



Walking By Faith Another Year

By Min. Sharon M. Prather



Benjamin S. Baker, author of *Special Occasions in the Black Church*, penned “The celebration of a church anniversary is a time to consider reflectively the faithfulness of God in providentially providing for and protecting His people....The church anniversary is a high, holy day of a tridimensional look: the past, present, and future of what the Lord has done, is doing, and will do in the life of His people.” Thus, on August 4, 2019, The People’s Community Baptist Church family celebrated 41 years of God’s faithfulness.

Reflecting on the past and the vision of The Late Rev. Thomas J. Baltimore, organizer of The People’s Community Baptist Church, the blueprint was conceived sitting around a small kitchen table with a group of family and friends. From the time of its conception until now, *People’s* has become *Bible Based, Christ Centered, and Kingdom Focused*. A number of charter members were instrumental in using their time, talent, and treasure to fulfill Rev. Baltimore’s vision. Many have passed on. However, they were remembered reverently on August 4 during both Sunday worship services. A few of the remaining charter members are Deaconesses Phyllis Davenport, Letishia Winfield, and Delores Lincoln; and Deacons Phil Baltimore and Rick Robinson.

What would a church anniversary Sunday – or any Sunday – be without the preached Word? We were blessed to have one of our own as the guest preacher for the morning – Kristin Kelly – now “The Reverend” Kristin Kelly. Kristin became a member of *People’s* at a young age and could often be found teaching adult Sunday School! Even then, we knew God had His hand on her to do a mighty work. She is the daughter of Rev. Donald and Mrs. Brenda Kelly of The Olive Branch Christian Church, and now serves on the staff of Friendship West Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas, where Dr. Freddie Haynes serves as senior pastor.

Rev. Kristin preached both worship sermons from Sixth Chapter of the Book of Judges. Her delivery was with power, Spirit, and truth. Rev. Kristin’s message at the early service was entitled “Here We Go Again,” from verses 1-13. She preached about real faith that allows us to ask God questions. In her second sermon, “Don’t Stay Past the Lesson,” from verses 17-23, Rev. Kristin pointed out that there is an expiration date for our fear and comfortability. We must find where there is need, step out on faith, and stretch our spiritual gifts.

After each worship service, members and guests gathered in the Norwood Center to mingle and reflect on the 41 years of The People’s Community Baptist Church.

While contemplating the historical aspects of *People’s*, I am reminded of a sermon that Pastor Robinson preached on January 10, 2016, “I See a Church,” from Acts 2:42-47. It was a three-point sermon with many valuable sub-points. In that sermon Pastor elaborated on what our church could and should be.

In the sermon, Pastor conveyed that he could see a church (1) **Growing** into Christlikeness through love, forgiveness, humility, holiness, prayer, and righteousness; offering Bible studies where people clamor to fill classrooms, small groups, and campus ministry; learning how to maximize Right Now Media and Touchpoint; attending weekly prayer services; submitting to the Word of God; generously stewarding personal and church resources, and establishing a credit union; and (2) **Glowing** through solidarity structured around the Word of God; vision and mission statements on the website; members in leadership becoming servants among the people; a counseling or empowerment center; a community garden; wellness ministry; mentoring groups; partnering with other groups such as Action In Montgomery to advocate for the community; and (3) **Going** to serve strategically with saving souls in mind; successfully sharing the Gospel where God sends; supernaturally sharing the Gospel through the power of the Holy Spirit; successfully bearing fruit for the Master; adding a third Sunday worship service.

All of the above are lofty goals, but if we look around, many of these initiatives are already in place! Yet the Bible says, “But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him’” (1 Corinthians 2:9). Indeed, God *is* faithful in caring for His own. Are you preparing for the next 41? Do you see what I see? Amen.