

The Pilgrim Messenger

FEBRUARY, 2007

Volume II, Issue 3



**PILGRIM
BAPTIST
CHURCH**

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- Min. Steve Cossey
- Min. Angela Davis
- Min. Jacque Robinson
- Min. Carl L. Towns

Mr. Maurice Hall
Minister of Music

WEEKLY SERVICES

TUESDAYS:

9:30 am—Bible Study

WEDNESDAYS:

6:00 pm—Prayer Service

7:00 pm—Bible Study

SUNDAYS:

9:00 am—Sunday School

10:30 am—Worship Service

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ALL ARE WELCOME !

*"A Church Inspired by
the Word and
Empowered by the Spirit!"*

"ENVISIONING THE VISION"

Pilgrim Baptist Church Leaders' Retreat

January 19-20, 2007 - Lake Lawn Resort, Delevan, Wisconsin

Reflections by Pastor Kenneth R. Board

The Pilgrim Leaders' Retreat was held on Friday and Saturday, January 19-20, 2007, at Lake Geneva in southeast Wisconsin. Over 58 faithful members of Pilgrim braved the cold, snowy weather to convene for the purpose of developing a vision statement. Our facilitator was Rev. Dr. Rodney T. Smothers, Jr., a church Leadership Consultant and Director of Church Growth for the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church.

I began the retreat by sharing with the leaders how critical it is for Pilgrim to have a vision statement because it will provide clarity, focus, and synergy for the ministerial opportunities which we are and will be facing. We looked at the elements of a vision in Habakkuk 2:1-3 where God instructed the prophet to write the vision down on tablets of stone and make it plain, so that a runner (disciple, bearer of the good news) could run with it.

The attendees were highly engaged as Dr. Smothers shared multiple stories about how other pastors, including himself, had been given visions from God and empowered the laity (*congregation*) to run with the vision. Dr. Smothers stated, **"A vision is not based upon the needs of the congregation; a vision is based upon the needs of the community and the world in which we live. Churches tend to be too internally focused."**

These statements were profound and echoed the statements that I have been sharing with the congregation: our need to get outside the walls of Pilgrim and embrace our community needs. Dr. Smothers' presentation included audio, video, and computer graphics to help us envision a vision for Pilgrim Baptist Church. He sprinkled humor, singing, and stories to inspire all participants. We literally had fun working on a vision statement!

The attendees were divided into small groups to address the question: **What are the three primary needs of Pilgrim's community?** Based upon Matthew 28:18-20, we were able to craft a partial mission statement: **"The mission of Pilgrim Baptist Church is to make disciples . . ."** However, we were not able to complete the vision statement due to time constraints and the need to reach "a state of synergy" in the leadership team.

Though some leaders, including myself, were disappointed, we were grateful for the outstanding presentation by Dr. Smothers. The feedback forms reflected the leaders' perception that Dr. Smothers' facilitation and the materials used were excellent!

We left the retreat fired up, focused, enlightened, committed, and united as a leadership team to complete the vision statement as soon as possible! To complete our work, a follow-up "visioning" session will be held on Saturday, February 3, 2007, from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Pilgrim in the Nancy Smith Youth Center.

I am grateful to God for sending **faithful, available, and teachable leaders** to Pilgrim and their willingness to pioneer with God in creating and living out the vision for this historic church! Praise God!



Rev. Dr. Kenneth R. Board, Pastor
Pilgrim Baptist Church

(See Page 4 for more information.)

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HOW TO SUBMIT INFORMATION

We welcome your ideas, news items, and articles, which may be placed in the Newsletter mail slot near the church office. Our goal is that the *newsletter will be available on the first Sunday of each month.* Information is requested by the 15th of the preceding month.

All published information will have been reviewed and/or edited by the Pastor and the editorial staff.

WORDS OF WISDOM

- *Faith is the ability to not panic.*
- *If you worry, you didn't pray. If you pray, don't worry!*
- *When we get tangled up in our problems, be still. God wants us to be still so He can untangle the knot.*
- *Do the math. Count your blessings!*

—Author(s) Not Known

EVENTS CALENDAR

FEBRUARY, 2007

03 Saturday	10:30 am—Continuation of Leaders' Retreat at Pilgrim
04 Sunday	10:30 am—Morning Worship, Communion— <i>Mass Choir</i>
11 Sunday	10:30 am—Morning Worship— <i>Youth Choir / "Unlimited Praise"</i>
11 Sunday	04:00 pm—Installation of Officers at Pilgrim
14 Wed.	06:30 pm—Valentine Day Dinner at Pilgrim
18 Sunday	10:30 am—Morning Worship— <i>Mass Choir</i>
18 Sunday	06:00 pm—Ordination of Minister Steve Cossey at Pilgrim
25 Sunday	10:30 am—Morning Worship— <i>Male Chorus / "Unlimited Praise"</i>
25 Sunday	04:00 pm—Ushers' Annual Day at Pilgrim


