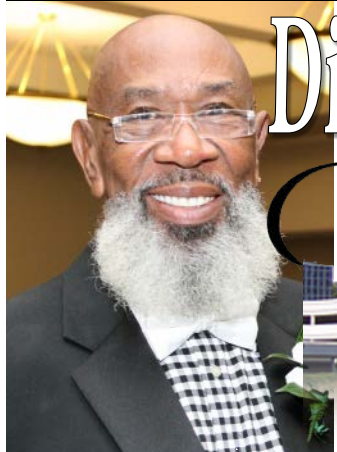


# MINISTER LEO ROBINSON: Still Here, Still Serving - p. 3

FREE



## Diaspora's Snide Remarks - p. 2



Friday  
September 18, 2026  
Vol. 13, No. 3  
ValleyWeeklyllc.com



**SALUTE!**  
Rosetta James Foundation  
ELDER OF THE WEEK



Mr. Bob Petty

"Autumn reminds us that letting go can be beautiful." — Anonymous

## 'Women in Music Week' Culminates This Weekend

The Huntsville Music Office's Women in Music Week (WIMW) culminates Sept. 20, part of more than 50 performances across Huntsville.

The festivities began on Friday, Sept. 11, with Sippy and special guest Mol-

lyWater at Rocket City Honky Tonk.

"Women in Music Week shines a well-deserved spotlight on the incredible talent, creativity and leadership of women across Huntsville's music community," Huntsville Music Officer Matt

Mandrella said. "It's a great opportunity to discover new music, experience a wide range of genres and support the women helping shape Huntsville's sound."

WIMW Executive Producer Alli Johnson with Artemis

Productions said WIMW is a celebration of local female artists and providing opportunities to showcase their talents.

For more information on lineups and schedules, visit [WomeninMusicHSV.com](http://WomeninMusicHSV.com).

## Guntersville Honors Two AAMU Alums

Two distinguished Alabama A&M University alumnae whose groundbreaking careers have influenced generations were recently honored by their hometown of Guntersville, Alabama.

Jeanette Scissum, a pioneering NASA mathematician and space scientist, and her cousin, Dr. Barbara Jean Henderson Anthony, a longtime educator and former Alabama A&M faculty

member, received keys to the city in recognition of their lifetime achievements and lasting contributions.

Guntersville Mayor Leigh Dollar presented each woman with a city resolution recognizing her accomplishments and legacy. As part of Scissum's recognition, the city also proclaimed Aug. 8 as Jeanette Scissum Day, to be observed each year in her honor.

Scissum earned



With family: Scissum (seated) and Anthony (r) were honored by Guntersville.

bachelor's and master's degrees in mathematics from Alabama A&M before joining NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in 1964. She became a trailblazer in the nation's space

program, conducting research related to solar activity and later serving in several scientific and technical roles at NASA.

Anthony's connection to Alabama A&M also spans decades. She earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education with a concentration in music from AAMU at age 19 before continuing her education at George Peabody College, now part of Vanderbilt University, and the University of Alabama, where she earned a doctorate in education.

## HMA to Display Works of Miles Hyman

The Huntsville Museum of Art will present Miles Hyman: Cinematic Visions Sept. 18, 2026, through Feb. 28, 2027. Organized by the Huntsville Museum of Art, the exhibition brings together a selection of paintings and drawings by acclaimed

American artist and graphic novelist Miles Hyman.

Across his practice, Hyman blends the visual language of cinema, literature, fine art and everyday observation. His noir-inspired compositions often feature streets, interiors and

figures caught in moments of quiet tension. Light and shadow play an essential role, shaping both the mood and movement of each scene.

Hyman will be featured at an opening lecture and reception Thursday, Sept. 17, from 6-8

p.m. The artist will discuss his work and the ideas behind Cinematic Visions. A book signing and reception will follow. Admission is free for museum members and \$25 for nonmembers. Visit [hsvmuseum.org](http://hsvmuseum.org).

