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# 2011 Usher and Health and Wellness Ministry Guide

*Driven to excellence in service in 2011!*

**Mississippi Faith-Based Health and Wellness Network**  
 Delta Alliance for Congregational Health (DACH)  
 Healthy Congregations (North MS)  
 One Mississippi National Baptist Unity Conference  
 Rising Sun Usher Federation

**Dr. Michael O. Minor, Editor**  
 Eleventh Edition



## **Usher and Health and Wellness Ministries 2011**

Ushers are God's public relations people. Health and wellness ministry members are God's promoters of Trinity Wellness (mind, body, and soul). It is our responsibility to demonstrate God's love toward every member and visitor. We provide members and visitors a great first impression of the personality and spirit of our church. We offer tips for healthier living. Our charge is to assist the Pastor in whatever way we can to enhance the worship experience and the life of the congregation. We are the extension of God's heart and hands. It is our aim to witness to others through right service and right living.

Health and wellness promotion will continue to be a major focus of the Rising Sun Usher Federation in 2011. We will target our efforts in our churches and our surrounding communities. We will promote Trinity wellness: mind, body, and spirit. To accomplish this we will do the following:

- empower people through prayer, study and service;
- support people in taking responsibility for lifestyle choices that impact their health and quality of life;
- encourage people to care for one another, and participate in the manner they are able in the service of others; and
- integrate wholeness in all aspects of our lives to create harmony with God, self, and others.

Yours for the cause of Christ,



**Michael O. Minor, EdD**  
**Editor and Director of Training**

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Hernando, MS 38632  
(901) 826-8355  
mom@midsouthchurches.org  
www.midsouthchurches.org/rising\_sun\_usher\_federation

### **6. What is the signal from the floor ushers to the pastor for distress such as a fire?**

The floor Ushers turn to the pulpit and brush both hands backward over the sides of their head. The pastor would then give the appropriate instructions.

### **7. What is the signal from the Usher in the aisle to the Usher in charge to request bulletins or other literature needed?**

The aisle Usher places the first two fingers of his/her right hand straight across the breast.

### **8. What is the signal from the Usher in the aisle or side wall that allows the Usher in charge to know that offering envelopes are needed?**

The aisle Usher places the first three fingers of his/her right hand straight across his/her breast.

### **9. What is the signal from the front Usher, which informs the Usher in the rear of the sanctuary to seat a visitor?**

The front Usher extends his/her hand politely while keeping the elbows close to the body.

### **10. What is the signal from the Usher in the aisle or on the side wall which informs the Usher in charge to send relief at once?**

The aisle Usher gets the attention of the Usher in charge and then places the first finger of his/her right hand straight across the breast.

### **11. What is the signal from the Usher in charge, which says to the Ushers who are serving that they should exit their assigned areas?**

The Usher in charge will take the fingers of his/her left hand and make a quick brush across the forehead to the right.

## Signs Commonly Used in Worship (Revised 1/2008)

1. **What is the signal from an Usher to get the attention of another Usher before a signal of request is made?**

The Usher presses together the fingers of his/her right hand together at the base of his/her neck.

2. **What is the signal from the Usher in charge, which informs other Ushers when they are to go on the floor?**

The Usher in charge will take the fingers of his/her right hand and brush his/her forehead to the left.

3. **What is the signal from the Usher in the aisle or at the side wall which informs the Usher in charge that seats are available?**

The aisle Usher raises his/her right hand to the level of his/her face and extends the palm of the right hand out if there are more than three seats. Otherwise, the Usher designates the number of seats, which are available by using the fingers. If no seats are available, the Usher raises his/her right hand with a closed fist.

4. **What is the signal from the Usher in the aisle or on the side wall to the Usher in charge which allows him or her to know that they are to send a message?**

The aisle Usher holds up the first four fingers of his/her hand to the level of the face until the attention of the Usher in charge has been obtained. The Usher who is to send the message should then deliver it to the person who is to receive it. Messages on paper are permissible from each Usher until it reaches the person who is to receive the message.

5. **What is the signal from the Usher in the aisle or on the side wall which alerts the Usher in charge that he or she should send someone to help in time of distress?**

The aisle Usher places his/her right hand at the upper chest area and does not remove it until someone comes to where he/she is standing.

