known as the “Black Wall Street” in the United States. The Juneteenth Celebration takes place in honor of the day in 1865 when the enslaved people in Galveston, Texas learned they were free and in honor of the devastating massacre of Greenwood.



Mt. Zion Baptist Church burning, 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre



It was perceived as an act of aggression against black Americans and insensitive to the historical significance of Juneteenth when Trump and his team planned a political rally on June 19 in Tulsa, Oklahoma, only a stone's throw from the site of the race massacre and in a state where the pandemic virus cases have skyrocketed. Reluctantly, the date of the rally was switched to Saturday, June 20.

During his speech at the political rally, Trump spewed racist rhetoric to the underwhelming disappointed crowd size of 6200 in a 19,000 capacity arena, down from an expected number to top a million. The provisions for the expected overflow crowd were quietly and quickly dismantled. In the midst of the COVID 19, Trump, his team, and supporters refuse to acknowledge the seriousness of the pandemic virus, limit crowd size gatherings, practice social distancing, wear masks or take other precautions for safety. How disgusting that in the 21st century, there are people who underhandedly encourage race supremacy, systemic racism, criminal injustice and civil rights inequality.

Good News –GOD’S IN CONTROL!





Dear Zion Family!

Confident in the faithfulness of my God, I humbly greet you, my Zion family and friends in the name of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ the one who orders my steps in His Will, His Way and His Word. In the disquiet of these troubling times, I dare say your experiences range from mountain top high, to valley low, to everything in between! The anxiety of the distraught and stressful challenge of dealing with the pandemic virus has definitely crippled our country in every imaginable way. Just as there was a glimmer of hope indicating a slow return to some societal normalcy caused by the pandemic, another shocking event horrified the very core of our consciousness and inflamed patience and spurred protests in the midst of COVID 19, the unresolved killer virus. The traumatizing violent and brutal strangulation via knee-chokehold on the neck of yet another unarmed, defenseless black man triggered national protests and unrest. The deadly image of the victim, George Floyd, being held down with his hands hand-cuffed behind his back and pleading for his life, reminded the black/brown communities of the many unjust deaths, false accusations, and the ongoing ugly giants of bigotry, poverty, poor schools, uninsured, increased incarcerations, and breakdowns in families/communities. Deciding that “Enough is Enough”, thousands teamed with the people whose skin has been kissed by the sun to combat systemic racism, police brutality, social inequality, abuse and other injustices. It is long past due for all people to have a solemn conversation to confront the hurt and pain the communities of color have endured for centuries and to hear and comprehend the oral weeping of inequality and the deep suffering their hearts are no longer willing to bear. The nation’s trauma risks the escalation of attitudes and feelings to an infectious feverish level causing the frayed fabric of the country to continue to unravel and cause further detrimental damage! Yet, the malicious demagoguery of a president, corrupt leaders, certain police officers, the noticeably silence of republican elected officials, and others continue to employ terror in pursuit of their specific agenda and their self-acclaimed power.

In spite of the obstacles before us, we, as a proud people, must never ever lose hope because we know the hand and anointing power of our God will help us handle any situation. We look up and believe that our Heavenly Inspiration’s grace is sufficient to see us through, knowing that despite all we can unequivocally state that “tough times don’t last; but tough people do”! We, the tough body of believers, know that the presence, power and protection of God has the ability to bring all things to pass, tear down the strongest of walls, push back the raging waters, calm the most ferocious winds, and stomp the vilest giants! Our God who is still on the throne will lift up bowed down heads and allow His light and His love to reflect policy change and social reform for all people! Light expresses God’s great love for us: His light points us to Jesus, “the light of the world” who guides us from the gloom of wickedness. So Zion, we must stay the course and know that the Holy Spirit allows us to walk in the wisdom of God, His spiritual authority, His favor, His victory, His anointing, prosperity, and His light! Therefore, walking in the spiritual guidance of God, we are led to walk the bright path to a life that glorifies the Son, the world’s brightest gift. And, as He shines in our lives, may we walk His lighted way. How wonderful to have the Word of God to guide, teach, help us to learn from it and give understanding so that we weave its Scriptures into our living. Therefore, it is my prayer that each of us will develop a deeper intimate relationship with God, our Miracle Worker, who will open our blind eyes and clear the blurred vision in order for us to possess insight into Jesus’ true identity in our lives and compel our faith in Him to know that His merciful touch can meet all our needs. Claiming our victory through our Heavenly Father, we must follow the safeguards of the CDC, keep healthy, pray, vote, and know the matchless power of our Savior!

I challenge each of you to do what you can do; then trust God to do the rest!

Do you hear me? ---**BELIEVE, TRUST, PRAY &**



Be Blessed...

Pastor Cyprian

ROBBED by Happenstance ...

In mid-March 2020 America was shut down due to the widespread **pandemic virus** and, in many cases, remains closed because the federal government refuses to listen to the CDC and to work in concert with the leadership in states to resolve the problem. Every American has been heavily affected but the educational learning institution, especially the graduating Class of 2020 was denied opportunities to participate in its well-earned and memorable school closing events. This required parents, guardians, administration, school staff, and the community to work together to ensure the success of all our students. Many see the last half of the 2019-2020 school year as a "lost," but many students continued to strive toward advancing their education, completing high school, achieving academic excellence, and being promoted to the next grade. The following are some of the experiences members of the Class of 2020 shared with the RMZ VOICE Newsletter editor, **Karen S. Brown**. Please continue to reach out to all of our students with your encouragements and blessings.



Kenya Burton -- Fairfield Middle School (promoted to 7th) - *This school year I received awards for Honor Roll and Perfect Attendance. I prefer going to school rather than online instruction because I get to see and talk to friends, and interact and participate in school activities. I do not feel sad or happy about the situation because it was not my decision. While at home, I had a certain time to do my online studies, talk on the phone and play outside. I miss doing fun things and not having to wear a mask. Kenya is the daughter of Jai and ReKisha Burton.*

Sonti Burton -- Fairfield Middle School (promoted to 8th) - *This school year I received awards for Perfect Attendance and Honor Roll. I am in the IB program at Fairfield. The pandemic has prevented my ability to interact with my friends. I missed the soccer season and did not get a chance to go on our planned Music field trip. It was harder for me to keep up with online school work while at home. This summer I have to work on a book report for the IB program. Sonti is the daughter of Jai and Rekisha Burton.*



