



Transforming

lives
for the

next generation

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Beloved Disciples.

For the union between 'pastor and people,' 2023 marked **10 years** of our sojourn towards the vision God is calling us to: **"TRANSFORM LIVES FOR THE NEXT GENERATION."** As milestones give us an opportunity to reflect, they should also consider the road ahead God will have us to travel. I look forward to who God has called into the consequential congregation that is Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

In the Spring of this year, as a congregation we affirmed the Master Plan for our Midtown Campus which comprises over 400,000 square feet of facilities over 23 acres. **THE MASTER PLAN** is a grand vision of how this church can take the lead in bringing to life a community for people of all economic backgrounds, contribute to the educational landscape of our city, maintain our presence as a vibrant congregation, and secure a solid financial foundation for future generations to further the legacy of our church. More than redeveloping our footprint in Midtown, we are transforming a community so that we can continue to transform lives for Jesus Christ.

As we continue to live out the challenge to "Transform Lives for the Next Generation," in 2024 our thematic focus is **"PROCLAIMING JESUS. MATURING DISCIPLES."** It is grounded in the truth of Colossians 1:28. The year's objective is to share Jesus Christ with our community and the world through worship, acts of service, radical hospitality and justice while we cultivate community within the life of our church through care, disciple-making and intentional fellowship. As we embrace a new reality emerging from the disruptive coronavirus pandemic, we must reorient ourselves to the core of our purpose as a Christian congregation. Our purpose is to reach as many people as we can and disciple them to follow Jesus. If we are faithful to our message and intentional in our approach, this year will be the beginning of a fruitful season.

So much transpires in the course of a year at an astonishing pace that we seldom pause to consider God's work through our congregation. This Annual Report is more than just a representation of what we have accomplished as a congregation. It is a testimony of what great things we can do, with the help of God, as we work together in unity. Please take time and peruse the pages of this document. Thank God for what God has done in us, through us and for us. Then I challenge you to ask God how you will participate in the mandate God has given us to transform lives for the next generation.

Yielded to God,

Rev. Dr. J. Lawrence Turner

Rev. Dr. J. Lawrence Turner



CONTINUING TO TRANSFORM LIVES THROUGH *Outreach*

It has been another rewarding year of supporting our local community. The BLVD's Outreach Ministries have consistently cared for those in need in our neighborhood, community, and city at large. We want to share some of the efforts made in 2023. **MANNA OUTREACH** continues to serve residents experiencing insufficient access to food. Through this ministry we provided 258,000+ meals via food boxes to seniors, people with disabilities, or those facing emergencies. Ultimately serving 11,000+ people, we continued in the fight against food insecurities. Beyond Manna Outreach, on a weekly basis The BLVD provides hot meals to 50 residents in Poston's Housing, snack bags to Room In the Inn, undergarments for the students of Perea Elementary, and needed items to the Hospitality Hub.

Our **MILITARY SUPPORT MINISTRY** enjoyed another year of supporting our active duty military and veterans within and beyond our church walls. Over the summer, we assisted with the Camp Lead initiative and VA Challenge. In the fall, we led a pen pal effort with active duty military members from the church and produced a video for Veterans Sunday, which featured a proud military family that includes a General, Lieutenant Colonel and Senior Master Sergeant. And to close out the year, we led a youth tour at the 164th Air Wing Military Base. We look forward to continuing this work in 2024 and touching even more lives in the Greater Memphis community.

On July 30, we hosted our **"BACK TO SCHOOL"** event in The BLVD Family Life Center. At the event, we supplied over 900 families with backpacks filled with essentials for the school year. Partnering with the Academy for Youth Empowerment allowed us to not only meet the academic needs of our community, but also the physiological needs. Together, we provided opportunities for families to receive vaccinations, job placement, and dental care.