MARCH, 2007

04 Sunday	10:30 am—Morning Worship, Communion— <i>Mass Choir</i>
11 Sunday	10:30 am—Morning Worship— <i>Youth Choir / "Unlimited Praise"</i>
18 Sunday	10:30 am—Morning Worship— <i>Mass Choir</i>
25 Sunday	10:30 am—Morning Worship— <i>Male Chorus / "Unlimited Praise"</i>

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR SPECIAL DAY!

Note: All are birthdays unless otherwise stated.

FEBRUARY, 2007

01 Sonia Johnson	
09 Monia Reed	
11 Matthew Johnson	
11 Mia Rigsby	
12 <i>Anniversary</i> —Mark & Shurice Hunter	
12 Dawana Johnson	
12 Bertha Rigsby	
14 <i>Valentine's Day</i> 	<i>Congratulations</i>
16 Tealeta Garrett	<i>Mark & Shurice!</i>
18 Conda Taylor	
18 Jackie Walker	
20 Jennifer Grier	
23 Bobby Staten	
24 Staci Wright	
25 Evelyn Huey	
26 Matthew Hunter	
27 Keith Crawford	
28 Ray Cooper	

**MARCH, 2007**

01 Tracy Reed
11 T. L. Weddle
13 Vera Forte
14 Cindy Crawford
15 Deloras Thurmond
19 Bert Weatherall
21 Patrick Johnson
21 Sha Russell
22 Alisia Mann
25 Renade Cossey
25 Charles Hunter
29 Julie Cooper



Happy Birthday To All!

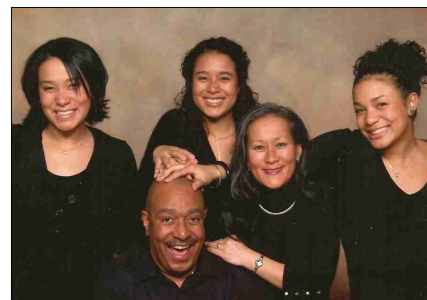
WELCOME BACK!

Minister Carl O. Towns

Pastor Kenneth R. Board and the Pilgrim family welcome Minister Carl L. Towns back to the Pilgrim pulpit. Minister Towns was licensed at Pilgrim by its former Pastor, Rev. Dr. Steve Bland.

Minister Towns said he is pleased to be back at Pilgrim and stated that he would like to focus his ministry on teaching.

He grew up in the Pilgrim family along with his siblings (*Carol Jo, Jackie, and Jeanette*), as they worshiped together with their



Minister Towns shown with wife, Rebecca, and their daughters (standing) Denise, Alex, and Carla.

parents, Mr. and Mrs. Carl O. and Albertha Towns.

Minister Carl L. Towns retired from the U. S. Navy and is currently employed by Winnebago County as a Human Resources Representative.

PROFILE: MOTHER GEORGIA COOPER

Editorial Comment

The month of February has been designated as a time to celebrate Black History. We at Pilgrim are blessed to have a wealth of Black History within our church. The Pilgrim Messenger will be profiling all year some of those who helped open doors and lay the foundation for the quality of life we now enjoy. Following is one such profile — that of Mother Georgia Cooper.

In July, 2007, two significant historical events will occur:

Mother Georgia Cooper's 90th Birthday and Pilgrim's 90th Anniversary.

Mother Georgia Cooper and her late husband, Deacon Walter Cooper, joined Pilgrim in 1945 and had been married 60 years at his death in 1999. They were among those who marched to the current church structure in 1961. Their four sons—Gary, George, Raymond, and W. Ronald—grew up worshiping with their parents at Pilgrim.

Mother Cooper is a "Mother" in many ways—as mother to her sons and their wives, as a member of Pilgrim's Mothers' Board, and as a mentor and mother to generations of young people who fondly call her "Ma Cooper." She was a role model for many young women as she successfully "juggled" being a Christian wife and mother, serving God and her church, meeting the demands of a career, and giving back to the community.

In addition to the Mothers' Board Ministry, she served Pilgrim as Church Clerk for 28 years, as an Usher, as a Sunday School teacher for 24 years, and as Administrative Assistant under two Pastors. She organized and directed the Baptist Youth Fellowship (BYF) in 1957, and became a Deaconess in 1962.

