

## "I Want to Be a Pastor"

Dennis Johnson, ABHS Board of Managers

*"If it is painful to part, remember that it was good to be together...And this shall be my joy and crown, if I hear and see you pressing onward in the footsteps of Jesus Christ to whom I have tried to lead you."*



These were the last words the beloved congregation would hear from their young pastor in his farewell sermon on Sunday evening, July 4, 1897.<sup>1</sup> These parting words reflect the heart of that pastor who was Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918).

Before he was Professor Rauschenbusch of Rochester Theological Seminary, the groundbreaking theologian, justice-seeking social reformer, formative source of American spirituality, and leading voice of the social gospel movement during The Gilded Age, he was Pastor Rauschenbusch, the faithful shepherd of Christ's flock at Second German Baptist Church (SGBC), New York City.

He served a small, struggling German Baptist congregation in Louisville, KY, for two summers during his seminary studies at Rochester Theological Seminary. Those months gave him a taste for pastoral ministry. Out of that experience, he wrote to a seminary friend in 1884, "It is now no longer my fond hope to be a learned theologian and write big books; I want to be a pastor. And if I do ever become anything but a pastor, you may believe that I have sunk to a lower ideal or that there was a very unmistakable call to duty in that direction."<sup>2</sup>

Following graduation from seminary at age 25, he was called in June 1886 to SGBC amid the poverty, squalor, and crime of New York City's infamous Hell's Kitchen neighborhood.

The young pastor came to save souls. He soon realized there was more to be saved than souls. He encountered urban poverty and corruption; immigrant exploitation and unemployment; filth-plagued, stench-infested, oppressively overcrowded tenements; disease; and so much death. He agonized over all the funerals he conducted, especially those of children. His first funeral as a pastor was for a child named Daniel Eisele; the funeral was held in the family home and the young pastor's comforting words were remarkable.<sup>3</sup> Throughout his Hell's Kitchen ministry, Rauschenbusch was haunted by the question, "Why do the children have to die?" The spiritual care of his congregation and the social conditions separating the poor and the rich were daily realities and formative experiences that shaped him as a person, a pastor, a preacher, and a prophet in his lifetime, and as a guide for later generations of Jesus-followers.

During an influenza epidemic in the winter of 1888, many of the poor froze to death on the streets of New York City. Young Pastor Rauschenbusch so exhausted himself tending to his duties and caring for his people that he, too, became ill and was confined to bed. When he received word

*(Continued on page 6)*

# Church Anniversaries

## October – December

We celebrate the faithful ministry of American Baptist congregations and their pastors! The following churches notified ABHS that they are celebrating anniversaries this quarter:

### 275 Years

Liberty Baptist Church, Exeter, RI  
Richard Johnson, pastor

### 220 Years

First Church of Pawtucket, Pawt, RI  
Rev. Karen East Robinson, pastor

### 185 Years

First Baptist Church, Racine, WI  
Rev. Holly Anderle, pastor

### 175 Years

Third Baptist Church, St. Louis, MO  
Dr. Tommy Simons, pastor  
First Baptist Church, St. Paul, MN  
Rev. William Englund and Rev. Sheila Ahlbrand, pastors

### 155 Years

First Baptist Church Fairbury, NE  
Rev. Dr. Bill Prather, pastor

### 150 Years

First Baptist Church, Clifton Springs, NY  
Rev. Anne Shaw Gardner, pastor

### 150 Years (continued)

First Union Baptist Church, Richmond, VA  
Rev. Dr. Roberta Young-Jackson, pastor  
Philadelphia Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA  
Rev. Emory Arnold Sr., pastor  
Two Runs Baptist Church, Palestine, WV  
Bethlehem Baptist Church, Rochester IN  
Donnie Kohls, pastor

### 145 Years

First Chinese Baptist Church, San Francisco, CA  
Rev. Sebastian Ong, pastor

### 125 Years

Corinthian Baptist Church of Germantown,  
Philadelphia, PA

### 100 Years

Evergreen Baptist Church of LA, Rosemead, CA  
Rev. Jason Ashimoto, pastor

### 70 Years

First Baptist Church of Bostonia, El Cajon, CA  
Van Tarpley, pastor

### 40 Years

Greater Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church,  
Milwaukee, WI,  
Rev. Kenneth Cutler, pastor

If your church is celebrating a significant anniversary, notify ABHS and request a certificate. We want to celebrate with you!

