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God's Goodness and Steadfast Love

There is something sacred about waking up to a new year. It is more than turning a calendar page. It is a reminder that God has been faithful once again. To see another year, to live in it, and to continue doing God's work is not something to take lightly. It is evidence of His goodness and His steadfast love at work in our lives.

Scripture tells us in Lamentations 3:22 to 23,

"Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning, great is Your faithfulness."

This verse speaks directly to the blessing of being here today. God's mercy carried us through last year's challenges, victories, losses, and lessons. His compassion did not run out. His faithfulness did not weaken. Because of that, we have been granted the gift of another year. Not simply to exist, but to live with purpose.

God's goodness shows itself in ways both seen and unseen. It is in the breath in our lungs, the strength to stand, the ability to think, to serve, and to love. His steadfast love keeps us anchored when life feels uncertain. It reminds us that we are never walking alone. Even when the road is difficult, His hand remains steady.

Being blessed to see another year also comes with responsibility. God allows us to remain here for a reason. There is work still to do, lives to touch, kindness to give, truth to share, and faith to demonstrate. Each new day is an opportunity to reflect His love to others. Our presence here is part of His plan.

Psalm 100:5 says,

"For the Lord is good, His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations."

This is the foundation of our gratitude. God is good. His mercy lasts. His love does not fade with time. It carries from one year to the next, from one season to another. When we look back, we can see His hand guiding us. When we look forward, we can trust He is already there.

So as we step into another year of life, let us walk with thankful hearts. Let us recognize that every day is a gift, every opportunity to serve is a blessing, and every moment is covered by His steadfast love. We move forward not by our own strength, but by His grace. And with that assurance, we continue God's work with joy, courage, and faith.



"Great is His faithfulness, for it does not depend on the strength of our hold on Him, but on the unwavering strength of His hold on us."

FASTING



What is Fasting?

Fasting: The term means to eat sparingly or to separate yourself from eating all together. Medically, it is a detoxification of your body, but spiritually it is never about losing more weight. The various types of fasts include:

- 1.) Normal Fast – abstaining from all solid and liquid food except for water for a period of time
- 2.) Absolute Fast – abstaining from all forms of solid food and water
- 3.) Partial Fast – abstaining from certain foods for a period of days
 - Dietary [abstain from certain foods]
 - Physical [change/increase physical exercise]
 - Financial [discontinue purchase of items and save/or give money towards evangelistic effort]
 - Social [abstain from internet activity; including FB, IG, and other sources]

What types of Fasts are Biblically recorded?

Types and Examples of Fasts:

- Isaiah 58:6, Ezra 8:23, I Kings 19: 4, 8, Daniel 1:8, Acts 9:9

What's the purpose of fasting?

Purpose: Spiritual fasting is NEVER about losing weight, but about gaining a closer relationship with God, developing discernment, and holistic cleansing. Throughout these days, we will purposefully lay down certain foods, while picking up our devotion to God. Throughout our period of fasting, I encourage you to actively seek God's guidance and develop new disciplines that will help you in your Christian journey. These disciplines may include reading the Bible more frequently, remaining prayerful, evangelizing the community, and engaging in intentional worship.

Let's FLOURISH through the powerful tool of prayer while considering one another and asking God to continue blessing our congregation, families, and our world. Please read daily...don't rush to the end, and take the time for true reflection. Remember that **Antioch is BIGGER than Antioch...** it always has been, and always will be!

Stay Encouraged!

Pastor J

Avoiding Another Government Shutdown?

(As of January 21, 2026)

Congressional leaders have released the final four spending bills, known as a "minibus," in a race to avert a partial government shutdown before the January 30 deadline.

Key details of the package and the current situation include:

- **Scope of Funding:** The legislation covers the departments of Defense; Labor, Health and Human Services; Education; Transportation, Housing and Urban Development; and Homeland Security.
- **Homeland Security & ICE Reforms:** A major sticking point involves the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) following the fatal shooting of a civilian by an ICE officer in Minneapolis. Democrats secured concessions including a cut to ICE's detention budget, a \$1 billion reduction for CBP, and \$20 million for body cameras for immigration agents.