900 FAMILIES SERVED FOR
"BACK TO SCHOOL"
SEASON



11,000+ PEOPLE SERVED
THROUGH MANNA
OUTREACH



258,000+ MEALS PROVIDED
BY MANNA OUTREACH

CONTINUING TO TRANSFORM LIVES THROUGH *Outreach*

400 TEACHERS
SUPPLIED WITH
TOOLS



On July 31, we proudly sponsored The BLVD's first **"TEACHERS STORE."** At this event, we gave free school supplies to 400 local teachers. Those much-needed teacher supplies included: dry erasers, markers, copy paper, pencil sharpeners, and Candy Apples. We were able to bless our teachers, who give so much to so many.

NEW CITY-WIDE
WEIGHT LOSS
INITIATIVE
LAUNCHED



Our **CHRISTIAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION (CHO)** partnered with Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare on a three-year health initiative called **"HEALTHIER 901."** This initiative challenges our church and our city to lose 1 million pounds by 2026. We look forward to watching sign-ups on the "Healthier 901" app and taking this initiative to another level in 2024!

30 YOUTH
ENGAGED IN
MILITARY BASE
TOUR



MEMFEAST is a community-driven initiative that provides Thanksgiving meals to families facing food insecurity. This year marked our 5th anniversary of serving our community. The theme for MemFeast 2023 was "From Our Family To Yours." This theme signified our dedication to the idea that we are all part of one extended family. We provided family-style Thanksgiving meals including breakfast items that would feed a family for the entire holiday instead of just one person and one meal. Our partnership with The City of Memphis and the Shelby County Government along with other community partners allows us to have an even bigger impact on the greater Memphis Community.

120 SNACKS AND
HOUSEHOLD ITEMS
DONATED BY ROOM
IN THE INN



In a world that often feels rushed and stressful, we recognize the financial burden that can come with trying to make the holiday season special for families. It is our sincere desire that, through this initiative, we can alleviate some of that stress for parents. No family should feel the pressure of purchasing gifts when this season is meant for celebrating love, togetherness, and the birth of Christ. The primary goal for **GIVING TREE** is to see the smiles on the faces of children as they receive these gifts, knowing that they are cared for and cherished. Beyond the tangible presents, we want every child to feel the love of Christ in their hearts and to experience the true spirit of giving and generosity. The 2023 Giving Tree successfully provided gifts to 270+ children in the Memphis area from various backgrounds.



CONTINUING TO TRANSFORM LIVES THROUGH *Social Justice*

The Social Justice Ministry held its inaugural meeting in January and has held five additional monthly meetings since. From the activities completed, including facilitating discussions, we prioritized the following issues and made them the focus areas of our ministry. These issues are: Public Education, Healthcare, Criminal Justice Reform, Civic Engagement, Food Insecurity, Environmental Justice, and Wealth Gaps.

In 2023, we were honored to serve as the host church in partnership with the National Action Network to provide a dignified and honorable celebration of life service for Tyre Nichols, whose murder in Memphis sparked national outrage. We partnered with organizations to host two Mayoral Forums to educate Memphians and provide the information needed to elect the next mayor of Memphis. Our ministry organized a letter-writing campaign asking Tennessee legislators to prioritize at-risk youth placement in homes instead of boarding schools. We also staffed voter registration tables at the Southwind and Midtown campuses every Sunday from July through September and staffed the registration process for the Peoples' Convention. This convention helps Memphians coalesce around mayoral and city council candidates. Finally, we held two postcard parties and addressed and mailed 1,200 postcards to encourage Memphians who had not voted in a while to vote in the 2023 Municipal Election.



This past year, we also advocated on behalf of Memphians who are unbanked, lack internet access, or do not have the tools and knowledge to make online purchases by asking the Memphis Zoo's CEO and Board to reverse a new policy that required the purchase of general admission tickets exclusively online. We organized a letter-writing campaign in support of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM Local 390 G) that was on strike for several months, asking their employer International Flavors and Fragrances (IFF) to negotiate in good faith.

Lastly, our ministry researched Public Education topics to be informed and determine how we can improve public education. Topics included: Student Testing and Standards, Teacher Standards/Qualifications/Preparation, School Board Standards/Qualifications, State Education Committee, Executive Leadership Qualifications, and the Superintendent Search. In 2024, we plan to continue strategizing and implementing initiatives that bring The BLVD together in the name of justice, equity, equality, and impact.

