

9th District AME Church

**9TH DISTRICT
AME CHURCH**

P.O. Box 11705,
Birmingham, AL 35202
1500 Daniel Payne Drive
Birmingham, AL 35214

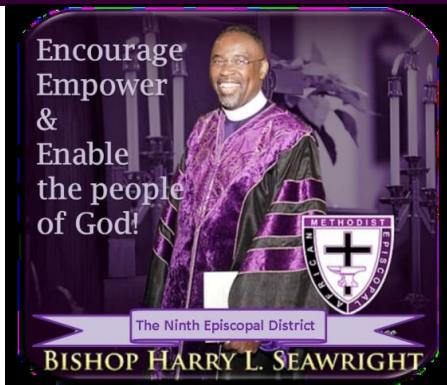
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9th District

**"God Our
Father, Christ
Our Redeemer,
the Holy Spirit
Our Comforter,
Humankind Our
Family"**



**SAVE THE NEW DATE!
9th Episcopal District Mid-Year Convocation
Thursday, March 30- Saturday, April 1, 2017
Daniel Payne Community Plaza**

1500 Daniel Payne Drive, Birmingham, Alabama 35214
Hotel Accommodations & Other Details: TBA

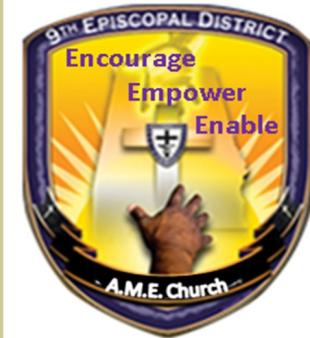
A PRAISE REPORT FROM THE EDITOR

Walking, driving, standing, dancing, shopping, cooking, exercising, pacing, showering unassisted, answering the door, crossing my legs, sleeping peacefully, jumping out of bed, travelling on a whim, going to a movie alone, scratching my leg, standing without a walker, strolling down the sidewalk, hula hooping, climbing steps, climbing stairs, picking up Kaleb, hugging family and friends while standing, fixing my own plate, getting my own drink, dusting furniture, doing laundry, cleaning bathrooms, vacuuming floors, sweeping floors, mopping floors, wearing two shoes, going to piano lessons, going to church, going on a picnic, watching sports events from high in the bleachers, "driving the train" rather than just watching, getting a pedicure....etc....

These activities and many more are blessings that I will never take for granted again. Many of you know that I suffered a major ankle fracture in August, followed by surgery. I thank you for prayers, thoughts and encouraging words! Franklin is now a "certified" Caregiver, and he appreciates your prayers as well. I hope you will be more aware of the "little things" that make up your daily lives. And for those who face mobility challenges and other issues on an ongoing basis and continue to press your way, YOU ARE MY HEROES! From a wheelchair at annual conference in September to walking unassisted at the Episcopal WMS Convention in December. To God be the Glory for continued progress!

Praying for each of you the blessings of this Joyous Season throughout the year!

Blessings and Joy!.... Marge



**The
Miracles
Continue**

Inside this issue:

From the Bishop's Heart	2
Thanks from Episcopal Family	3
Phenix City District Planning Meeting	4
Miracles Continue in ARR Conference	5
Prayer Ministry Update	6
Women in Ministry News	8
Miracles Continue in NE Conference	9
Youth Lives Matter Event Postponed	10
Christian Education Certification	11

The Ninth Hour

**The Official Newsletter of the 9th Episcopal District
African Methodist Episcopal District**

Volume VII, Issue 2

December 20, 2016

**The Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright, Presiding Prelate
The Reverend Sherita Moon Seawright, WMS Supervisor**

Mrs. Marge Simmons, Editor

The Reverend Alvelyn Sanders, Executive Administrative Assistant

Ms. Nell Hayes, Administrative Assistant

Welcome Home, Bishop and Supervisor Seawright!



It's official---Bishop and Supervisor Seawright are now bona fide Alabama residents! Welcome home!! Words are not adequate to express our joy as the 9th District Grand Reunion begins amidst prayers of thanksgiving for the miracles we've witnessed since October 28. The theme of this edition is "The Miracles Continue," which were the words at the end of an email from Bishop Seawright shortly after his surgery. It is my prayer that something inside this edition will inspire us to consistently take note of and give thanks to God for the miracles in our lives. Let's start today!

