

Goodbye 2024



Hello 2025

## New Deacons on Board doing well



Shown are newly ordained Deacon, Gary Harbour, Rev., Dr. and First Lady Cryer and newly ordained Deacon, Harvey Franklin Photo credit: Rene Camper-Stewart

## Newly licensed Minister LeDominique Davis



Photo credit: Gary Harbour



What a wonderful Christmas Musical we had!

Photo credit: Gary Harbour

**Psalm 107:1: "Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever!"**

**STAY CONNECTED!**



SPBC Website QR Code



SPBC YouTube QR Code



Women's Ministry made Christmas Baskets for our homebound members and delivered holiday treats to the Oxnard Fire Department and the Oxnard Police Department.



We are so blessed at Saint Paul to have an anointed Deacon Board  
Back row: Derrick Wilson, Hubert Wells, Gary Harbour, Harvey Franklin, Vincent Stewart, Charles Dixon. Front row: Danny Thrower, L.T. Bradley, Joe Brown, Gernote Wade, Dennis Chiles Photo credit: Rene Camper-Stewart



Rev. Dr. Edward L. Cryer  
Photo credit: Roxanne Russell

Greetings Family of The Most-High God,

Our theme for this newsletter is "Gratitude!"

As I was doing my reading and meditation, I came across a prayer that inspired me; I'd like to share it with you.

#### Morning Prayer

Each new day is a promising beginning.

We can wake up and say, "Oh God, it's morning," in two ways.

One uses "Oh God" as a kind of lament, and "morning" becomes a time for "mourning."

Or we can use "Oh God" as an exclamation of joy and gratitude where we offer to God, in our morning offering the "First Fruits" of the new day—a harvest begun but not finished yet.

We can offer Him our "first energy." The energy we "grew" while sleeping, thanks to Him.

We can refuse to plunge into hurried activity and sit with Him or kneel before Him and get His and our wits about us, collect His and our thoughts and resolutions for the days, and offer Him the best time of the day—our first waking moments.

Refreshed by sleep, we can praise and thank Him, ask forgiveness from Him for yesterday's inattentiveness and wrongs, resolve to forgive those who ignored or wronged us, and ask for his continued favor, while resolving to favor others.

We can promise to spend His grace, given yesterday and in the past, wisely today.

"Well begun is half-done." If we begin our day well, we believe we will end it well and the harvest will be both greater and real.

Yes, our morning offering is our own private ceremony of "First Fruits."

Amen.

As you contemplate thoughts of the New Year, my prayer is for God's goodness, grace and lovingkindness to move our hearts towards reflections of Gratitude for all that He has done in our lives this year!

Happy New Year to all,

Pastor Rev. Dr. Edward L. Cryer

# OUR FIRST LADY'S BOOK SIGNING



**Congratulations to our own First Lady Shirley Neal Cryer, on the launch of her new book entitled "AfroCentric Style: A Celebration of Blackness and Identity in Pop Culture" from HarperCollins Amistad.**

**Within the pages are more than 200 photos and thought-provoking commentary that link the vibrancy of Black identity and expression with mainstream popular culture.**

**On Sunday, December 8th, Barnes and Noble in Ventura hosted her first book signing. It was a great event!**

**Again, Congratulations, and we look forward to future releases. May God continue to bless all of her endeavors.**

**Be sure to get your copy!  
Available wherever books are sold.**

**Visit [www.AfroCentricStyle.net](http://www.AfroCentricStyle.net) to find a retailer near you or to order online.**



First Lady Cryer and Sis Veronica Bowie



Bro. and Sis Harbour



Sis. Stephanie Wright and Sis. Annie Gandy visited the book signing.



Bro. and Sis. Ray with First Lady Cryer



Deac. and Rev. Wilson and their daughter Bri with First Lady Cryer at book signing

# The Women's Ministry has been busy!



Be kind and  
compassionate  
to one another,  
forgiving each  
other, just as in  
Christ God  
forgave you  
Ephesians 4:32

The Angel Tree Baskets made by the Women's Ministry were received with gratitude!



Sis. Annie Gandy  
greeted attendees



Sis. Brenda Irving gave  
the welcome

Photo credit: Dr. Vincent Stewart  
In October the Women's Ministry hosted a Breast Cancer Awareness Program that included testimonies and Keynote Speaker, Dr. Suzanne Fussell. Flags were placed in front of the church in the shape of the Pink Ribbon which is the Breast Cancer symbol.