## Three from N. Ala. Join Seniors Hall of Fame

A group of older adults, including several from North Alabama, has been inducted into the Alabama Senior

Citizens Hall of Fame during Prattville ceremony. Three of 11 permanent state inductees

into the Senior Citizens Hall of Fame are from North Alabama, including: • **Russ Hutcherson**,

of Huntsville • **Nancy Robertson**, of Huntsville • **Geoff Statum**, of Huntsville.

# The Valley Weekly

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE!

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# AUNT IRMA MAKES IT PLAIN ...

## *We Didn't Come to America: We Became a People Here!*

*Every now and then, Aunt Irma hears somebody say that Black Americans don't have a culture. We don't have a language, they say. We don't have traditional clothing. We don't have an ancestral country to point toward on a map.*

Well, baby, neither does a tree carry around the seed it came from. But that doesn't mean it has no roots.

Our African ancestors arrived on these shores centuries ago carrying pieces of many civilizations within them. Yoruba, Igbo, Akan, Kongo, Mandinka and countless others were thrown together under circumstances too horrible to romanticize. Families were broken. Languages were suppressed. Names disappeared. Connections to particular African homelands were

deliberately severed.

And still, something remarkable happened.

We became a people.

We took sorrow and made spirituals. We took spirituals and helped make gospel and blues. The blues helped give birth to jazz, rhythm and blues and rock and roll. Later came soul, funk and hip-hop. The whole world eventually started tapping its feet.

We seasoned food differently. We preached differently. We buried our dead differently. We developed our own expressions, humor, storytelling, hairstyles, churches, colleges, literature, political traditions and ways of surviving things that were supposed to destroy us.

That, sweetheart, is called *culture*.

And America is not simply someplace Black Americans wandered into last Tuesday.

Our ancestors were here before there was a United States of America. They cleared its land, harvested its crops, built portions of its cities,



fought in its wars and helped force the nation, generation after generation, to live a little closer to the promises written in its founding documents.

Sometimes our brothers and sisters elsewhere in the African diaspora proudly say, "I am Jamaican." "I am Haitian." "I am Nigerian." "I am Ghanaian."

And they should.

But Aunt Irma wants us to notice something.

Most Black Jamaicans descend from Africans carried to Jamaica. Most Haitians descend from Africans carried to Saint-Domingue. They created new peoples and cultures in the places where history deposited them.

So did we.

In fact, some modern African national iden-



tities are surprisingly young. Ghana became Ghana in 1957. Nigeria became independent in 1960. Kenya followed in 1963. Their ancient peoples and cultures are much older than those modern nations, of course.

Meanwhile, Black people had already been creating a distinctive African-American culture for centuries.

So Aunt Irma isn't interested in a contest over who is "more African." Nor does she need to borrow somebody else's flag to prove that she belongs somewhere.

Africa is the ancestral motherland.

But America is home.

That doesn't mean America has always treated us like family. Lord knows it hasn't. But

being mistreated in your own house doesn't make it somebody else's house.

We have buried too many generations in this soil to be strangers to it.

So when somebody tells Aunt Irma that Black Americans have no culture, she just smiles.

Because somewhere in the background somebody is probably listening to our music, speaking one of our expressions, wearing something influenced by our style, eating food touched by our traditions—or practicing a little dance we invented.

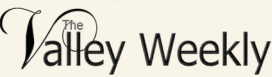
Aunt Irma doesn't need to argue.

She'll just turn up the music.

The culture can speak for itself.

- TVW Staff





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Making Impact & Building Legacy

MINISTER LEO ROBINSON: Still Here, Still Serving

Most often, legacies are built through titles, positions, and public recognition. Others are built quietly—one haircut, one conversation, one second chance, and one life changed at a time.

Minister Leo Robinson is building that kind of legacy.

For more than 50 years, Robinson has practiced his craft as a master barber and community servant. As owner of Ivey’s Barber Shop, LLC, the oldest African American-owned barber shop in Huntsville, he has preserved an important piece of our city’s Black history while making the shop much more than a place to get a haircut.

Like the traditional Black barber shops that have long anchored our communities, Ivey’s is a gathering place—a place for conversation, encouragement, mentorship, fellowship, and sometimes a much-needed word of faith.