Kourtney Booker -- Henrico High School Graduate- *While in high school this year I completed 40 hours of community service and was a member of the SCA. My high school graduation was not what I had dreamed of but I was thankful for the opportunity to be able to celebrate. While at home this summer I have been spending time with family and preparing for college. During the pandemic I missed seeing my friends and being able to go to certain places. I am mentally preparing myself for college in the fall. I want to attend Virginia State University and major in Criminal Justice. Kourtney is the daughter of Rodney and Katrina H. Booker.*

Mark Norrell -- Henrico High School Graduate- *During my time in high school I was on the Honor Roll and Baseball Team for all 4 years. I was in the Decca and FBLA clubs and was a member of the Kappa League, a community service and leadership organization for young men. I completed my course requirements for a certificate in Pharmacy Technician. My graduation consisted of a virtual graduation celebration at home with family and friends and a victory lap around the*

Richmond Raceway, where there was a parade and cap and gown pictures were taken with family members. A section of the wall at school was designated and painted for the class of 2020 for all graduates to sign. This summer I have been spending time with family and close friends. Of course, I missed senior activities such as prom, senior trips etc. but I also missed getting an opportunity to go to New York to pursue modeling. This summer I will be working, and I plan to attend North Carolina A&T State University in the fall with potential majors in the field of Engineering, Pharmacy or Nursing. Mark is the son of Mark and Patrice Norrell.

Angel Swinson – Henrico High School Graduate – *COVID 19 affected me both negatively and positively. Unfortunately for me and many others, the pandemic virus meant no prom, no graduation, no pictures, and no school closing activities to be later recalled as they had been so readily remembered in the past; nor did I have the chance to see, talk to, laugh with or say goodbye to my classmates, teachers and friends. However, I was elated to participate in a social distancing class victory lap afforded to the Henrico High Class of 2020 at the Richmond International Raceway. Afterwards we were able to greet one another, a moment that was certainly amazing and jubilant. I am confident, however, that all my hard work paid off and am delighted to announce that in the fall I will be attending the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) where I plan to specialize in Nursing! Angela is the daughter of Bernadette Swinson.*



Khalil Reid – Hanover High School Graduate – *As a student, I was involved in a number of extra-curricular activities. I was the drum line captain for two of the four years that I was a member of the school marching band; a member of the varsity track team - serving as captain for one year, and was an all-state runner for three consecutive years, breaking multiple school track records. Although COVID 19 put a damper on everything, my graduation was perfect – short, easy and no speeches! I must admit that having reached this amazing milestone with the people with whom I started this journey and not be able to celebrate and say goodbye to my peers, kind of sucked. Not to mention, I did not get to display my honors and medals on my gown that I earned, nor did I get to see the proud glow of success in my parents' eyes! This fall I'll be attending George Mason University. Khalil is the son of Curvey and La'Shawn Reid.*



Julian Scott -- Atlee High School Graduate - *My high school graduation was amazing. All the graduates went to different stations to visit old teachers to say goodbye. I spoke to my friends over the telephone, but I have missed seeing friends and family members in person. I frequently used FaceTime to communicate. This summer, I plan to work and hang out with my friends. This fall, I hope to attend a 4-year college in New York City to study Music Production and Sound Engineering. My parents and family members are very excited for my accomplishment. Julian is the son of Albert III and Carla S. Scott.*



Asiana Stovall Newton -- Glen Burnie High School Graduate-

While in high school this year I completed 3 college courses and technical school. For graduation we had to walk across campus and drop off textbooks. Then we received a goodie-bag, a water bottle with our school name engraved on it, a name card and our diploma. Tables were set up with balloons and pictures were taken, and we were greeted by our principal and assistant principal. This summer I have been having fun in a safe way. I missed

getting my license to drive this summer because DMV was closed due to the pandemic. This fall I want to attend the University of Wisconsin in Green Bay and major in Nursing. Asiana is the daughter of Nakisha Stovall Ramone Newton.



Eriel Waddy -- Hermitage High School Graduate- *This school year I have participated in many community activities some include: RMZ Usher, Youth Ambassador for The Giving Heart*

Thanksgiving Feast 2019, and Feeding the Homeless at the Men and Women Shelters. In high school I was a CEA mentor and a Hermitage High School Cheerleader. My high school graduation was a time to remember. It took place on the football field where I had a chance to walk across the stage while immediate family was there for support. This summer I have missed late night talking and hanging out with friends and senior day festivities. Also, this summer I have focused my attention on applying for scholarships and preparing for college. I want to continue my education at VCU majoring in Pre-Nursing; so, one day I will have my own practice as a midwife. Eriel is the daughter of Sam and Tammy Waddy.

Faith White -- Varina High School Graduate -

My high school graduation was an awesome experience. It was held at the Richmond Raceway (the State Fairgrounds). As we drove around the track teachers, principals, and other school officials held inspiring signs and took pictures. When we got to the finish-line, our name was announced and our picture was taken. While in high school, even though the in-person school year was shortened, I got a chance to complete 40 hours of community service. During the pandemic I missed being around my friends, going to the prom, and attending senior outings; but I got a chance to improve my cooking skills. One day I hope I will be able to cook like my mom and grandmother. This summer I am working; but in the fall, I am planning to attend J. Sergeant Reynolds and major in Nursing. Faith is the daughter of James and Dannelta H. White.



Jayla M. Kemp -- University of Virginia Graduate -

I recently graduated from University of Virginia School of Nursing. My graduation was supposed to be on May 17, 2020. Unfortunately, it was canceled due to the COVID 19. Missing graduation was the thing I was most upset about but grateful to my family and friends who certainly helped to make up for my disappointment. After viewing my virtual graduation on TV with my immediate family and a special friend, my family members, loved ones and friends surprised me with a wonderful parade of vehicles driving by my home, honking horns and beautifully displaying colorful signs, posters and blue and orange balloons. Everyone offered congratulatory wishes, gave gifts and virtually celebrated with me, keeping social distancing. During my extra downtime, I studied for my NCLEX or the Virginia Nursing State Boards. Now I am a Registered Nurse and employed at VCU Health in Richmond in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU). I am excited about starting my nursing career and helping others! Jayla is the daughter of William E. III and Irlene G. Kemp.



Although the 2019-2020 school year closings and graduations were quite unique, the Zion family congratulates each of you for your achievements and steadfastness, encouraging you to stay focused on your goals. Know that from time to time, life throws a curve ball of events that are beyond our control. As each of you pursues different endeavors in life, it is our prayer that you keep God as the center of your life, govern your living on His Word so that when life deals you a bad hand, you can survive, grow in His likeness, trust and honor Him for it is He who gives us hope and has the power to smooth out all situations that may confront us!



SPOTLIGHT on.....