## Primary Source

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# Opportunities to see “A Resilient Faith”

at YOUR  
FINGERTIPS



You can see the traveling exhibit “A Resilient Faith: Japanese American Baptists in World War II” at two historically Japanese American Baptist churches this fall. Japanese Baptist Church in Seattle will host one exhibit through November. Evergreen Baptist Church of Los Angeles will host a second exhibit during November and December as they celebrate their centennial.

To schedule the traveling exhibit in your church or region, contact Jenny Manasco, (J.Manasco@ABHSarchives.org).

To view the online exhibit, use this QR code or go to [www.ABHSarchives.org/online](http://www.ABHSarchives.org/online).



Right: Attendees of the Evergreen Baptist Association annual meeting gather at the ABHS traveling exhibit.



## ABHS Transitions:



With the JACS project winding down, we must, unfortunately, say farewell to Brice Bongiovanni. He will be leaving us for the North Carolina State Archives where he will be the Imaging Operations Coordinator. We wish him all the best and know he will continue to make lasting impacts in the archives world.

Brice has been with ABHS for two years as the project archivist for the Japanese American Confinement Sites project. In this role, Brice was responsible for scanning documents and photographs related to the experience of the Japanese American Baptists during WWII. He also prepared the digital files for preservation and added description and metadata that ensures the documents are discoverable in online searches.

More recently, Brice was the person primarily responsible for the traveling and online exhibits, “A Resilient Faith: Japanese American Baptists in World War II.” This project would not have been a success without his genuine care for preserving and telling this story.

Brice adds, “It’s been a real honor to work with the ABHS on such an important project, and I hope that hearing the story of Japanese American Baptists will inspire people to work together and stand up on behalf of their neighbors.”

Thank you, and best wishes, Brice!



Bringing our legacy to light

## From the Archives: J.C. Herrin: Civil Rights Pioneer

Mariah Hamby, Head of Archives and Special Collections

*The Daily Argus, Mt. Vernon, New York*  
OCTOBER 31, 1942

### Youth Leader To Be Ordained At First Baptist Tomorrow

J. Caesar Herrin, in charge of young people's work at the First Baptist Church, will be ordained into the Baptist ministry Sunday at 8 P. M. at ceremonies at the First Baptist Church. The Rev. Dr. David E. Roberts, dean of students at Union Theological Seminary, will preach the ordination sermon.

The Rev. Stanley B. Hazzard, a resident of Pelham and a member of the staff of the Baptist City Mission Society of New York City, will give the charge to the candidate. L. Jerome Matteson, moderator of the Southern Westchester Baptist Association, will read the Ordination Council's recommendation of the candidate. The Rev. Dr. Elmer A. Love, pastor of the church, will be the officiating minister.

A graduate student at Union Theological Seminary, Mr. Herrin was Summer supply pastor at the church while Dr. Love was with the U.S.O. at Fort Warren, Cheyenne, Wyo.

Mr. Herrin is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Cline E. Herrin of Concord, N. C. He is twenty-eight and married.