**Is 2025 Your Year for the Next Level Journey?**  
The Journey to The Next Level By Pastor Edward L. Cryer  
I Samuel 18:2-5

Many people possess a passionate desire to progress, to move forward, and to go higher. A great desire to go higher is embraced by so many of us. And in many instances, we desire to go higher, and move or ascend to the next level because we believe that circumstances and conditions in our lives will be better.

God uses the problems and challenges of our past and present to prepare us for the next level.

God takes people higher who can handle it with a spirit of humility, and not get beside yourself.

Behaving ourselves wisely is a great indication that we are ready for the next level.

Remaining faithful to God at your present level will move God to take you to a higher level.

For more of Pastor Cryer's "Golden Nuggets" visit the SPBC website

## PROUD OF OUR YOUTH



Sis. Ray with our Youth Christian Club class

Photo credit Rene Camper Stewart



Next Gen choir- Photo credit Rene Camper Stewart



Sister Shawna Ray teaching children about Gratitude



Andrea Whitesides Photo credit Rene Camper Stewart

**SHOUT OUT TO  
PARENTS &  
GRANDPARENTS**



Meliek Anderson, Jesse and John-Isaac Gatlin-Photo credit: Gary Harbour

**Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.**

**—Romans 12:15**

**A Devotional**

While misery may love company, grief can lead many of us to withdraw and hide. So, let's remember those who have lost loved ones, especially this time of year. Let them know how you value and miss their loved ones, too. As you talk about their loved ones, please mention them by name. Don't feel like you need to explain the why behind their death or give advice to the grieving — remember, Job's counselors were a blessing until they started talking, trying to defend God and explain why Job was suffering. Love serves, encourages, and waits; so, serve, encourage, and wait. Do it with both the grieving and the rejoicing people in your fellowship. Make this a season of true joy and comfort. Affirm their grief while sharing their laughs and rejoicing with them in their good surprises.

They need to know it is ok to have moments of joy in their sadness. Also, dear friend in Jesus, make sure you are around people full of joy and rejoice with them, too! It's hard to serve if you don't rejoice.

**My Prayer...**

Holy God and comforting Father, please give us eyes to see and hearts to offer loving care to those around us who are grieving. During this special time of year, please use us to bless those in sorrow and help us as we join those who are rejoicing. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our source of comfort and joy. Amen.



## **A NEW MINISTER AT SPBC**

**LeDominique Davis**



We are so pleased to share our very Dominique Davis being licensed by our Pastor, Rev. Dr. Edward L. Cryer to be a Minister. LeDominique, age 24, is currently serving in the United States Navy, stationed at Point Mugu. He is originally from Fort Worth, Texas and before being stationed in Port Hueneme, he was stationed in Hawaii. LeDominique says he has always had an awareness of the gospel, but it was not until he lost his mother in 2018 that he came to fully understand it. He is now ready to fulfill God's plan for his life and do his best to ensure others are saved.

## Deacon and Sister Larry Bumpus, A Servant Couple

by Freda Ramey

Saint Paul Baptist Church is a church of worshipers whether they come as individuals, whole families or as we'll spotlight today, in the form of a "Servant Couple."

This article delves behind the scenes with Larry and Shirley Bumpus, who have been married almost 50 years.

Married on Good Friday, Larry and Shirley are parents to Tiffany, 49 and Larry, 48 – both enjoying their own successful careers.

In the mid 70s, Larry and Shirley with their two toddlers arrived to Ventura County from Detroit, Michigan with plans to build a good life for the family. As is the case with many young families migrating to Ventura County, their connection was Larry's military service which he started in 1976 and was stationed at Point Mugu. He'd urged his young wife to stay back home until he'd gotten himself rooted, but nope, Shirley was having none of that. As Shirley described, "It was Mom, Dad, two toddlers and a trunk of belongings." A little background – while they grew up in Detroit, Shirley's family is from Mississippi and Larry's from Tennessee. They're good wholesome, southern folks which explains their value for proper decorum, support of the church and old fashioned family values. The Bumpus' were raised in the church. In reflection, Larry states,

"My dad was a faithful man who was never hesitant to express his faith. He was not afraid to get down on his knees in front of me. When he did that, we were quiet. That is something that I always remember. If he was in prayer when we approached his home, we knew to go around to another door so as to not disturb him. You have to respect that part of who that person is. It's true with a man's house and likewise, true with God's house (the church)."