Veronica Y. Spears-Jackson

By Quiana Jackson



Veronica Y. Spears-Jackson, the sixth of eight children, was born, educated and reared in Richmond, Virginia, by her South Carolina born parents, Mr. James Edward and Mrs. Julia Law Spears. At an early age Veronica attended Union Baptist Church in South Richmond where she was an active member of Sunday school, UBC Youth Choir and UBC Choir under the direction of the late Theodore Durham.

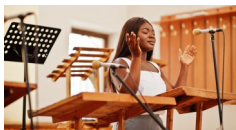
Upon graduating from George Wythe High School, she furthered her education at the Rutledge Business College, earning a Certificate in Business Administration and was employed by Crawford Manufacture as an office assistant. Later, she worked for State Farm Insurance Agency as a secretary for three years, during which time she enrolled in insurance courses at J Sergeant Reynolds Community College, obtaining her license to sell life, auto and homeowners insurance. For seventeen years she worked in the State Farm Insurance Claims Office. Consequently, she pursued a career with Travelers Insurance in the Claims Department where she has been employed for sixteen years and has worked part-time with Suntrust Mortgage Default Department for seven years.



Veronica is married to Bernard L Jackson, Sr. She is the proud mother of two adult children, Bernard L Jackson, Jr. (Tosha) and Quiana Jackson, and is blessed with five beautiful grandchildren.

As a former member of Gethsemane Christian Fellowship she actively participated in the Whosoever Will Choir, the Voices of Gethsemane, Bible study and the Women's Ministry, a ministry that diligently gave to the community for women and men through their program, Dress for Success. It was an organization helping to prepare young men and women the proper way to dress for job interviews. In addition, Veronica enjoyed singing with the musical group, Inplace, which allowed her to perform in the Prison Ministry for men, women and children and at various churches throughout the area, including Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church.

For the past 15 years Veronica has been a member of Rising Mount Zion, joining under the pastorate of Rev. Dr. Roscoe Cooper III. For a number of years, Veronica was a devoted member of the Rising Mount Zion Inspirational Voices and the Zion Pastor Aide Ministry. Currently, she is a soloist/talented voice in the RMZ Mass Choir, an avid Bible study student, and continues to be very supportive to her Pastor and the church ministries and programs. The sincere glow in Veronica's eyes, her contagious friendly smile, and her balanced inspiring spirit make everyone feel comfortable in her presence. This jovial wife, mother, grandmother and friend is excited about the growth of RMZ and often recalls pleasant events, especially the story of how the RMZ 8:15 morning worship service and several other ministries birthed under the leadership of Rev. Cooper have flourished and made such an impact on the thriving membership.



Her mother, the matriarch of their family, instilled in her at a very early age the importance of being actively involved in church, getting to know who God is and His purpose for your life. Veronica receives this advice as a sobering reality, never squandering her gifts, but rather, she uses them for God's glory and the blessing of others. Her favorite scriptures are: *Philippians 4:13 – I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*; and *Proverbs 3:5-6 – Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.*

VERONICA Y. SPEARS JACKSON, your family loves you and effortlessly joins your spiritual family to congratulate you for having been chosen the RMZ VOICE Newsletter spotlight person of the quarter!



“I CAN’T BREATHE! I CAN’T BREATHE! I CAN’T BREATHE! M-A-M-A! M--A—M--A! I c-a-n-’t b-r-e...”

Those words were heard around the world as a young unarmed, black man helpless and powerless was penned-down with his hands hand-cuffed behind his back! It was the begging cry and the disgraceful and heartless nature of the white officer videoed depicting the 8 minutes and 46 seconds that he shamelessly pressed on the victim’s neck, choking out the life of a human being, and showing no remorse. The brutal behavior of the officer lingers in the minds and deeply pains the hearts of so many throughout the world. George Floyd was one of more than a hundred known men and women of color who perished at the hands of white stone-hearted officers for no probable cause and receiving literally a slap on the wrist, if any punishment at all, for their openly unconscionable crimes! For centuries Black Americans have tried fruitlessly to make their voices heard, including decades of non-violent behavior encouraged by the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Yet, little has changed, just more empty promises! It has been a long time coming, but after the George Floyd incident, people are determined not to quit, not to rest, but rather to fight on until social injustice, systemic racism, and police brutality, inequality in housing, education, employment, health care, social reform, and discrimination of any kind have been eradicated! The dignity of people of color and the inhumane suffering of our black/brown children, brothers, sisters, loved ones, and the moaning, merciless “CRY” of George Floyd demand a need for policy change, a more detailed investigation of similar cases, and other race vindications. Additionally, it gives reason to continue to inspire and galvanize a nationwide Black Lives Matter Movement, messaging that this behavior will no longer be ignored nor tolerated by millions of people of all races. So, yes, Mr. Floyd, the world thanks you for the ultimate sacrifice you gave to change the world for all people of color. Your demise is boldly broadcasting the wrong you endured and helping people to realize you don’t have to be black to be outraged by certain vicious, violent and uncaring behaviors exploited by an individual(s) with licenses to protect! It reminds us that although some people tried to demonize the victim’s character, God chooses and uses anyone--the ordinary, the unlikely, and the least of us, to teach a lesson, change the sentiment of a nation, and encourage everyone to develop a Christ-like attitude of love, compassion, freedom, righteousness, wisdom, and forgiveness. It is heartening to witness the transformation of attitudes of racial ideology is shifting and demanding accountability and equal consequences for one’s actions, especially those in authority who serve and protect the people in the communities. Unfortunately, POTUS continues to focus on racial grievances, white power, packing the courts with judges, many without qualifications and experience, and division rather than togetherness, and who consistently plays to his base, ignores everyone else, and denigrates black leaders and others in the country. Yet, all over the country and world there is a blatant rejection of displaying confederate flags, statues, emblems, systemic racism, and ideological inequality or things that are offensive to a race of people. When well-respected individuals, groups and companies boldly stand up, speak out against the wrongs, and prompt the needs of others, Americans of every skin hue are grateful for the power of their voices and their limitless energies given to the cause! At long last, the death of George Floyd has opened the eyes of so many. After her daddy’s death, the voice of his young daughter was also heard around the world saying, “MY DADDY IS GOING TO CHANGE THE WORLD!” Already confederate statues, flags and emblems are being removed; police reforms made, focuses on other racial incidents, and the Breonna Taylor law passed.