- **Legislative Path:** The House aims to vote on these measures before the end of the week. Because of the controversy surrounding immigration enforcement, the Homeland Security funding will likely be voted on separately from the other three bills.
- **Senate Timeline:** Once passed by the House, the Senate will have only a few days to approve all six remaining funding bills to send to the President's desk by the end of the month.

Partial shutdown over DHS funding?

The government is indeed facing a January 30 deadline (this Friday) to avoid a partial shutdown. While the House passed its funding bills last week, the process has stalled in the Senate due to a significant and volatile standoff over the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and ICE.

Here is the latest as of January 28, 2026:

The Minneapolis Flashpoint

The primary driver of the current deadlock is a wave of national backlash following the fatal shooting of Alex Pretti, an ICU nurse, by federal agents in Minneapolis last Saturday. This follows the Jan. 7 killing of Renée Good in a separate enforcement operation.

- **Democratic Response:** Senate Democrats, led by Chuck Schumer, are now vowing to block any funding package that includes DHS unless "meaningful, enforceable reforms" are added, such as judicial warrant requirements and limits on the use of force.
- **Republican Stance:** House and Senate Republicans argue that the funding bill should proceed as negotiated, accusing Democrats of walking away from a bipartisan agreement at the last minute.

The Strategy: "Splitting" the Package

To avoid a broad shutdown, Senate Democrats have proposed separating the DHS funding from the rest of the \$1.2 trillion "minibus" spending package.

- **The Plan:** Pass five of the six remaining funding bills (Defense, Labor/HHS/Education, Transportation/HUD, State, and Treasury) to keep those agencies open.
- **The Hurdle:** Republicans have so far resisted splitting the package. Even if they agreed, any changes would require the House to vote again—but the House is currently in recess and not scheduled to return until February 2.

What a Shutdown Would Actually Look Like

If no deal is reached by midnight Friday, roughly half of the federal government will technically lose funding. However, the impact on immigration enforcement might be different than in past shutdowns:

- **ICE and CBP:** Because of a massive \$165 billion funding infusion from the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act" passed last year, these agencies have significant "carryover" funds. They are expected to remain operational and continue immigration enforcement even if other parts of the government shut down.
- **Other Agencies:** Departments like Defense, Education, and Transportation would be more directly affected, potentially leading to furloughs for thousands of federal workers and delays in services like air traffic control and housing assistance.

Current Status: Negotiators are in high-stakes talks, but the path to avoiding a shutdown remains "elusive" as the Friday night deadline approaches

What's Happening in Congress?



The "Epstein files" refer to a massive body of evidence—totaling over 300 gigabytes of data—collected during federal investigations into the sex trafficking ring operated by the late financier Jeffrey Epstein. These documents include FBI interview summaries (302s), flight logs from his private aircraft (nicknamed the "Lolita Express"), "black books" containing thousands of personal contacts, and internal Department of Justice (DOJ) memos.

The primary focus of these files is to uncover how Epstein operated a global trafficking network for decades with apparent impunity and to identify the powerful individuals who facilitated or participated in his crimes.

The Sharp & Short Choice: Facts Over Fiction: Unmasking the Files



The Connection to Congress

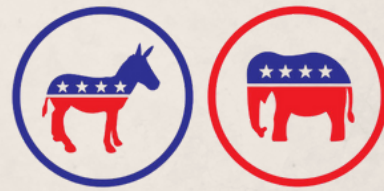
In late 2025 and early 2026, the relationship between these files and Congress reached a boiling point through legislative action and intense oversight:

- **The Epstein Files Transparency Act:** In November 2025, Congress passed this act with near-unanimous bipartisan support (427–1 in the House). The law legally mandated the DOJ to release all unclassified investigative materials related to Epstein by December 19, 2025.
- **Congressional Subpoenas:** The House Oversight Committee issued subpoenas to the Epstein estate, successfully obtaining over 30,000 pages of private emails and financial records. These documents have revealed the settings between Epstein and various high-profile figures, including tech moguls and political advisors.
- **Contempt Proceedings:** As of January 2026, the House Oversight Committee has moved to hold prominent figures, including Bill and Hillary Clinton, in contempt of Congress for refusing to comply with subpoenas related to the investigation.
- **Enforcement Battles:** Lawmakers like Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA) and Rep. Thomas Massie (R-KY) are currently petitioning federal courts to appoint a "Special Master" to oversee the DOJ. They argue the Department has violated the Transparency Act by missing deadlines and applying excessive redactions to protect "powerful interests."