J. C. HERRIN

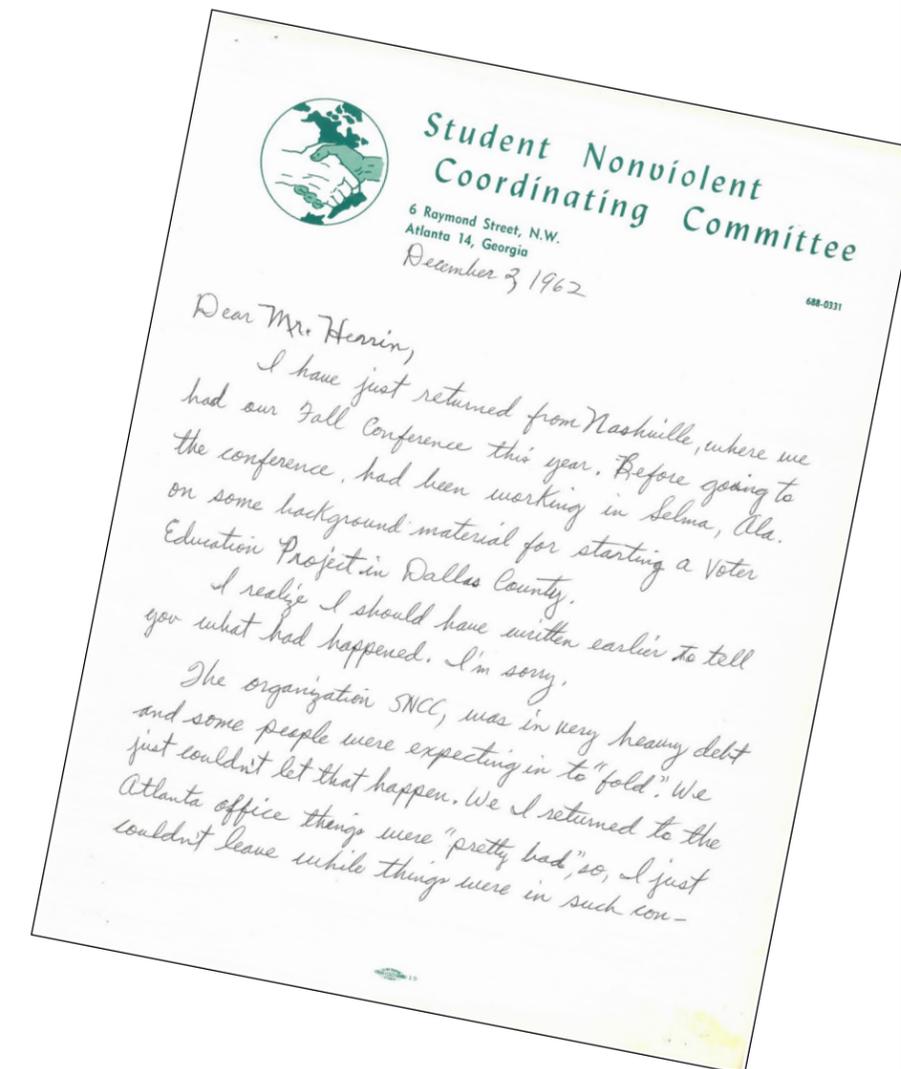
Wake Forest College, N. C., and has done work at the Hartford Theological Seminary.

Special music at the ordination will be presented by Frank Fairbanks Stone, tenor, accompanied by Margaret McPherson Dubocq, organist-choir director, both students at the School of Sacred Music, Union Theological Seminary.

Rev. Julius Caesar Herrin (1914-2009) was a pioneer of the Civil Rights movement. A North Carolina native, Herrin graduated from Wake Forest College (Winston-Salem, NC) and Union Theological Seminary (New York, NY), and spent three years working with Baptist students at the University of Missouri. In 1946, he became the Baptist Student Union Chaplain for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Herrin's convictions about racial equality and interracial cooperation were hallmarks of his tenure as Chaplain.

In 1954 the North Carolina Baptist Convention (Southern Baptist Convention) fired him, citing his liberal theology. Following a brief stint as Associate Pastor for Scarsdale Baptist Church in Scarsdale, NY, Herrin returned to the South in 1959. As Assistant General Secretary of the American Baptist Convention for Work in the South (1959-1971), Herrin gave American Baptists a significant presence in the South during the Civil Rights movement.