Special thanks to each contributor to this edition and to those who receive it in the Spirit with which it is offered. Thank you for your kind feedback.

The Ninth Hour

Guiding our minds to a continuous focus on structured times of prayer as recorded in the scriptures "... the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house"

(Excerpts from Acts 3: 1 and Acts 10: 30)

A Special Request from Bishop Seawright

Please share this newsletter, including making hard copies available for members who might not have access to e-mail or social media.



From the Bishop's Heart

The Miracle Continues

In just a few days, Christians will celebrate the birth of Jesus, our Savior. Christmas-time creates many emotions in many people. Whether the feeling is excitement, wonderment, surprise, or nervousness, Christmas is in the air.

Toddlers and little children are excited, waiting for Santa. Bigger children are on edge, wondering if they'll get "the latest" on Christmas morning. Adults weigh the options of the "re-gifting" surprise. Seniors reflect on their youthful days and nervously wonder if anyone will remember to give them gifts.

Unfortunately, this is the new state of our "society." We rush and stress about one 24-hour period in December. At some point during the day, somebody probably will mention "next Christmas".

As I think about Christmas this year, the miracle of the holiday brings more light. A miracle is defined as "a surprising and welcome event that cannot be explained by nature or science". Miracles are divine acts.

Christmas is the ultimate miracle. The miracle of Jesus' birth reminds us that God has the power and authority to create what's needed most. After Adam and Eve sinned, God wanted to restore the perfect relationship with humans. God, knowing humankind's sinfulness, loved us enough to send Jesus. Jesus, the child of a teenage girl whose purity was intact, was born to save people from sin.

Because Jesus was born and remained committed to his mission, the miracle continues. Jesus died on a cross and was buried in a tomb. Three days later, when the women came to anoint Jesus' body, the tomb was empty. God raised Jesus from the dead. The miracle continues. Just as Jesus was resurrected to new life, those of us who accept Jesus as our risen Savior die to sin and are resurrected to new life in Christ.

During this 2016 Christmas season, I challenge you to reflect on the miracles in your life. Look for miracles. Expect miracles. The miracle continues. I thank God for the miracles in my life.

Because of Christ, I am,

H. L. Seawright

Bishop Harry L. Seawright
Presiding Prelate
9th Episcopal District
AME Church



Component Ministries Make Plans to Bless God's People

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CERTIFICATION TRAINING

The Ninth District Christian Education Department is sponsoring a district certification training workshop. The training session is designed to equip and empower Christian Education Directors, Church School teachers and superintendents with some of the tools and resources they need to be more effective in their ministries. The two groups mentioned are the targeted groups. However, we encourage pastors and those who are interested in these ministries to join us in this training.

The training will be held on February 18, 2017 at Ward Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Prattville, Alabama, Rev. Agnes Lover, pastor. The registration cost is \$35. Lunch will be provided. We hope that every local church will be represented.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DIRECTORS & TEACHERS CERTIFICATION TRAINING

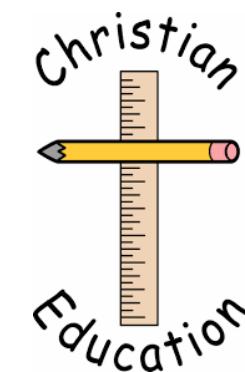
WARD CHAPEL AME CHURCH, PRATTVILLE, AL

FEBRUARY 18, 2017

9:00 AM-2:00 PM

REGISTRATION: \$35

*Registration form and all other details will be posted on the 9th District website.



*Submitted by Sister Hattie Nathan, Christian Education Director
9th Episcopal District*

Component Ministries Make Plans to Bless God's People

Youth Lives Matter – Postponed Until the CEC in July 2017 Plans to Hold District YLM Events are Underway

The Youth Lives Matter event originally scheduled for December 30, 2016, has been postponed until the Christian Education Congress (CEC) in July. To prepare for the CEC, each Presiding Elder District is asked to host a Youth Lives Matter (YLM) event at their respective Church School Convention.

Please see an excerpt of the revised implementation plan below. Requested participants are asked to contact Rev. Antoine Perrier, Chair of YLM by Thursday, January 5, 2017, via e-mail at avperrier@gmail.com. The next planning meeting will take place via conference call on Tuesday, January 17, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. Please plan to join the call.

