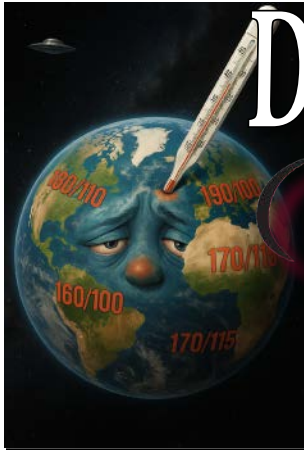


# Human Hypertension: A View from Beyond - p. 8

FREE



## Drake and AI Consortium - p. 10

AAMU & NABA REGIONALS - p. 9

Friday  
December 5, 2025  
Vol. 12, No. 14  
ValleyWeeklyllc.com

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



Mr. Gregory Miley

# The Valley Weekly

"In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on." — Robert Frost

## Team Redstone Takes Part in D.C. Ten-Miler

During a recent City Council meeting, Council Member Michelle Watkins had the opportunity to present Team Redstone with

Ten-Miler held in Washington, D.C. This year marked Team Redstone's 29th consecutive year bringing home the



a resolution honoring its participation in the 41st Annual Army

prized eagle trophy for the Government Agencies Division. The City of Huntsville, Alabama would like to commend Team Redstone for

this outstanding achievement and wish them the best of luck in next year's Army Ten-Miler!

Ms. Watkins was also presented an Army Ten Miler race 2025 finishers medal for her support of the Redstone Rockets Army Ten Miler team.

## Grant Helps Huntsville Add to Its Transit Fleet

The City of Huntsville has been awarded a \$6 million U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant for the purchase of six new Low or No emissions (Low-No) hybrid diesel/electric transit buses to replace buses that

have reached the end of their useful life. "As Huntsville continues to grow, our transit system must grow with it. This grant supports our long-term plan to modernize the fleet and ensure residents have access to reliable, efficient transportation,"

Mayor Tommy Battle said.

The new buses will be larger, environmentally cleaner and more efficient hybrid while operating with reduced carbon emissions, improved fuel efficiency and lower maintenance costs.

## LearningQUEST Celebrates The Fourth Estate!



Becca Andrews



John Archibald

## Annual Program Presents Prize-Winning Journalists

A "Celebrate the Fourth Estate!" presentation will be held on Friday, December 5, at Trinity United Methodist Church, Wesley Hall, 12-2 p.m. The activity will feature journalists John Archibald and Becca Andrews.

This program continues what has become an annual speaking opportunity for prize-winning journalists. John Archibald is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist with the Alabama Media Group.

Becca Andrews, an award-winning investigative journalist and author, is an assistant professor at Western Kentucky University.

The two recently co-hosted the podcast "American Shrapnel" about Eric Rudolph, the American serial bomber. They will be reflecting on a year of powerful storytelling. The series encourages audience participation and presenters will answer as many questions as possible.



**HEALS:** Council Member David Little recently allocated \$75,000 from the District 2 Council Improvement Fund to HEALS, Inc. CEO Heather Mason and Chief Development Officer Risha Sanderson to support the organization's mission of delivering medical, dental and optometry care to underserved children in Huntsville. HEALS, Inc. works in partnership with local school systems and healthcare providers to offer accessible, school-based health services for children and helping bridge critical gaps in care across our community.

## The Valley Weekly

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE!

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The Board of Directors of the  
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 -presents the-

★ **20th**  
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 “Honoring Our Elders” Gala



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The Valley Weekly		
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# STATE OF AMERICA: When Feeling “Good” Costs Us Our Future

Each election cycle reveals something deeper about the American soul. People do not simply cast ballots—they cast feelings. And in our most recent federal election, too many Americans felt good about voting against people who didn’t look like them. They voted against the very individuals who clean their homes, tend to their children, protect their communities, and work in their businesses each day.