**HOSTED 2
POLITICAL FORUMS**

**INTRODUCED REGULAR
MEETINGS, HOSTING 5**

**REACHED 1,200
IN VOTER CAMPAIGN**

**IDENTIFIED 7 FOCUS
AREAS FOR MINISTRY**

CONTINUING TO TRANSFORM LIVES THROUGH

Discipleship

MEN'S *Ministry*



In September, Men's Emphasis aligned with the Southern Heritage Classic. It was not only about the classic, but it was also about the heritage of our legacy in ministering and mentoring future generations of men. From the men's choir leading us in spirited worship to the powerful and impactful sermon by our pastor. At Men's Emphasis we honored: Elder Joseph Kyles and Charles Atkinson Sr., Dennis Adams, Towrey Turner, and Minister Christopher Watson. This year also marked the return of The King's Table. This breakfast gathering was attended by more than 175 men. The breakfast featured a powerful bible study by Dr. Tony Evans themed, "Kingdom Man." In 2024, we will strengthen our brotherly bonds and continue to grow our ministry to men within our church family.



WOMEN'S *Ministry*



In the month of October we observed Women's Emphasis Sunday. The theme chosen focused on Song of Solomon 4:7, highlighting both the inner and outer beauty of women. This Sunday was a joyous celebration of women, embracing and acknowledging our significance in the kingdom of God. We celebrated the essence of being women of God and reflected on the empowering message conveyed that affirms that God created us with intentionality and in His eyes we have no flaws. The Women's ministry also paused to celebrate the legacy of the late Mrs. Shirley Rosebud. Her creative genius is forever embedded in the legacy of Mississippi Boulevard.



CONTINUING TO TRANSFORM LIVES THROUGH

Discipleship

It is a privilege to be a Christian and to do the work of leading others to Christ. We do not take this opportunity for granted and are excited to report on how our ministry made an impact in 2023. This year, we had 750 participants in Life Groups, welcomed four new leaders, and created four new groups including Young Adults, Parents, Church Choir, and Church Staff. The BLVD welcomed a total of 144 New Members, including 26 Baptisms. We can feel returning and new energies in the church and we are excited about it! In 2024, we plan to continue this great work as well as innovating new ways to win souls.



CONGREGATIONAL CARE COMMUNITIES (C3)

Our communities gathered together this year in a new way. To start the year, all communities organized, presented, and participated in a Spiritual Officers' Training. This training set the tone for developing our Fellowship Publications, updating the Communities Manual, developing a Ministry Calendar, and organizing member Birthday Greetings. Over the summer, all community leaders and organizers came together again to enjoy fellowship at the Hattiloo Theater. This special event was called "Re-engage," and resulted in us renaming Congregational Cares as C3 to rebrand our ministry.

In June, the Benjamin Community had their first in-person gathering. The Joseph Community met every third Wednesday of the month in addition to conducting its annual Community Gathering. The Judah Community gathered together for two in-person worship services in the spring and fall. The Levi Community attended worship services together on an ongoing basis followed by fellowship experiences. The Rachel Sisters attended the 2023 Fall Retreat at Bethany Hills in Kingston, Tennessee, where one sister was elected to serve as the Fall Retreat West Area Coordinator. The Men of Jacob Community served lunch at The BLVD's Scholarship Luncheon. The Dan Community gathered at in-person worship services and held fellowship experiences afterwards. We look forward to furthering the C3 rebrand in 2024 as each community grows.