The following are some changes already observed throughout the country:

- ◆ Confederate statues, flags, plaques, and symbols that represent division among people and the defense of slavery are ordered to be removed from public places.
- ◆ Out of respect for its only fulltime black driver, Bubba Wallace, and deciding it is the right thing to do, NASCAR will no longer allow confederate flags and emblems to be displayed on race cars, clothing, billboards, etc.
- ◆ The Breonna Taylor Law – The Louisville, Kentucky City Council voted unanimously to pass the Breonna Taylor Law, which makes it illegal for policemen to enter a dwelling without identifying themselves. Breonna Taylor, a 26-year old African-American emergency technician was fatally shot by Louisville Metro Police Department (LMPD) officers on March 13, 2020 while executing a “no-knock” procedure that resulted in her unlawful death.
- ◆ At least four Generals who work or have worked in the White House publicly denounced the present president’s behavior in dealing with the COVID 19 virus, the systemic racism protests, and intentionally using people for his personal gain.
- ◆ General Milley, currently employed in the white House, apologized publicly for having participated in the president’s photo op at St. John’s Catholic Church while wearing his combat uniform, which indicated the perception that the military supported the cause. Also, innocent, non-violent protesters in Lafayette Park were illegally pepper-sprayed to clear the way so the president could walk from the White House through the park to the nearby Catholic church.
- ◆ New York Governor Andrew Cuomo issued a sweeping executive order on police reform that redesigns the state police department, charging them to propose and enact in 9 months (April 1, 2021) police reform or will not be eligible for state funds.
- ◆ Choke-holds outlawed.
- ◆ An Atlanta man, Rayshard Brooks, reported asleep in a Wendy’s drive-thru line was fatally shot in the back, following a struggle with the police, grabbing a Taser from one of the officers and running away. Criminal charges of murder were simultaneously filed against the two officers. Again, videos showed the shooting officer kicking the victim, bragging that he got him; and his partner was seen standing on the victim’s shoulder while he lay dying in the Wendy Fast Food parking lot. The police chief stepped down.
- ◆ Schools and military bases bearing the names of confederate generals are being renamed.
- ◆ Entertainers, major companies, amusement parks, states, and the list seems to increase daily, have vowed to change and/or remove controversial names, labels, and symbols such as *Dixie Girls*, *Aunt Jemima Pancake Mix* and *Syrup*, *Uncle Ben’s Rice*, *rides*, etc.
- ◆ White officers in Wilmington, North Carolina were fired after a tape was found with them threatening acts of race war so they could wipe out the expletives “n” word.
- ◆ Elijah McClain of Aurora, Colorado was stopped by white officers, walking home from a convenient store was attacked, put in a carotid hold *which is pressure to the side of the neck that cuts off blood flow to the brain*. First responders injected him with ketamine. He had a heart attack on way to hospital and died days later. Officers were cleared at first, then fired and charged after a video was viewed contradicting the report by officers.

*The best blueprint for life is the Bible, the Good News Gospel, and the Word of God.
If its teachings are followed, it builds a better person, a better people, a better community,
and a better nation that bear the image and characteristics of God.*

The *RESOURCE* Page...

2020 VOTING & REGISTRATION

HEALTHY VOTING TIPS – Find healthy, secure, and safe ways to cast your ballot this year
<https://www.healthyvoting.org/Virginia>

OFFICIAL ELECTION WEBSITE – Get details and deadlines for voting in your area
<https://www.elections.virginia.gov>

1. Register to Vote 2. Check Registration Status 3. Registration Deadlines

2020 KEY DATES/DEADLINES

ELECTION DATE ----- General Election --- **NOVEMBER 3**

REGISTRATION DEADLINES ---- by mail or in person --- **OCTOBER 13**

ABSENTEE VOTER DEADLINES ----- application by mail -- **OCTOBER 27**
 application online --- **OCTOBER 27**
 application in person – **OCTOBER 31**
 submission by mail/in person --- **NOVEMBER 3**

ABSENTEE VOTING

ABSENTEE VOTING --- Virginia offers limited “**NO EXCUSES**” early voting... Beginning with the November 2020 presidential election, Virginians for the first time will be able to vote up to **8 DAYS** early without citing one of a dozen sanctioned reasons why they should get an early ballot. In 2020 registered voters can cast a ballot in the November 3 election from **OCTOBER 24 – OCTOBER 31** without providing an excuse.

Virginia still offers its traditional absentee voting beginning on the 45 day before an election. Begins **SEPTEMBER 19**; ends **NOVEMBER 2**. But anyone seeking to vote before the new “**NO EXCUSES**” window will still have to provide a reason to obtain absentee ballots.

ID REQUIREMENTS --- – **PHOTO ID** and/or **VOTER REGISTRATION CARD** required

LET YOUR **VOICE** BE HEARD ---- **VOTE!!!**

ADVANTAGES OF VOTING

VOTING offers every citizen a media of expression. It's an honor conferred on the citizens that's as much a responsibility as it is a right. There are many benefits associated with voting, from political to social to economic gain, as well as physiological benefits. **The following are some reasons why you should participate in voting and elections:**

- **PERSONAL POWER**
 - It gives you the opportunity to voice your opinion on issues.
 - Power to vote as you see fit since it's a democratic right.
- **HEALTH BENEFITS**
 - You can enjoy both physical and social health
 - You can reap benefits such as less crime and better health care.
 - It improves your societal well-being.
- **COMMUNITY CONCERNS**
 - It has direct impact on how the government makes appointments, laws, budgets, public policies
 - You have responsibility to vote for policies that will benefit your children and future generations.
- **BETTER LEADERSHIP**
 - It's an opportunity to share the issues that need to be addressed.
 - Your vote has an impact on how the government implements policies that affect you and your family.

Reasons not to vote, unacceptable!!!

IT'S YOUR DUTY & YOUR RIGHT!!!



Spratley Allen Missionary Circle

By Sister Valorie McBee

The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. Your right hand, O LORD, was majestic in power. Your right hand, O LORD, shattered the enemy. Exodus 15:2,6 (NIV)

To God be the glory for continuing to enable the missionaries to reach out with love and care to others through various media platforms for prayer and comfort, to send cards to the sick and bereaved and drop off food items and care packages. Even during this time of crisis with the pandemic, racial injustice, and lack of national leadership, the missionaries are still actively doing the work of the Lord.

The Baptist General Convention One Hundred Twenty-First Annual Session and Congress of Christian Education were virtually held from Sunday, June 28 through Wednesday, July 1.