Excerpt of Revised Plan:

Each Annual Conference is asked to provide a representative from each Presiding Elder District to act as a liaison for the district. (Member of Clergy Preferred.)

The Episcopal YPD Director will remain as a member of the YLM Committee to continue representation of YPD matters and to ensure that all YPD Directors are informed and active.

The Christian Education Congress team is asked to provide a representative to assist in coordinating the 9th District YLM event during the CEC at Troy University.

YLM requests a representative from the Episcopal Evangelism and Church Growth Committee as well.

**For more information about any of the items featured in The 9th Hour, please contact your Presiding Elder, or contact the 9th Episcopal District at (205) 326-4499/
E-mail: ninthdistrictame@gmail.com.**



The Episcopal Family Sends Thanks to the 9th Episcopal District

A Big “Thank You”

On Friday, October 28, 2016, while changing planes in Detroit, Michigan, I experienced full cardiac arrest. Through quick Delta Airlines and medical staff responses and supernatural intervention, God restored my heartbeat.

After a quadruple bypass and 6 weeks of recovery, I received clearance from my cardiologist. This allows me to begin my cardiac rehabilitation in Alabama.

9th District, thank you for your support. Immediately you blessed my family and me! Your blessings continue to overtake us, even today. You provided and provide everything necessary to assist with my healing. Prayers, cards, Presiding Elders' and Pastors' visits, Laity, Components of all levels, financial support, phone calls, texts, social media posts and genuine love sustain us.

Because we belong to a Connectional Church, we also thank Bishop John and Supervisor Penny White for their assistance. While we were in Dearborn, Michigan, the 4th District's Episcopal Team led their District in assisting us.

The Seawrights are grateful for everybody who has done anything to bless us. We pray God's blessing upon all of you.

I am happy to have moved to Alabama! I'm excited about the work to which God calls this District. However, please respect my need to continue the healing process. With your continued prayers, support, understanding and patience, I know God will restore me to total health.

During this Christmas season I pray blessings upon you. I expect continuous miracles in the 9th Episcopal District.

Because of Christ, we are,

Bishop Harry L. Seawright, Presiding Prelate
9th Episcopal District
Supported by Sherita, Shari, Matthew and Cameron Seawright

WHERE THERE
IS HOPE,
THERE IS *faith*.
WHERE THERE
IS FAITH, *miracles*
HAPPEN.
© 2016

Phenix City District Planning Meeting

2016-2017 Phenix City District Planning Meeting

The 2016-2017 Phenix City District Planning Meeting was held on Saturday, November 26, 2016 at Gaines Chapel A.M.E. Church in Phenix City, Alabama where Reverend Nathaniel Copeland is the pastor. Presiding Elder Samuel Smith met with pastors and clergy from 8:30 A.M. to 9:30 A.M. Eastern Time. Additionally, the Christian Education Department Meeting began at 9:00 A.M. to 9:30 A.M. Eastern Time. Furthermore, at 9:30 A.M., the Official Opening of the Phenix City District Planning Meeting was called to order by Presiding Elder Samuel Smith, as he led the congregation in the Devotional Service. The remaining order of service for the Phenix City District Planning was as follows; (1) presentations by the District Component Leaders (*Women's Missionary Society, Young People Department, Laity, Christian Education, Sons of Allen, DPCP Representative, Christian Debutante-Masters, Women in Ministry, and Health Ministry*); (2) a workshop presentation on "Organizational Leadership and Design," was presented by Reverend Wendell Jones; and (3) the Noon Day Worship Service. The Noon Day Worship Service "Message" was preached by Reverend Rodney Smith, pastor of St. John A.M.E. Church, Ft. Mitchell, Alabama. Reverend Smith preached on "**We are in this TOGETHER**".



Reverend Wendell Jones provided leadership training for the Phenix City District Planning Meeting...one of many nuggets of knowledge and experience was that "you grow from the outside in." (Organizational Leadership & Design)

A Moment of Praise" We give glory, honor, and praise to [Our Almighty God](#) for healing our 9th District Leader, Bishop Harry L. Seawright, and our Phenix City District Leader, Presiding Elder Samuel Smith. "**Our God is A Healer**" Amen.

