

## February 2021

Greetings, Beloved Church Family!

It is with the joy of the Lord that I greet you at the beginning of the second month of the year 2021. Our God graciously blessed us to share together in worship and prayer and fasting during the month of January, which has made me excited to see what the Lord has in store for us in the ensuing 11 months of this year. I pray you have great expectation for the things God will do in your own life—even if some of those realities initially challenge or concern you. We still believe that God causes *all things [to] work together for the good of those who love God and are the called according to His purpose* (Romans 8:28). Therefore, we do not lose heart and we do not lose hope. God always causes us to triumph...even over our tragedies! For that, we give God praise!

As we begin this month we are reminded that every February the nation pauses to celebrate the robust history and contributions of African-American people. (I know Wheeler Avenue doesn't wait until February to celebrate our people, but humor me!) **It's Black History Month** and this year the nationwide focus is on the Black Family! All too often when we or the dominant culture refer to the Black family it is done with either disdain or discouragement. We far too regularly hear about dysfunctional (Black) families and the like, but this month our church has chosen to celebrate our heritage and the families out of which we have come and into which we have been engrafted. Our theme for this month's festivities is, *Celebrating the Black Family: A Family Reunion*. There is a listing of all the celebrative events for the month on our website, and I encourage you to participate in the multiplicity of offerings that will be made available to you over these four weeks. In addition to our nuclear/biological/traditional families, our church members have been blessed by adoptive and foster and blended families. We honor the gifts of our intergenerational as well as interracial families. From the family in the single-parent home to the single-person household, we have seen God do great things despite the family structure. And in addition to all of the above, each of us is blessed to benefit from our church family! For that, we give God praise!

Part of the reality of most families is the oft-dreaded FAMILY MEETING! Well, our church family has two of those each church year. And the second of which will take place on Monday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, at 7:00pm. As was the case at our August gathering, we will have a virtual Mid-Year Church meeting to discuss where we are as a congregation and what we plan to accomplish in the remaining months of our Church Year that began September 1<sup>st</sup>. And although many family meetings are a dreaded reality, I am proud to report, God continues to favor our congregation with most cordial and congenial conversations that enable us all to know about the many goings-on at our church, as we participate in its governance. For that, we give God praise!

To be sure, Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church is a blessed church! We are a favored church! And we continue to be a growing church! Consequently, we must always be a caring, giving and responsive church. As our brothers and sisters continue to suffer during these pandemic times, we will do all in our power to remain socially relevant and culturally aware while we are spiritually reverent with a commitment to share. We are still concerned about those who have inadequacy of needs without access to a voice with which to seek necessary change. We are called upon to be that voice and provide assistance where we have opportunity and wherewithal. For 58 years God has enabled us to do so, and we look forward to the occasions to continue to do the same. And, believe it or not, for that, WE GIVE GOD PRAISE!

Happy Black History Month, Family!

Still reimagining our future,

M. D. Cosby