Sunday evening was filled with a delightful display of talent provided virtually by youth from around the state. Children and youth performed praise dances, sang with angelic voices and skillfully played various musical instruments. The youth minister, Rev. Charity Fisher rendered a powerful message entitled **“Ain’t No Stopping Us Now”!** Evangelist Fisher spoke from *Acts 4:16-22 (NIV)*. Rev. Fisher reiterated that with God’s help African Americans have made some progress, and won some victories but the fight is not over. She stated that we need to keep moving forward by (1) focusing on our priorities by following Divine Authority and Power, Jesus. Focus on becoming a better person, pursue education, choose our battles wisely, and know our mission (no time for drama). Think, talk, help in the name of Jesus, speak out about injustices, **and** speak to the goodness of God. (2) Anticipate our acquittal – God will allow us to finish our assignment. He will provide and no demon can stop what He calls us to do. Keep walking by faith, **“Ain’t No Stopping Us Now”**.

Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday were spirit-filled days of classes and evening worship services. One of the classes, **“For Such A Time as This: The Call for Women’s Wisdom, Courage, and Spirit** was taught by Rev. Dr. Margaret Delk Edney, Associate Minister, Mt. Olive Baptist Church, Norfolk, VA. Her theme was, **“Leadership DNA Models of Sisterhood in Times of Crisis”**; she referenced several scriptures including *Proverbs 4:5, Joshua 1:9, John 16:33, 1 Corinthians 16:3, Judges 4*. Rev. Edney stressed that the **DNA** model symbolizes that women are **divinely** created by God, **navigated** by God to change the world and that we must **accomplish** the task at hand. During this time of crisis, there is no more business as usual, women of faith must seize this moment of opportunity to stand together and offer our gifts, talents, stories and testimonies for those who will come behind us. We must lift others as did the women of the Bible and African American Women -- **Deborah** - the only female judge mentioned in the Bible was also a prophetess, a warrior and leader of her people, the Israelites. **Queen Esther**-a Jewish Leader, **Mary** - mother of Jesus, **Nannie Helen Burroughs** – African American educator, orator, religious leader, civil rights activist and business woman, **Ida B. Wells** – journalist, educator, **Mary McLeod Bethune** whose parents were former slaves. Ms. Bethune founded the Daytona Normal and Industrial Institute which later became the Bethune-Cookman College; she was also a stateswoman and civil rights activist. These women of wisdom, strength and courage were **DNA** models who allowed God to use them to open doors for others. Rev. Dr. Edney’s other sub-topic was **“It’s Moving Time”**, meaning the sign of the times prompts us to “gather at the well”, a space that represents where Jesus dwells, a place where we can come away with wisdom, courage and strength to regain our vision and voices. Rev. Edney invited presidents of organizations such as the National Council of Negro Women, the Black Women Coalition several Sorority Presidents, the Editor of Essence Magazine, Susan Taylor, BGC women ministers and heads of other black women groups to share what they are doing to create change. **“It’s Moving Time”**.

Rev. Dr. Alison Gise-Johnson is Co-Pastor of Faith Community Baptist Church, Richmond. Dr. Johnson is a Professor at Virginia Union University and author of the book, **Burnout**. Rev. Johnson conducted the Women’s Ministry session on **“Reviving Our Roots as Extraordinary Leaders”**. Based

on *Luke 4:18, 19*, the Spirit whispers to us to lead based on love, to collaborate with men and women to fulfill our missional mandate. As the Exodus women, we too must pledge to lead extraordinarily by:

- Asking God to lead and guide us in the right direction and to implement divine directions on moving people forward until sovereignty replaces mere survivor.
- Using our brains to be logical, imaginative and explanatory and to use divine imagination and innovation. We can discover our capacity, courage and creativity to transform our families and communities based on values of life, love and land.
- Writing the vision and making it plain.
- Being aware of how God is inviting us to a solution of every place we occupy.
- Creating a space for peace with ourselves and others.

Rev. Dr. Elisha Burke, Director of Health and Wellness for the Men's Ministry of BGC sponsored a plenary session on **"African American Health Before, During and After Covid-19"**. Dr. Ethlyn McQueen-Gibson, DNP, MSN, RN-BC, Professor at Hampton University School of Nursing, and the Director at the Gerontology Center for Excellence, Dr. Phillip B. Duncan, FACC and Sister Genea Luck, Associate State Director of Multicultural Outreach and Community Engagement of AARP Virginia were the presenters. The panelists discussed many important points about "Blood Sugar Rising", the risk factors and steps to take to control diabetes:

- 1.Know your numbers - for Blood Pressure, Hemoglobin and Cholesterol.
- 2.Know the symptoms – excessive thirst, frequent urination, extreme hunger, fatigue, blurry vision.
- 3.Risk factors – Overweight, rarely exercise, 45 or older, high blood pressure and family members who are diabetic.
- 4.Covid-19 and diabetes connection underlying conditions - lung disease, cardiovascular disease, liver disease.
- 5.Wear a mask, practice social distancing, seek medical advice for persistent cough, fever or shortness of breath.
- 6.Manage diabetes – Lose weight, increase physical activity, take diabetes meds.
- 7.Change lifestyle – eat more veggies and fruits, eat sweets in moderation, access <https://www.choosemyplate.gov> , read food labels, use patient portals, become aware of stress levels, have health conversation with our children, notice how legislation affects health, and encourage our youth to seek health-care careers.

Newly elected officers as well as honorees were announced on Wednesday. *Sister Shirley B. Robinson*, RMZ member was chosen as an honoree for Area A and *Sister Polly Jones Mason*, Area A, was elected as President of the Women's Division. The evening worship services were spirit-filled and concluded on Wednesday evening with communion and prayer. The Virtual BGC Convention was a blessing to everyone in attendance.

The Spirit of God gives us all that we need to carry out His work. Amen!

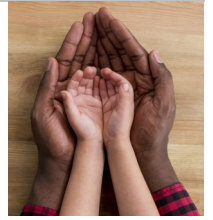
With heartfelt sadness, the members of the Spratley Allen Missionary Circle acknowledge and mourn one of its members, *Sister Lillie Smith*.

Matthew 5:4

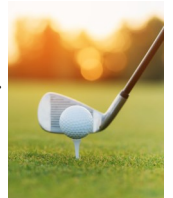


IT DEPENDS ON WHOSE HANDS IT'S IN!!!