Many felt good voting against a fully qualified woman—not because of her policies or her record—but because she was brown, the child of immigrants. This happened because we have allowed ourselves to be convinced that im-migrants are violent threats, despite the fact that so many of your own parents and grandparents arrived on these shores seeking the same hope, opportunity, and dignity.

At the same time, men and women across racial and political lines rejected qualified women candidates—including Hillary Clinton—because someone told them that women should not lead America. In the 21st century, there are still people who openly believe a woman’s place is at home, birthing and rais-ing children, not leading a nation. You should read your bible some more!

This is one of the primary reasons many Black women have struggled to fully embrace the “Women’s Movement.” Too often, we have watched women forget the history that allowed them to stand in those board-rooms, classrooms, and courtrooms in the first place. They were beneficiaries of the Civil Rights Movement—and once inside the workplace, too many acted as if our fight had never included them.

We now find ourselves in a nation where people are willing to hand over the very idea of democracy just to keep poor, brown, and working-class people at the bottom. And because the act felt good, many ignored the uncomfortable truth that they were also voting against their own extended families in rural and economically distressed communities.

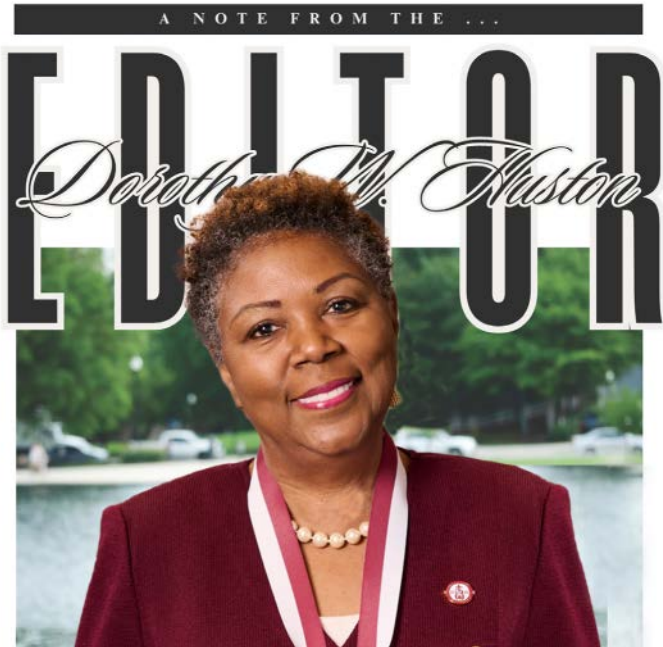
We consume television, podcasts, and social media that demean, distort, and divide. Some of the people most educated, most privileged, and most capable of critical thought are the very ones cheering on the madness. In school, I was taught to think for myself—to question, to evalu-ate, to use reason. Yet today, many simply echo whatever voice makes them feel validated.

So I ask: *What has happened to us?*

We profess to be Christians, yet our actions contradict everything we claim to believe. We stand silent in the face of cruelty, injustice, and blatant manipulation. We choose comfort over conscience. We choose tribe over truth.

The state of America is not just a political problem—it is a moral one. And until we reclaim the courage to think critically, act compassion-ately, and confront hard truths, we will continue down a path where feeling “good” becomes far more important than doing what is right.

Until next week ...



Dorothy

**DECEMBER 5 - ADOLPH CAESAR** - Adolph Caesar was an American actor, theatre director, dancer, and chore-ographer. He was nominated for an Oscar and a Golden Globe for his supporting role in the film A Soldier’s Sto-ry (1984). Caesar appeared in Norman Jewison’s film A Soldier’s Story, for which he received a nomination for “Best Actor in a Supporting Role” from both the Academy Awards and the Golden Globe Awards. He also played the role of “Old Mister” in the Steven Spielberg film, The Color Purple and appeared in Fist of Fear, Touch of Death. In addition to his film career, Caesar did much voice-over work for television and radio commercials. Caesar also lent his voice to Silverhawks, in which he voiced Hotwing, a magician and skilled illusionist.







