

## INSPIRATIONAL CORNER

### Religion and God:

#### Are We Getting Them Mixed Up?

By *Min. Richard Mills*

In our search for meaning and connection, we often find ourselves discussing religion and God. But are they the same? Many people unintentionally blur the lines between the two, leading to misunderstandings and sometimes even frustration in their spiritual journey.

I have come to the understanding that religion is a structured system, a collection of beliefs, rituals, and traditions designed to guide people in their faith. Religion offers a sense of community, moral teachings, and a pathway to connect with the divine.

But God, exists beyond any institution. The presence of God is not confined to churches, mosques, or temples, but rather found in everyday moments, personal experiences, and the depths of faith itself.

One common misconception is that religion guarantees a connection with God. Religion certainly offers guidance, but faith is personal. Someone can be deeply religious yet feel distant from God, while another person with no religious affiliation can have an unshakable sense of divine presence.

Another misunderstanding is the idea that religion is inherently divisive. Yes, throughout history, differences in belief have led to conflict, but at its core, many religious teachings emphasize love, compassion, and unity. Unfortunately, human interpretation can sometimes overshadow the true purpose of faith: understanding and connection.

For those who feel lost in this conversation, the key is to recognize that religion and God are not interchangeable. Religion can be a valuable tool for worship, but it should not replace genuine faith. Whether you choose to practice within a religious framework or cultivate your relationship with God in your own way, the important thing is seeking understanding, peace, and truth.

So, let's ask ourselves: Are we confusing religion with God? Are we focusing more on rituals and traditions than on building an authentic spiritual connection? Wherever you stand, reflection is always the first step toward clarity.

I'm often reminded, because our pastor has never asked us, "What is our religion,?" his question is simple, "What is your faith?"



## BIBLE TRIVIA

Tuesday Trivia: "Missing in Action" -

Why were only eleven disciples mentioned in Matthew 28 and not 12?

## A Shining Light in Our Midst: Celebrating Sister Sheryl Little

Every church is blessed with individuals who quietly and faithfully serve the Lord, spreading joy, encouragement, and love wherever they go. At Antioch Church, we are fortunate to have one such gem — Sister Sheryl.

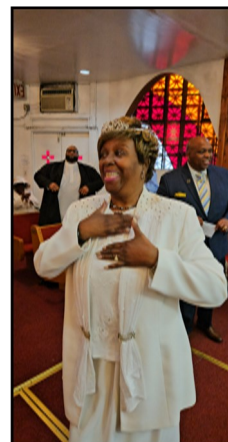
Sister Sheryl, lovingly known as a pillar within our church family, wears many hats with grace and humility. As our dedicated church secretary, she ensures that the administrative work runs smoothly behind the scenes. But her service doesn't stop at the desk. Recently, she has also taken on the role of usher, greeting each person who enters our sanctuary with her radiant, ever-present smile — a smile that can lift even the heaviest of hearts.

Beyond her administrative and welcoming roles, Sister Sheryl is a woman on a mission — quite literally. As an active missionary, she boldly proclaims the Good News of Jesus Christ wherever she goes. Earlier this year, she prayerfully put her "hat in the ring" for the prestigious **Home Mission Convention's Missionary of the Year** award. Her dedication, compassion, and unwavering faith earned her the honor, and in 2025, Sister Sheryl proudly and humbly accepted the title of **Missionary of the Year**.

But her passion for serving others extends beyond the church walls. Sister Sheryl is an active and cherished member of her community and local senior center, constantly offering her time, talents, and heart to lift others. She even found a new way to worship — through movement and praise — by joining the **Vandalia Praise Dancers**, a liturgical dance ministry that uses graceful expression to honor God.

It's easy to see that Sister Sheryl is a woman who walks her faith in every step, every smile, and every word. Her tireless energy and commitment to her church, her community, and her calling inspire all who know her.

We give thanks to God for the life, the spirit, and the vibrant example Sister Sheryl sets for us all. Congratulations, Sister Sheryl, on your well-deserved title as Missionary of the Year — and may God continue to bless you richly in every endeavor!





## *Resurrection Sunday 2025: A Celebration of Life and Victory*

Antioch Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ – April 20, 2025

Resurrection Sunday was a powerful and spirit-filled day at Antioch, as we came together to celebrate our risen Savior, Jesus Christ. The sanctuary was filled—not only with people, but with the presence of God. Family and friends gathered from the neighborhood and from across the boroughs of New York to worship, rejoice, and remember the victory we have through Christ.

Among those in attendance were Sister Doris's grandchildren and great-grandchildren, filling the pews with youthful energy and joy. It was truly a blessing to see the youngest generation present and participating in such a sacred occasion. Their presence reminded us that the message of the Resurrection is for every age.

The preached word came forth with power and authority. Our pastor boldly declared the truth of the Gospel: **Jesus lives!** The message stirred hearts and lifted spirits, reminding us that because He lives, we have hope for tomorrow.