144

NEW MEMBERS

26

BAPTISMS

750

MEMBERS OF
LIFE GROUPS

4

NEW LIFE GROUPS: YOUNG
ADULTS, PARENTS, CHURCH
CHOIR, CHURCH STAFF



CONGREGATIONAL CARE COMMUNITIES



CONTINUING TO TRANSFORM LIVES THROUGH THE

*Next
Generation*

BLVD
Kids

BLVD Kids equipped our youth to be great examples of love, faith and purity in 2023! We started the first quarter of the year with a Vision Board and Yoga event to help the kids set their vision for the upcoming year and get grounded. We also held a Black History program and provided Spiritual Gifts Assessments to the youth. We held Spring Fest at our Southwind Campus with over 300 people attending. We implemented Sunday Fundays as a time for our kids to enjoy food, intentional fellowship and have fun every fifth Sunday. We also started our Financial Workshops. Our annual Vacation Bible School was held at the Southwind campus with a culminating trip to Urban Air. Over 70 youth and their parents attended the classes and we donated \$500 to No Kid Hungry. We culminated the spring Crossroads Bible Club at the Schools of Perea, where we averaged 15 kids each week. We held classes on CPR, child abuse awareness, and more. We also started a Parent Life Group. Our Hallelujah Fest "Superhero Edition" welcomed 700 kids to a safe alternative for Halloween. Our Christmas Program saw more than 70 youth participants!

Quota

The middle and high school girls of The BLVD showed up powerfully and energetically this year! The Leading Ladies hosted "New Year, New Vision of Me." At this event, girls gathered to create positive affirmations and engage in female empowerment discussions. Our ministry also hosted "My Black Is Beautiful" and "Black Girls Rock -- In Our Past & In Our Present." We hosted, "My Mental Health Matters." Activities centered on understanding negative and positive emotions and how they can exist in our brains, sometimes at the same time. We also hosted a Physical Fitness & College-Readiness event for our girls. We set up stations with weights, kettlebells, jump ropes, resistance bands, etc. and invited University of Memphis staff to teach our girls how to prepare for transitioning from high school to college. Over the summer, we held our "Senior Spotlight Pearl Ceremony." Each girl was offered a set of pearls to signify their entry into womanhood and led in prayer. This year, we were also able to incorporate high tea and etiquette training. We have been blessed to watch our programming grow in a way that serves both women and girls. In 2024, we look forward to continuing to engage through our ministry

Young

We started the year with Kingdom Men Healthy Cooking Class at Crosstown Concourse and a HBCU College Tour of Tougaloo College, Alcorn State University, and Jackson State University. In the spring, we visited the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum in Jackson, MS and held a Health & Wellness/College Readiness Session with 40 students. More than \$138,000 was raised in support of our Scholarship Program. Over the summer, we hosted our Scholarship Recognition Brunch at the Midtown Campus followed by Scholarship Sunday where 13 high school seniors and 3 adults were recipients. We also served as the worksite/business partner for City of Memphis MPLOY Youth Summer Job Program and partnered with Ettaro Fine Arts Foundation to host Camp LEAD featuring a showcase performance of singing, dancing, theater and visual art gallery. We closed out the year with our NEXUS Day Out to Air Force Base and Memphis ROX with 27 students.

60+
ASSESSED
SPIRITUAL
GIFTS

\$138K
SCHOLARSHIPS
AWARDED

700+
HALLELUJAH
FEST
GUESTS

THE NEXT GENERATION



CONTINUING TO TRANSFORM LIVES THROUGH

Worship

PASTORAL ANNIVERSARY

On March 31, 2023 we celebrated our pastor, Rev. Dr. J Lawrence Turner's 10th year of faithful service to Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and his 25th year in ministry.



CONTINUING TO TRANSFORM LIVES THROUGH

Worship

NATIONAL BACK TO CHURCH SUNDAY

On September 16, 2023 we kicked off our "Homecoming Weekend" with a tailgate at Tiger Lane. It was a fun-filled day with plenty of food, fun, and fellowship for all age groups. On September 17, 2023 we continued our celebration by participating with thousands of churches across the country in the "National Back to Church Sunday." Over 1,000 congregants attended in-person worship.



FOUNDERS DAY

This year marked our 102nd year in existence. A lot has changed, but one thing has remained the same: God's faithfulness to this ministry.



