

# THE VISION

## Quarterly Newsletter of Providence Missionary Baptist Church



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Reverend Damon P. Williams, Ph.D., Senior Pastor and  
Reverend Khalia J. Williams, Ph.D., First Lady

The guiding slogan or tagline of our church is "You are Loved, You are Forgiven, and You are Accepted." What a powerful message! To know that when you give your life to Christ, you are entering an unconditional relationship; what you did in your past doesn't matter, what you desire in your heart can be delivered. The greatness of God is, indeed all consuming and I am left to think of the writer, actor and extremely talented Lin Manuel Miranda during an interview, spoke about the phenomenal success of his play "Hamilton." He explained that God's goodness had put his dreams to shame. In other words, Miranda could never have believed what transpired in his life was possible. He knew there was something bigger than him in the midst of his success; that he had used his God given gifts to entertain and, from a his-

torical perspective, to inform others.

Oprah Winfrey had a similar experience by growing up in a very impoverished circumstance and never knowing how high she could actually dream. Her life became a testimony to what God can do. Once, she thought earn-

ing a paycheck that is 1000 times her age (if 30, \$30,000) was the measure of success. She never imagined herself the media magnate that she is today, becoming one of the richest women in the world. Oprah also acknowledges God's

grace and love as the reason for her success.

God gave both Lin Manuel and Oprah magnificent gifts; they recognized their gifts and used them. He opened the doors and allowed their lives to flourish well beyond their wildest dreams.

That's Love!!!

" But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked."

Luke 6:35 NRSV

## You are Forgiven, Accepted and Loved

# SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY

"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony" Revelation 12:11

Deacon OJ and Deaconess Lori Flowers

### What is Love?

Today, our view of love is often blinded by reality shows, hopeless romantic movies and novels. Rarely do we confess to ourselves what love is not—that love is not money nor material possession; that love is not expressed only when it's sunny out and the birds are chirping. Nor is love only expressed when someone is doing what we want them to do. Lori was praying for a spouse for decades and OJ had to go through his own personal challenges and pains, and love was something that seemed out of the reach for both of them. Although they had known each other for almost two decades, neither could have imagined the kind of powerful love that would grow between them. The two first met while attending Arizona State University. He was an undergrad and played football, while Lori was working on her Master's degree. After they graduated, the two lost touch, but thanks to Facebook, they were able to re-connect almost 20 years later. A courtship developed that some would describe as dreamy, but yet was very real! Throughout their courtship, OJ and Lori decided to honor God and remain celibate. They sacrificed their instant gratification for something bigger and better by making a decision that is not popular in today's world and, in fact, is often looked down upon. A love without worldly conditions, limits or measures of what one can do for another is practically unheard of; however, OJ and Lori believed this sacrifice would force them



into better communication and enable them to get to know better each other's strengths and opportunities. Before long, OJ asked Lori what if one day he could give her "Flowers for Life." With that theme, OJ proposed to Lori at Praise in the Park in front of 10,000 people and totally surprised her. So what is love? The concept is so difficult that the Greeks had six words to define it, one of which, Agape, is recognized as the highest form of love. The love of God for man and of man for God. It is a type of unconditional love, a love without limitations or circumstances. It's to love somebody completely. Jesus showed this unconditional love when He chose to go to the cross to die for our sins, even when He didn't feel like it. Changing the script or taking Himself down from the cross would have been more convenient for him, but He stayed because of Agape love. This is unconditional love, love with no limits and which is rarely seen among humans. As powerful as the Flowers' love for each other was and still is, it will never rise to the love Christ gives to them daily. However, they aspire to reach to the love of Christ in their relationship, as we all must do. No matter if the relationship is with a spouse, a family member or a coworker, we can strive to remove the conditions, limits and circumstances. Yes, we can love that spouse who didn't do what we wanted; we can love our co-workers despite their shortcomings; we can love even through the pain caused by a family member or a misbehaving child. We can strive to love unconditionally, because after all, that is the purest love!