## THE VALLEY WEEKLY VALLEY DEATHS

### NELMS MEMORIAL FUNERAL HOME

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

Funeral services are incomplete and will be announced at a later date for **MRS. MARILYN RUSSELL WARREN** (b. 1954).

Celebration of Life for **MR. MICHAEL HUMPHREY** (b. 1955) was Sunday, November 23, at New Life Seventh-Day Adventist Church with Pastor Nelson Stokes officiating.

Funeral service for **MR. RAYANTHA HORTON** (b. 1958) was Saturday, November 22, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel with Pastor Waymon Moore officiating.

Funeral service for **MR. JAYLAN TRAVON "POOH BEAR" WATKINS** (b. 1999) was Saturday, November 22, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel with Minister Ricky Leslie eulogist.

Funeral service for **MR. JUSTIN MARLO DAVIS** (b. 2000) was Saturday, November 22, at Springhill Church with Pastor Ricky Morland officiating.

Funeral service for **REV. CHARLES W. POWELL SR.** (b. 1946) was Saturday, November 22, at Union Hill Primitive Baptist Church with Pastor Oscar L. Montgomery, officiating.

Funeral service for **MR. JOHN F. RICE** (b. 1949) was Saturday, November 15, at Big Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church with Pastor Jeffrey Jefferson officiating.

Funeral service for **MR. WALTER CLIFFORD SOBRYAN** (b. 1944) was held Sunday, November 9, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel with Rev. Herbert Cartwright officiating.

Funeral service for **MRS. ROXANN TIBBS BATTLE** (b. 1938) was Saturday, November 8, at First Missionary Baptist Church with Pastor Carlos D. Williams officiating and Reverend Earla Lockhart as eulogist.

Funeral service for **MRS. QUENTIN MITCHELL TAYLOR** (b. 1973) was Saturday, November 8, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel with Elder Gilbert Mitchell officiating.

## Spiritual Game Plan

PRESTON BROWN'S

### Today's Spiritual Game Plan: "The Spirit That Rules Your Life"

Psalms 37:7 says, "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when evil people succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes."

There is a song written by Thomas A. Dorsey that goes, "If we ever needed the Lord before, we sure do need him now." In Psalms 37, David makes the case as to why we need God in our lives today. We see in this scripture the contrast between the wicked and the righteous—in other words, those who seek to know God and those who don't.

Today, I believe that we live in a society where most people are not spiritually minded. We all have spiritual sides as well as physical sides. Our physical sides are always lagging behind our spiritual sides because we continue to allow our emotions to govern the way we live. However, our emotions don't always reveal the truth about life; they just make us feel good about the decisions we make regardless of the truth.

How do we allow our physical sides to catch

up to our spiritual sides? The only way we can do this is to renew our minds. Romans 12:2 tells us "do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds". That's why we need God to change the very nature of our lives, because how can anybody not realize that we are all sinners? Just look at how many people we have in law enforcement. Look at all the prisons and jails that

we have in this country. Look at all the materialism and greed and self-seeking people all around. Human nature is sinful. Romans 3:10 says "there no one righteous, not even one." That's why our hearts and natures need to be changed.

We all need Jesus to change the ruling spirit of our lives. The spirit of Christ and the spirit of the world are exactly opposite. The spirit of the world is to hate but the spirit of Christ is to love. Until Jesus saves us from our sins and we grow in His grace, the spirit of the world will continue to control us. It is so important that we become aware of the Holy Spirit that lives in each and