CONTINUING TO TRANSFORM LIVES THROUGH

Creative Arts

A familiar and timeless hymn, "A Charge To Keep I Have," resonates in reflection on the journey of the Creative Arts Ministry in 2023. In our introspection, we look back upon the past year while setting our course for the one ahead. These words encapsulate the charge we have chosen to embrace. Our goals and achievements have been clear, and they align seamlessly with these guiding principles:

- **Collective Worship:** Our unwavering commitment to transforming worship experiences from mere performance and spectatorship to a unified, participatory journey continues to bear fruit. Our congregation is engaged and inspired by the unity experienced in collective worship.
- **Ministry Growth:** Our continuous recruitment efforts have broadened the horizons of our ministry. We have warmly embraced diverse talents and perspectives, enriching our worship community.
- **Southwind (East) Musical Presence:** Efforts have been directed towards ensuring that our Southwind (East) location enjoys a consistent and spiritually enriching musical presence, from the call to worship through to the benediction.

We are thrilled to welcome our new Music Director, Terrence L. Brown, a Memphis native, Music Director of Janelle Monáe & The ArchOrchestra, and a distinguished Morehouse College graduate. His exceptional leadership promises to lead our musical journey to new heights. Moreover, we are excited to introduce our Artist in Residence, Dr. Stephen L. Hayes, a music educator with a rich history of service to HBCUs and higher education. His wealth of experience and accomplishments are a valuable addition to our ministry.



CONTINUING TO TRANSFORM LIVES THROUGH

Facilities

Over the past year, we have achieved significant milestones and made considerable progress in our commitment to maintaining and enhancing our church's facilities, strengthening our community, and delivering impactful events and services to our congregation. Here are some of the highlights:

- **New Roofs:** We have successfully completed the much-needed roofing projects to ensure the safety and longevity of our beloved church. The new roofs not only protect our cherished space but also serve as a testament to our dedication to the physical preservation of this spiritual home.
- **Building Upgrades:** Throughout the year, we have carried out various essential upgrades to our facilities. These improvements aim to enhance the comfort and experience of our members and visitors, providing a welcoming environment for worship and fellowship.
- **Successful Events:** We take pride in our ability to host successful events, both in person and virtually. These gatherings have allowed us to strengthen our bonds as a congregation, share moments of joy, and further our spiritual growth.
- **Excellent Service:** Our church's core mission is to serve and support our members. The dedicated efforts of our staff, volunteers, and the entire congregation have allowed us to maintain and even exceed the high standards of excellence in the services we provide.

This year has not been without its challenges, but we have faced them with unwavering faith and resilience. We extend heartfelt gratitude to all of you, our congregation, for your unwavering support and dedication. As we look forward to the year ahead, we remain committed to growth and prosperity. May the upcoming year bring us even closer to our spiritual goals and be filled with peace, love, and unity.



CONTINUING TO TRANSFORM LIVES THROUGH

*Financial
Management*

In 2018, The BLVD developed and approved policies to establish a Legacy Giving Fund to support the development of a "Legacy Builders Program." The Legacy Builders Program is made up of individuals who have made a commitment to provide financial support, beyond their lifetime, to The BLVD by leaving a legacy gift or gifts. More than 20 briefing sessions have been held to acquaint members and to encourage them to join.



**FORMALIZED COLLABORATION
BETWEEN PAYDAY LOAN
PROGRAM AND EVENT**

61

**ADULTS AND YOUTH LEARNED
ABOUT FINANCIAL SUCCESS**

158

**ATTENDEES AT LEGACY
PLANNING WORKSHOP**

Our first workshop of 2023 was themed, "Journey to Financial Success for Adults and Youth." In partnership with State Farm Insurance Company, National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Memphis Chapter, Truist Bank, Black Clergy Collaborative of Memphis (BCCM) and Operation Hope, The BLVD helps attendees of all ages learn how to manage their finances before it's too late. There were 47 adults and 14 youth who participated. The theme of our next workshop was, "Wills, Estate, and Final Life Planning." We collaborated with State Farm Insurance, the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Memphis Chapter and the Estate and Family Law Group to discuss the final planning necessary to not burdening loved ones left behind. There were 158 participants who attended. Topics ranged from wills to estate planning, insurance, and end-of-life planning. In our, "Borrow and Save - An Alternative to Payday Loans," workshop we collaborated with the Black Clergy Collaborative of Memphis and Hope Credit Union, which has been involved in our "Borrow and Save" program since its launch in October 2021. Our workshop centered on how the program offers a saving incentive. All of these workshops and programs will continue to grow in 2024 and remain open to all congregants!

