



# Jacob's Ladder



A NEWSLETTER OF OXFORD FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Sapada Thomas, Pastor

Volume 20, Number 11, November 2020

## Laity Sunday: "See a Need and Lead"

On October 18, 2020 Oxford First UMC gave Pastor Sapada Thomas the day off as we celebrated Laity Sunday. On this day each year worship is placed in the hands of the church's Lay members. This year the message was delivered by Minister Gracie Spearman, Chairperson of

OFUMC Prayer Ministry and Outreach Programs. She used as a subject "See a Need and Lead," drawing text from the book of Nehemiah. She illuminated Nehemiah's story to the congregation. It was a learning experience for all.



Chris Spearman in Praise Dance.



Closing out the service, Sis. Niler P. Franklin, Administrative Council Chairperson and Program Coordinator presented a plaque of Appreciation to Minister Spearman.

# My Ministry Journey

by Rev. Mattie Gipson



Who knew, when at the urging of my cousin, Mrs. Macie Goff, to be the Sunday School pianist, I would one day be a declarer of the Gospel, a proclaimer of the Good News, one chosen by the Almighty to shepherd His people? As I look back over my life's journey, that may well have been the spark that set me on this journey.

I was about ten years old and was by no means an accomplished musician. I tried to beg out of doing it, but she told me that would be my way of serving God. In spite of my continued efforts to decline, she wasn't taking NO for an answer. I couldn't play many songs and sometimes I could only play the melody line. She said "You just play the best that you can and I'll sing it out."

And so it was. I finally told my piano teacher about it and she started adding a hymn to my lesson each week. My repertoire increased and so did my skills. From time to time Mrs. Goff would remind me that I was making God smile. I continued playing for Sunday School and later began playing for the Children's Choir; then for the Youth Choir and eventually for all choirs.

As my skills grew, so did my responsibilities. As an active youth I attended District and Conference events and was often asked to play for worship at these events. I immensely enjoyed attending the various meetings and workshops and leadership training classes. I became acquainted with people all over the North Mississippi Conference. I attended The Youth Institute

every summer and became the youth Pianist for these events and learned much about how to choose the proper music according to the Christian Season and the type of event from the renown Mr. Leon Spight from Ridley, MS. Mr. Spight was a musician extraordinaire!! To learn from and work with him was a great privilege.

As part of my church experience/journey, I taught Sunday School and Vacation Bible School. I continued this throughout high school and during the summers as I matriculated through Rust College. Teaching the Youth Sunday School class was a special joy. We not only read and discussed the lesson from our lesson book but we learned how to relate what we learned to our lives. That was an awesome experience!!!

**FAST FORWARD**— As an adult I continued to be involved in the life of the church. I enjoyed learning the Bible as well as church history and church structure. I attended events at Lake Junaluska, NC and continued to broaden my knowledge about life and about the United Methodist Church. I never had even any remote idea about entering ministry. I just ENJOYED doing church work and trying to be the best Jesus follower I could be.

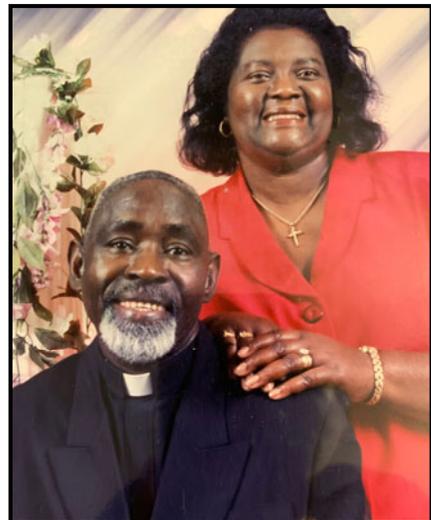
Sooooo, imagine my surprise when one Sunday after church as I was coming down from the choir loft and a lady who I respected and held in high esteem stepped into the aisle in front of me and asked me point blank, “Are you preaching yet?” I let out a hearty laugh and said, “Am I doing what?!!” She calmly replied as she smiled and said, “You’ll soon know what I’m talking about.” I then came back with, “No ma’am, Frank’s

the only preacher in the house.” And we each went our separate ways.

**FAST FORWARD AGAIN**—Imagine my amazement at Annual Conference’s Ordination Service when at the end of Service, the Bishop says, “There is someone in here tonight struggling with a call to ministry. It’s a female, and I invite you to come forward now. I know you have not talked to your pastor yet but that’s ok. Come now.” I looked wide-eyed at Frank and sat on my hands lest my hands fly up and admit I was the one. In a few minutes, another young lady rose from her seat and went forward. I let out a big sigh of relief that I WAS NOT THE ONE!

A couple of weeks later I found myself talking to Rev. Herod and asking how to tell when you’ve been called to preach. A broad smile came across his face and he said, “I was wondering when we’d have this conversation.” And the rest is history...

Coming soon: Things I’ve Learned Along the Way.





"...Freely you have received; freely give."  
MATTHEW 10:8b NIV

Oxford First UMC Prayer and Outreach Ministry will continue giving out food boxes on Mondays at 1:00 P.M. to those in need until the end of the year, or until otherwise noted, at the church on 102 Dylan Avenue.

*Jacob's Ladder* is a monthly publication of Oxford First United Methodist Church. EDITOR/PUBLISHER: Clarence H. Franklin. ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Niler P. Franklin. All rights reserved. Announcements or articles should be submitted to Rev. Sapada Thomas or submitted by e-mail directly to Franklin at [chfrank@panola.com](mailto:chfrank@panola.com). Visit our website at [www.OxfordFirst.org](http://www.OxfordFirst.org) and click on the *Jacob's Ladder* link to view previous month's issues.



**Administrative Council Meeting**  
**Wednesday, November 11, 2020**  
6:00 P.M.



**Thursday, November 12, 2020**

**Thursday, November 26, 2020**  
Both at 5:30 P.M.