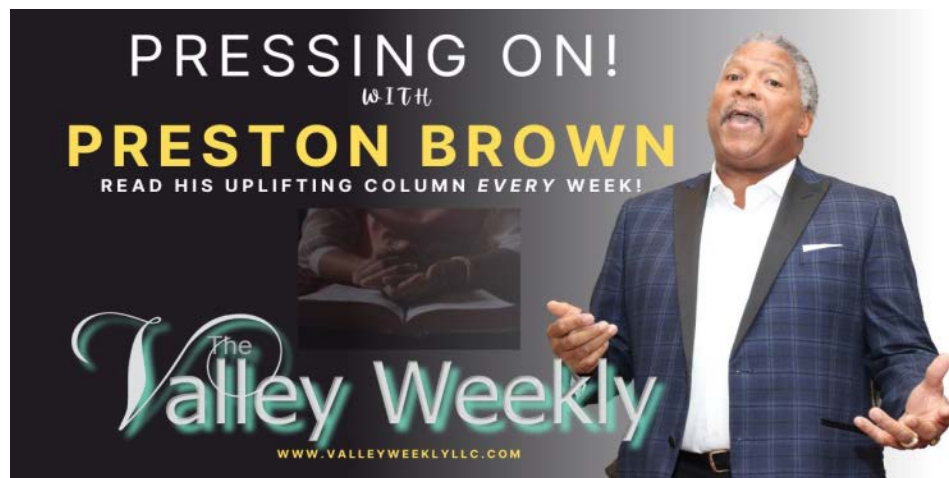
every one of us. We must allow the spirit of Christ to guide us so that we can truly see the difference between right and wrong as well as what is true and what is false.

May God grant you spiritual success in discerning between what is true and what false.

*Question:* How can discovering the truth enhance our lives?

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:**  
*"Learning to Survive"*



# Milennia

by Gloria B. Caldwell

## The Wait ...

Pacing, foot tapping, exasperated breaths, frustration, and build-up. The wait will have you acting strange. Your mind is racing, anticipating the very thing you're waiting for, seeing the person, the adventures, the trip, the first day of school/work. You can't wait to start, be on your way ... or get there! The adrenaline you get wanting to arrive at your destination is magnifying. This is the energy you need to bottle up to remind you of why you want something.

The thoughts of seeing your friends, putting your plan into motion, just being in THAT moment. It is unbearable. Being so close, yet so far. What if they forget about me? What if I don't make it? What if I fail? What if my plane is late? Please let me make it to that mark! It is so an-



noying, and I just want to be there!

So what do you do? How about thinking about what your next moves will be? Take a breather, and concentrate on the next planning phase. What will that look like? After the newness wears off, what's next? After you've reached that mark, it's only the

beginning.

You will reflect and celebrate, as you should, but then you'll be on to the next phase. That moment will come and go quickly. A long time coming, a few days duration in excitement. You know the drill. This has happened so many times.

So, in the wait, continue. Keep your mind in creative mode. Keep your body active. Think about the plan. Make sure the strategy and priorities are clear.

Rest. Meditate.

It is coming; there's no doubt about that. Time waits for no one. Just relax in the moment and stay prepared. Be ahead of the game. The wait becomes the moment in time.

God loves you, and so do I.

He has given you a gift; open it.

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## Celebrating 33 Years of "Handel's Messiah: A Soulful Celebration"

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, ..." - Isaiah 9:6

(Note: this submission is dedicated to Ms. Gail Hamilton-Masondo, Grammy Award-winning co-producer, "Handel's Messiah: A Soulful Celebration," <http://www.valleyweeklyllc.com/ValleyWeekly08082025V11N49.pdf>)

As we move into this holiday season of celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ referenced in the above Bible text, let me remind you of the 33th anniversary of a Grammy-winning Christmas classic -

### With a Local Connection.

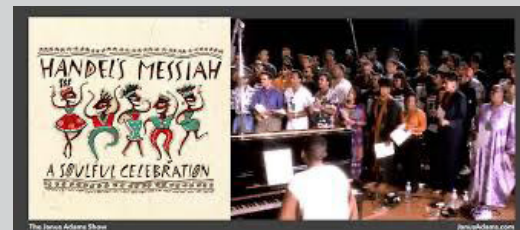
In 1992, *Handel's Messiah: A Soulful Celebration* debuted as a re-interpretation of composer George Frideric Handel's 1741 oratorio.

