



***GULF COAST JURISDICTION***  
*May 2017*

**Bishop Smith encourages the saints at the Sewell's anniversary**

THONOTOSASSA, FL. – Saints from across The Church of the Living God International and throughout the Gulf Coast Jurisdiction, gathered to hear Bishop Charles D. Smith, GCJ Bishop and Pastor of Promise, in Fort Walton Beach, FL teach a seminar to help us transform in the Spirit.

The occasion was the 23rd pastoral appreciation for Co-Pastors Tony and Deborah Sewell held at Lily of the Valley CLGI in Thonotosassa, FL on Saturday, May 6, 2017.

Teaching from James 1:5-8, Bishop Smith said, “We can’t be double minded about God. We must have faith in God!” He further added from Acts 10:34-48 that people, who believed in the Word of God without doubt and opened themselves up to God, were filled with the Holy Ghost.

Quoting from Jesus in Luke 8:25, Bishop Smith asked the saints, “Where is your faith?” “Doubting in your heart means there is some space in there that does not believe the truth. That space is doubt,” he said. “That is the part that made the disciples not be able to cast the devil out of the boy [in Mark 9:18],” he added.

He said that nobody should backslide believing that Jesus has risen from the dead. “When there’s no doubt that heaven is real, you stop sinning. When people go back to sin, they have to stop believing in something.”

“If there was any doubt in Jesus, he would have drew his hand back, when they went to put the nail in it. If he doubted that, then he would have doubted that God would raise him from the dead,” he said.

Referring to Abraham, Bishop Smith said, “Spiritual people as they grow in God will do all things so that God has victory and is glorified. Abraham called God Jehovah Jireh, when he provided a savior (His Son) a ram in the bush instead of Isaac.”

He said we should examine ourselves every time we go to prayer and look in the mirror [as it says in James 1:22-25] because we want to see some transformation. “We should all ask [as the disciples did in Mark 9:28] why could we not cast him out, in every case, when we pray and something does not work out.” Bishop Smith concluded by saying, “We must pray and fast to get to the point where God can fully use us.”



## More May stories

### **Category: Events**

*Churches across the jurisdiction held revivals, fundraisers, celebrated Mother's Day, pastoral appreciation, birthdays and congratulated high school and college graduates.*

- **From Life in Christ:** Elder Ruth Latham arrived at Life in Christ on May 11, 2017 with the theme, "God's love is amazing." She covered how we can have access to God through prayer by faith and we can cast all our cares unto him because he care for us. God can give us peace that the devil cannot duplicate and whatever the devil has for evil, God can turn into a blessing, miracle and testimony". The Saints were very encouraged. "Elder Latham was a blessing. I shared her message with many others after her visit," says Mother Earlie Mae Little.

*Aaryton Canahualpa:* "The visit by Elder Latham was one that was appreciated and enjoyed."

- **From Spirit of Christ:** Spirit of Christ held their Annual "Suds n Stuff" car wash & yard sale. This event has a twofold purpose. Members raise funds through the yard sales towards their attendance at the General Assembly, while raising funds for the church through the car wash. The combination of both events provided a great avenue for inviting potential new members to the church. Our greatest asset was Sister Venus Woods and her wonderful technique for waving people in to her Lemonade stand.



*Elder Debbie Calix:* "We had a wonderful time of hard work and fellowship."

**In the photos:** Members of Spirit of Christ washing cars, participating in a yard sale and selling lemonade.

- From Lily of the Valley:** During the first weekend in May, we had the blessing of honoring our shepherds once again for their labor in God. We had three wonderful speakers: Elder Charles Latham, Bishop (Sel) James Johnson, and to wrap up the Spirit-filled weekend, we heard from Elder Crystal Lucky. "Everyone left there with a blessing and motivation to press on in God," said Minister Shahara Franklin.



*Minister Desiree Sewell:* "I believe our Pastors felt very honored and appreciated."