# A Word From Our Pastor

**REVEREND DAMON P. WILLIAMS, PH.D., SENIOR PASTOR**

## HAVE I TOLD YOU LATELY THAT I LOVE YOU?

Providence, I love you. Have I told you so lately? We can get so caught up in the busy-ness of life and the business of ministry that we too often forget to obey the simplest commandment given to us by Jesus-- to "love our neighbor." This reality recently visited my life in a major way when I learned, about a month ago, that my Father was diagnosed with cancer. Before I began having any morbid thoughts, I distinctly recall thinking, "When was the last time I told my Dad I love him?" Being secure, and sure, that my Father was well aware of the deep and profound love I have for him and my Mother and that he knew the sincere appreciation I had for my upbringing, these were truly the first thoughts that ran through my mind. I began to plot the myriad of ways that, if God gave me the chance, I would not only tell them, but I would also show them in every way possible. Even through the fatigue of the daily grind of life, ministry, family, and work having this mission on my heart has given me strength, energy, and a renewed sense of purpose. Quite literally I say to myself ... "My Dad is going to know that his Son loves him!". How and with whom, in YOUR life, can you adopt this same mission? Who are the persons that

probably are aware that you love them, but would appreciate a blatant reminder? Remember that scripture teaches us that your love is not a keepsake to be hid-

den in the drawer of your heart and only opened on certain occasions, but rather it is a precious jewel to be shown, demonstrated, and given proudly to the ones God has blessed you to have in your life. Don't wait for a diagnosis of ill health before you jump into action to speak and show those simple words, but rather, at the time you read this, make your plan now, right now!

The love Jesus Christ has

given us to share is the one limitless resource that we have. There is no reason to be stingy with your love because the more you share it, the more the Lord will give unto you. Spring is upon us. The weather has improved and with it the excitement of getting out and getting active is here! Leverage that same excitement in sharing your love. So Providence, as you go and do likewise I will simply tell you, yet again ... I Love You! God bless you my beloved Providence and may heaven continue to smile upon you.



# OUTREACH

## MATRONS' CIRCLE

The Matrons' Circle at Providence Missionary Baptist Church is one of its oldest organizations. This august ministry was founded as a joint venture by B. L. Wright and Rosa Williams of Wheat Street Baptist Church and Romell Adair of Providence Missionary Baptist Church. These women made it their mission to promote Christian missionary work through outreach programs and community fellowship. They also felt that, as a group, it was their duty to

enhance the spiritual, cultural, and social life of the church. Today, the Providence Matrons' Circle continues to carry the mantle of its founders through several service projects. Annually, the group facilitates the following: (1) a donation project referred to as the "Shoebbox Project" with the City of Refuge and other homeless shelters where needed grooming items are provided; (2) the "Dial Soap Drive" where bars of Dial soap are collected and disseminated to assist the Family Unification Network with

a prison ministry throughout the state of Georgia; and (3) the distribution of lap robes to residents of various nursing homes in the metropolitan area.

Quarterly, the Matrons' Circle visits the "Our House

Shelter" for women and infants to serve them breakfast and give the mothers a few moments of pampering. Closer to home, the Matrons' Circle makes sure that the members of

Providence are not forgotten by providing special

Christmas packages to those who are ill and home-bound. Courtesies are also sent to acknowledge a death in the family and cards to celebrate a birthday. The Matrons' Circle meets on the second Sunday of each month, and any woman of Providence is welcome to join. All church members are encouraged to participate in any of these service projects. Look for future announcements regarding dates, times, and locations.



Matron's Circle members prepared bags for those in need.



TRANSFORMED

NOW

neXt

# CHOSEN CONNECTED

PMBC'S CHILDREN YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

## PMBC's Children, Youth and Young Adult Ministry –

**@CONNECTED** – has been on the move in 2017! They have hit the ground running. The ministries have been rebranded – CHOSEN (elementary school students), neXt (middle school students), NOW (high school students), and TRANSFORMED (young adults) – and there is a new energy that is spreading like wildfire.

### RECENT AND UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

A Community Service Project was held on March 18th, 2017 from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM at the Atlanta Community Food Bank.

The Guardian Meeting that was scheduled for Sunday, March 19th was rescheduled for Sunday, May 21st immediately after 10:45 AM Worship service.

### iStudy

It will continue every Wednesday. Parents or Guardians need to get in the habit of bringing the children each week from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM. This is the time for each child to study God's word through song, Bible Study and much more. In addition, dinner is served.

### iFlow

There is no iFlow the 2nd and 3rd Sundays in April because of College Day/Palm Sunday and Easter.

There is no iFlow the 3rd Sunday in June because of Father's Day.



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## SUNDAY SCHOOL



Superintendent Diana Ashurst with winner Joshua Washington



Superintendent Ashurst with teacher of the Joshua class, Dionne Mahaffey and winner Anthony Arrington

The Sunday School conducted a "Bring A Friend to Sunday School" campaign during the month of January and first two weeks of February.

The winners of the contest were Joshua Washington from the Great Expectations Class and Anthony Arrington from the Joshua Class.

They both received a \$25.00 gift card for bringing the most friends to Sunday School.