Articles and photos submitted by Reverend Dr. Jo Ann Sumbry
Approved by Presiding Elder Samuel Smith
Phenix City District, NE Alabama Conference

*"We are
in This
Together"*

I will restore you to health
and heal your wounds,
declares the LORD.
Jeremiah 30:17

Miracles Continue in the Northeast Alabama Conference

During this 2016 Conference Year, sickness of many forms attacked the bodies of our families and friends. But knowing that, "**Our God is A Healer**," we trusted Him and not ourselves. "And then we "prayed without ceasing," and today our testimonies mirror the quote from Psalm 30:2, "**Lord my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me.**"

Highlights from the 7th Session of The Northeast Alabama Conference

The 7th Session of the Northeast Alabama Conference was called to order on Tuesday, October 11, 2016 by Bishop Harry Lee Seawright, the 133rd elected and consecrated Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, with our Supervisor, Reverend Sherita Moon Seawright present. The conference was held at Washington Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Tuskegee, Alabama, where The Reverend Dr. Andrew Holtz served as the Host Pastor, Sister Ramona Holtz, First Lady, and the Washington Chapel Family, Host Church.

The Northeast Alabama Conference Roll was called, followed by the reading of Presiding Elders' Reports. Next, Reverend Sherita Moon Seawright and the Northeast Alabama Conference Branch of the Women's Missionary Society President and Officers celebrated the Night-in-White Worship Service as the people of God honored missionaries who are life members for their "unwavering" services of going beyond the walls to help persons in need.

The second day of the Northeast Alabama Annual Conference was filled with excitement as the business of the Annual Conference was discussed. A very spirit-filled Hour of Power Worship Service followed Annual Conference business session where all in attendance "lifted the name of Jesus" and "praised God from whom all blessings flow." The late evening Worship Service was initiated with an uplifting great hymn of the church, "And are we yet alive". There was great singing, worship, and God's word entitled "**Put Your Eyes Back on Jesus**" was preached.

As the 7th Session of the Northeast Alabama Annual Conference continued, Bishop Seawright shared a brief overview of his ministry before his arrival in the Northeast Annual Conference. He mentioned how others thought it could not happen in his ministry, *but God showed the people it was possible*". Members of the Northeast Alabama Conference thank God for a Bishop who can share points of wisdom helpful for the pastors and church congregations.

Women in Ministry celebrated and worshipped in the afternoon hour. After the Women in Ministry Worship celebration, Bishop Reginald Jackson of the 6th District preached a powerful, on-time "Word" on, "**Stir Up the Gift**", as all in attendance celebrated the new ordinates.

On the final day of the Northeast Alabama Annual Conference, high commendations were given to the style of leadership exhibited by Bishop Seawright during the Conference. Other members of the Conference were recognized for their services offered during this 7th Session. Finally, the Sons of Allen worshipped in the afternoon and the Lay Organization of the Northeast Alabama Conference worshipped during the evening service. (Continued on Page 6)

*"Our
God
Heals"*

*"Put Your
Eyes
Back on
Jesus!"*

*"Stir
Up the
Gift!"*

Women in Ministry

“Standing United, Moving Forward, Stronger Together”

The African Methodist Episcopal Women in Ministry (AME/WIM) is the official professional organization for women pursuing excellence in ministry in the A. M. E. Church. We work to define, enhance, support, and expand the presence of women in ministry and leadership in the A. M. E. Church, the community, and beyond. Our goal is to empower each other to show up, to speak up, to stand up, and to stretch out to provide more effective and creative ministry/work to the church, the community, and beyond!



We are thankful to the previous AME/WIM Executive Board of the 9th Episcopal District under the leadership of Dr. Mary Hudson for their exemplary work during the previous quadrennium. During the 2016 Planning Meeting, the 9th Episcopal District WIM elected the following officers to serve as the Executive Board for the 2016-2020 Quadrennium. WIM members, contact an Executive Board member if you are interested in serving in one of the vacant positions. We plan to have all offices filled by the end of January 2017.

The Rev. Deborah Peppers, President
P. E. Letitia Watford, 1st Vice President

The Rev. Mattie Edwards, 2nd Vice President
The Rev. Mary Garrett, Secretary

The following elected Annual Conference Coordinators serve as ex-officio members of the Executive Board.