Why It Matters to Lawmakers

For Congress, the files are not just about the "client list" rumors; they are a tool for legislative oversight. Lawmakers are investigating the "sweetheart" plea deal Epstein received in 2008 and whether government institutions or high-ranking officials actively suppressed investigations to protect themselves or their associates.

WHAT'S GOING ON IN PG COUNTY



Preparing for the 2026 Midterm Elections: Prince George's County

The 2026 Midterm (Gubernatorial) Election is a critical opportunity for residents of Prince George's County to shape the future of both the State of Maryland and our local community. Below is a concise guide to the essential dates, deadlines, and resources you need to stay informed and ready to vote.

Important Election Dates

Event	Primary Election	General Election
Voter Registration Deadline	June 2, 2026	October 13, 2026
Early Voting Period	June 11 – June 18	Oct 22 – Oct 29
Mail-in Ballot Request (Online)	June 19, 2026	October 27, 2026
Election Day	Tuesday, June 23	Tuesday, Nov 3

1. Check Your Registration

Ensure your name and address are current. Registration is permanent in Maryland as long as you keep your address updated with the Board of Elections.

- How: Visit the [Maryland Online Voter Registration System \(OLVR\)](#).
- Same-Day Registration: If you miss the deadline, you can still register and vote in person during Early Voting or on Election Day by bringing proof of residency (e.g., MVA-issued ID, utility bill, or bank statement).

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2. Choose Your Voting Method

- Mail-in Ballot: Any registered voter can vote by mail—no excuse is required. You must request your ballot by the deadlines listed above. Ballots must be postmarked or placed in a secure drop box by 8:00 PM on Election Day.
- Early Voting: Prince George's County will host multiple early voting centers. These centers are open from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM daily during the early voting window.
- Election Day: Vote at your assigned polling place from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM.

PG COUNTY

Know the Candidates

The 2026 ballot will include high-stakes races for:

- Statewide Offices: Governor, Comptroller, and Attorney General.
- Federal Offices: U.S. Representative (Congressional Districts 4 and 5).
- Local Offices: County Executive, County Council, Sheriff, and Board of Education.

Local Resources

Prince George's County Board of Elections

Address: 1100 Mercantile Lane, Suite 115A, Largo, MD 20774

Phone: 301-341-7300

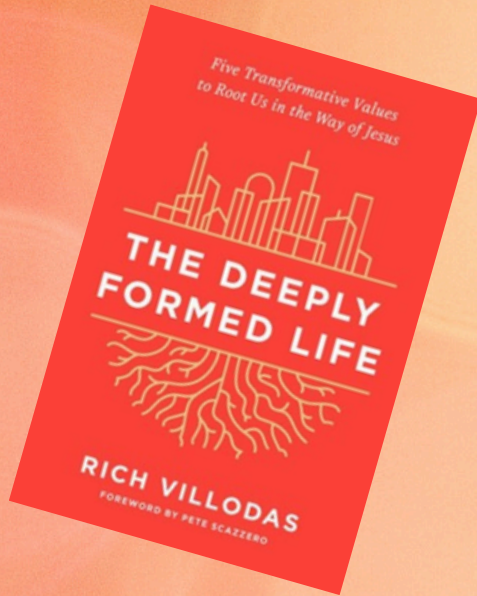
Email: election@co.pg.md.us

Official Candidate Lists:

Check the Maryland State Board of Elections website for the most up-to-date list of filed candidates for the Gubernatorial Primary.



