

The Echo

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Pastor's Pen

Everyone seeks freedom. The Bible tells us that, spiritually speaking, no one is free. In Romans 6, Paul explains that we are all slaves. We are either slaves to sin or slaves to righteousness. Those who are slaves to righteousness become a different kind of slave, and in that slavery find complete peace and true freedom. Although it seems like a contradiction, the only true freedom in Christ comes to those who are His slaves

A servant is one who works for wages, and is owed something from his master. The Christian, on the other hand, has nothing to offer the Lord in payment for his forgiveness, and he is totally owned by the Master who bought him with His shed blood on the cross. We are not hired by Him; we belong to Him (Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 7:4).

Far from being oppressed, the slave of Christ is truly free. We have been set free from sin by the Son of God. Through our bondage to Christ, we have become sons and heirs of the Most High God. As heirs, we are partakers of that inheritance—eternal life—which God gives all His children.

The Christian life is one of death to self and rising to “walk in the newness of life” The only way to bury self desires fully is by the power of the Spirit who is the only source of strength. We strengthen the new nature by continually feeding on the Word of God. Through prayer we obtain the power we need to escape the desire to return to the old life of sin. Then we will realize that our new status as slaves to Christ is the only true freedom. Are you free in Christ?



Students Continue to Soar

Skyler Townsend has two years of college behind her and is ready to begin year three. She attends the University of South Alabama where she is majoring in Biomedical Science. In the spring of 2025, this brilliant young scholar earned her place on the Capps Covey College of Allied Health Professions Dean's List. This brilliant young lady has maintained a 4.0 GPA. Skyler was sworn into the National Guard in Montgomery on Monday April 28, 2025. She is a member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. She was named Miss Black and Gold 2024-2025. Her accomplishments are numerous and they have just begun. Congratulations Skyler on your determination to be the best in school and in your chosen profession. Your family is so very proud of you. They support you in prayer and wish nothing but success for you.



Walking for Others

The Annual Sickle Cell Walk was held on Saturday, June 7, 2025 at the Bob Harrison Center at 9:00. The North Alabama Sickle Cell Foundation is community based and established to help improve the quality of life for individuals who suffer from sickle cell conditions such as sickle cell anemia.

Brother Rickey Graham has become a champion for the cause. For the past few years, he has been essential in organizing a team for Saint Rebecca. He encourages all members who can, to donate to the foundation. All funds help the foundation provide services to those who need it most.



This year eleven members of the church participated in the walk-a-thon and they had fun. Rickey thanks everyone who walked and also all that gave a donation. Your kindness is appreciated.

Father's Day Celebrated

The Annual Father's/Men's Day celebration was held on the third Sunday in June. The guest speaker for the occasion was Bishop Maury Patton and he brought an extremely inspirational message taken from 1Corinthians 16:13. He brought out that there is a time for everyone to be revealed and God has to set the time. Act on the Word of God and you'll see victory. It's better to recognize a re-write instead of the devil. Stand firm in the faith and don't allow self deception to prevent the vision from coming to pass. Just know that everyone is not for your vision.

When overcoming adversity we must 1) Be Watchful 2) Stand strong in the faith 3) Act like men and 4) Be strong. How sweet it is to walk in the will of God. Some distractions are unavoidable, but all are manageable. Maintain your focus and keep your eyes on Jesus.

The Youth/Children's Choir provided the song ministry. The zest for singing is always evident when they sing. It is always a pleasure to have Bishop Patton bring the Word. His messages are applicable to current life situations whereby solutions and encouragement can be found in the Word of God.

Congratulations to the Father's Day Committee on the spiritual success of the worship. May God bless each of you is our prayer.