**In the Photos:** Saints from around CLGI who attended the Sewell's pastoral appreciation celebration.



**In the photos:** Scenes from Lily of the Valley's Mother's Day event.

- From Lily of the Valley:** Mother's day at LOV was a very wonderfully emotional service. It was very moving to see the children of our mother's express their gratitude for all of the work they do on a daily basis. Most of the young people really expressed the appreciation they had, not only for their mother's daily care, but also for their mother's leading them in the way of the Lord. "I'm thankful that I have a leader who treats me as her son and teaches me in every area of my life," expressed Deacon Matthew Galarza.

*Minister Desiree Sewell:* "We all had a wonderful time!"



- From Prince of Peace:** Sister Deshalya Harrison completed her nursing degree from the Florida State College at Jacksonville. She had her pinning ceremony on May 8 at the Florida Times Union Performing Arts Center, Jacoby Hall and graduated on May 13.



*Pastor Paulette Harrison:* "I praise God for being with Sister Deshalya and bringing her through all of her accomplishments!"

**In the Photos:** Pastor Paulette Harrison and her daughter Sister Deshalya Harrison.



- **From Christ the Redeemer:** This month we celebrated three graduates at Christ the Redeemer. Minister Oyama Lucas graduated with his Master’s Degree in Theology. Minister Katrinae Lucas graduated from Kaplan University with her Master’s Degree in Healthcare Administration. And the talented, Jalin Lucas graduated from Bogalusa High School with honors, and will be attending the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in the fall.



He will also be joining the National Guard to become an officer.

*Minister Tanoa Williams:* “What an honor and a privilege to see how the Lord has kept this family and is excelling them both in the Spirit and in the natural!”

**In the Photos:** (left to right) Brother Jalin Lucas, Minister Oyama Lucas and Minister Katrinae Lucas.



- **From Christ the Redeemer:** The saints at Christ the Redeemer celebrated several birthdays in May: Minister Shaneika Brinkley, Brother Devon Kitt, and Deacon Josh Marsh had birthdays this month. The Christ the Redeemer congregation serenaded them with the Happy Birthday song!

Minister Tanoa Williams: “They all had a great time!”

**In the Photo:** (left to right) Elder Treani Thompson, Brother Orion Brinkley, Deacon Josh Marsh, Brother Devon Kitt and Minister Shaneika Brinkley.

- **From New Covenant:** Happy Birthday New Covenant saints! We have started back our monthly birthday celebration. Our Christian Education Superintendent, Elder Ruth Latham, started with a bang! “Everyone likes to be celebrated on their birthday and feel special. The Lord laid it on my heart to reinstitute the birthday celebrations to, show the saints just how special they are to our heavenly Father,” said Elder Latham. We celebrated all those who had a birthday from January through May. From this point forward, we will celebrate the birthdays each month. Elder Latham provided the food, Exhorter Maurissa Spriggs provided the decorations, and Exhorter Dominique Spriggs provided the desserts.



Exhorter Maurissa Spriggs: “Everyone had a great time!” **In the Photo:** Saints enjoying the birthday celebration.

- **From New Covenant:** At New Covenant this year for Mother's Day, the moms slept in (hopefully). We deviated from our normal routine of the Brotherhood department hosted breakfast, and instead allowed the mothers to get a few extra Z's. The brothers did however have light refreshments for the women and passed out flowers at the end of morning service.

- **From New Covenant:** On Memorial Day weekend, the New Covenant Youth and Young Adult department held a revival with Minister John Williams and family. The Lord used Minister John to encourage the youth and young adults to desire spiritual gifts and the Holy Spirit, because it is through these that people are converted and saved.



As we know, Minister John has the gift of healing. Minister John prayed for Minister Maurice Spriggs who had emergency surgery on his leg back in March. His doctor told him that it would take a full year for him to be able to run again. Well Minister John prayed for him and while he prayed, Mother Barbara

Cooper got a healing in her knee. Minister Spriggs had his last physical therapy session on Tuesday, June 6, and on Thursday, June 8, he started back running.

Deacon Doug Russell received a healing as well. Deacon Doug had been dealing with a cyst and pain in his knee, but God! Minister John prayed for him and the pain is gone.

Pastor Trinette Brooks and the saints from Auburn Opelika Worship Center attended the revival and Assistant Pastor Zavien Williams helped Minister John Williams pray for the saints.