GREAT BOOKS TO READ

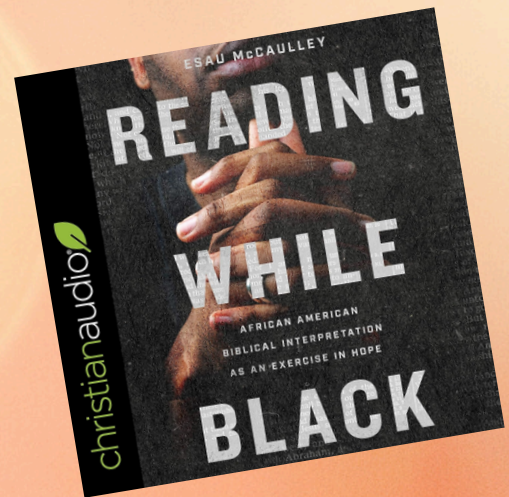


The Deeply Formed Life by Rich Villodas

While this book is written for a broad audience, Rich Villodas—the lead pastor of New Life Fellowship in Queens—infuses his writing with a deep understanding of racial justice, contemplative spirituality, and community. He argues that modern Christian life is often too shallow and proposes five "values" to help believers develop a more rooted faith:

1. Contemplative Prayer: Slowing down to be with God.
2. Racial Reconciliation: Seeing justice as a spiritual discipline.
3. Interior Examination: Looking at the "under the iceberg" parts of our emotional health.
4. Sexual Wholeness: Navigating modern life with integrity.
5. Missional Presence: Living out faith in the world.

It is a practical, challenging guide for anyone looking to bridge the gap between their Sunday worship and their daily reality.



Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope by Esau McCaulley

This award-winning book is both a personal testimony and a profound theological work. McCaulley, an Anglican priest and professor, addresses the unique questions that Black Christians often bring to the Bible. He explores how a faithful, Christian life involves:

- A "Hopeful" Reading of Scripture: Finding God's voice in the midst of struggle and systemic injustice.
- The Theology of Policing and Politics: How the Bible speaks to modern social issues without losing its spiritual core.
- Identity and Heritage: Understanding that the African presence in the Bible is not accidental, but central to God's plan.

This book is excellent for those who want to deepen their biblical understanding while remaining firmly grounded in the historical and contemporary Black experience.

Other notable mentions include:

- "Strength to Love" by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: A collection of sermons that remains a foundational text for Christian social ethics.
- "The Color of Compromise" by Jemar Tisby: While more focused on history, it provides a spiritual framework for Christians seeking to live out a life of racial justice as part of their discipleship.

Roots of Resilience

This image Below serves as a visual timeline of perseverance, moving from the arrival of the slave ship to the hope of the Underground Railroad. It honors the ancestors who endured the unimaginable, portraying them not as victims, but as people of immense dignity and humanity.

The composition highlights the transition from forced labor in the fields to the active resistance led by figures like Harriet Tubman. For African Americans, it reflects a legacy of turning struggle into progress, using the light of hope to navigate toward a future of self-determination.





"Love is the silent language whispered between two hearts, composing a symphony of joy through a lifetime of shared sunsets.

Happy Valentine's Day."

Southern Chicken and Sausage Gumbo

Ingredients For the roux

½ cup vegetable oil or bacon grease

½ cup all purpose flour

For the gumbo

1 large onion, diced

1 green bell pepper, diced

2 celery stalks, diced

3 cloves garlic, minced

1 pound chicken thighs or breasts, cut into chunks

1 pound smoked andouille sausage or any smoked sausage, sliced

6 cups chicken broth

1 teaspoon salt, adjust to taste

1 teaspoon black pepper

1 teaspoon paprika

½ teaspoon cayenne pepper, optional for heat

2 bay leaves

1 teaspoon dried thyme

1 teaspoon dried oregano

1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce

1 tablespoon hot sauce, optional

1 bunch green onions, sliced

¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped



Instructions

Start with the roux. In a heavy pot or Dutch oven heat the oil over medium heat. Add the flour and stir constantly. Keep stirring until it turns a deep brown color like melted chocolate. This takes patience, about 15 to 25 minutes. Do not walk away or it will burn.