Over 50



Legacy Builders as of 2023

More than 20



briefing sessions held

STAFF & CHURCH *Council*

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Rev. Dr. J. Lawrence Turner, Senior Pastor
Vera Banks, Executive Assistant
Gerald Lee Ricks, Minister of Music and Arts
Wayne Hobson, Director of Ministries
Charles Monger, Director of Operations
Chantay Branch, Director of Human Resources
Anthony Brown, Chief Financial Officer

MINISTERIAL TEAM

Minister Christopher Watson, Nexus Minister (Middle & High School)
Pastor Mary E. Moore, Minister of Congregational Care
Donna Palmer, Administrative Support
Sharon Smith, Administrative Support

SUPPORT STAFF

Essie Clay, Receptionist
June Johnson, Receptionist
Diane Mayes, Receptionist

FINANCE TEAM

Debra Wellington, Accounts Payable Clerk
Loretta Cox, Senior Accountant
Bettye Boone, Stewardship Coordinator

OPERATIONS TEAM

Althea Burkett, Administrative Support
Angelique Gray, Events Coordinator
Towrey Turner, HVAC/ Maintenance Tech
Terry Lawrence, Maintenance
Cleveland Rhodes, Maintenance
Brittney Hill, Housekeeping
Anthony Madison, Housekeeping
Sandra Madison, Housekeeping
Emma Scott, Housekeeping
Omar Westmoreland, Housekeeping

FOOD SERVICES

Carol Singleton, Chef

MANNA OUTREACH

Ira Jones, Warehouse Lead
Marion Thomas, Manna Helper
Marquis Wilborn, Manna Helper

FAMILY LIFE CENTER

Ronald Sampson, Family Life Center Director
Natalie Neely, Family Life Center Assistant

MEDIA TEAM

Antoine Beane, Digital Engagement Manager
Jermaine Black, Media/Video Director
Kristina Bray, Media Assistant
Clarence Scott, Video Production/Content Editor
Jarvis Brooks, Audio Engineer
Kerry Kernan, Post-Production Specialist

WORSHIP AND CREATIVE ARTS

Terrence Brown, Music Director
Steve Bethany, Lead Guitar
Tevin Curtis, Percussionist (Midtown)
Kem Gray, Bass Guitar/Keyboardist (Midtown)
Darryl Pruitt, Bass Guitar (Southwind)
Aaron Mayse, Percussionist (Southwind)
Isaiah Walker, Organist (Southwind)
Dr. Stephen Hayes, Artist in Residence
Anedra Gatewood, Worship Lead (Southwind)
Brock Brown, Assistant Choral Director
David Edwards, Worship Lead (Midtown)

CHURCH COUNCIL

Andre Dean, Moderator
Metrick Houser, Vice Moderator
Eunice Morris, Secretary
Ericka Lacey, Assistant Secretary
Charles Atkinson, Treasurer
Shirley Harris, Assistant Treasurer
Katlyn Morris, Member-at-Large (18-35)
Michael Leavy Sr., Member-at-Large (SW)
William Larsha, Jr. Parliamentarian
Archie Sanders, Diaconate Chair
Glenn Sessoms, Elder Chair
Elzie Rosebud, Trustee Chair
Jana Kinkle, Outreach-Chair
Cathy Henderson, Christian Education Chair

CONTACT

The mission of The BLVD is to Lead others to Christ, Learn to be like Christ, Live for Christ, and Love as Christ without Limits in the Greater Memphis Area through transformative worship, engaging fellowship, impactful ministry, consistent discipleship, and broad evangelism.

LEAD, LEARN, LIVE AND LOVE WITHOUT

Limits

MIDTOWN CAMPUS

70 North Bellevue Boulevard
Memphis, TN 38104
901-729-6222

SOUTHWIND CAMPUS

8220 East Shelby Drive
Memphis, TN 38125
901-421-8780

SOCIAL MEDIA



@theblvd1



@theblvdmemphis



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MOBILE APPLICATION

Mississippi Boulevard Church



THE BLVD

Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)