Sunday School Superintendent Diana Ashurst is encouraging parents to bring their children to Sunday School each Sunday. They receive a full curriculum that will not only teach them more about the Bible, but will also provide fun activities with other children. Sunday School begins promptly at 9:30 AM each Sunday and ends at 10:20 AM.

*By Trina Lewis*

The average child spends about 1500-2000 hours per year in secular school, being influenced by humanistic and sometimes even by immoral and ungodly people and information. This influence is exerted by their peers and even by adults. And most of the time parents have no idea as to what their child has been impacted by during the course of a day.

The Bible says "Train up a child in the way that they should go..." If the majority of our children's influence and values are being set by "the world" then we are not training up our children in the ways of the Lord or molding their moral consciousness.

If our children attend Sunday School Ministry only one hour per week and 4 hours per month and 48 hours per year, we haven't even begun to compete with how much time they spend learning in "the world". If and when they stray, we then want to bring them to the church, to the altar, to the preacher for redemption. Later in life when they are out of control, we beg God to change them. But parents need to understand that NOW is the time to be committed to their children's whole development.

What a grave disservice we do to our children to get

them up Monday through Friday to attend secular school where they learn reading, writing, math, health, etc., but we don't get them up on Sunday mornings to attend Sunday School where they learn about repentance, salvation, holiness, righteousness, heaven, hell, and the love of God.

Ask yourself ... "Am I sending the wrong message to my children about what's most important in their lives; am I guilty of misplaced priorities to exist."

Consider, parents, that we are failing our children when we treat Sunday School and Youth Bible Study lightly. We brag about what grades and accomplishments they make in secular school, and doing so is laudable; however, we should not treat "Bible and Spiritual School" as lesser considerations. They are both important. Secular school gets them ready to one day go out into the world, but Bible school gets them ready one day to get up out of this world!!

Let us not be more committed to our children's secular education than we are to their spiritual education.

Please bring your children to Sunday School and on time.

## LENTEN SEASON

This year the The Lenten Season began on March 1 and culminated on Resurrection Sunday, April 16. Lenten, as most Christians know, is observed as one of the most holy times of the Christian year.

Providence began the season on March 1, 2017 with an Ash Wednesday service. Many members were in attendance and all present received ashes. The Pastors dispensed or imposed the ashes on the foreheads and reminded us "For dust you are and to dust you shall return." (Genesis 3:19) This tradition is a reminder that our lives are short and we must live them to the fullest.

The day also was the beginning of the Daniel Fast. Christians consent to fasting in order to seek an intimate relationship with God. We rid ourselves of unhealthy and unnatural foods and redirect our focus from desires of the flesh to the desires of the Lord. Our purpose during the fast is to focus on God wholeheartedly.



### ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

### 100 DAY BIBLE READING PLAN

Providence participated in a 100 Day Bible Reading Plan which continued through the Lenten Season. This Plan also culminated on April 16th. We recognize that reading and understanding the Word of God is truly a way to become more connected to His will in our lives and to better recognize His love and His expectations. The Lenten season is Holy and Providence embarked on a path of becoming closer to God as a community of believers.



### PREACHING, PRAISING AND STUDYING

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## A PMBC EASTER

### THE CRUCIFIXION—The Remembrance and the Reason

### THE RESURRECTION— The Blessing

For God SO loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (John 3: 16-17)



### GOOD FRIDAY SERVICES

#### April 14th

Providence connected with others at Cascade United Methodist Church at 12:00 Noon

Reverend Khalia Williams, Ph.D., delivered one of the 7 Last Words at Ben Hill Methodist Church at 7:00 PM



### EASTER EVE— Children Fun

#### April 15th

Easter Speech Rehearsal at 10:00 AM

Easter Egg Hunt and Party after the Rehearsal



### EASTER SUNDAY—HE IS RISEN

#### April 16th

Sunrise Service—6:00 AM

Easter Breakfast—7:30 AM

Easter Sunday School Program—9:00 AM

Easter Worship Experience—10:45 AM

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH AND DINNER

**FEBRUARY 26, 2017**

As we all know, February is the designated month for the celebration of Black History. Providence observed this important month with a weekly presentation each Sunday. This year we recognized the great musicians, singers, and song writers from our past. In addition to the presentation of historical information about these figures, our choir presented a favored or famous song associated with that great American. The celebration was heartfelt and reminded members, especially our youth, of the great contributions African Americans have made to this country.