But Robinson has not been satisfied simply to succeed himself. He has worked to create opportunities for others.

For eight years, he partnered with the Union Chapel Institute of Biblical

Studies to teach Barber Skills Training to aspiring barbers. The results speak loudly: four barber shop owners and eight individuals now employed



in Huntsville-area barber shops. That is impact. When you teach someone a skill that allows them to earn a living, support a family, and perhaps one day employ someone else, you are building legacy.

Robinson’s ministry is equally personal. Through Second Chance Deliverance & Restoration Ministries, Inc., which he founded more than 20 years ago, he shares a testimony that gives credibility to the ministry’s very name. Robinson overcame

a 14-year drug addiction and a nine-month incarceration. Instead of hiding those chapters of his life, he has allowed God to use them as a testimony to help others understand that yesterday does not have to determine tomorrow.

His message is powerful because he has lived it: there can be life after addiction, life after incarceration, life after mistakes, and purpose after pain.

His ministry has translated faith into action—helping individuals in recovery, feeding people experiencing homelessness, conducting coat drives for children in Title I schools, supporting the Dr. Richard Showers Recreation Center After School Program, and assisting families throughout our community.

The community has noticed. Robinson received the 2024 Community Champion Award from Redstone Federal Credit Union, was featured on WHNT-19’s Hoover’s Heroes in 2025, and received the All the King’s Men Award from the Morgan County Branch of the NAACP.

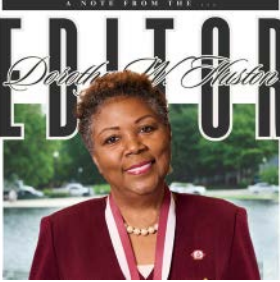
Yet his greatest recogni-

tion may never come with a plaque.

It is found in the barber who owns a shop because someone taught him a trade. It is in the person struggling with addiction who hears Robinson’s testimony and decides to try again. It is in the child who receives a warm coat, the family that receives assistance, and the person who walks into a barber shop needing a haircut but leaves with encouragement.

Born in Greenbrier, Alabama, the youngest of eight children of Elder Aaron and Mother May Ella Robinson, Robinson graduated from Butler High School in 1971. His commitment to ministry stretches back nearly five decades. Licensed to preach in 1978 and ordained in 1979, he now serves as an Associate Minister at Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church. His continued biblical and ministerial studies—including training through Union Chapel Institute of Biblical Studies and George W. Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor University—demonstrate that even after decades of service, he remains committed to learning and growing.

He is also a husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather—a reminder that legacy begins



at home before it reaches the larger community.

Perhaps two words from his biography best capture Minister Leo Robinson’s journey:

“Still here!” Still here after addiction. Still here after incarceration. Still here after more than 50 years behind the barber chair. Still preaching. Still mentoring. Still feeding. Still giving. Still believing in second chances. And, most importantly, still serving. Minister Leo Robinson reminds us that making an impact does not require a perfect beginning. What matters is what we do with the life, opportunities, lessons, and second chances God gives us.

And in Huntsville, Alabama, Minister Leo Robinson is using his second chance to make sure others have one, too. That is making impact. That is building legacy.

Until next week ...

Dorothy

**SEPTEMBER 18 - BEN CARSON** - Benjamin Solomon Carson Sr. is an American politician, author and former neurosurgeon serving as the 17th United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development since 2017, under the Trump Administration. Prior to his cabinet position, he was a candidate for President of the United States in the Republican primaries in 2016. He became the youngest chief of pediatric neurosurgery in the country at age 33. Carson has received more than 60 honorary doctorate degrees, dozens of national merit citations, and written over 100 neurosurgical publications. In 2001, he was named by CNN and TIME magazine as one of the nation’s 20 foremost physicians and scientists, and was selected by the Library of Congress as one of 89 “Living Legends” on its 200th anniversary. In 2008, he was bestowed the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award in the United States.

- BlackCelebrityBirthdays.org





## NELMS MEMORIAL FUNERAL HOME

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

Funeral services for **MS. LIELIA MORRIS** (b. 1964); **MR. DAVID CROSS**; **MR. ERIC DEAN READUS**; **MS. REGINA MICHELLE CHUMANGE** (b. 1981); and **MR. WILLIAM DOUGLAS** (b. 1960) will be announced at a later date.