Shirley goes on to explain, "We arrived here to California, having never seen mountains and the ocean. It was a lot to take in. My oldest sister lived in Los Angeles.

She's the only connection we had to California. They brought us up here to Point Mugu where Larry was stationed so we could get life started here. This has been a great place to raise the kids. We now have four grandkids, and everybody is grown."

"We got involved with St. Paul through the kids," says Shirley. "They started going to St. Paul with their friends. They told me about it then I too started attending."

Larry shared that from 1985 to 1990, Shirley told him about St. Paul. Upon his return, he, too joined the family. Larry currently serves as a Deacon and President of the Men's Ministry and attributes these roles to many faithful men of God who have since gone home to the Lord. "My walk of faith is a journey with Christ, but others keep me rooted." "You have to put yourself in a position where you can be successful in the walk of faith because that journey can try to sway you. Even though Christ has died for us, we still have to be accountable for our actions," stated Larry. "We must continue to walk and be faithful to the people and the pastor – to assist in any endeavor in a faith in line with what Christ would do."

Shirley has served in almost every role in the church. "I have done just about everything you might think to do in the church. The only thing is not sing in the choir".

"I led the Women's department and have been ushering 20 plus years. I've been a convention person in the church. I have had four mentors including Mother Leola Samuels. When ushering, we are the first face you see. If you are someone new, if you are a non-Christian, that first face is the first expression of what's going on in the church. No frowns, always a smile, greeting newcomers. Our main job is to support the pastor. We are the vessels people see... we represent what our Pastor and Church are all about. We want you to feel at home and relaxed.

I love my church.," says Shirley. Currently, Shirley serves as the Pastor's secretary and church clerk.

"Larry is the one with the level head." Sister Bumpus expresses, "Whenever anything negative is brought up, he always says "Let's not discuss that. Leave it there. I don't want anything to hinder what we are doing."

"We help each other keep focused. There are challenges. The whole thing is we are about working with people in the church and trying to help deepen and strengthen our relationship with God. We want to model Christlike behavior. There are so many names – Samuels, Walters, Chambers, Champion and so many ... so many upstanding people. Deacon Joe Brown is one I cling to in prayer and thought. Each one bares a piece worthy to sustain what we are to do."

"The support the congregation can give us is prayer and supplication," say the Bumpus'.



Contributed photo

1 Peter 3:7 ESV

**Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.**

## **Sunday Morning Behind the Scenes** by Deacon Dr. Vincent Stewart

Have you ever thought about what happens before the 10 AM Sunday Service? Well, the first thing is that there is a morning Sunday School. The teachers are Rev. Alan Timmons, Deacon Danny Thrower, Deacon Dennis Chiles, and other leaders in the church. Sunday School and Bible Study are essential to developing one's growth in the Word.

While Sunday School is in session, Deacon Joe Brown and Brother Steve Robinson are taking steps to ensure the sound system is working for the service.

Brother Craig Swan, Brother Melieck Anderson, Brother Henry Patterson, and Deacon Dr. Vincent Stewart work on the streaming system using Facebook Live and YouTube Live. These systems allow those unable to attend the service in person to join the worship.

Around 9:40 AM, the Deacons and Ministers of St. Paul Baptist Church meet with Pastor Dr. Edward L Cryer to pray that someone will come to Christ. The Holy Spirit will move into the sanctuary, touching those in need; the Pastor will brief and discuss assignments related to the service with the Ministers and Deacons.

When members join the church, a new members class lasts about 4 weeks. This class gives the new members orientation and instruction in the church.

The choir meets in the back just ahead of service to review the order of service and any last-minute changes to the songs sung in the service.

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### **BE THE EVANGELIST-SPREAD THE GOSPEL**

SPBC Service Times

Sunday School 8:30 a.m.

Morning Worship 10:00 a.m.

Tuesday Prayer Meeting 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday Bible Study 7:00 p.m.



**Behind the scenes before 10:00am service**

Photo credit: Dr. Vincent Stewart



**We are blessed every second Sunday  
by our Men's Choir**