On the last Sunday of the month, as has become our tradition, we held our annual Family Life Dinner in the Fellowship Hall. The food was delicious and the service was excellent. This event is a time for all families to get together, remember our past and to give thanks for the families we are blessed to have. The Fellowship Hall was filled to capacity and Providence was blessed to have so many members and visitors for this Family Affair.



The Singers



The Servers and the Great Food

A Full House

## ACTIVITIES—JANUARY THROUGH APRIL

### Family Fun Night

February 10th



### Domestic Violence Seminar

Janie's and Ida's House of Hope

March 18th



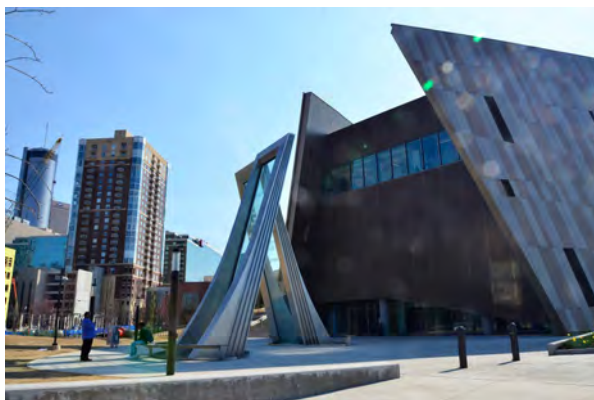
### College Day

April 9th



### Civil Rights Museum

March 4th



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## YOU ARE LOVED

*"And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love. "*

*1 Corinthians 13:13 NRSV*

### Editorial Opinion

From the day we are born to the day we die, if we are fortunate, we will experience love in various forms. Newborn babies are welcomed into the world with abounding love. The parents, extended family and friends of the family lavish love on this new person in their lives. Indeed, babies are receptive to love; in fact, they learn to demand it. The cry of a baby is not always for food; oftentimes, it is the need to have someone close to them, cuddling and showing them loving affection. Babies, as well, learn to give love. They enjoy hugging, kissing and snuggling with their parents or caretakers. The emotional wellbeing of the baby is dependent on this reciprocal loving experience.

As we grow older, we learn to love others outside our family circle. We may find a best friend we enjoy being around as we experience companionship and compatibility with others and learn what we like and don't like from others.

Then later, if we are lucky, we discover what love is between two people who want to build a life together. This romantic love is often considered paramount of the human love experience. It allows us to care for another person as the Bible has directed us. 1st Corinthians details what love is supposed to be. It is kind, patient, humble, not selfish, upstanding, and it never ends. If we should marry, these are directions as to how we should treat our spouses each day. If we are obedient, our love will endure any and all ob-

stacles and troubles we may encounter.

A very popular song from years ago was the "Greatest Love of All," first recorded by George Benson and even more popularized by Whitney Houston. It states that self-love is the greatest love. While many may debate this importance, self-love is nevertheless an example of love which we often overlook. Self-love can cause much consternation in our lives when we do not experience it.

But whatever the nature of the love in our lives, we all need it. We need it for validation that our lives matter. We need it to receive and show compassion. We need it to comfort us in our times of need. We also need it when things are going great and we want others around us to feel the same sense of joy and well-being.

We may never receive all of these features of love from any single human being, but we can receive them all, every single one of them, from the Holy Spirit which dwells within each one of us. It is ours when we receive salvation and connect our own spirit to God. The Holy Spirit, as explained in the Bible, is our comforter, helper, counselor, and advocate. It offers courage, peace, guidance, and truth. It is truly our GREATEST love. The Bible says that God IS LOVE! And the greatest example we have of this pure love is Jesus Christ, who laid down His own life for us. That is certainly LOVE

# Upcoming Events

Date	Event	Sponsored By
<b>April</b>		
23rd	Living Benefit versus Final Expense Seminar 12:45—Fellowship Hall	Dorcas
30th	Healthy Lifestyle Cooking Demonstration with Chef Carlene	Church Wide
<b>May</b>		
6th	Bible and Brunch—11:30 AM	Transformed
7th	Girl Scout Meeting—12:30 PM	Church Wide
18th	Women in Christ	Church Wide
21st	Student Recognition Sunday	Church Wide
28th	Memorial Day Recognition	Church Wide
<b>June</b>		
3rd	Community Day with Hoosier UMC and St. Paul Episcopal—Hoosier UMC—10:00 AM—2:00 PM	Church Wide
5th—9th	Vacation Bible School with Hoosier UMC and St. Paul Episcopal—PMBC—5:00 PM	Church Wide
18th	Men in Christ Day	Church Wide
18th	Community Feast in the Garden	Church Wide



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