Worship with Zion Progress

Friends and Family Day was celebrated at Zion Progress on the fourth Sunday in June at 10:00, and Saint Rebecca was in charge of the worship. Pastor Clark brought the message from Matthew 24:1-13. The message topic was "Operating in a Spirit of Readiness". He lifted up that to operate in the Spirit of God is to operate in expectancy. Wherever the angels are circling, there's a blessing right around the corner. Whatever God has for us, it's already ours. There are various measurements of time. God's moment in time cannot be placed on a calendar, but Jehovah is always on time. Spiritual time is that which has already happened but just hasn't been manifested. That's where the devil tries to get us offended in the spiritual. The devil fights because of your destiny. Our job is to hold on until it is revealed. We can't afford to let the opportunity pass us by to get what God has for us. Sometimes opportunity only knocks once. Jehovah, He is God from everlasting to everlasting. No matter what we need He is the I Am.



The Unity Choir provided the song service. Every song was spiritually encouraging and appropriate for worship. The fellowship with Zion Progress is long standing and it is always a blessing for the two churches to gather. We look forward to worshipping with them again on the first Sunday in September as we celebrate Homecoming. May God forever smile on and continue to use each of the churches for His glory.

80 And Fabulous

Sister Eddie Jean Hampton is as always, fabulous. The difference now is that she is even more so at 80. On June 21, 2025 her daughter, Lawanda, was treated to a surprise birthday dinner by her daughter, On June 21, 2025 Lawanda and her sister, Dolores, treated Eddie Jean to a surprise birthday dinner with friends and family in attendance. They made sure that they helped her welcome 8 decades of God's grace, 80 years of faith and favor. Her actual birthdate is June 23rd.

This was a double celebration. She also celebrated her grandson's graduation from high school. Everyone enjoyed a southern meal of barbecue and plenty of vegetables as vegetables are her thing. There was a special tribute at the end. Each guest presented her with a rose for a total of 80 roses. The roses were presented while "Mama" by Boyz II Men played in the background.

Eddie Jean, you are so loved and it is the prayer of your amazing family that you will be blessed by God with many more birthdays. Happy birthday also from your church family.



Christian Humor

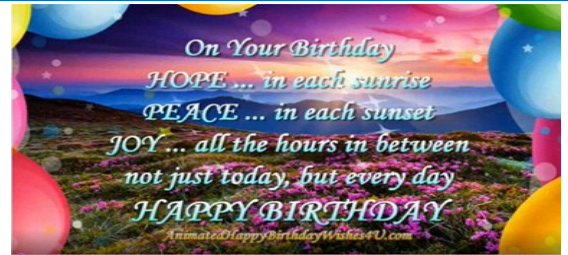
An elderly patient gets hearing aids from a doctor. After a short time, he meets the doctor again. Doctor: "Your hearing is perfect. Your family must be really pleased." Patient, "Oh, I am in a funny situation now. I haven't told my family yet. I just sit and listen to their conversations. In a month, I've changed my will three times!

A little girl from Alabama went to church for the first time ever when she was visiting her grandparents in Michigan. When the pastor announced it was time for the Lord's Supper, she was excited—and hungry. The congregation filed up to the altar rail, and the child watched in confusion as her grandparents received a wafer and small plastic cup of wine. She could hardly wait to get back to the pew to tell her grandma that Jesus wasn't from Alabama. "How do you know that, dear?" asked her grandma. "Because that was the poorest meal I've ever seen," she said. "Mama would've at least given everybody some corn bread and sweet tea."

A young pastor was about to officiate his first wedding. He was very nervous about it. So he went to his senior pastor for advice. Young pastor said, "Pastor, I'm really nervous about officiating this wedding. What should I say during the ceremony?" The senior pastor replied, "Don't worry. The Scriptures are full of passages appropriate for the occasion. Just quote from the Bible and you'll be fine." So the day of the wedding arrives. Everything goes smoothly and as the ceremony nears the end, the young pastor raises his arms for the final benediction, but draws a blank. He doesn't know what to say. At that moment he remembers the senior pastor's advice to quote from the Scriptures. The first verse that comes to mind is the one which he spoke on a couple of Fridays ago during the Good Friday service. "Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing."