This 75-minute presentation was co-produced by Huntsville, Alabama native Mervyn Warren.

A 1985 Oakwood College graduate and original member of its Grammy Award-winning Take 6 a cappella sextet, Warren's re-interpretation showcased multiple genres of African American music.

For example, he remixed Handel's original opening Overture to create Overture: A Partial History of Black Music, *Overture*; it featured such African-American genres as spirituals, hip-hop, R&B, ragtime, big band, jazz fusion, and blues.

To conclude this 16-song album, Quincy Jones conducted the *Hallelujah Chorus* finale *Hallelujah!*, <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C1NKZVoh6pY/?hl=en>, which featured an All-Star cast of Black entertainers; view the list at *Handel's Messiah: A Soulful Celebration* - Wikipedia. (image credit: Janus Adams)



### The Results?

*A Soulful Celebration* won the 1992 Grammy and Dove Awards for Best Contemporary Soul Gospel Album and Contemporary Gospel Album of the Year, respectively; also in 1992, it charted on The Top Gospel Albums (#3), Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums (11), Top Contemporary Christian Albums (13), and The Billboard 200 (82).

Shortly after receiving their 1992 Grammy Awards, I was privileged to bring "Skipper" Warren with its co-producer and my childhood friend Gail Hamilton to Hampton University in March 1993, to conduct a music workshop concluding with Warren guest-conducting *Hallelujah!* with HU's His Chosen Sound gospel choir.

Need to refresh your holiday spirit? Revisit *Handel's Messiah: A Soulful Celebration* - Wikipedia. . . .

... Then, more importantly, go out and create your own Soulful Celebration in your home, work- and worship place, ...

.... And finally and most importantly, make it last another 33 years!



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The Valley Weekly

# VALLEY EVENTS

HAPPENINGS, ACTIVITIES &amp; MORE!

**December 7**

Christmas with C.S. Lewis  
Mars Music Hall  
Von Braun Center  
1 p.m.

**December 9**

Alabama A&M University  
150th Anniversary Closing  
Ceremony (Invitation Only)  
Huntsville, Ala. - 5:30 p.m.

**December 11**

"Wheel of Fortune"  
Mars Music Hall  
Von Braun Center  
Huntsville, Ala.  
7:30 p.m.

**December 13**

Jeff Dunham  
Propst Arena  
Von Braun Center  
Huntsville, Ala. - 5 p.m.

**January 16-17**

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban  
Mark C. Smith Concert Hall  
Von Braun Center  
Huntsville, Ala.  
7 p.m.

**January 25**

*Fantasia with Anthony Hamilton*  
Propst Arena  
Von Braun Center  
Huntsville, Ala.  
8 p.m.

**January 27-February 1**

The Sound of Music  
Mark C. Smith Concert Hall  
Von Braun Center

Huntsville, Ala.  
7 p.m.

**February 1**

Harlem Globetrotters  
Propst Arena  
Von Braun Center  
Huntsville, Ala.  
3 p.m.

**February 6**

Diana Krall  
Mark C. Smith Concert Hall  
Von Braun Center  
Huntsville, Ala. - 7:30 p.m.

**February 22**

Heart  
Propst Arena  
Von Braun Center  
Huntsville, Ala.  
7 p.m.