During the **Invitation to Discipleship**, heaven rejoiced as **Brother Charles Aiken** stepped forward to confess his belief in God and desire to become a full-fledged member of Antioch. Brother Charles, the brother of our Missionary Board President Portia Armstrong, is now part of this the family of faith. We praise God for adding another soldier to His army. **Hallelujah!**

As is tradition, our beloved First Lady had prepared Easter eggs for the children—and the children at heart. Though she was absent this year, her legacy of love continued through her granddaughter, **Zoe**, who joyfully stepped forward with a basket full of Easter treats. What a festive and heartwarming moment it was!

This Resurrection Sunday was truly a day of **renewing, rejoicing, and celebration**. We give God all the glory for the souls touched, the joy shared, and the message of life that rang throughout the house:

**Jesus Lives!**



## DISTRICT ASSEMBLY NEWS

# WOMEN'S

## CONFERENCE \* PRAYER \* GATHERING



"When Women Pray!"

**SAVE THE DATE:**  
**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30**  
**7 PM**

JOIN US ON ZOOM:  
MEETING ID: 896 1823 0814  
PASSCODE: 308702  
1 929 205 6099

Elder Marcella Francis, Chairperson  
Bishop Dr. Darryl Rouse, Sr., Presiding Prelate

NORTHEASTERN DISTRICT ASSEMBLY  
2025 WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

**Honoring**  
OUR TRAILBLAZERS  
OF THE NORTHEASTERN DISTRICT ASSEMBLY



**AUGUST**  
**22-23**  
**2025**

**Friday**

**Concurrent Sessions 10:00 AM**  
Concurrent Sessions & Evening Service  
Antioch Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ  
979 Herkimer Street | Brooklyn NY 11233  
**WOMEN ONLY**

**Saturday**

**Banquet 12:00 PM**  
Historic First Church of God in Christ  
221 Kingston Avenue | Brooklyn NY 11213  
**ALL ARE WELCOME**

**Cost**

**Conference & Banquet**  
Friday- Conference Only: \$50.00  
Saturday- Banquet Only: \$100.00  
Both Days: \$140.00  
Zelle: nedawomensconference@gmail.com  
**FINAL PAYMENT IS DUE ON AUGUST 1, 2025**

**Contact**

**Registration**  
Sister Ivestia Blake, Treasurer/Registrar - 917-561-5357  
Sister Doris Govan, Registration - 347-225-3582



Join us at the 2025 Women's Conference and Banquet!  
Experience inspiring conversations, unforgettable fun, and an occasion to remember.  
Don't miss this special event, bring your family and friends, and let's celebrate together!

Elder Marcella Francis, Chairperson  
Bishop Dr. Darryl Rouse Sr., Presiding Prelate



Northeastern District Assembly  
Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ

**Ushers League**  
Presents...

# EVERYBODY'S BIRTHDAY

**Saturday, May 3, 2025**  
12:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Held At:  
**Historic First Church of God in Christ**  
221 Kingston Avenue | Brooklyn NY 11213

Sister Faye Howell, Chairperson  
Sister Doris Govan, President  
Bishop Dr. Darryl Rouse Sr., Presiding Prelate

## BIBLE TRIVIA ANSWER

In Matthew 28:16, only 11 disciples are present because Judas Iscariot, one of the original 12 was no longer present.



## Hands Off! A Day of Protest in Defense of Democracy

By Cynthia Blake, LMSW

On Saturday, April 5, 2025, people across the country took to the streets to send a clear message: *Hands off our democracy*. In over 1,400 towns and cities, citizens came together under one banner to protest the increasingly authoritarian actions of the Trump-Musk administration—a regime whose policies many believe pose a direct threat to American civil liberties and democratic norms.

I was proud to stand among them.

In Hastings-on-Hudson, a usually quiet village along the Hudson River, I joined a spirited group of protesters, including a close friend, to raise our voices in unity. The air was cold, and the rain relentless, but the energy was undeniable. People came prepared—not just with signs and umbrellas, but with stories, resolve, and a shared sense of urgency. Despite the cold rain, the turnout was strong, and the energy was electric. The gathering took place at the **Veterans of Foreign Wars Building**, a powerful and deeply symbolic setting. Standing on the grounds of an institution dedicated to those who served to defend freedom abroad, we came together to defend it at home.

We gathered under umbrellas and huddled close to hear speeches from our fellow neighbors. Concerns were raised across a wide spectrum of critical issues. Speakers passionately addressed the administration's threats to Social Security, health care, public education, scientific integrity, and the erosion of civil rights.

Each story, each voice, carried a sense of urgency, frustration, and fierce hope. The common thread through every speech was a deep belief that the future of American democracy depends on active participation and solidarity. What struck me most was the unity. Though many of us had never met before, there was an unspoken bond—one forged by shared concern and an unyielding belief in justice and a desire to protect what we hold dear. We weren't just protesting policies. We were defending the very idea of democracy: a government by the people, for the people. Each voice painted a vivid picture of how the administration's decisions are affecting real people in real time.

The Hands Off! movement is more than just a moment of protest; it's a call to vigilance. It's a reminder that civic participation doesn't end at the ballot box. It lives in the streets, in conversations, in our willingness to show up—even in the rain.

That Saturday may have been wet and gray, but it was also full of color—of courage, of passion, and of hope.