We did not spend the entire revival in the church. Minister Crystal Derico, New Covenant's Youth and Young Adult director hosted a BBQ at her home on Saturday evening. It was fun fellowshiping with the saints.

The revival also served as a farewell to our current jurisdictional youth and young adult director. Deacon Doug created a wood plaque for the Williams family. Each of the New Covenant youth and young adults signed the back with well wishes and thanks for the great example they have been to the saints in the Gulf Coast Jurisdiction. On Sunday morning following service, Deacon Doug presented the plaque, (in photo on left) he designed and made, to Minister John and Minister Tanoa Williams for their service in the ministry to the Gulf Coast youth and young adults.



**In the Photos:** Saints receiving blessings at the Youth and Young Adult revival.

Pastor Augustus Russell and Assistant Pastor Bonita Russell encouraged Minister John and Minister Tanoa Williams by saying, “We have really enjoyed you in the Gulf Coast, you have really been a blessing here at New Covenant and we know you will be a blessing where ever you are, because the Lord is on your side. Our prayers will be with you according to Isaiah 41:10: *Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.* “We pray that God will continue to bless you and your family in your new endeavors.”



*Exhorter Maurissa Spriggs:* “We all had a great time and the Lord moved by miracles, wonders and signs during the revival.”

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### **Category: Testimony**

Saints at two churches received a healing and excelled in school, while one church is able to purchase much needed land.

- **From New Covenant:** The Lord is a keeper! The Lord knows the number of hairs on our head, so he surely knows how to touch us in our bodies. Lately Pop Hill has been dealing with congestive heart failure and kidney failure symptoms such as fluid retention in his feet and trouble breathing. He had to spend a few days in the hospital, but the Lord touched his body and he could return home. His symptoms returned but his daughter, Minister Andrea Spriggs, began to call upon the Lord and asked the church family to do the same. The Lord has touched him in his body and he is doing better.

*Minister Maurissa Spriggs:* “I praise God for his miracle working Power!”

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- **From Christ the Redeemer:** Brother John Williams III testified that he was one of three students in the 4th grade who received straight A's all year. He also earned the citizenship award in his class. He is excited to be entering the 5th grade when he starts school in the fall. In addition, to top it all off with his May blessings, he celebrated his 10th birthday this month.

*Minister Tanoa Williams:* “Congratulations John!”

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- **From Promise:** Bishop Charles D. Smith testified how the Lord brought the price of the land next to his church down so that he could purchase it to expand Promise CLGI and add classrooms and other needed space.

*Editorial Staff:* “God is always doing great things for his people!”

## Category: Blessing

*Saints in one church received a job promotion, multiple job offers and recognition for the increase in students testing scores.*

- **From New Covenant:** During the month of May, three members received job-related blessings. To start the month off, Minister Ronny Fleming received a promotion as assistant manager at the Chicken Salad Chick restaurant in Montgomery. Minister Ronny has been with the company since 2013 and has been a dedicated worker. He has worked his way from the prep line to his current position as assistant manager. During that time, he has found favor with his management. Minister Ronny said, “This job is truly a blessing from the Lord who is the head of my life. He has elevated me to a position that I never aimed for.”



Next, Deacon Doug Russell received a GS job offer. Deacon Doug was consistent in asking the saints to pray that the Lord would open the door for the right job and he did just that. Deacon Doug did not allow his current season to distract him from what God had planned for his next season. To encourage your faith even the more, he not only got the GS job offer, but he received another job offer as well. “Isn’t God great?”

Our teacher extraordinaire, Exhorter Crystal Russell, has done it again. In past Gulf Coast Newsletters, we learned that she started a debate team at Brewbaker Middle School where she teaches. Which is amazing in itself, but that is not all. Just within her first year of being at the middle school, the testing scores for the students have been the highest during the current principal’s term. The principal attributed this increase in scores to Exhorter Crystal Russell.

*Minister Maurissa Spriggs:* “We are so proud of them and thankful for the blessings they received!”

**In the Photo:** Minister Ronny Flemming.