Graveside service for **MRS. YOLANDA HYTER** (b. 1962) will be Saturday, September 19, at 12 p.m. at Valley View Memorial Gardens, 139 Meridianville Bottom Road, Meridianville, Ala.

Funeral service for **MR. ERIC READUS** was Monday, September 14, at Indian Creek Primitive Baptist Church, 380 Indian Creek Road NW, Huntsville, Ala.

Funeral service for **MRS. MATTIE LOVONDA ANNETTE MOORE** (b. 1970) was Sunday, September 13, at Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church, 7575 Greenbrier Road, Madison, Ala.

Funeral service for **MR. ISHMAEL HANNAH** was Sunday, September 13, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel.

Funeral service for **MRS. EVETTE M. STEPHENSON** (b. 1956) will be Saturday, September 12, in Steer Town, St. Ann, Jamaica at Prestigious Boss Funeral Home of St. Ann, Jamaica.

Funeral service for **MRS. KATHERINE BONE OCCOMY** (b. 1937) was Saturday, September 12, at St. Bartley Primitive Baptist Church, 3020 Belafonte Avenue NW, Huntsville, Ala.

Funeral service for **MS. CANDICE LASHAE SCRUGGS** (b. 1996) was Saturday, September 5, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel.

Funeral service for **PASTOR MARCUS LANIER** (b. 1964) was Saturday, September 5, at Right Way Church of God in Christ, 5307 Mastin Lake Road NW, Huntsville, Ala.

Funeral service for **MR. TEVIN BURKS** (b. 1997) was Friday, September 4, at Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church with Pastor Dr. Larry Davidson, Jr., officiating and eulogist.

# Spiritual Game Plan

PRESTON BROWN'S

## Today's Spiritual Game Plan: "A Heart That Pleases God"

Genesis 4:3-5 says, "In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. And Abel brought an offering, fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering. But on Cain and his offering, he did not look with favor."

When I played professional football, we were judged by our talents, our strength, our size, and our speed. But God doesn't look at us that way. God looks at our hearts, and He looks at our desire to please Him. As we see here in this scripture, Abel had a greater desire to please God than Cain did. So my question is, do we only desire God to answer prayers for our lives, or do we desire to please Him? So often we want God to answer our prayers, but we don't honor our commitments that we make to God. For example, we may say that we are going to study the word more or pray more or give more, but we never follow through with these promises. So I pray that God gives each and every one of us a more dedicated heart so that we can be more obedient and committed to what He wants us to do.

*Prayer:* Merciful God, give us a clean heart so that we can better serve you.

*Question:* Do you feel that you have a desire to please God? If so, what are you doing on a daily basis to accomplish this?

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 TODAY!

NEXT WEEK:  
"The Certainty of Hope"



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## I Didn't Meet Barack Obama; Instead, I Met "My Barack Obama"

*Sometimes leadership isn't giving the speech. Sometimes it's having enough trust, courage and credibility to tell the person giving the speech, "You need to be there."*

On our recent seniors' bus trip to Chicago, several among our 53 travelers shared the same hope: "Perhaps we might see former President Barack Obama while visiting the Obama Presidential Center."

I certainly wouldn't have minded. But secretly, I was hoping to see someone else.

For years, I've studied what I call "Silver-Mettle Leaders"—those men and women who may operate one step removed from center stage but help "make the trains run on time."

Few people have fascinated me more in that role than Valerie Jarrett.

### Consider January 2008

Barack Obama had shocked the political establishment by winning the Iowa caucuses. Five days later, Hillary Clinton stunned him by winning New Hampshire.

Suddenly, Obama needed to demonstrate that Iowa had not been a political fluke. South Carolina mattered.

On the eve of that state's crucial Democratic primary, an exhausted Obama resisted attending one more event—the Pink Ice Ball hosted by Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Others tried unsuccessfully to persuade him. Then Valerie Jarrett stepped in.