## NOTEWORTHY NEWS

## THE NATIONAL ACTION NETWORK CONVENTION

**April 2-5, 2025**

## “Being A Light In Dark Times”

Held at the Sheraton NY Times Square Hotel

Report by *Sister Portia Armstrong*

A delegation of NEDA political action representatives of which Trustee Dottie Golson is chairperson along with myself, Sister Portia Armstrong, General Assembly PAC chair, was in the house!

I attended on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. On Wednesday there was an emphasis on social justice and criminal justice. Our national social/criminal justice attorney Benjamin Crump, Esq. moderated both panel discussion. The social justice panel was entitled, "From Grief to Action." We are tired of hearing, "Our prayers are with you. "We must take our grief and let it fuel non-violent but intentional action. Reverend Al Sharpton had a fireside chat with Ari Melber [MSNBC] and Al B Sure! [Singer] in which you can always count on Ari to quote some Tupac because it's a shame but the social issues of Tupac's time is still the fight and struggle of today. On the criminal justice side, Rev. Al had fireside chats with Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg and Joy Reid [MSNBC] who both stood unafraid to point out the criminal acts of this administration. Attorney Crump moderated a panel of DA's and Attorney Generals.

On Thursday, there was an emphasis on “Finding Truth In The Age of Misinformation.” I thoroughly enjoyed the fireside chat with MSNBC hosts Symone S. Townsend, Alicia Mendez, and Michael Steele. Let us recognize the authoritarianism of silencing free speech, the press unless their narrative is that of what the government wants said. Also there was a Mayoral Candidates Forum on Thursday.

On Friday there was an emphasis on DEI and protecting our communities. Why are we scared to say DEI? How have we let this administration make them dirty words? Say it out loud, Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity. They are honorable goals to strive for. When it is under attack, our children's education is under attack, our health care is under attack and our social/economic development is under attack. All that we've fought for is now being taken away.

I will end my report with the panel entitled, “The Black Church in the Age of Trump 2.0.” While Trump is claiming he wants to make America Christian again, with every executive order he wakes up and writes each day they show less love and concern for God’s people. “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” Micah 6:8.





## NOTEWORTHY NEWS

### Celebrating Pastor Travis T. Haynes: 20 Years of Faithful Leadership

On Saturday, March 29th, a joyous and spirit-filled celebration took place in honor of Elder Travis T. Haynes, marking his 20th Pastoral Anniversary. Family, friends, and church members gathered to recognize and pay tribute to a man whose unwavering faith and dedicated service have touched countless lives.

Pastor Haynes stands as the esteemed leader of two thriving congregations — St. Matthew Church of Christ, affectionately known as “The Well,” in Brooklyn, NY, and Friendship Baptist Church Worldwide in Roslyn Heights, NY. His influence has extended beyond the walls of these churches, inspiring not only his own members but also believers throughout the Northeastern District Assembly. For many years, Pastor Haynes has also faithfully served as Antioch’s pre-anniversary preacher, where his powerful preaching continues to uplift and ignite hearts.

The celebration was a beautiful testament to the love and respect Pastor Haynes has earned over two decades of shepherding his flock. Members of Antioch, along with many others from near and far, gathered in unity to honor this devoted servant of God. The afternoon overflowed with heartfelt tributes, uplifting worship, and powerful expressions of gratitude.

It was truly a spiritual and spectacular event — a reflection of the profound impact Pastor Haynes has had on the lives of so many. As the congregation rejoiced and gave thanks, one sentiment was clear and powerful: To God be the Glory for the life, leadership, and legacy of Pastor Travis T. Haynes. We celebrate his past, honor his present, and pray God’s richest blessing over the future of his continued ministry.



## MAY

Sister Dorothy Morris 12th  
Minister Richard D. Mills 30th

## BIRTHDAYS



## JUNE

Sister Priscilla Sassa 10th  
Brother LaRay Cheek 22nd

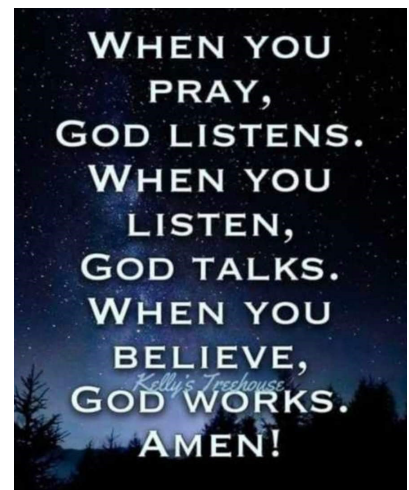


*Bro. LaRay and Min. Zulema N. Cheek*  
*18th Wedding Anniversary*  
*June 14*

## A POEM

Written By Tracy Armstrong

Paths crossing, meeting at a clear spot  
One path worn, used and well established  
Stripped of its natural hue  
Its essence unlinked from its state of being  
While the other fresh  
Still innocent, full of green  
The path still new, dew lightly shining on its  
leaves  
They cross at a point, one sharing its experi-  
ence  
While the other the excitement of youth  
Paths crossing, meeting at a clear space  
One new, one used but both thankful for the  
place.



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