**February 28-March 1**

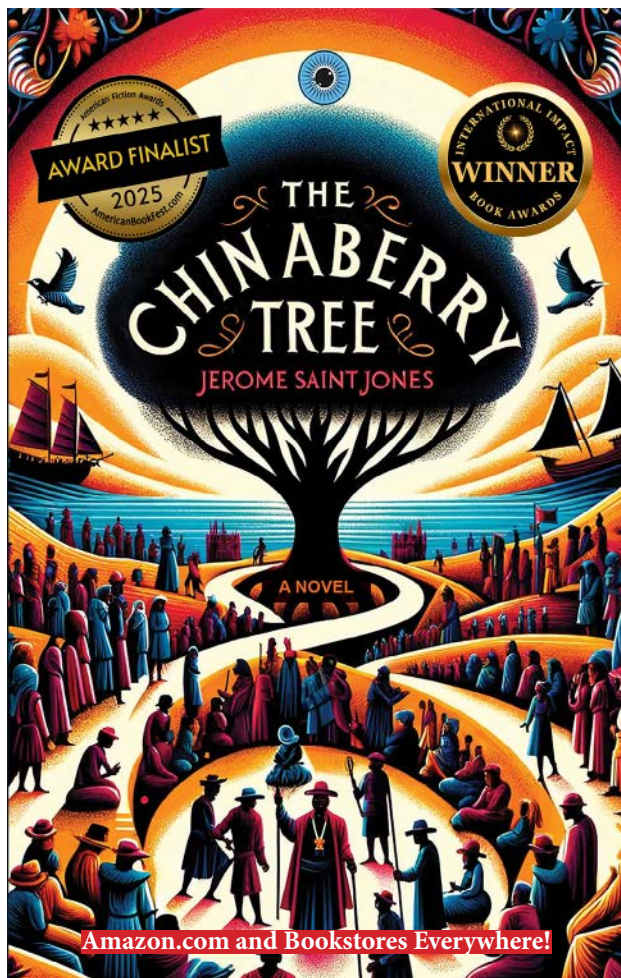
Disney on Ice  
Propst Arena  
Von Braun Center  
Huntsville, Ala.

**March 5**

KC and The Sunshine Band  
Mark C. Smith Concert Hall  
Von Braun Center  
Huntsville, Ala.  
7:30 p.m.

**March 27-29**

The 6th Annual Women's Expo Conference  
The Westin Hotel  
Huntsville, Ala.  
[www.thewomensexpoHSV.com](http://www.thewomensexpoHSV.com)



## PowerShot

"This is not the time to be afraid. This is the time to stand up and fight back and to resist any temptation for them to divide us. We are in this together..."

Letitia James



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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.*

*"Not everything that is faced can be changed,  
but nothing can be changed until it is faced."*

— James Baldwin





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

## Mr. Gregory Miley

Mr. Gregory Douglas Miley is a Dothan, Alabama, native, born as the only son among five sisters, to the late Harding Miley, a nearly 30-year-veteran of the Dothan Police Department, and the late Delories Miley, a Woolworth retiree.

A product of Dothan City Schools, Miley graduated from George Washington Carver High School in June 1969, with honors, and attended Wallace Junior College and Trade School for two years, receiving a certificate in electronics technology in September 1971. He entered the United States Air Force that same month, serving four years as a Missile Systems Maintenance Specialist on the Hound Dog missile and received an honorable discharge in June 1975.

In September 1975, Miley decided to further his education and enrolled in the University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH). In 1979, he after earned the B.S. degree in electrical engineering. Remaining in Huntsville, Miley began his engineering career in November 1979 at Teledyne Brown Engineering, and he

would later work for various engineering firms within the Huntsville vicinity throughout his nearly 40-year career. His duties primarily included supporting different commands and project offices at Redstone Arsenal and Marshall Space Flight Center. More specifically, Miley travelled extensively on various TDY assignments in the U. S. and foreign countries, including Germany, the Netherlands, Israel, Egypt, and Kwajalein.

The Alabamian also volunteered with various groups. He tutored at the Boys and Girls Club (Mason Court) and provided much-needed support to the Emergency Home Repair Program through the city of Huntsville Community Development Agency, CASA of Madison County (now known as Enable Madison County), Feeding the Homeless, and various other community volunteer projects. In May 2004, he received the Distinguished Engineering Alumni Award from the UAH College of Engineering.