Quietly but firmly, she told the candidate what he needed—not necessarily wanted—to hear. If he wanted to win, he needed to go. He went.

The next day, Obama won South Carolina in a landslide, 55 percent to Clinton's 27 percent, restoring momentum to a campaign that would eventually make history. That is -

### The Power of a Silver-Mettle Leader

Sometimes leadership isn't giving the speech. Sometimes it's having enough trust, courage and credibility to tell the person giving the speech, "You need to be there."

The story carries an additional connection for me. My daughter is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha, and I am a member of its brother organization, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

So imagine my surprise, 18 years later, after touring the magnificent Presidential Center, when I looked up from my seat in its Tafari's Kitchen restaurant.

There she was. Valerie Jarrett.

And of all colors, she was wearing a beautiful soft pink pantsuit with a white shell.

"Valerie Jarrett!" I exclaimed with all the restraint of a child spotting his favorite performer at a concert. She turned and smiled.

I introduced myself, told her how long I had admired her leadership and shared my concept of Silver-Mettle Leadership. We even reminisced briefly about that South Carolina story. Before she walked away, I mentioned that our group had traveled from Huntsville, Alabama. She turned back.

"My family is from Tuskegee," she said. Connection.

I had traveled to Chicago hoping I might encounter America's 44th president.

Instead, I encountered one of the people who helped make the trains run on time during his historic journey.

Sometimes our greatest leadership role models aren't standing in the spotlight.

Sometimes they're standing just outside it.

I didn't meet Barack Obama.

Instead, I met **my Barack Obama**.

And for this Silver-Mettle Leader, that was even better.



Tim Allston

Leadership Player-Coach and Four-time Amazon Best-Selling Author, "Leading from the Middle"

Contact: (256) 212-0949 - <https://bit.ly/4aB9Lwm>

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# Millennial Moment

by Gloria B. Caldwell

## Piece by Piece ...

*There were pieces  
I had to look at in  
my own life ...*

The stuff I picked up from family, the stuff I thought was smart, or passed off as "just who I am" — none of it was building me anything. It was something I was used to, something inherited, something comfortable. But comfortable and working are two different things. I labeled them the same for years.

And it wasn't in one area of my life. It was the work I didn't finish, the relationships I stayed in too long, the body I ignored and then apologized to when I finally



got serious about fitness, the money I mishandled and called "handling things." Same problem. Just a different room in that house of confusion.

I'm not a person who does delicate walking tones anymore. No ex-

cuses, no pretending it's fine, no needing people to comfort me about my life.

I want my life fixed — the best it can be. Not talked about. Not someday. Fixed. Because the rest of my life, I want it to be magical, and it won't get there running the same patterns I never chose to begin with.

So piece by piece: look at your life. Trace it back to the choices you made. Own it — not your mom's, not your dad's, not your situation's. Just yours. Then choose different.

God loves you, and so do I. He's given you a gift. Open it.



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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.*

The Valley Weekly

# VALLEY EVENTS

HAPPENINGS, ACTIVITIES &amp; MORE!

**September 17**

*"An Evening with the Arts"*  
Alabama State University Rocket City Alumni Chapter (\$20, \$40)  
Lee High School Theater  
2500 Meridian Street N  
Huntsville, Ala.  
Contact: Christen Edwards | (256) 683-2954;  
Dr. Joseph Henderson, Chapter President, (256) 683-5648

**September 18**

Concert on the Dock  
Lowe Mill Arts & Entertainment \$10 Parking  
Huntsville, Ala. | 6-9 p.m.

**"Devin Crutcher"**

Huntsville R&B Concert Series  
Huntsville Botanical Garden  
4747 Bob Wallace Avenue SW  
Huntsville, Ala.

**September 18-20**

Arnez J

**Comedian**

Huntsville Levity Live  
2012 Memorial Parkway SW  
Huntsville, Ala.  
(256) 261-3374

**September 19**

*"Bollywood: A Decade of Impact"*  
AUM Foundation (\$175)  
Von Braun Center  
700 Monroe Street SW  
Huntsville, Ala. 35801  
6-11 p.m.