After a church service on Sunday morning, a young boy suddenly announced to his mother, "Mom, I've decided to become a minister when I grow up." "That's okay with us, but what made you decide that?" "Well," said the little boy, "I have to go to church on Sunday anyway, and I figure it will be more fun to stand up and yell, than to sit and listen."

H U M O R



The church wishes each of you a happy birthday.

Tony Hawk 2nd
Victoria Miller 2nd
Markeeta Graham 3rd
Jasmine Townsend 3rd
Joshua Parker 3rd
Trey Parker 3rd
Darlene Hampton 4th
Kristopher Nelson 7th
Mother Mary Graham 8th
Melody Rice 8th
Amanda Brown 9th
Tiajuana Wherry 9th
Cierra Thompson Siaw 9th
Timothy Byers, Jr. 9th
Sabrina Thompson 12th
Linda Ford 13th
Carol Garner 15th
Jonathan Garner 16th
Sylvia Graham 16th
Malasia Ford 19th
Deja Young 19th
Pastor Joe Hereford 20th
Briana Graham 21st
Dea. Cleadus Thompson 22nd
Xzavion Tinker 23rd
Kemberli Brooks 25th
A'Taisha Fletcher 26th
Jasmine Crutcher 26th
Sandra Smith 29th
Davia Young 29th

Happy Anniversary

An anniversary is another year of love for a married couple. The following are celebrating this month.

Anthony & Lillie Townsend 3rd
Derrick & MaKayla Carr 12th
Robert & Bertha Cook 15th
Shelby & Jacqueline McGrady 17th
Michael & Wendy Johnson 18th
Terrence & Leigh Ann Pruitt 22nd
Dea. Buford & Diane Thompson 23rd

Annual Car Show

The **Annual Car Show** was a great success. Due to inclement weather, the date was changed from June 14th to June 21st. Regardless of the date change, a large number of faithful attendees supported the effort. More than 65 participants registered their vehicles and several others did not register, but chose to support. Cars varied from antiques, classics, vintage to modern. It is always fascinating to see the work and love that go into maintaining the vehicles.

There was fun and entertainment for all ages including DJ Unique, ice cream, hot wheels, skin care/makeup vendors. As usual, concessions were available for purchase. Show participants were afforded the opportunity to win cash door prizes every hour along with a plethora of door prizes. Everyone is a winner, however, select vehicle owners were awarded trophies for the best in their particular category.

As previously, the Car Show was organized by Sister Karol Hersey. Her organizational skills are second to none. She worked tirelessly to ensure that the show went well. Karol

thanks everyone who played any role in the event. Special thanks go to the parking crew who labor so hard in the heat to make sure that the cars are parked correctly and everyone was safe as well as their property.

All proceeds from the Car Show will

go to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Anyone wishing to make a donation to be included from Saint Rebecca, please see Sisters Belinda Garner or Karol Hersey.



Recipe Corner

Squash Casserole

Ingredients:

6 Tbsp. unsalted butter, divided
3 lbs. yellow squash, sliced 1/4-inch thick (from 5 medium squash)
1 medium-size yellow onion, chopped (about 1 1/2 cups)
2 tsp. kosher salt, divided
2 large eggs, lightly beaten
1 (8-oz.) container of sour cream
4 oz. sharp Cheddar cheese, shredded (about 1 cup)
2 oz. Swiss cheese, shredded (about 1/2 cup)
1/2 cup mayonnaise
2 tsp. chopped fresh thyme
1/2 tsp. black pepper
2 sleeves round buttery crackers (such as Ritz), coarsely crushed
1 oz. Parmesan cheese, shredded (about 1/4 cup)

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease an 11- x 7-inch (2 quart) baking dish with cooking spray.

Cook squash: Melt 3 tablespoons of the butter in a large skillet over medium-high. Add squash, onion, and 1 teaspoon of the salt; cook, stirring often, until center of squash is just tender and liquid has evaporated, about 10 minutes.

Drain liquid: Transfer mixture to a colander set over a bowl. Drain 5 minutes; discard any liquid.