Miley joined the Progressive Union Missionary Baptist Church in



August 1976. Ordained as a deacon on January 29, 1989, by Progressive Union Church, he has served and continues to serve in various ministries, including Deacon Board chair, Finance Committee chair, church treasurer, Sunday School teacher, Transportation Ministry, church newsletter, Music Ministry, Audio-Video Ministry, and various community projects through Progressive Union.

Since retiring, Miley continues to volunteer with Enable Madison County and, lately, Mobility Worldwide of North Alabama. The avid volunteer is an active member of Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Chapter 1067, Huntsville, where he loyally serves as chapter photographer.



"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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# AUNT IRMA MAKES IT PLAIN...

## Human Hypertension: A View from Beyond

If an intelligent traveler from the outer reaches of the galaxy were handed only one chart to understand Earth — a simple list of nations and the percentage of adults taking blood-pressure medication — the conclusions might be both surprising and unsettling. With no knowledge of human culture, history, or biology, the alien would likely see two competing truths reflected in the same numbers.

In one interpretation, countries with high medication rates might appear advanced. After all, such data could suggest long life expectancy, well-developed healthcare networks, and widespread access to treatment. People live long enough to develop hypertension, doctors are available to diagnose it, and pharmacies exist to

dispense medication.

A medicated society, from this distance, might look like a prosperous one — capable, organized, and committed to maintaining human life.



But the same numbers could just as reasonably be read as warning signs.

If half of a nation requires daily chemical cor-

rection simply to keep its blood moving safely, what does that say about the environment these humans have built? It might suggest chronic stress, unhealthy food systems, and lifestyles so taxing that the body can no longer regulate itself. Hypertension becomes not a condition of old age, but a price of participation — the toll of modernity paid in pills.

Our extraterrestrial observer would likely notice another oddity: that populations with the lowest medication rates could represent either the healthiest societies on Earth or the most medically underserved. Without context, a medication count cannot distinguish between a utopia of

wellness and a landscape of silent suffering. High numbers might reflect strong care or widespread illness; low numbers might signal

robust health or premature death.

And perhaps the alien's most important question would be the simplest:

If humans are as clever as they claim, why do so many require medication to function normally?

Hypertension medication, to this outsider, would not appear inherently good or bad — only revealing. It would tell a story about a species brilliant enough to engineer solutions, but still struggling to solve the conditions that require them.

Our imaginary visitor might choose to settle

somewhere with low medication use and long life expectancy — a place where health is cultivated, not just managed. They would look for a society where bodies thrive

without chemical assistance, where wellness is the default rather than a prescription.

Because from a distant vantage point, a nation full of pill bottles and pressure cuffs may not look like a triumph of medicine.

It may look like a warning.

-TVW Staff



## MAYHEM IS EXPENSIVE. ALLSTATE IS NOT.



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# AAMU's NABA Chapter Attends Regional Conference

Alabama A&M University accounting students recently took their classroom knowledge to the corporate world during the National Association of Black Accountants (NABA) Southern Regional Student Conference in Atlanta. The AAMU NABA chapter – one of the largest in the nation with more than 300 members – brought 81 students to the event, combining professional development with visits to some of the country's top financial institutions and a behind-the-scenes look at the Atlanta Braves organization.

Students gained firsthand exposure to the inner workings of major companies such as JPMorgan Chase & Co., Bank of America, and the Braves. They participated in panel discussions, networked with professionals, and explored career paths in finance, consulting, and sports.

"What I took away from the trip is that there are many opportunities for us, but you have to make yourself stand out," said accounting freshman Jushon Fleming of Montgomery, Alabama. "Nothing is going to be given to you – you have to be patient and always work hard. It was an amazing experience, and I'm truly thankful I was able to make so many connections."