A shared email



- ♦ Put a **basketball** in my hands; it's worth about 15 bucks. Put that same basketball in the hands of LeBron James and it's worth 30 to 40 million dollars. ***It depends on whose hands it's in!***
- ♦ Put a **football** in my hands; it's worth about \$10 to \$11.00; but put it in the hands of Paton Manning and it's worth about 50 to 60 million dollars. ***It depends on whose hands it's in!***
- ♦ Put a **golf club** in my hands it's might be worth about 50 bucks. Put it in the hands of Tiger Woods, it's worth 80 million dollars. ***You see, it depends on whose hands it's in!***



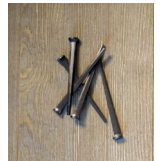
- ♦ Put a **stick** or **rod** in my hands, I could probably beat away a wild animal or something that may come after me. Put it in the hands of Moses and he parts the Red Sea. ***It depends on whose hands it's in!***



- ♦ Put a **sling shot** in my hands, it just becomes a kid's toy; put in the hands of King David and he slays a giant. ***It depends on whose hands it's in!***

- ♦ **Two fish** and **five loaves** of bread would feed me with bread left over. Put it in Jesus' hands, He feeds thousands. ***It depends in whose hands it's in!***

- ♦ Put a **couple of nails** in my hands, I might be able to build a bird house or nail down a piece of wood. Put the same nails in Jesus' hands it leads to salvation and eternal life for the folks who love and trust Him. ***You see, it depends on whose hands it's in!***



- ♦ **Your worries, your cares and the things that got you stressed out**, if you leave them in your hands, that's all they are ever going to be. Put those same worries, cares and problems in the hands of Christ, ***He'll see you through it and take care of every need you've got.***

***Have a blessed day and remember that IT DEPENDS ON WHOSE HANDS IT'S IN!!
Give everything you've got to God and let Him handle it for you!***





Sick, Shut-in & Bereaved Families

"The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed; a refuge in time of trouble.

Psalm 9:9

God doesn't promise any of us that we will escape the turbulent seas of life, but He does promise that He will never leave us nor forsake us. His promise assures us that when He permits suffering, He also provides comfort; and only He can still our hearts and quiet our minds. Therefore through difficult times, stand still and trust God to lead you!

To each of our bereaved families and to those who have been hospitalized, undergone surgery, experienced a period of illness, or suffered other afflictions, know that Pastor Cooper, the Diaconate Ministry and your Zion family sincerely extend our genuine support, love, and deeds of kindness to you and your families. As a church family we reach out in sincerity, humility and love to all who are hurting and grieving. Know that together we can heal and grow in understanding and in the peace that is ours through Jesus Christ who knows our most painful moments and provides forgiveness, deliverance and hope in all situations.

- **Trustee Phil Downey (Sister Marie) and Family** mourn his nephew, *Brother Charles "Little Charles" Downey*.
- **Sister Althea Lewis** and siblings mourn their mother, *Sister Catherine M. Lewis*.
- **Sister Teresa Olivis** mourns her husband, *Brother Blanchard D. Olivis*
- **Deaconess Willnette Folly (Deacon Thomas)** mourns her brother, *Brother John Thomas Russell*.
- **Sister Ruth Barbee (Brother Ernest)** mourns her son, *Brother Leroy McAllister III*.
- **Sister Jane Allen** mourns her cousin, *Brother Keith Faltz*, of Queens, New York.
- **Sister Demi Massey, Sister Tania Watkins and Brother Robert Moore and Brother Aubrey Moore (Sister Sally)** and the **Zion family**, mourn their mother, their cousin, and their faithful member, respectively, **Sister Tawanda Watkins**.
- **Sister Michelle Chiles, Brother Shawn Cooper (Sister Danielle), and the Zion family** mourn her mother, his grandmother, and their faithful member, respectively, **Sister Lillie M. Smith**.
- **Deaconess Viola Mason, Sister Patricia Mason, Sister Rebecca Mason, Sister Robinette Mason, and Young Sister Alasia Mason and Young Brother John Webb**, mourn her husband, their father, their grandfather, and faithful Zion Deacon, **Deacon Robert Mason**.
- **Sister Vivian Minor** mourns her niece-in-law, *Sister Michelle Thorpe* of Chesterfield, Virginia.
- **Sister Claudette Calhoun, Brother Jonathan Calhoun, Jr. (Sister Karey), Sister Angel Calhoun, Brother Kayjon Fleming, Brother Jonathan Calhoun III, Master Kameron Calhoun, Sister Alice Calhoun and Sister Annette Farmer**, mourn her husband, their father, their grandfather, her brother and her brother-in-law respectively, *Brother Jonathan Calhoun, Sr.*
- **Sister Veronica Williams, Sister Ruby Christian, Sister Monique Davis and Sister Carol Ellis** mourn her mother and their aunt, *Sister Ada Davis*.
- **Sister Lillie Dade (Brother Banks)** mourns her uncle, *Brother Albester Harper* of Danville, Virginia.
- **Sister Joyce Thompson** mourns her cousin, *Sister Ann Baten* of Morristown, New Jersey.



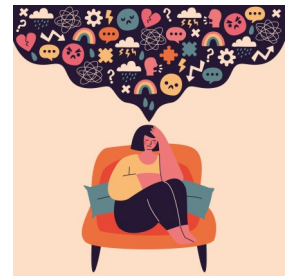


By Dr. Cheryl Jordan-Sayles

Taking Care of Your Mental Health

Taking care of your mental health is essential to overall good health especially when it comes to the stress related to Covid19. Fear and anxiety about this new disease is over whelming from worry about your own health in contracting the disease as well as worry about the health of family members and friends potentially getting this deadly virus. Additional sources of stress can be related to financial situations, loss of a job, social isolation and worry about younger children and the opening of schools as well as the stress related to social distancing and wearing of the mask. All of these issues have become a part of our everyday worry in some way for everyone.

Anxiety is the normal reaction to uncertainty and things that may harm us. However, stress, fear, worry, anxiety and depression take a toll on health and wellbeing quickly. Our body's reaction to these feelings can cause your body to produce "stress hormones" that elevate blood pressure, heart rate and blood sugar and causes symptoms of *fatigue, muscle tension, headaches* and *insomnia* to name a few. Taking care of your mental health is essential during this time of the Covid19 virus.



- ◆ Eat as well as possible,
- ◆ Exercise regularly and get enough sleep.
- ◆ Make time for hobbies that you enjoy.
- ◆ Stay connected with family and friends to avoid the social isolation with reaching out by phone, text or video calls.
- ◆ Cut back on the time spent listening to the news which in of itself can be overwhelming with all the debates and information concerning COVID19.
- ◆ Learn relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or meditation or yoga that help to decrease the response of the body to the stress hormones.
- ◆ Most importantly seek help or support if more serious signs of depression and anxiety are present. *Feeling of hopelessness, feeling out of control, having a sense of helplessness or fear, feelings of anger or developing a change in eating/sleeping habits* are some symptoms that may suggest that further help is needed.
- ◆ While the stress and worry of COVID19 is a part of our everyday life, try to preserve some sense of normalcy, maintaining structure to the day is important.
- ◆ Be kind to yourself and remember that you are not alone in this struggle.
- ◆ Be kind to others and remember to help others in the community who may be socially isolated such as the geriatric population. It will make you feel better.