Once the roux is ready add the onion, bell pepper, and celery. Stir well. Cook for about 5 minutes until vegetables soften. Add garlic and stir for another minute. Add the chicken and sausage. Stir to coat everything in the roux. Cook for about 5 minutes until the chicken starts to firm up.

Slowly pour in the chicken broth while stirring. Bring to a gentle boil. Add salt, pepper, paprika, cayenne, bay leaves, thyme, oregano, Worcestershire, and hot sauce if using. Reduce heat to low. Cover and let simmer for 45 minutes to 1 hour. Stir occasionally.

Taste and adjust seasoning. Add green onions and parsley in the last 5 minutes. Serve over a scoop of warm white rice.

Four Layered Pecan Pie

- 1 refrigerated rolled pie crust (from a 15-ounce package)
- 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup cup sugar, divided
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract, divided
- 4 eggs, divided
- 1 cup corn syrup
- 1 1/4 cup chopped pecans



What to Do

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Unroll pie crust and place in a 9-inch deep dish pie plate, pressing crust firmly into plate.

In a medium bowl, combine cream cheese, 1/4 cup sugar, 1 teaspoon vanilla extract, and 1 egg. Beat at low speed until smooth; set aside.

In another medium bowl, beat 3 eggs. Add remaining sugar, the corn syrup, and remaining vanilla; mix well.

Spread cream cheese mixture in pie crust. Sprinkle with pecans and slowly pour corn syrup mixture over pecans.

Bake 40 to 45 minutes, or until center is set. Let cool, then refrigerate 4 hours or until ready to serve.

If necessary, cover edge of pie crust with foil to prevent excessive browning after 25 minutes.

If you like, you can top each slice with a scoop of vanilla ice cream and a drizzle of maple syrup.

WOMEN WALKING WORTHY

Women's Prayer Meeting Conference Call

Women Walking Worthy

Ephesians 4:1

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord,
beseech you that ye walk worthy of the
vocation wherewith ye are called

**Hosted by Deaconess Jacqueline Williams
Antioch Baptist Church of Clinton
Every First Wednesday of the Month at 7 pm.**

Contact: Deaconess Jacqueline Williams at 410-507-3891 or jwill1@yahoo.com

to receive the ZOOM information



Antioch Baptist Church of Clinton (ABCOC) is a, fundamental, Bible believing Church. We seek to be identified with those who love God's work and strive to practice it. We not only believe the fundamentals of the faith, but we take our stand against all things which discredit and try to destroy the authority of the Bible.

Plan Your Visit

Antioch Baptist Church of Clinton has several opportunities for group study and worship. Start your week with Sunday School, Sunday Worship Service and Children's Church. Come back out to join us on Tuesdays and Thursdays for bible study.

When you come to ABCOC, you will be welcomed into a friendly, positive environment by people who are happy to see you. Antioch Baptist Church has several opportunities for group study and worship.



Newsletter Schedule:

- 1st Quarter - Due by January 15th
- 2nd Quarter - Due by April 15th
- 3rd Quarter - Due by July- 15th
- 4th Quarter - Due by October 15th

Sunday School
8:30 AM

Join via Zoom
Call Number: (301) 715-8592
Passcode: 145961268#

YouTube Live @ ABC Clinton MD or
Facebook Live @ ABCOC
10 AM Sunday Morning

Bible Study
Tuesday, 7:30 PM

Prayer Line
Wednesday, 7:00 AM (Weekly)
Prayer Line

Noon Day Bible Study
Thursday

Thursday, 12:00 PM (Weekly)
To Join the prayer line
Call 607-374-1189 |
Access Code: 934479

ABCOC Website:

<https://abcocmd.org>

Pastor:

Reverend James W. Jones Jr.

Please feel free to send your submissions to gomab02@gmail.com any time during the quarter. Please do not wait until the last minute. Newsletter will be ready for publication by the 20th day of the new quarter.

ABCOC Communications Committee: Jennifer Williams, Deborah Amis, Chuck Coleman, Khadijah Givs Martin and Jacob Gillison.

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