At JPMorgan Chase, students heard from industry leaders who shared their personal career

journeys and insights into navigating the financial services field. They learned about the company's culture, early career programs, and opportunities designed for aspiring professionals. The interactive discussions allowed AAMU students to ask questions, gain valuable perspective, and make meaningful connections with JPMC representatives.

The group also received a warm welcome at Bank of America, where students had in-depth conversations with professionals from various departments and enjoyed a networking luncheon with panelists, many of whom were HBCU alumni. Seeing graduates from historically Black colleges thriving in major corporations inspired the students and reinforced the importance of representation in corporate leadership.

At the NABA conference, students attended workshops, networking sessions, and career fairs, including one-on-one "coffee chats" with representatives from top firms like

KPMG. AAMU student Victoria Pruitt earned top honors as part of the winning team in Deloitte's Green Tank Challenge Case Competition.

In the competition, Pruitt and her teammates acted as the executive leaders of Greenvergent Solutions, a company facing rising costs, slow payments, and growing competition. They analyzed the company's financial statements and internal memos to identify the main issues affecting profitability, then created a five-year plan with strategic solutions to improve performance. Pruitt helped develop and present a 10-minute executive-style presentation showcasing their analysis, recommendations, and forecast to a

panel of judges. Her team's strong performance earned first place – and Pruitt received a \$1,000 award.

The trip was supported by faculty advisors Dr. Felicia Farrar, Dr. Joseph Reid, and Dr. Kelley Marie Duncanson, with additional backing from global accounting firm RSM US

and the Alabama Society of Certified Public Accountants.

Under the leadership of President Marayah Davis, Vice President Autumn Peoples, and the executive board, the AAMU NABA chapter continues to model excellence, professionalism and service.

"My experience was outstanding," said marketing freshman Patience Jackson of Atlanta. "Hearing how professionals at Bank of America transitioned from college into their careers showed me it's truly possible to succeed, no matter your background."







## Drake State Participates in AI Consortium

Drake State Community & Technical College is proud to participate in the AWS–Machine Learning University Educators Consortium and Transformation Alliance. The college is one of 14 historically Black institutions collaborating to expand access to artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning education across Alabama.

The meeting culminated in the formation of the Alliance for AI and Machine Learning, a groundbreaking initiative co-led by Dr. Calvin Briggs of the Southern STEM Center and Dr. Majed Dweik of Alabama A&M University. This new alliance will serve as a catalyst for integrating AI across educational institutions and strengthening the state's talent pipeline.

“Industry-aligned AI and machine learning teaching and research are essential to preparing the

workforce of the future and ensuring that innovation benefits everyone,” said Margie Vela, Senior Program Manager-Machine Learning University, AWS. “We’re proud to support our education partners across the Southern Region as they lead the way in advancing inclusive innovation that connects learning, research, and real-world impact.”

“Drake State is committed to ensuring that our students are not only prepared for today’s workforce but are equipped to lead in tomorrow’s innovation economy. Through this partnership with AWS and the Machine Learning University Educators Consortium and Transformation Alliance, we are opening doors to cutting-edge AI and machine learning education that will empower our students to create solutions for real-world challenges and drive

inclusive progress across Alabama and beyond,” said Lydia Owens, Business, Computer Science, and Engineering Technologies Division Chair, Drake State Community College.

This effort marks a significant step toward cultivating a tech industry that is more representative of the communities it serves, while positioning Alabama as an emerging hub for machine learning education and innovation. By expanding AI and machine learning opportunities for HBCU students, we equip future leaders with the skills to shape how this transformative technology is developed and deployed, locally and globally. Whether creating algorithms that serve communities more fairly or designing AI solutions that address local challenges, these students are becoming architects of a more equitable technological future.

## This Sunday's Lectionary

Sunday, December 7, 2025

Second Sunday  
of Advent



(Track 2, Year C)

First Lesson:

Isaiah 11:1-10

Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

Second Lesson:

Romans 15:4-13

GOSPEL:

Matthew 3:1-12

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