**September 20**

Jazz in the Park  
"Eric Darius"  
Opening Act: Patrick Lamb  
Pre-Opening Act: Arkose  
Big Spring Park West  
Downtown Huntsville  
5-9 p.m.

**September 25**

Concert on the Dock  
Lowe Mill Arts & Entertainment \$10 Parking

6-9 p.m.

**"Angie P. Holmes"**

Huntsville R&B Concert Series  
Huntsville Botanical Garden  
4747 Bob Wallace Avenue SW  
Huntsville, Ala.

**Concert**

Koe Wetzel & Wyatt Flores  
The Orion Amphitheater  
Huntsville, Ala. | 7:30 p.m.

**September 26**

iFEST  
International Festival of North Alabama (Free)  
The Orion Amphitheater  
12- 5 p.m.

**September 27**

Jazz in the Park  
"Kim Scott"  
Opening Act: Jeff Ryan  
Pre-Opening Act: Carol Albert  
Big Spring Park West  
Downtown Huntsville  
5-9 p.m.

**October 2-3**

Luenell  
Huntsville Levity Live  
Comedy Club  
2012 Memorial Parkway SW  
Huntsville, Ala.

**October 3**

11th Annual Pink Ribbon

Gala

**"Sneaker Ball"**

Dance | Donate | Make a Difference  
Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.  
Campus 805 - The Cafeteria | 6-10 p.m. (Formal)

**October 7**

Five Finger Death Punch,  
Cody Jinks & Eva Under Fire  
The Orion Amphitheater  
Huntsville, Ala. | 7:30 p.m.

**October 9**

Huntsville Havoc vs.  
Pensacola Ice Flyers

Exhibition Game

Polaris Ice at Propst Arena  
Von Braun Center  
Huntsville, Ala. | 7 p.m.

**October 13**

Concert  
The Doobie Brothers  
The Orion Amphitheater  
Huntsville, Ala. | 8 p.m.

**October 15**

AAMU Homecoming Golf Tournament  
Hampton Cove Golf Course  
7 a.m. Registration  
8 a.m. Shot Gun Start

\$600 Foursome/\$150

<https://mp.gg/23yc17khq>

**October 15**

AAMU Homecoming Alumni Pep Rally - 6-8 p.m.  
Mixer 6-11 p.m.  
The Orion Amphitheater  
701 Amphitheater Drive  
Huntsville, Ala.

**October 16**

Alumni Homecoming Affair  
Stovehouse  
DJ Nakidfine and Element XI with BigTim da DJ

**"POWERSHOTS"**  
*John 'Jahni' Moore*  
**TRUTH 2 POWER**

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*"There are more than others think possible. Care more than others think wise." - Howard Schultz*

*"It is not impossible, you just haven't found a way yet!" - J.T. Moore*

*What Have You Been Missing?*

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*"The nature of everything changes when you go from belief to knowing."*

J. T. Moore



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

## Mr. Bob Petty

Mr. Bob Petty has served in some capacity as an education professional for well over 45 years, utilizing his extensive experience in teaching, training and supervision in various settings to impact the lives of hundreds of young men and women.

Petty earned the Bachelor of Science degree in engineering technology and the M.Ed. degree in industrial technology education from historic Alabama A&M University. He went on to pursue additional studies at Athens State University, Mississippi State University and Winston-Salem State University (N.C.). These institutions equipped Petty with a proven ability to teach electricity, electronics and applied physics, as well as to serve as an able supervisor of both students and other teachers.

The educator traces his long length of service back to his nearly 30-year affiliation with J.F. Drake State Community and Technical College where, from 1972-2000, he ably taught in and ultimately

led the Department of Electronics/Electricity, providing able guidance to instructors, supervising the total operations of the unit, counseling and interviewing students for enrollment, coordinating and spurring job placement for graduating students, serving on boards and committees, and even networking with high schools and technology centers.

From 2000-2010, Petty served as an education service provider for AWS Limited, where he served as a liaison between the firm and various area colleges, in addition to securing tutoring, transportation and housing for international students. During the period, he primarily served as an education service provider for the National Training Board (NTB)-Bermuda, operating as liaison between NTB and Tennessee Valley area colleges and universities.

