

A birthday celebration



Rev. Rickey E. Parks was born to parents Chester, Jr. and Azzilee Parks. He was an extra special baby because his parents were told that his birth could cause health concerns or even death if the pregnancy was not terminated, but with the faith of God and many prayers, his mother was determined to bring her son into the world. He was born at the Jefferson Regional Medical Center on Thursday, January 10th, 1963 at 4:46 pm and he weighed 6 pounds and 15 ounces.

Having been the only boy in his family, with two sisters Sharon and Carlotta, he was spoiled rotten to say the least. As a child, Pastor Parks' favorite toy was Batman. He also loved western cowboys. He thought he was the baddest thing in Pine Bluff, wearing his little cowboy hat and holster.

One of his favorite subjects was Physical Education. Upon graduating from high school, it was no surprise that he would pursue his advanced education in that field. In 1986, he received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Community Recreation and Physical Education from the University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff. Pastor Parks later received his Master of Science degree in Secondary Education.

During his college years, he met the love of his life, or as he would put it, his "rib" or the "Queen," Sis. Felicia Stribling. They first laid eyes on each other in a campus parking lot. During his first conversation with her, he decided to ask her out on a date and she accepted. She also accepted his marriage proposal, and they

were married on August 12th, 1989.

At the age of 18, God called and Pastor Parks accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. During his early discipleship at the Rose Hill Missionary Baptist Church, he served as an usher and as a choir member. On June 27th, 1999, he was ordained as a Minister at the Rose Hill Missionary Baptist Church. In 2002, Pastor Parks accepted the call to pastor at Star Bethel Missionary Baptist Church in Wabbaseka, Arkansas. Through his extensive work history, he now has experience with the church on local, state and national levels.

In 2008, Rev. Parks was called to pastor at Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church. Since February 2008, well over 140 new disciples have joined by way of baptism, reinstatement, letter, or Christian experience.

On Saturday, January 10th, Pilgrim showed its appreciation for his enthusiasm and dedication with an "Old Time Gospel" Musical Birthday Celebration. Special guests from the Champaign-Urbana churches contributed to the program, including Dea. Sam Johnson, Rev. Ronald Baker, Rev. Nate Williams and Sis. Audrey Mock. We heard about the various positions that Pastor Parks holds, from his family, co-workers and friends. It was a blessed birthday celebration filled with singing, expressions of thanks and plenty of birthday cake.

Upcoming Events

Pre-Valentine Musical
February 6th, 7:00 pm

National African American Parent Involvement Day
February 9th

Soup for the Soul
February 9th, 6:00 pm

Male Chorus Monthly Musical
February 14th, 7:00 pm

Christian Valentine Gala
February 14th, 7:00 pm - 11:00 pm

Field Wear & African Attire Sunday
February 22nd

BYF Black History Program
February 22nd, 3:30 pm

Bro. Steven Thompson, Jr.



I went to church.
I got to sit with the deacons.
They sang.
I had lots of family.
The water was three feet.
I was wet.
I had dinner at my grandma's house.
Pastor Parks came too.
We ate cake.

Bro. Steven O. Thompson, Jr. was featured in the Anthology of Short Stories by Young Americans for his story describing his baptismal day.



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SUBMIT IDEAS

Do you have a story suggestion or good news that you would like to share with Pilgrim? Drop a form in the newsletter submissions box located in the vestibule! You can also submit your story information to pmbcnewsletter@gmail.com. The deadline for March's issue is **February 18th**.

Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church

1310 North Sixth Street
Champaign, Illinois
(217) 356-9633

Pastor: Rev. Rickey E. Parks
Editor: Sis. Tyla N. Conerly

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Bro. Thompson honored for serving

Thirty-five individuals and one organization have been honored by the Ministerial Alliance of Champaign-Urbana & Vicinity. The alliance last gave awards in 2002 and resumed the practice this year at a program held in December of 2008 at St. Luke Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, Champaign.

The awards recognize people who have served the community in different ways, explained the Rev. Evelyn Underwood, Alliance President. Layperson of the Year Award, for "tireless devotion to education of all children and uplifting the community," went to 13 people.