Despite not having all the answers about COVID19, it is important to still have faith and to know that we will get through this crisis!

Count it all joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. James 1:2-4 ESV



COPING...

No doubt, the Coronavirus has put all our lives in a topsy-turvy quandary that continues to linger, causing adjustments that have created shattering heartbreaks, limited celebrations, and wide awakenings, forcing us to develop creative ways of connecting and staying connected. While means of coping were probably as varied as the persons with whom **Valorie McBee** and **Sally Collins**, RMZ VOICE Newsletter editors, interacted, the activities initiated by Amanda M. and Michael A. McBee of Virginia, and Patricia Royal and Duvall Meadows of Pleasantville, New Jersey caught the attention of the two editors as they, too, sought ways to cope..



Amanda M. is a retired Richmond Public Schools educator. After retirement she served in Richmond as a substitute teacher/librarian and as a reading specialist in Henrico County Public Schools. So far, she has been coping beautifully and is so thankful that she has sufficient finances, food and shelter. She worships on Sundays and Wednesdays via zoom and often talks to her grandchildren on the phone. Additionally, she has been going through old pictures, gardening, sewing, and reading! She praises the Lord for all things, knowing that she's blessed!



Michael Allen McBee - "Although I take online courses in order to keep up with the current changes in real estate, as a realtor, I've had to adjust the way I conduct myself and my business during the Coronavirus. I hold virtual meetings, practice social distancing, wear a mask, and often sanitize my personal items in order to protect and help keep my family, my clients, myself and others safe. Though there are challenges, I pray and faithfully keep moving forward.

When the two women of God, **Patricia Royal** and **Duvall Meadows**, from Pleasantville saw that the Coronavirus was lingering, they were inspired to connect with others and decided that a friendship circle was needed. Jesus declared referencing *John 15:11-14* --- *I have told you this that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you... You are my friends if you do what I command.* Jesus in His divinity is our Savior and Lord. In His humanity He is our friend. What was originally just an idea, morphed into "The Believers' Friendship Circle."

Thus, on April 30, 2020 the first session was launched. Every Thursday at 4:00 p.m. friends from California, Virginia, Maryland, Georgia, Illinois and North Carolina access the Conference Call line for prayer, scripture, ice breakers for laughter, tips for everyday living, and topics for scriptural, mental and physical growth. Members from various walks of life have served as presenters and discussion leaders. Feedback from participants has revealed that they found the sessions encouraging, inspiring, enlightening and thought-provoking, providing great and meaningful suggestions for coping.

Some shared stories of cooking, gardening, shopping on line and writing. While some were truly saddened and missed their daily interactions and others welcomed a little down time to shut out the din of the world and focus on the goodness of God.

While the two sisters were seeking their own ways to cope, they lovingly provided an avenue for as many as 36 others to do the same through the "The Believers Friendship Circle."

We praise and thank God that although we, as a people, have not relished a lifestyle that we are used to living, our God provides everything we need and, in our isolation, offers numerous ways that empower us to remain connected to family, friends and others. For that, we are grateful, knowing that due to the brokenness of our country, God's watchful eye still blesses us with His loving presence, true faithfulness, divine mercy, amazing grace, and infinite Agape Love that always sustain us in every situations!



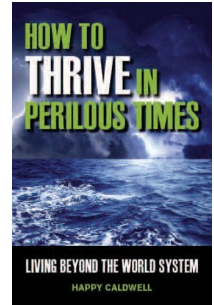
BOOK REVIEW

How to Thrive In Perilous Times

Living Beyond the World System

By Happy Caldwell

Overview by Sheila Cunningham Price



There are four guidelines that we should adopt to thrive during these perilous times. Two are at Jesus' direction and two others are from the writings of Paul.

Be Not Deceived. Jesus tells us that we are to be careful and to guard against the deception from men in the last days. Satan is a destroyer and a deceiver. He is a liar and he is more intent than ever to destroy the saints of God and the church. We must be cautious that we not let our defenses down and allow the devil to break through and devour us. We must avoid the double-minded people among us, for they are unstable in their ways. We must circumvent mental lethargy by staying forthright in studying and applying God's doctrines. Likewise, we should thwart the feelings of apathy, for this invokes a passive sense of surrender to God; expecting that God will do everything for us. The dispirited and passive person is an open target for Satan. *"Take heed that no man deceive you."* Matthew 24:4

Be Not Troubled. Jesus said in the last days, we would hear rumors of wars and that other tumultuous things will come upon us to trouble our minds and take away our peace. These pronouncements may cause us to feel anxious and worried. We must learn not to be victims of our circumstances and remain strong in the belief that "no weapon formed against us shall prosper." Although perilous times will come, we don't have to allow them to destroy our lives. We must learn how to deal with the disruptions and to come together as Christians to pray and trust that God can divert any disaster. As a body of believers, we can band together to rebuke Satan's influence during the storms of life. Perilous times will come, but they are not of God and should not be received by God's people. As Christians, we can rebound from life's circumstances of illness, disease, layoffs and financial setbacks. *See that ye be not troubled.* Matthew 24:6

Continue in the Things You Have Learned. The church should teach us how to live with victory over trials and we must act with the knowledge we garner in the Word of God. We should be of purpose, being faithful, charitable, patient and long-suffering, knowing that God is with us during the perilous times and that He will not forsake us.

Know the Word. Many of us are spiritually lacking in the knowledge of God's Word, and therefore, we are void of spiritual wisdom. We can thrive in perilous times by being prepared for them beforehand. By being knowledgeable of and grounded in God's word, we will be able to discern the truth from deception. Our minds should be programmed to receive the correct information whenever presented (rejecting the deceptions of the enemy), which will allow us to make wise and responsible decisions for our lives. *For the Lord giveth wisdom and out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.* Proverbs 2: 6

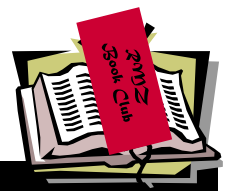
In the last days, we will be confronted with turmoil and tribulations. As believers of Christ, we can be overcomers and we must live above the trials. We must learn to be content, even during painful travails, and not be caught up in the things that rob us of our joy in the Lord. We must not quit, but remain vigilant in the things we have learned. As Christians, we have the foundation to prevail during perilous times. Again, problems are going to come, but we should have the wisdom, knowledge and strength of the Lord to work through and to sustain the difficulties we encounter. With the promises and protections of God, we should have the fortitude to withstand the vicissitudes of life.

Finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Ephesians 6:10-12

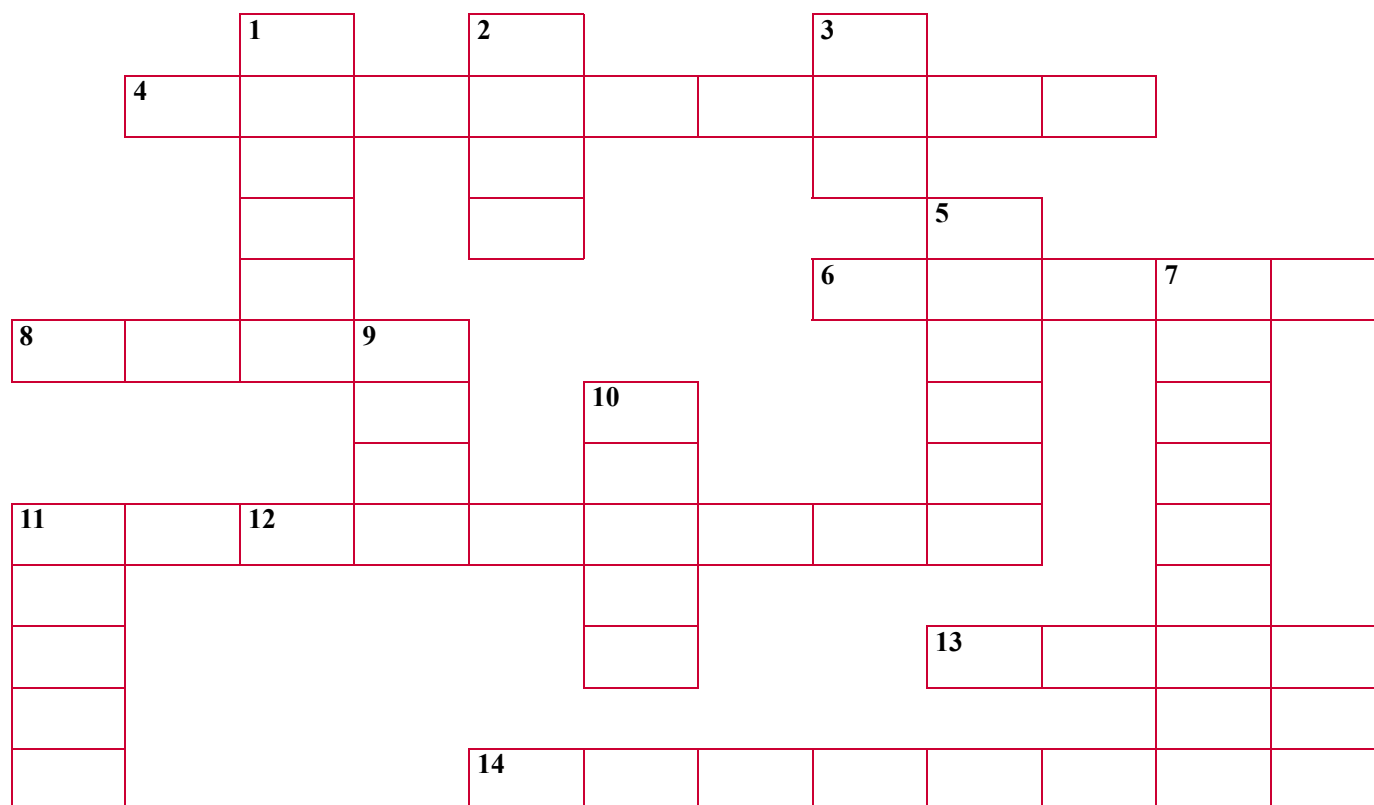
Suggested Reading

"I Am A Church Member
Discovering The Attitude
That Makes The Difference"
By
Thomas Rainer



COVID-19 Crossword Puzzle

This COVID-19 crossword will remind you of ways you can protect you and your family from the spread of this disease. If you've been paying attention to recent news report, you're sure to do well on this crossword!



Across: 4. An important warning sign of COVID-19 is difficulty ____ or shortness of breath. 6. Do not shake _____. 8. ____ your hands frequently. 11. Handle food _____. 13. Limit ____ sharing. 14. If possible, open ____ to increase ventilation.

Down: 1. Avoid large ____ of people. 2. Try not to touch your _____. 3. Limit close contact with others, staying about ____ feet apart. 5. Stay home if someone in your ____ is sick. 7. Disinfect surfaces like tables, desks and ____ regularly. 9. Stay ____ if you are feeling sick. 10. Always cover your mouth when you ____ or sneeze. 11. People with the COVID-19 virus sometimes feel pain or pressure in the _____. 12. If someone in your family is ill, give them their own ____, if possible.

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Information included in these clues can be found at www.cdc.gov. Please go there to learn more about preventing the spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019, or the COVID-19.

Activity Page

BACK TO SCHOOL WORD SEARCH



12-8
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"My teacher said no man can be wise on an empty stomach. I think I need a cookie!"

By and JEFF KEANE

BOOK	TEACHER
FIRST	THINK
GERMS	VIRTUAL
HANDS	VOICE
LEARNING	WASH
PART	WELCOME
REPORT	WHISPER
SCHOOL	WISE
TABLET	

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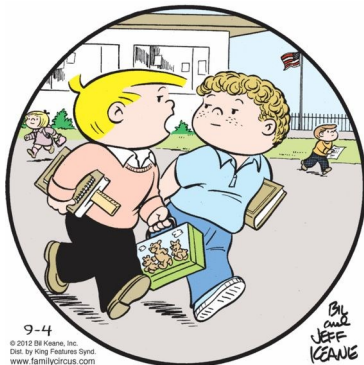
Graphics

Daphne Hill

Quarantine is over



How do we get out?



9-4
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"The hardest part about goin' back to school is getting my voice to whisper again."



1-13

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"If I can't see any germs before I wash my hands, how do I know when I get them all off?"

Down: 1-CROWDS; 2-FACE; 3-SIX; 5-FAMILY; 7-DOORKNOBS; 9-HOME; 10-COUGH; 11-CHEST; 12-ROOM;

Across: 4-BREATHING; 6-HANDS; 8-WASH; 11-CAREFULLY; 13-FOOD; 14-WINDOWS