The Rev. Sandra Anderson, Alabama River Region Annual Conference
The Rev. Charles Marie Davis, Northwest Annual Conference
To Be Determined, Southeast Annual Conference
To Be Determined, Northeast Annual Conference
Dr. Lugenia Johnson, Southwest Annual Conference

The Rev. Peppers, 9th Episcopal District WIM President, along with other members of the 9th Episcopal District AME/WIM Executive Board are scheduled to meet with female clergy in each annual conference per the schedule below.

Southeast Annual Conference, January 13, 2017 @ 5:30 p.m.

New Mt. Zion, Eufaula, AL

Northeast Annual Conference, January 14, 2017 @ 10:00 a.m. (Eastern time)

Salem Chapel, Salem, AL

Northwest Annual Conference, January 14, 2017 @ 2:00 p.m.

New Magnolia, Bessemer, AL

Southwest Annual Conference, January 21, 2017 @ 11:00 a.m.

Metropolitan, Mobile, AL

Alabama River Region Annual Conference, January 21, 2017 @ 4:00 p.m.

St. Peter, Montgomery, AL

The 2016-2020 Quadrennial theme, “Standing United, Moving Forward, Stronger Together”, was highlighted along with the AME/WIM Quadrennium goals during the Connectional AME/WIM Executive Board meeting with the Episcopal District Presidents in Naperville, Illinois on December 5, 2016.

The Resolution on Gender Justice and Equality of Women was presented to the Commission on Women in Ministry by the Connectional Executive Board of the AME/WIM (the Rev. Erika D. Crawford, President) on December 6, 2016, adopted by the Commission on Women in Ministry (Bishop Anne E. Henning Byfield, Chair) and subsequently presented and adopted by the AME Church General Board (Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie, President) on December 7, 2016. (*Breaking News: Connectional AME/WM Newsletter*) Therefore, we stand united with the Connectional Executive Board of AME/WIM and the AME Church to call for and to work toward gender justice and the equality of women in all aspects of life. To see the entire resolution visit https://gallery.mailchimp.com/dc3c22c7522f31dcb68f6cd14/files/Final_draft_Dec_2016_general_board.pdf.

March 2017 will kick off the AME/WIM “Herstory is My Story” campaign. The intent of this campaign is to honor and celebrate at least four women who have made significant strides throughout the community. The women can either be clergy or laity from varied walks of life. More information will be available in January 2017. We ask that each local congregation throughout the 9th Episcopal District to join this celebration of women. Please send pictures of your celebrations as well as the biographies of the women celebrated to WomeninMinistry9@gmail.com.

We like to thank all our supporters, both publicly and privately, as we partner to advance the Kingdom of God!

Miracles Continue in the Alabama River Region Conference

MONTGOMERY-SELMA DISTRICT

ALABAMA RIVER REGION CONFERENCE

Rev. Albert L. Hyche, Presiding Elder

2016 ANNUAL CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

The Montgomery-Selma District of Alabama River Region Conference made special efforts to bridge the gap between the church and community of Montgomery, AL. On October 6, 2016 at 3:15 p.m. religious and community leaders met at Saint Paul A.M.E. Church in Montgomery. The Town hall meeting created a platform for exploring ways to engage and empower individuals to become more active in resolving social action concerns in their communities.

The following persons were our special guest...Pastor James Nuckles of Antioch Baptist Church, Mr. Thad McClammy from District 76 of the Alabama House of Representatives, Judge Steven L. Reed from the Montgomery County Probate Court, Pastor Cromwell Handy of the Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church, Sheriff Derrick Cunningham of the Montgomery Sheriff's office, and Police Chief Ernest Finley. The facilitator of the Town Hall was Rev. Valdes J. Snipes-Bennett, Pastor of Mt. Zion AME Church in Sevren, Maryland.

Probate Judge Steven Reed (pictured at right) made specific comments regarding the mental health facilities. He advised that there was no money available for keeping persons who have been voluntarily committed resulting in jails being used to house persons suffering from mental illnesses.

The Thursday night Ordination Service, one of Women’s Empowerment, was divinely orchestrated by God. Answering the heavenly call of The Reverend Jerena Lee and Mother Rosa L. Parks to continually defy the odds of inequality, The Reverend Dr. Jo Ann Browning, Co-Pastor of Ebenezer AME Church, Ft. Washington, Maryland reminded us that God is able to do “exceedingly abundantly above all...” as she powerfully preached **“God Is Able!”** A great cloud of witnesses was gathered: Supervisor Reverend Sherita Moon Seawright; Dr. Gwendolyn Boyd, President of Alabama State University; Rev. Yvonne Howse, Dean Alabama River Region; Chaplain (Major) Monica R. Lawson, United States Army; Naomi Scales and the Montgomery Alumnae Chapter Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; Presiding Elder Jacquelyn L. Denson, Camden District Southwest Alabama Annual Conference; Reverend Dr. Cathy McFadden, Old Ship African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and others to observe the elevation of The Reverend LaChane Nicole Slater to the Order of Itinerant Elder.