Stir together casserole filling: Stir together eggs, sour cream, Cheddar and Swiss cheeses, mayonnaise, thyme, pepper, and remaining 1 teaspoon salt in a large bowl. Gently fold in squash mixture.

Spoon casserole filling into baking dish: Spoon into a lightly greased 11- x 7-inch (2-quart) baking dish.

Make cracker topping: Microwave remaining 3 tablespoons butter in a medium-size microwavable bowl on HIGH until melted, about 25 seconds. Toss together crackers, Parmesan cheese, and melted butter until combined.



Sprinkle topping over casserole: Bake and serve:

Bake in preheated oven until golden brown, about 20 minutes

Fifth Sunday Worship

The fifth Sunday Worship, known as youth Sunday, was a smashing success. Minister Tiffany Sledge from Saint Bartley P.B. Church was the guest speaker. The message was taken from Mark 6:48-51 and the topic was "An Encounter With Jesus". Sometimes it feels that life with Jesus can be an adventure. As we mature in the faith, we learn that every day with Jesus is not a sunny day. Sometimes there are stormy days, but it's so good to know that we serve a God who is in control of them. That's why we should say everyday that this is the day He has made and we will rejoice in it. Following Jesus may lead to some unexpected situations. Life comes with unexpected storms and chaos. The question is, how do you respond to the thing that throws you off course. The storms often expose how deeply we are rooted in Christ. Do you respond like those who have no hope, or do you respond with faith? Because God may seem absent, it doesn't mean He doesn't see you.



The Praise Team ministered in music and members of the Dance Ministry danced to the song Jehovah Jireh while being sung by the Praise Team. They were wonderful. The church is most grateful for the Word from Minister Sledge. Saint Rebecca is her "home away from home," and we love you.

Puzzle Fun

N	B	P	D	W	A	H	M	F	R	T	H	C	N	X	U	R	G	E	H
H	Y	A	X	I	T	A	I	I	L	R	X	C	V	Q	Q	N	Y	N	I
G	P	Q	K	W	E	R	A	I	K	C	P	J	A	S	U	O	B	I	R
G	F	T	N	R	E	Y	F	Y	C	I	F	L	I	E	Z	L	G	H	V
F	X	F	C	W	H	E	A	T	W	A	V	E	N	E	B	E	O	S	Z
X	Z	E	O	B	J	P	M	N	Q	W	S	A	D	B	P	M	G	N	M
Z	C	R	P	A	L	R	P	J	B	E	I	F	E	O	E	R	G	U	S
I	K	C	C	O	P	U	P	L	I	A	L	A	P	V	D	E	L	S	U
S	C	K	V	U	L	W	E	R	O	G	G	S	E	G	A	T	E	A	N
Y	E	L	H	G	Z	L	R	S	P	O	I	A	N	Z	R	A	S	R	G
T	R	Y	U	A	L	E	E	N	K	C	P	B	D	B	J	W	L	G	L
I	K	E	M	P	B	B	H	N	L	I	U	G	E	Z	J	E	A	T	A
G	W	Z	Y	E	G	W	E	E	K	A	E	O	N	P	O	U	O	P	S
K	A	S	U	U	E	C	S	C	H	K	K	S	C	I	M	Y	A	A	S
F	E	L	P	N	O	I	T	A	C	A	V	R	E	M	M	U	S	V	E
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F	I	O	F	J	O	B	N	U	K	B	B	V	Y	Q	R	H	N	W	T
V	Q	D	P	B	N	E	Y	B	Y	S	K	F	R	S	Y	P	R	T	S
Y	A	D	E	L	L	I	T	S	A	B	Q	M	K	S	T	T	W	T	X

BASTILLE DAY
BEACH
BLUEBERRIES
BLUE SKIES
FIREWORKS
GOGGLES

HEATWAVE
ICE CREAM
INDEPENDENCE DAY
LIFE JACKET
POLLEN
POPSICLES

RAINFOREST
SWIMMING POOL
SUMMER VACATION
SUNGLASSES
SUNSHINE
WATERMELON