The American Baptist Churches of the South (ABCOTS), with over 200 congregations, is a testimony to this work. Herrin created and secured funding for southern college students in support of integration in public schools, churches, and civil rights organizations. He was an integral part in raising foundation money for scholarships and grants to help Black students be able to get the education necessary to become future leaders of their communities.



**Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee**  
6 Raymond Street, N.W.  
Atlanta 14, Georgia  
December 3, 1962

Dear Mr. Herrin,

I have just returned from Nashville, where we had our Fall Conference this year. Before going to the conference, had been working in Selma, Ala. on some background material for starting a Voter Education Project in Dallas County.

I realize I should have written earlier to tell you what had happened. I'm sorry.

The organization SNCC, was in very heavy debt and some people were expecting in to "fold." We just couldn't let that happen. We returned to the Atlanta office things were "pretty bad," so, I just couldn't leave while things were in such con-

208 Auburn Ave., N.E.  
Atlanta 3, Ga.  
Jackson 5-1763

**Southern Christian Leadership Conference**

PLEASE NOTE:  
our new address  
41 Exchange St., S.E., Atlanta 3, Ga.  
Telephone 524-1178

James R. Wood, Public Relations Director  
Ralph D. Abernathy, Treasurer

Martin Luther King Jr., President  
Wyatt Tee Walker, Executive Director

January 29, 1962

The Reverend J. C. Herrin  
Post Office Box 188  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Dear Rev. Herrin:

Sorry I was out ill when you were here visiting us. I'm feeling much better now.

I have enclosed some checks which have been returned to me. The two checks for students at Tennessee A & I were returned because of scholastic difficulties. The one for McLaurin is made out to the wrong school, it should be made out to CMI (Christ Missionary Industrial College). Please have the check for Mr. McLaurin redrawn.

I am listing below some additional request for scholarships:

Ruby Shuttlesworth	-- \$225.00	University of Cincinnati
Patricia Shuttlesworth	225.00	University of Cincinnati
Patricia Sherman	100.00	Howard University
Gwendolyn Brooks	262.50	Morehouse College
Edward Brooks	300.00	Morris Brown College
Elroy Embry	160.00	Rm. and Board @ \$40.00 per mo.
Salynn McCullum		

We are in the process of preparing a six month report on the Scholarship Program. We are working toward the 6th of February as the deadline.

Hope I get a chance to see you on your next visit.

Sincerely,  
*Edwina Smith*  
(Mrs.) Edwina Smith  
Secretary to Mr. Walker

TOUGALOO SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

### Tougaloo College

\$ 100.00      Tougaloo, Mississippi, November 3, 1961 194

Received of The American Baptist Home Missions Society

A Donation of One Hundred and 00/100 ----- Dollars

Current Expenses - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to be applied as follows:  
Building Fund - - - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ With hearty Thanks  
Scholarship Aid - - \$ 100.00  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Ed Butler*  
PRESIDENT

RG 1512 JC Herrin Papers were donated in 2022 by Herrin's daughter, Cindy Evans.

(Continued from page 1)

of a parishioner in need, he rose from his bed, still sick and weak, to go minister.

As a result of leaving his sickbed too soon, his hearing was affected and before long, the gift of hearing faded away. By 1891 at age 30 he was nearly totally deaf and forced to live with what he described as a “physical loneliness.” He married Pauline Rother in 1893, which means he never heard his wife’s voice, he never heard his children laugh. In his hearing-impaired world, he was left with an unceasing surf-like roar for the rest of his life. As a shepherd of Christ’s flock, the steadfast pastor sacrificed his health for the love of his people. He decided that the hearing loss left him inadequate to fulfill his calling and unable to carry out his pastoral duties. With deep sadness, he resigned as pastor. The church, however, with love and grace, refused his resignation, and he remained with them for six more years.