Article and photos submitted by Reverend Jessica Durr

9th Episcopal District of the AME Church Prayer Ministry

Bishop Harry L. Seawright

Presiding Prelate

The Rev. Sherita M. Seawright

Episcopal Supervisor

The Rev. Dr. Ronald D. Sterling

District Coordinator

The Rev. Raymond Swafford

Assistant District Coordinator

Warriors on the Wall Prayer Ministry News Update

The Prayer Ministry is designed to provide ongoing intercessory prayer for all areas of the ministry within the 9th Episcopal District and other ministries as deemed appropriate.

"And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart." Luke 18:1"

December 2016

"It seemed like a dream, too good to be true when God returned Zion's exiles.

We laughed, we sang, we couldn't believe our good fortune.

We were the talk of the nations—God was wonderful to them!"

GOD was wonderful to us; we are one happy people.

And now, God, do it again-- bring rains to our drought-stricken lives

So those who planted their crops in despair will shout hurrahs at the harvest,

*So those who went off with heavy hearts will come home laughing, with armloads
of blessing.*

The Lord has done great things for us as noted by the psalmist in Psalm 126. "Warriors on the Wall" Prayer Ministry is excited about what the Lord has done, and how He is still blessing the ministry to be a blessing!

As many of you know, our Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Harry L. Seawright, Presiding Prelate of the Ninth Episcopal District, and his beloved wife, our Episcopal Supervisor, the Reverend Sherita M. Seawright, came to Alabama with the spirit of prayer and expectation. They came running and were not slack in sharing and passing on the visions that the Lord had placed in their hearts. One of those visions was a prayer ministry in the State of Alabama.

Bishop Seawright shared that vision, and within several weeks, a written plan was presented to him for implementation in the district. He would choose the Rev. Dr. Ronald D. Sterling as the district coordinator and the Rev. Raymond Swafford, as assistant coordinator.

The excitement of the prayer ministry started spreading throughout the Episcopal District as presentations were made at the Annual Conferences. The original rollout date for the prayer ministry was scheduled for the November Planning Meeting. However, during the Alabama River Region Annual



Prayer Ministry Update (cont'd from page 6)

Conference, in October, as Dr. Sterling was making his energetic prayer-ministry presentation, the question was raised, "When will we start?" Well, since everything was in place, other than the coverage for the entire state, Dr. Sterling stated, "We can start as early as tomorrow!" So, the "Warriors on the Wall" Prayer Ministry officially started on the evening of October 6. Little did we know, the Lord was setting it up so that the ministry could be instrumental in bringing forth a miracle.

On the day of Bishop Seawright's medical emergency, the Warriors on the Wall Prayer Ministry was made aware of the situation; within 7-minutes, the warriors were on the line speaking words of life and calling on the name of Jesus for a miracle. And a miracle was manifested. We know that prayers all over the connectional church and probably abroad were sent up on Bishop's behalf; however, the vision of a prayer ministry that the Lord placed on the heart of Bishop, was the same ministry that would be instrumental in standing on the wall on his behalf.

There have been several testimonies of how the Lord has blessed through the prayer ministry, but the one with Bishop Seawright is one that we all can attest one. The Lord has done great things for us!

Since the prayer ministry's inception, there has been a total of 1,701 callers. The summary for each month and a total are shown below:

Month	Total Callers	Average Callers Per Day
October	509	19
November	765	25
December	427	24
TOTAL	1701	23

The ministry is grateful for the support across the district. Each day is supported by a conference or a component ministry: Sunday – 9th District WMS, Monday – Northwest Tuesday – Southeast, Wednesday – Alabama River Region, Thursday – Northeast, Friday & Saturday – Southwest.

You can join and support the prayers every night from 9:00 – 9:15 pm (CST) by calling 641-715-3580, access code 975086#.

Submitted by The Reverend Dr. Ronald D. Sterling