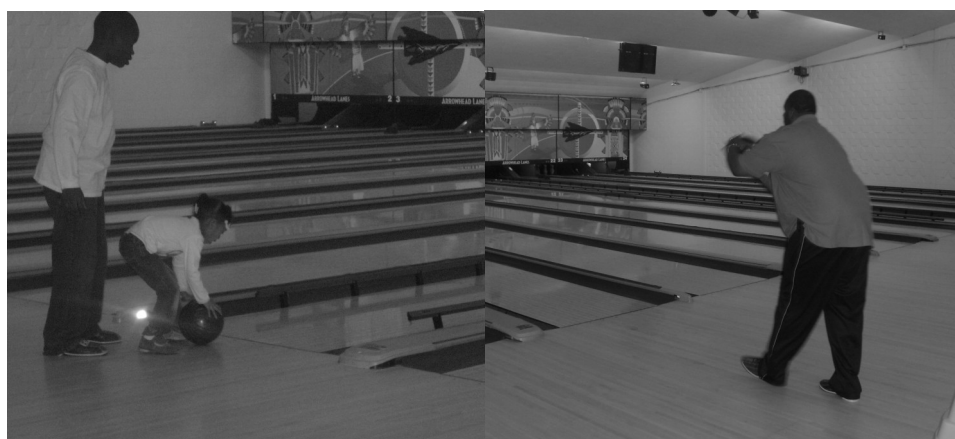
- Excerpt from The News-Gazette article "Individuals, group honored for serving" by Lynda Zimmer

Of those recognized, was Pilgrim's very own Bro. Patrick Thompson. Bro. Thompson, co-founder of Visionaries Educating Youths and Adults (VEYA) and a mentor who had dealt with truancy in Champaign schools.

Visionaries Educating Youth and Adults is a community-based organization collaborating with the University of Illinois College of Education's Department of Educational Policy Studies (EPS). They strive to provide tutoring and mentoring services to at-risk African American youths.

VEYA was initiated in 2004 by Bro. Patrick and Sis. Maria Thompson. It is a community initiative that focuses on improving the academic achievements of African American youths from kindergarten through high school.

Quarterly bowling outing



(Left) Bro. Rontez McClure helping his sister Jaymee. (Right) Bro. Scott James taking his turn for The Saints.

On Sunday, January 25th, the church fellowshiped together during the quarterly bowling outing at Arrowhead Bowling Lanes. Sis. Sandra Carter-Harvey, Coordinator, rallied up the following teams: Sis. Chrishanna and Connie Carter for The Saints, Bro Steve Campbell and Sis. Maria Lillard for the Heavenly Angels, Bro. Dennis Bigham and Sis. Crystal Peacock for the Disciples for Heaven, and Bro. Marcus Reid and Sis. Brittany Sanders for the Bountiful Bowlers.

Sis. Charlene James eventually bowled a strike for The Saints and Sis. Tiena Smith made five strikes for the Bountiful Bowlers by the end of the night. Sis. James' strike was not in vain, for The Saints went on to win with a total of 2,095 points.

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.

*Sigma Xi Chapter In Conjunction with
The Bridge Builder Foundation
Presents:*
**12TH ANNUAL
SCHOLARSHIP BALL**
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2009
DOORS OPEN AT 8:00PM

THE HOLIDAY INN HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER
1000 W KILARNEY, URBANA, IL
ADMISSION \$35

MUSIC BY:
BONSU

Christian Valentine Gala

Saturday, February 14, 2009

7:00 pm - 11:00 pm

Hanford Inn & Suites

2408 North Cunningham Avenue, Urbana

Tickets in advance: \$25.00

Tickets at the door: \$30.00

This event is sponsored by the Building Fund, featuring recording artist "Lemmie Battles" of the Chicago Mass Choir and various guests from the community.

The Building Fund is selling Valentine baskets for:

\$5.00, \$10.00, \$15.00, \$20.00 and \$30.00

Church Chat!



Sis. Stéfani Thompson

January Jamboree, Washington Preschool

On Thursday, January 22nd, Stéfani participated in the January Jamboree with her class as they performed the jumping and counting song.



Zion Leshawn Reid

Blessing, Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church

On Sunday, January 25th, baby Zion was blessed as Pastor Parks and both Sanders and Reid families gathered around and prayed.



Sis. Ranija Turner

Highest Honors, Franklin Middle School

Ranija is an 8th grader at Franklin Middle School. She received Highest Honors for her straight A performance this past semester.

The inauguration of Barack Obama

The inauguration of Barack Obama as the forty-fourth President of the United States took place on January 20th. The inauguration, with a record attendance for any event held in Washington, D.C., marked the commencement of the four-year term of Barack Obama as President and Joseph Biden as Vice President.

With his inauguration, Obama became the first African American to hold the office and the first President born in Hawaii. The theme was "A New Birth of Freedom," commemorating the 200th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln.

Sis. Sandra Carter-Harvey and her children traveled to Washington for the inauguration. Sis. Carter-Harvey exclaimed, "it was a feeling that you can't describe being among all those African Ameri-



Barack Obama, 44th President of the USA.

Americans making history".

Bro. Lloyd Winston, who was also in attendance, believes that "as long as Obama has God in his life, the United States of America is in good hands". Sis. Regina Purnell also traveled to Washington. Dea. Charles Adams was personally invited to the celebration for his dedicated service to the country.