His pastoral vocation in Hell’s Kitchen was the anvil on which he forged his spirituality, his calling, his theology, his social vision of the gospel, and his kingdom vision of life as it ought to be. It formed within him the conviction that the will and realm of God must prevail in the entirety of one’s being and in every aspect of human existence and that salvation is a transformation from self-centeredness and self-interest to an orientation toward God, others, and the common good in the direction of equality, community, freedom, love, justice, and solidarity.

Displayed in the SGBC of NYC, before it was sold and converted to a nightclub, was a tablet honoring Rauschenbusch reading: “Preacher, Author, Teacher, Leader of Men; ‘Thy Kingdom Come’ His Prayer and Passion; His Life an Inspiration; His Message a Benediction to Multitudes.”

A single soul of the multitudes was Julius Dietz, a local butcher, who spoke on behalf of the congregation at the 10th anniversary of Rauschenbusch’s pastorate. He said, “We have found in him more that is Christlike than in any human being we have ever met...and when I review all (his labors) and feel he is our pastor, my heart says, ‘Praise God from whom all blessings flow’ who has placed our brother among us.”<sup>4</sup>

Still among us through his writings, brother Walter continues to challenge us to press onward in the footsteps of Jesus.



Dennis L. Johnson is a retired American Baptist pastor and chairperson of the Research & Publication Committee of the ABHS Board of Managers. He is author of two collections of daily reflections with Walter Rauschenbusch: *To Live in God* (Judson Press, 2020) and *Life with God* (Good Faith Media/ Nurturing Faith books, 2025).

1. “Farewell Sermon,” ABHS Rauschenbusch Family Papers, RG 1003, Box 139.
2. Winthrop S. Hudson, ed., *Walter Rauschenbusch: Selected Writings* (Paulist Press, 1984), 53.
3. “Funeral for D. Eisele,” ABHS Rauschenbusch Papers, RG 1003, Box 126, Vol. 4:182-187.
4. Paul M. Minus, *Walter Rauschenbusch, American Reformer* (Macmillan, 1988), 99.

## Research Snapshot – Arielle Rochelin



Arielle Rochelin, a Ph.D. candidate at Duke University, recently visited ABHS to research African American missionary women from Spelman College and Shaw University who served in Central Africa around 1900.

She consulted the Joseph Clark Papers, which document early Baptist mission work in the Congo, and the correspondence of Louise Cecilia “Lulu” Fleming, one of the first Black women missionaries and a pioneering physician. Rochelin also reviewed materials on the mission stations of Lukunga and Palabala, in the Congo Free State.

Her work sheds light on the vital role of Black women in global missions and the significance of archival collections in preserving their stories.

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Samuel DeWitt Proctor Circle	\$501-1000
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* Baptist history publication -- potluck!	
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* inclusion on a special plaque in ABHS Reading Room	

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**INSIDE: J.C. Herrin:  
Civil Rights Pioneer**

## Going Digital Doesn't Mean Going Paperless!

In recent newsletters you have read a lot about ABHS's digitization projects. One misconception about digitization is that we are gradually emptying the shelves as archival materials are digitized. To the contrary: ABHS (and all professional archives) preserves the paper originals of everything we digitize. One ramification of this is that digitized archives require effectively double the storage space, being preserved both on computer servers *and* on shelves.

In fact, the shelves in our approximately 12,000 sq ft of archival storage rooms are at roughly 92% capacity. With new collections arriving almost weekly, you can imagine that we will soon be completely out of shelf space!

We have drafted a reconfiguration of the archival storage rooms with additional compact shelving for archival boxes, dedicated art storage for the 75 or so portraits we have, and specialized storage for microfilm, photographs, and large maps.

Purchase and installation of the additional shelving and specialized storage will cost over \$400,000. As you consider your end-of-year charitable giving, we hope that you will include ABHS in your generosity.

To make a donation online, use this QR code:

