

How to Budget That Next Tax Refund - p. 9

FREE



More RJF Gala Photos - pp. 11-12

Friday
March 21, 2025
Vol. 11, No. 29
ValleyWeeklyllc.com



GLORIA B: What Do You Have to Give? - p. 5

60th Anniversary of Bloody Sunday - Page 10

SALUTE!
Rosetta James Foundation
ELDER OF THE WEEK



Mother Pearl Harris

"I have learned that even when I have pain, I don't have to be one." - Maya Angelou

A&M Announces Founder's Day Events

It's time to come home, Bulldogs! All roads lead to The Hill, marking 150 years of life, legacy, leadership, and excellence in honor of visionary founder, Dr. William Hooper Council.

For one historic week, April 26 - May 4, The Hill will be alive with unforgettable events honoring past, present, and future; electrifying perfor-

mances that capture the AAMU spirit; and opportunities to connect, reflect, give back and celebrate.

Saturday, April 26
3K Run
Sponsored by Pre-Alumni
7:00 AM Registration | 8:00 AM Start Time | Event Center

Sunday, April 27
150th Gospel Concert
Featuring the Clark Sisters
4:00 PM | Event Center

Monday, April 28
Oratorical Contest and Bulldog Beat Performance
5:30 PM | Bradford Auditorium

Tuesday, April 29
Band Concert
7:00 PM | The Fellowship of Faith Church.
Enjoy an electrifying performance by the AAMU Band as they take the stage for a night of musical excellence.

Wednesday, April 30

Every Sunny Wednesday - Founder's Week Edition
12 Noon | The Quad
An afternoon of fun, fellowship, and student engagement.

Thursday, May 1
Founder's Day Panel Time TBD | The Welcome Center

Friday, May 2
Convocation & Wreath Lay Ceremony - 10:30 a.m. Bradford Auditorium - Keynote Speaker: Dr. Mark S.

Berry '91, SVP, Southern Company

Saturday, May 3
AAMU Alumni Association Awards Luncheon
10:30 AM | The Ernest Knight Reception Center

Sunday, May 4
Worship Service & Memorial Walk
10:00 AM | St. John AME Church
229 Church St NW, Huntsville, AL 35801

Ostara on the Mountain Set

Join in with the excited organizers at the John Scoble Memorial Pavilion at the beautiful Monte Sano State Park to celebrate Ostara Sunday, March 23, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.! Ritual attire encouraged, but not required.

Bring a dish



to share, and join others for food and fellowship, an egg hunt for the kids at 1 p.m., and a ritual to follow!

There is power available at the pavillion, so feel free

to bring crockpot foods! Alcohol is allowed in moderation. The pavillion is at the trailhead, and has a beautiful overlook, so please take photos and share them with us!

Also check out other Kids events & activities in Huntsville.

Panoply 2025 Details Coming Soon!

Panoply Arts Festival, presented by Mazda Toyota Manufacturing, will takeover Big Spring Park again this

spring! Join Arts Huntsville when it releases festival details to the public on Thursday, March 20, at 10 a.m. at the

Huntsville/Madison County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Still missed it? Visit www.arts-huntsville.org.

TMCF's SOAR HBCU Scholars Program Starting

High-achieving high school juniors can now apply for The Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) Seeking, Observing and

Achieving Results (SOAR) HBCU Scholars Program. The program is a joint partnership with TMCF, Alabama A&M Univer-

sity and J.F. Drake State Community & Technical College. The free one-week residential summer program allows high school juniors

(rising seniors) to live on campus and learn about Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Historically Black Com-

munity Colleges (HBCCs), college admission, financial aid and scholarship resources.

Huntsville Prepares for 2025 Cotton Row Run

For 45 years, the Cotton Row Run has been the premiere Memorial Day (May 26) running event in the South

that honors fallen military members who sacrificed their lives for our freedom! Runners pass through a living me-

morial flag line that commemorates Fallen Warriors whose family members live in North Alabama.

Proceeds from the

race benefit Gold Star Families and other charities in the community.

The Cotton Row Run is conducted by

the Huntsville Track Club.

For more information, visit [Cotton Row.org](http://CottonRow.org).

The Valley Weekly

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The Valley Weekly Washington One Minute

by Ron Hamm



Here are the latest top issues and events in Washington:

1. CONGRESS. The House and Senate are in recess this week. Last Friday night, by a vote of 54-46, the Senate approved the House-passed FY2025 Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act and sent it to the President for his signature, thereby averting a federal government shutdown at midnight. House Democrats lost another Member last week (the 2nd in 2 weeks) when Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ) passed away on Thursday due to complications from his cancer treatment, changing the ratio to 218 Rs to 213 Ds with 4 vacancies.

2. EXECUTIVE BRANCH. The Washington Post reported that federal employees began receiving emails last week ordering them to return to in-person work starting March 17. Last Thursday was the deadline for federal agencies to submit plans for mass layoffs that must include a significant reduction of full-time staff and cuts to real estate and budget. At the same time, last week, U.S. District Judge William Alsup in San Francisco ruled that fired probationary workers should be reinstated at the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Agriculture, Department of Energy, Department of Interior, and the Treasury Department. According to Reuters, Elon Musk's U.S. DOGE Service has overseen cuts of more

than 100,000 jobs across the 2.3 million-member federal civilian workforce. On Monday, the President attended his first board meeting as the new Chair of the Kennedy Center.

3. LAW FIRM BANS. On Friday, the White House issued its 3rd attack on a major law firm, suspending the security clearances and banning federal contracts with the 1200-lawyer Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison firm (due to former Paul Weiss lawyer Mark Pomerantz's actions to build a criminal case against Trump years ago when he worked at the Manhattan district attorney's office) just days after U.S. District Judge Beryl Howell ruled that a prior executive order that sought to prevent employees of the law firm Perkins Coie from entering federal government buildings and forcing contractors to reveal if they engage in business with the firm appeared to violate the Constitution. The Friday order against Paul Weiss was the third time the administration has gone after a major law firm: in late February, it suspended clearances for Covington & Burling for providing pro bono service to former special counsel Jack Smith.

4. CANADIAN TARIFFS. Last Thursday Canadian Finance Minister Dominic LeBlanc was in DC to meet with administration officials to discuss upcoming automobile and other goods

tariffs the U.S. is set to impose beginning April 2. After on-again-off-again threats of expansive tariffs, the U.S. now applies 25% surcharges on Canadian (and all other producers of) steel and aluminum as well as 25% on goods that do

not comply with the existing USMCA trade agreement between the two nations. Regarding the April 2 tariffs, The New York Times reported that the administration was planning to go full steam ahead, and then, afterward, consider individual exemptions, changes, or broader renegotiations on tariffs with specific countries, depending on market reactions. According to an analysis published in Sunday's Washington Post, retaliatory tariffs against the U.S. imposed by China and Canada aimed at the agriculture, manufacturing, and energy sectors will impact a disproportionately high 3 million workers in counties that voted for Donald Trump (versus 2 million workers in Kamala Harris-voting counties).

5. SUPREME COURT. Last Thursday the White House asked the Supreme Court to allow it to enforce an executive order ending birthright citizenship that has been blocked nationally by federal district judges in Seattle, Maryland, and Massachusetts. Next Monday, the court will hear a pair of cases, Louisiana v. Callais and Robinson v. Callais, as to whether Louisiana's creation of a 2nd majority-Black congressional district in the state was an unconstitutional racial gerrymander. In May 2024, the Supreme Court put a lower court's decision to strike the district on hold, clearing the way for the state to use the 2024 redistricting map with the 2 majority-Black congress-

sional districts in place for last year's elections.

6. HIGHER EDUCATION. On March 14, U.S. Department of Education Acting Under Secretary James Bergeron sent a letter to education stakeholders addressing concerns over the massive layoffs, officially called "Reductions in Force" (RIFs), that occurred at the Education Department (ED) last week. Mr. Bergeron attempted to reassure stakeholders that the cuts were strategically applied to minimize disruptions to critical services. His message was that college officials should not panic about the dramatic slashing of ED personnel and the consequences it might have for their students and campuses. Some of the key points included:

- Federal Student Aid Operations Unaffected: The RIFs did not impact employees handling FAFSA processing or loan servicing.
- Institutional Aid Programs Remain Funded: The Office of Postsecondary Educa-

tion, which oversees TRIO, institutional aid, and Minority-Serving Institutions, was not affected.

- Career & Technical Education Programs Intact: Critical functions under the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (including Perkins Act administration) remain operational.
 - Concerns Over Service Delivery: Despite reassurances, the significant reduction in staff raises concerns about ED's ability to efficiently deliver services, especially given prior understaffing.
 - Reorganization Efforts: Bergeron framed the layoffs as a strategic move to reorganize department functions, though stakeholders remain anxious about further changes.
- Overall, while federal funding and core services remain intact for now, concerns persist about ED's long-term capacity to effectively support students and institutions.

7. FEBRUARY INFLATION REPORT. The Department of Labor reported better than expected inflation data last week with the Consumer

Price Index up only 0.2% in February for an annual rate of 2.8% from a year earlier, after January's surprisingly large 0.5% increase. The core measure of inflation, which strips out volatile food and fuel prices to give a better sense of the underlying trend, rose 0.2% from the previous month for an annual rate of 3.1%. A 4% drop in airfares in February, the result of sharply lower demand for airline travel, was a primary driver of the better-than-expected inflation data, although prices for consumer staples, such as eggs and other grocery items, continue to rise. The Federal Reserve's Federal Open Market Committee meets Tuesday and Wednesday and is expected to take no action on interest rates due to concerns that an expanding trade war will cause prices to rise.

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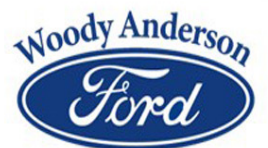


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ON THIS DAY

Led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., civil rights demonstrators began historic trek from Selma to Montgomery, the capital of Alabama, on March 21, 1965.

- BET.com/Bettman



Honoring Our Elders, Investing in Our Future!

The Valley Weekly

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The Valley Weekly
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In the book of 1 Peter, we are reminded to submit to God, resist the devil, and for young people to honor their elders and be clothed in humility. It is in this spirit of humility and gratitude that the Rosetta James Foundation recently hosted its annual 19th Annual Honoring Our Elders Celebration, a moving tribute to those who have spent their lives serving our community.

Last Saturday afternoon, we recognized nine distinguished elders for their commitment, leadership, and lifelong contributions. Their wisdom, resilience, and service inspire us all. I extend a heartfelt thank you to our dedicated Board members—Linda Burruss, Dr. Annie Grace Robinson, Jerome Saintjones, Gary T. Whitley, Jr., Ja'Lissa Williams, and Morgan Saintjones—whose tireless efforts make this event a success each year.

Our work would not be possible without the invaluable contributions of our community volunteers. We deeply appreciate the dedication of Dr. Carla Clift, Robert Drake, Michael Morns, Dorothy El-Amin, Mariah Mathis, and Kimberly Rodriquez, who played an instrumental role in welcoming and accommodating over 400 guests. Special thanks to Horace Wilson for his remarkable presentation, which added a heartfelt touch to the evening.

We are also grateful to the staff at The Jackson Center, whose unwavering support and hospitality ensure a seamless and welcoming experience for our elders and their guests. Our program participants—Elder Linda Spalla and Pioneers Rev. Earla S. Lockhart and Eugene Dickerson--helped create an unforgettable day filled with warmth, respect, and celebration.

Beyond recognizing our elders, the Rosetta James Foundation remains committed to investing in the future of our community by supporting young people who give back. This year, we proudly awarded \$37,500 in scholarships to students who have demonstrated a strong commitment to volunteerism. We presented 25 remarkable students with \$1,500 scholarships. Together, they have dedicated thousands of hours to community service each year. Congratulations to each recipient—we wish you continued success in your education and future careers as engaged and compassionate citizens.

Times are changing rapidly, and the wisdom of our elders is more vital than ever. As a child, I often heard the phrase, "Honor your parents and elders so you will live long," but I never fully grasped its depth. Now, as I witness the swift passage of space and time, I understand its profound truth. Elders carry the knowledge and experiences that shape our communities, and their guidance is invaluable.

I personally cherish the time I spend with elders, always finding their wisdom to be a source of strength and inspiration. My hope is to leave behind a legacy of respect and appreciation for generations to come. One day, I hope to grow old, surrounded by people who understand that honoring and respecting elders is ultimately the way of honoring and respecting ourselves.


To all who support the mission of the Rosetta James Foundation, thank you. Your generosity and dedication ensure that we continue to uplift and celebrate those who have paved the way before us while empowering the next generation to serve. Please enjoy the photos we've included this week on pages 11 and 12.

With great admiration and humility—until next week.

Dorothy



MARCH 21 - AL FREEMAN JR. - Albert Cornelius Freeman Jr. was an actor, director, and educator. Freeman was a life member of The Actors Studio. He appeared in a wide variety of plays, ranging from Leroi Jones' *Slave/Toilet* to Joe Papp's revivals of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* and *Troilus and Cressida*, and films, including *My Sweet Charlie*, *Finian's Rainbow*, and *Malcolm X*, as well as television series and soap operas, such as *One Life to Live*, *The Cosby Show*, *Law & Order*, *Homicide: Life on the Street* and *The Edge of Night*.



- BlackCelebrityBirthdays.org

THE VALLEY WEEKLY
**VALLEY
DEATHS**



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Funeral service will be announced for **MR. JOSEPH KNOWLES** (b. 1959) and **MS. LINDA "CheChe" HAYNES** (b. 1976) at a later date.

Funeral service for **MR. IDOWU BAILEY** (b. 1962) was Saturday, March 15, at The Redeemed Christian Church, Jesus House for All Nations, 4906 Blue Spring Road, Huntsville, Ala.

NELMS MEMORIAL FUNERAL HOME

2501 Carmichael Avenue NW- Huntsville, AL 35816
(256) 539-8189 - www.nelmsmemorial.net

Funeral service for **MOTHER MARY FRANCES BOOKER ROBINSON** (b. 1937) will be announced later.

Funeral service for **MR. EARL JAMES "AKA BJ" MCDONALD** (b. 1943) was Saturday, March 15, at Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church with Pastor Larry Davidson officiating.

Funeral service for **MR. ELBERT LEON RICE** (b. 1950) was held Saturday, March 15, at Bethany Primitive Baptist Church with Pastor James Battle, officiating.

Funeral service for **SSG (RET) DEMETRIUS A. JONES** (b. 1971) was Friday, March 14, at Triana Cumberland Presbyterian Church, 263 Stone Street, Madison, Ala., with Pastor James Childress, officiating and Rev. Tremaine Davis, eulogist.

ROYAL FUNERAL HOME

4315 Oakwood Avenue NW - Huntsville, AL 35810 -
(256) 534-8481- www.royalfh.com

Funeral service for **MRS. CATHEREN WILLIE PAMPLIN** (b. 1950) was Sunday, March 16, at the Royal Chapel of Memories, 4315 Oakwood Avenue NW, Huntsville, Ala., with Pastor Carolyn Lucas officiating.

Funeral service for **MRS. ALBERTA JORDAN READUS** (b. 1960) was Saturday, March 15, at Union Hill CPCA, 3126 Nevel Dr NW, Huntsville, Ala., with Dr. Edward Anderson officiating.

Funeral service for **MR. HAYWOOD COLUMBUS BURWELL** (b. 1953) was Friday, March 14, at Syler Tabernacle, 904 Oakwood Avenue NW, Huntsville, Ala.

Spiritual Game Plan

PRESTON BROWN'S

Today's Spiritual Game Plan: "You Complete Me"

Galatians 5:22 says, "But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

In the movie Jerry Maguire, the main character says to his love, "You complete me." This may sound endearing, but we have to remember that only God can complete us. That way, we don't have to place all the responsibility on the people we love to have all the answers for our lives. In the long run, it ends up being too much for them to handle. Most of us live in this physical, fallen world. A world tied to our emotions, where feelings are easily hurt and tempers usually flare. When we live in the spiritual world that is not tied to our emotions, we begin to understand how love can be patient and kind. We begin to see and understand that when we love someone, we won't be easily angered or proud or rude. All of these feelings are tied to physical emotions. That's why we need to tap into our spiritual sides; that will allow us to see all the possibilities of beautiful relationships with the people we are trying to love. We need to understand that having a relationship is a great thing, however, it's not the easiest thing when we allow ourselves to be rude, self-seeking, and easily angered. That is the physical side of us that we have to learn to deal with.

Remember, our relationships with other people all

begin with the personal relationship that we have with God. I also believe that our relationships with other people is a direct reflection of how much time we spend reading and meditating on His word. When we have this loving relationship with this loving God, we will understand that only God can complete us. He is the only one who can handle our situations. He is the only one who really knows the depth of our pain as well as the issues that we are facing in our lives. All we need to do is "Let Go and Let God" complete us in all that we do. May God grant you



spiritual success in walking in the fruits of the spirit, so that you can love others the way God intended for you to love.

Question: Why is it important to establish a relationship with God before we establish relationships with other people?

Stay encouraged, my brothers and sisters, and make sure you purchase a copy of my books, *Spiritual Game Plans For A Successful Life* and *A Champion Game Plan for Life*, at amazon.com.

NEXT WEEK:

"Realizing Your Full Potential"



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2025 NEWSFLASH: Trump is NOT the Enemy, However ...

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities against powers ..." - Ephesians 6:12

Michael Jackson's MoonWalk 2.0?

In the initial weeks of his administration, President Donald Trump has frequently reversed policy decisions, reminiscent of Michael Jackson's iconic moonwalk—appearing to move forward while sliding backward.

These reversals have affected areas such as federal workforce reductions and the imposition of foreign tariffs, often in response to legal challenges. The conservative National Review observed, "A disciplined, well-managed presidential administration shouldn't regularly find itself in the position of having to walk back things said by its most senior officials," [Walk-Back Season at the Trump White House | National Review](#).

Despite the controversies and the resulting "Trump-xhaustion," it's essential to recognize that Trump is not the primary adversary. As stated in Ephesians 6:12, our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the spiritual forces of evil. Trump may serve as a mirror, reflecting societal issues that we must address within ourselves.

Consider These Three Introspective Questions:

1. We criticize Trump's policies that separate families, but do our actions contribute to familial discord in our own lives?
2. We denounce his falsehoods, yet are we consistently transparent and truthful in our dealings?
3. We oppose his discriminatory rhetoric, but do we harbor biases that affect our interactions with others?

The responsibility for societal issues doesn't rest solely on political figures. For instance, approximately 90 million eligible voters - 36% of eligible voters - abstained from voting in the last election, surpassing the number of votes for either Trump or Harris. This apathy underscores the need for personal accountability and active participation in our democracy.

No More "I told you so, ..."

It's time to move beyond saying "I told you so" and actively participate in fostering positive change. Trump isn't the enemy, but a catalyst prompting us to reflect and act.

In conclusion, while it's easy to project our frustrations onto leaders like Trump, true change begins with self-examination and personal responsibility.

By addressing our shortcomings and engaging constructively in society, we can overcome the challenges that confront us.



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Millennial Moment

by Gloria B. Caldwell

What Do You Have to Give ...

God is asking for your best. That can be different for every individual. As in the Bible in Mark 12:41-44 and Luke 21:1-4, when Jesus observed wealthy individuals putting absorbent amounts of money in the temple treasury, a poor widow came and put in two coins. He told His disciples how she gave more. The story spoke about the spirit of generosity, sacrifice, and a giving heart. This shows that she gave her best, as well.

What do you have to give? What are you holding back? Don't you under-



stand what He will give you in return for what you give Him? He is the almighty. He is not just asking for money, He is talking about time, talents, and love. This ROI is something spectacular. Do you understand if you give yourself, in all ways, to Him, He will return healing for broken-

ness? Peace in exchange for chaos and turmoil. Joy in exchange for pain! In the midst of weakness, He can give you strength beyond imagination! When in doubt, He will give hope! In the struggle, He will give a renewed sense of purpose! Is this your desire?

This requires another Knockout Mentality staple, which is faith. It requires you to press in, and do! What are you waiting for? Consider what you have to give, then choose to give it! God loves you, and so do I! He has given you a gift; *open it!*

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The Valley Weekly

VALLEY EVENTS

HAPPENINGS, ACTIVITIES & MORE!

March 20
Spring Equinox Camping
Retreat: Joy Journey
Camp Edwards, LLC
205 A Water Tank Road
Toney, Ala.
campedwardsllc.com

“Fraud/Elder Abuse”
Presenter: Hannah Walters, FBI
Robert “Bob” Harrison
Senior Wellness and Advocacy Center
6156 Pulaski Pike NW
Huntsville, Ala. – (256)
519-2040
11 a.m.

March 20-30
Rocket City Fair
2195 Jaycee Way
Huntsville, Ala.

“Brantley Gilbert: The Tattoos Tour 2025”
The Orion Amphitheater
701 Amphitheater Drive
Huntsville, Ala.
7 p.m.

March 21
Field Trip to Civil Rights
Institute (Birmingham,
Ala.)
Harrison Senior Wellness
and Advocacy Center - \$16
Departure: 8 a.m.
Return: 2 p.m.
Sign-up: Front Desk
Robert “Bob” Harrison
Senior Wellness and Advocacy Center
6156 Pulaski Pike NW
Huntsville, Ala.
(256) 519-2040

“Men Are from Mars,
Women Are from Venus”
LIVE
Mars Music Hall
Von Braun Center
700 Monroe Street
Downtown
Huntsville, Ala.
7:30 p.m.