Further, Petty maintains a nearly 20-year affiliation with the North Alabama Center for Educational Excellence (NACEE), providing tutorial services to high school students, developing partnerships with community industries and agencies, counseling and interviewing students for



mentoring program, and serving as the industry liaison for Upward Bound and Upward Bound Math & Science programs.

Petty enjoys a continuing affiliation with the Alabama Education Association, the Alabama Vocational Association, J.F. Drake Education Association, the National Education Association, Alabama VICA Association, and the National VICA Association.

Among his most recent honors are the William Hooper Council Distinguished Alumni Award from Alabama A&M University Alumni Association, Inc., and the Benjamin Banneker Friends in Planning Award presented by Alabama A&M University's Department of Community and Regional Planning.

"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](http://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](mailto:info@valleyweeklyllc.com).



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## This Sunday's Lectionary

Sunday, September 20, 2026  
Seventeenth Sunday  
After Pentecost

(Track 2, Year A)  
**First Lesson:**  
Jonah 3:10-4:11  
Psalm 145:1-8  
**Second Lesson:**  
Philippians 1:21-30  
**GOSPEL:**  
Matthew 20:1-16

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Here are the top issues and events in Washington, D.C., for this week:

**1. CONGRESS.** The House and Senate are in session this week. The House had a long list of suspension bills (requiring a 2/3 “yea” vote to pass) to call up Monday and Tuesday, followed by debate on the Russia sanctions bill and another Democrat-forced vote to end the war with Iran. House suspension bills include the biannual authorization of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ civil works programs and a bill to ban data centers from hiking utility rates ... The Senate will attempt to move forward on the long-stalled CLARITY Act, which would create a federal regulatory framework for the cryptocur-

rency industry, and possibly on a bill to regulate college athletes’ “name, image, and likeness” (NIL) rights.

**2. EXECUTIVE BRANCH.** The President returned to the U.S. Sunday after attending the final round of the 2026 Amgen Irish Open at the Trump International Golf Links and Hotel in Doonbeg, Ireland, concluding a 2-day foreign trip during which he met with Irish President Catherine Connolly and Irish Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Micheál Martin in Dublin, where he caused a stir by calling for the unification of the Irish Republic with British-run Northern Ireland. Yesterday, he also called on Ukrainian President Zelen-

sky to halt strikes on Russian oil refineries and other infrastructure used to produce and distribute diesel, saying the attacks are causing a global shortage (diesel in the U.S. hit a record \$6.20 per gallon average on Sunday). ABC News reported today that the Trump-appointed Kennedy Center Board may seek to declare bankruptcy as soon as Tuesday. Last Friday, a federal judge in California ruled that the administration’s plan to cut staff levels at FEMA by 50% was unlawful, a victory for labor groups who had sued the agency. Last Thursday, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 1st Circuit declined to allow the administration to implement a new U.S. Postal Service rule that would tighten mail-in voting requirements before November’s congressional elections ... Next Thursday (Sept. 24), the President will host a state dinner for Chinese President Xi Jinping at the White House.

**3. SUPREME COURT.** In 2 separate actions last week, the Supreme Court handed Democrats wins on Missouri’s disputed congressional map,

ordering on Thursday a pause of a federal judge’s ruling in Missouri that would have allowed the state to use the new 7 Rs/1 D map intended to give the GOP an additional seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in the 2026 elections. The justices’ order, with no public dissents, came less than 2 days after Justice Brett Kavanaugh, who handles emergency appeals from Missouri, declined to disturb a Missouri Supreme Court ruling that barred Missouri from using the new map. With the deadline to send out ballots for military and overseas voters just 9 days away, Thursday morning’s order likely means that the state will use the 6 Rs/2 Ds map it adopted in 2022 – a different map from the one it used for the state’s primary election on Aug. 4 – for the November elections ...

**4. AUGUST INFLATION REPORT.** Last Friday, the Labor Department announced that the consumer price index (CPI) rose 0.4% seasonally adjusted for the month, keeping the annual inflation rate at 3.4%. However, the core CPI, which strips out volatile food

and energy prices, posted a significant 0.3% monthly gain, or 0.1 percentage point higher than expected. On an annual basis, gasoline is up 27.4% and fuel oil has surged 52%. As of Sunday, AAA reported the average price in the U.S. for a gallon of regular gas was \$4.31, with diesel hitting another record at \$6.20 per gallon.

**5. FEDERAL RESERVE.** The Federal Reserve’s Federal Open Market Committee meets tomorrow and Wednesday, with most economists predicting that the Fed will raise the federal funds rate. According to CNBC, oddsmakers are now betting that there is a 90% chance that the Fed will raise rates this week.

**6. EDUCATION - WORKFORCE PELL BORROWER DEFAULT PREVENTION WEBINARS.** The U.S. Department of Education has released a self-paced online course to help financial aid administrators implement Workforce Pell, covering program approval, eligibility requirements, aid packaging, and program management

via Partner Connect and the FAFSA Partner Portal. ED also launched a multi-phase default prevention initiative, beginning with a September 29 webinar on NSLDS tools for tracking delinquent borrowers and calculating cohort default rates, followed by an October 13 session on borrower communication and support strategies. Regional workshops, conference sessions, and institutional technical assistance will follow. The timing is notable because ED is expected to release fiscal year 2023 cohort default rates this month, the first above zero percent in several years now that borrowers have returned to repayment. Institutions should ensure that financial aid and student success staff are registered for both sessions and review the Workforce Pell course before submitting program approvals.

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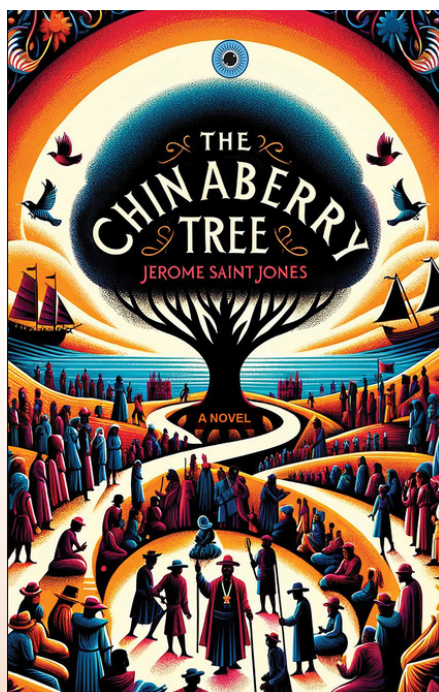
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# AAMU Choir, Yolanda Adams to Perform for ‘Healing’ Conference

The Alabama A&M University Choir will share the stage with Grammy Award-winning gospel artist Yolanda Adams during the closing concert of the 2026 There Is A Balm In Gilead National Healing Conference on Saturday, Sept. 19, at Samford University in Birmingham.

The 7 p.m. concert at Samford’s Wright Fine Arts Center will bring together nationally recognized gospel music and collegiate and community choirs for an evening

centered on faith, hope, worship and healing. Adams will headline the concert, with performances by the Alabama A&M University Choir, Birmingham Youth and Young Adult Choir and Greater Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church Choir.

Yolanda Adams will headline the Sept. 19 conference concert featuring the Alabama A&M University Choir.

The performance will serve as the finale of the four-day There Is A



Balm In Gilead National Healing Conference, scheduled for Sept. 16-19 at the Hyatt Regency Birmingham – The Wynfrey Hotel.

Organizers say the conference is designed to encourage dialogue and promote healing among individuals and commu-

nities directly and indirectly affected by racism and racial trauma.

The conference also coincides with the commemoration of America’s 250th anniversary, providing a setting for participants to reflect on the nation’s history while considering pathways toward greater understanding and healing.

For the Alabama A&M University Choir, the closing concert provides an opportunity to bring the University’s musical tradition to a statewide audi-

ence while performing alongside one of gospel music’s most celebrated voices.

Adams, whose career has spanned more than three decades, is known for blending gospel, R&B and inspirational music and has earned multiple Grammy Awards and other honors throughout her career.

General admission tickets are \$54 and VIP tickets are \$80.25.

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