She served as Vice President and President of the Women's Department of Rockford and Vicinity District Association for 12 years. Most recently, she was a Discussion Leader for nine years in the International Bible Study Fellowship.

Mother Cooper feels that one of her most significant contributions as a member of Pilgrim was the privilege of serving as historian when compiling facts related to the Church's Anniversary Brochure in 1980. She has agreed to co-Chair with Mrs. Beverly Owens our upcoming 90th Anniversary Celebration scheduled for August 26 and 27, 2007.

During her career, Mother Cooper became a Certified and Registered Social worker in 1954 and later became the first Black woman to serve as County Superintendent, an administrative position she held for 17 years before retiring in 1980.

She had well prepared herself by earning a BS Degree from Alabama State Teachers College and doing post-graduate studies at Rockford Business College, the University of Illinois, and the University of Chicago School of Social Services Administration.

Mother Cooper has, without fanfare, served her community well—including volunteer work with the Council for Community Services, United Way, Legal Aid Society, Winnebago Council on Aging, CETA, and the Housing Commission.

In appreciation of her community work, she received many awards such as the Rotary Club's *Service-Above-Self Award*, a plaque from Rockford's former Mayor Box for "20 Years of Continuous Volunteering in Comprehensive Employment and Training," the YWCA's *Hewlett Award for the Professions*, a *Superior Performance Plaque* from former Illinois Governor Ogilvey, and a *Continuous Service Award* from the Rockford and Vicinity District in 2006. She was also a member of Taus, Inc. for 20 years.

As the daughter of a Baptist Minister, *Miss Georgia Williams* (now Mother Georgia Cooper) attended high school at Alabama State Teachers College in Montgomery, Alabama as a student of people training to be teachers; and to really round out her high school education, she **ran track**. Just talk with her about **relays and the 400-yard dash!**



FEBRUARY: CELEBRATING ROCKFORD'S BLACK HISTORY!

1834: Lewis Lemon, a 22-year-old slave of Germanicus Kent, established Rockford with Kent and Thatcher Blake.

1891: Peter Blakely founded Rockford's first African American church, Allen Chapel A.M.E.

1954: Constance (Renick) Lane became the first African American to teach public school in Rockford.

1971: Victory Bell became the first African American to hold municipal office in Rockford with a seat on the City Council.

1989: Charles Box was elected as Rockford's first African American Mayor, receiving 63 percent of the vote.

—For more Rockford Black History facts, go to www.rockfordillinois.com/black1.htm

LEADERS' RETREAT "LEADER"

The Rev. Dr. Rodney T. Smothers, Jr. facilitated Pilgrim's recent Leaders' Retreat at Lake Lawn Resort in Delavan, Wisconsin. (See Page 1.) Pastor Kenneth R. Board offers this introduction of Dr. Smothers:

"He is a former United Methodist pastor of several churches: African American, multi-racial, and multi-cultural.

"He is a dear friend who served as an adjunct professor along with me at The Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta. Currently, he serves as Director of Congregational Growth at the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church.

"Dr. Smothers is a gifted worship leader, preacher, professor, evangelist, church planter, and leadership-development coach/consultant for a number of cross-denominational churches in the USA and Caribbean."



Photo courtesy of
Dr. Rodney T. Smothers

TWO MEMBERS SHARE COMMENTS ABOUT THE RETREAT

Brother David A. Sidney

"The Leadership Retreat showed me the power of God's faithfulness to the Church. Paul's letter to the Church at Corinth reminds us that Pilgrim is one body: *'The Body is one unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ'* - (I Corinthians 12:12)

"By our working together through 'ice-breakers,' the message of Dr. Smothers, and our meals together, glimpses of spiritual gifts in all of us emerged.


"It was a powerful weekend."

Sister Carmen Jordan

"The retreat was very powerful and moving. Although we did not complete the vision statement, Dr. Smothers helped us to visualize and conceptualize the importance of mission, vision, and leadership.

"One eye opener for me was that, as a congregation, it is our duty to hold each other accountable for contributing to the spiritual, physical, emotional, and financial well being of the church. Each one of us has been equipped to do our 'fair share' of the work; and, in doing so, we can more efficiently and effectively carry out the mission of making disciples — as will be evident in a God-centered and community-inspired vision."

ANNUAL VALENTINE'S DAY DINNER!

Once again, the Reeds (*Deacon Willie and Deaconess Margaret*) will host their wonderful Valentine's Day Event at Pilgrim on Wednesday, February 14, with a fellowship/social at 6:00 p.m. and dinner at 6:30. It's an opportunity for couples and singles alike to dress up and be treated royally. Tickets are \$15 each and may be obtained through the church office. 

PILGRIM BAPTIST CHURCH



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