March 22
World Water Day Waterway Cleanup
Huntsville’s Spring Branch
Parking: Madison County
Walking Track
4205 Pump Street SW
Huntsville, Ala.
(256) 532-5326
9 a.m.-12 noon


Jazz Jam Session
Valley Conservatory
(Donations Encouraged)
5732 U.S. Highway 431
Brownsboro, Ala.
5-7 p.m.

March 24
Girls on the Run
Fern Bell Recreation
Center
107A Sanders Road
Huntsville, Ala.
4-5:30 p.m.

PowerShot

“Taking the risk to climb isn't about the height or the potential fail— it's about boldly daring to face the unknown and the belief that the view from the top will make every step worth it.”

J. T. Moore



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No representation is made that the quality of the legal services to be performed is greater than the quality of legal services performed by other lawyers.

“Fear is a disease that eats away at logic
and makes man inhuman.”

- Marian Anderson



Rosetta James Foundation "Spotlight on Our Elders" ... Featuring

Mother Pearl Harris

First Lady Hattie Pearl Harris is a native of Forest, Mississippi, where she was the fifth of 10 children born to Mr. Henry Jones and the late Mother Annie Mae Jones. She graduated from East Scott High School in Lake, Mississippi. She is a licensed evangelist in the Church of God In Christ (COGIC).

Dr. Harris serves faithfully in various capacities in her local church, as well as on the district and jurisdictional levels. She has served diligently and faithfully in the gospel ministry for 31 years with her loving husband of 41 years—founder and pastor of True Light Church of God In Christ (Blessed Hope Ministry), Superintendent Dr. Terrell Harris, Jr.

Dr. Harris is the proud and blessed mother of three wonderful children—Apostle Derek T. Harris (Renee'), Trudy Harris Moore (Charles) and Mark Christopher Harris, all truly miracles from God. God graciously fulfilled Psalm 113:19 in her life: "He maketh the barren woman to keep house, to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the Lord." She is also blessed with four beauti-

ful grandchildren.

In November 1972, Dr. Harris received Jesus Christ as her personal Savior and was later baptized and filled with the precious gift of the Holy Ghost. Dr. Harris believes in fasting and prayer, and she has a victorious testimony that prayer changes things. A loving, kind, caring and God-fearing woman, she has been anointed by God to teach the unadulterated word of God in power and to minister to young, hurting women.

She is founder of "Personal Touch Ministry," which is divinely designed to bring healing, deliverance, restoration and hope to young women whose lives have been changed by neglect, rejection, divorce, depression, emotional hurt, poor self-esteem, brokenness, loneliness, abuse, guilt, as well as from suffering disappointments of unfulfilled potential and unrealized dreams and aspirations. Dr. Harris is a conference and seminar speaker and teacher, as well as a facilitator, counselor, encourager, motivational speaker, administrator and organizer. A retired educator, Dr. Harris was



an elementary teacher, principal, curriculum specialist for federal programs, and conflict resolution trainer. She is president of the Ministers Wives Guild on the local and district level. Dr. Harris is the executive director of O. L. Meadows School of Ministry, main campus, Birmingham, Alabama, and former president of the Jurisdictional Sunshine Band. She is the recipient of many awards and accommodations.

She holds an Associate of Arts degree, B.S., M.E., Certification in Administration and Supervision, Certificate in Theology, and an earned Ph.D. degree in biblical counseling.

Dr. Harris graciously embraces Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."



"Spotlight on Our Elders" is a weekly feature sponsored by the Rosetta James Foundation to promote **volunteerism** and activism in our community among those who are 70-plus. The Foundation also provides scholarships. Learn more about us at www.rosettajamesfoundation.org. Know an outstanding elder (70+) that you would like to see featured? Send us a photo and 250-word write-up to info@valleyweeklyllc.com.

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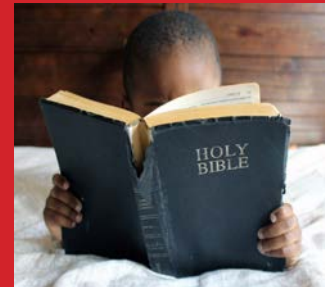
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This Sunday's Lectionary

Sunday, March 23, 2025

Third Sunday
in
Lent



(Track 2, Year C)

First Lesson:

Exodus 3:1-15

Psalm 63:1-8

Second Lesson:

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

GOSPEL:

Luke 13:1-9



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NOTES OF A NATIVE SON

This, Too ...

by afroblastik [John 'Jahni' Moore]



The other day, while walking in the woods of some property in the country, we came upon the crusted remains of an old Oldsmobile. It was the bare essence of a former glory—its frame twisted by time, its once-glossy paint now a muted patchwork of rust and decay. Time arched over it, nature had begun reclaiming it, vines weaving through the skeletal remains, composting leaves and branches settling into the crevices where an engine once roared. I know there had to be some wildlife housed somewhere beneath its hulking frame. At one point, this car had been a concept, a design, a plan, then brand new, rolling off a showroom floor with a pristine shine, full of promise. Possibly

the esteemed object of someone's dream. How many families had been transported back and forth, voices drifting from the windows as it sailed across the open terrain, 'the new ruling power of the road.' Then it was all over. Now, it sat still, wedged into the earth, forgotten. My first question was how it got there. Then something a lot more relevant: this too will pass.

Everything that seems real, solid, permanent, so pressing, so essential in the moment—it all fades in time. The things we chase, the worries that keep us up at night, the victories that swell our chests, the defeats that weigh us down—all of it moves forward, slipping into darkness, dissolving into the vast current of time. Nothing



stays forever, not even the most polished, powerful satisfying machine you ever owned. And yet, here we are, so often caught up in the illusion of permanence. We find ourselves suffering in the shadow of what might happen. We shiver in frigidity or fear of a world we can't control.

We hesitate, waiting for the 'perfect time.' We dwell in regret, replaying the past like we can rewrite it. We chase, we cling, we grasp, as if we can hold the world still in our hands. But life doesn't work that way. It is all fully alive and animated, moving on whether we're present

for it or not.

Perhaps the lesson in that old car wasn't just about decay or impermanence. Maybe that crusty Oldsmobile was simply a reminder to truly live while we can. Death reminds us to live. To be present in our actions, in our relationships, in our

own skin. To take in the crisp air on a morning walk, to laugh without restraint, to speak truth, to chase passions, to take the chance or risk, to show up for the people who matter. To live on purpose.

It's a sobering thought to realize that one day, we too will be remnants—memories in the hearts of those we touched, footprints fading into the path we walked. I say we get up, get out and go live. We know where we will end up. No sense in tiptoeing toward it in quiet desperation. Make each footprint count as spring springs forth in this season of rebirth. And when those other days come, may it be said and known that we didn't just exist in this thing.

We lived it.

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Some Very Smart Ways to Budget Your Tax Refund

(BPT) - Tax season is here, and many Americans are eagerly awaiting their tax refunds. While it might be tempting to splurge on something fun, there are other clever ways to use this extra cash to improve your financial budget this tax season. Here are three savvy tips to help you budget your tax refund:



1. Opt for a budget-friendly phone plan

Consider using your tax refund to switch to a more affordable and flexible phone plan. There are various no-contract plans available that can help you save money every month. For instance, you can find deals offering 50% off your Total Wireless 5G Unlimited plan when you bring your own phone and sign up for Auto Pay*. This means you could get one line for just \$25 per month, with taxes and fees included, guaranteed for five years.

By cutting your monthly phone bill in half while still enjoying unlimited wireless data, talk and text, you can redirect those savings to-

ward other financial goals.

2. Strengthen your emergency fund

Think of your emergency fund as a financial safety net. Life happens - whether it's an unexpected car repair or a medical bill, having some extra savings

can keep you from going into debt. Savings can start small, and for first-time savers, it can be daunting to put away money. What's important is to start somewhere and sooner rather than later. Aim to save at least three to six months'

worth of living expenses.

By doing so, you'll thank yourself for being prepared for those unexpected moments and avoid the stress of crunching numbers.

3. Make home improvements

Your home is one of your biggest investments, so why not put some of your tax refund into making it better? Consider using your tax refund for necessary repairs or upgrades, such as fixing a leaky roof, updating your kitchen, or adding energy-efficient appliances. These improvements can save you money in the long run and prevent small issues from becoming bigger problems.

It will also improve your living space, making your home more comfortable. Additionally, these enhancements can increase your home's value if you decide to sell or rent it in the future, allowing you to reap the financial benefits of your improvements.

4. Invest in your future

Your tax refund could be the perfect opportunity to set yourself up for long-term success. Whether it's contributing to a retirement account, such as an IRA or 401(k), it will help you prepare for the future without the worry of not having a fund to rely on.

In addition to retirement accounts, investing in your future can also mean

investing in your education and professional development. Enrolling in classes and courses can help you advance your personal learning as well as career aspirations. Many universities and colleges offer in-person or online courses that can fit best into your schedule.

These investments can yield long-term benefits, helping you achieve financial stability and career growth.

By wisely using your tax refund and exploring cost-effective options, you can enhance your financial budget. Plus, you'll have more peace of mind knowing you're making the most of your hard-earned money!

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Building Bridges Together: 60th Anniversary of Selma Bloody Sunday

by Renée Stroud-Ouellette

After 60 years, Selma, Alabama's Edmond Pettis Bridge remains an iconic structure of solidarity and perseverance in action. It is a stark reminder of what occurred on March 7, 1965, when civil rights demonstrators attempted to peacefully march from Selma to the state capitol in Montgomery to advocate for voting rights. They were also seeking justice for the murder of Jimmie Lee Jackson, a Baptist deacon, who was one of the four people who died that day. Instead, they were met with batons, tear gas, and weapons by White law enforcement officers and men on horseback. The event became known as "Bloody Sunday."

Tens of thousands of people from across the United States and abroad made the pilgrimage to Selma to commemorate Bloody Sunday on March 9, 2025. This year's theme was "Building Bridges Together" and was sponsored by the non-profit, Bridge Crossing Jubilee. Another organization, Salute Selma, hosted events on Blak women and Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Weekend events



included dignitaries included Martin Luther King III, Representatives Terri Sewell (D-AL-07) Maxine Waters (D-CA-24), and Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY-08). During a panel discussion at the Dallas County Courthouse, attendee



The historic Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama.

89-year-old Majorie Craig, NAACP Chair, Political Action Com-

mittee, said "we all need to be diligent about staying abreast of what's going on in the three branches of government – Executive, Legislative and Judicial. We need to wake up, protect our voting rights and hold our politicians accountable."

Merriment filled the air. Vendors aligned both sides of Water Street selling everything from African garb to turkey drumsticks to the obligatory commemorative T-shirts, lanyards, cups, and calendars. Music filled the air causing people to dance

in the streets. The smell of meat and fish on the grill was a sensory delight. It was a carnival-like atmosphere aimed at young, old and people in the middle. However, the conversations in the vendor booths were serious about the current situation facing the demise of democracy.

Anchoring the weekend of events was the opportunity to engage with a host of advocacy and benevolent groups like the National Advance of Colored People, League of Women Voters of Alabama (LWVA), Southern Poverty Law Center, Youth Group: Selma 2025 for Dr. LaDena Bolton for District Commissioner (Serving

Businesses and Empowering Families), Eastern Star, Grand Chapter, and Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge (Free and Accepted Masons, Jurisdiction of Alabama).

Forums like workshops, panels, breakfasts, and galas leading up to march day, provided participants an opportunity to find out what is needed to effect calls to action based on collaboration and inclusivity. According to Ms. Kathy Jones, President, LWVA, "what is needed is [for everyone] to stand in solidarity with the Omegas, Deltas, the NAACP and other like-minded people to push back attacks on DEI,

voter suppression, gerrymandering and others that inhibit people from living their lives."

The heavy rainfall ended just in time as officials prepared to open the gates leading to the bridge to allow for "The Annual Pilgrimage to Selma." The Bloody Sunday tragedy was publicized in the U.S., as well as around the world. A national outcry ensued sparking former President Lyndon B. Johnson to call a joint session of Congress to obtain the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. He signed it on March 9, 1965. The message was clear that day but according to marcher, Richard Porter from Bloomfield, Michigan, "we gone back to 'square one'. Something we cannot afford as a democracy."

Ms. Renée Stroud-Ouellette is a member of The League of Women Voters of Alabama, a nonpartisan civic and political grassroots organization working to protect and expand voting rights and ensure everyone is represented in our democracy. We empower voters and defend democracy through advocacy, education, and litigation, at the local, state, and national levels.

More from the Rosetta James Foundation 'Honoring Our Elders' Program

Official Images from Kandi Kam Photography
Saturday, March 8, 2025 - The Jackson Center



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