# 2011 Rising Sun Usher Federation Usher and Health and Wellness Guide

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### Abbreviations:

KJV: King James Version

NIV: New International Version

NKJV: New King James Version

The **Mississippi Faith-Based Health and Wellness Network** is a collaborative effort captained by Faith Partners joined by Medical Professionals, Health Related Organizations, and Concerned Citizens united to make Mississippi a healthier place to live, work, and play. For more information, go to [www.midsouthchurches.org/health\\_and\\_wellness](http://www.midsouthchurches.org/health_and_wellness) or e-mail [hope@midsouthchurches.org](mailto:hope@midsouthchurches.org).

## The Usher Ministry. The Health and Wellness Ministry

Over the years, the Rising Sun Usher Federation has seen its mission expand from the basics of usher training to the development of health and wellness ministries. Since ushers are some of the most committed, caring persons in our churches, it is no surprise that from within these ministries health and wellness has emerged as another opportunity to serve.

As ushers, we extend hospitality to Christian brothers and sisters even when they are strangers. As members of health and wellness ministries, we extend the promise of healthier living even to those who don't value living healthy lives. As ushers and health and wellness members, we make the faith visible. Those we encounter make a full report back to the world, a message about our love.

In both these ministries, we extend hospitality making our faith in Christ visible to others. The usher is usually the first person someone (whether new or a "regular") sees when arriving for worship. The health and wellness ministry is on the frontline of promoting healthier living through appropriate physical activity and healthy eating. We get joy knowing that our work positively effects the lives of many glorifying our Father in heaven.

Understanding that the world is watching us, we strive to live daily the lives of service we show within the walls of our churches. We will exhibit a welcoming spirit in our daily walk. We will practice healthy living through appropriate physical activity and healthy eating. We serve knowing that God wants only the best that we have to offer.

Our ministries of welcoming and hospitality and health and wellness will help others live better lives. We take our work seriously knowing that, to the world, we are the face of Christianity - their need for a Godly connection. Our efforts may help someone who has had a difficult week. Or, we may share in the joy of those celebrating a major milestone in their lives. In any case, we are on the frontline of serving our congregations.

*"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5.14-16, NKJV).*

Article 9. This Federation shall represent in the North Mississippi Baptist Education Convention as a permanent body with whatever the body deems best.

Article 10. Any church may become a member of the Federation. Faithfully submitted by your Constitution Committee on this day, Saturday, February 14, 1998, at Second Eudora Baptist Church, Eudora, Mississippi

Pastor Michael O. Minor, Chairperson  
Sister Joanne Wright, Secretary  
Minister Emma Hardiman

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### Brief History

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The Rising Sun Usher Federation was originally founded in 1944 at the Rising Sun Baptist Church, Pastor C. C. Cathey, by Pastor R. L. Jones and Sister Vernice Williams. The purpose of the Federation was to foster the Kingdom of Christ on earth and to train young people. Pastor T. H. Hibler was chosen as the first president and provided dynamic leadership for the first nine years of the Federation. The Federation lay dormant for a number of years until 1997.

- April 19, 1997: Pastor Minor looks through the *North Mississippi Baptist Education 1992 History Book* and takes an interest.
- April 20, 1997: While eating dinner Pastor Minor, speaks with his mother-in-law Earnestine Bennett, former secretary, about the Usher Federation.
- May 26, 1997: Pastor Minor and Pastor Montgomery discuss the possibility of re-constituting the Federation.
- February 14, 1998: At Second Eudora, the constitution was adopted and officers elected: President – Pastor Bernard Montgomery; Vice – President – Vacant; Secretary – Sis. Joanne Wright; Lady Chief – Sis. Pearl Wilson; Man Chief – Vacant; and Education Department Chair - Pastor Michael O. Minor.
- May 9, 1998: First official meeting at St. Mary. Pastor Curtis White, Second Eudora delivered the first message
- November 8, 1998: Pastor Montgomery's first annual address
- April 24, 1999: First Federation-wide call for churches to sponsor an annual health fair
- January 27, 2001: First Federation *Usher Guide* published
- April 20, 2001: First Health and Wellness only educational period
- April 27, 2002: First Federation-wide health observance calendar distributed
- January 25, 2003: First Federation *Usher Guide* including expanded health and wellness information published

## Report of the Constitution Committee

*Brother President, we your committee on the constitution wish to make the following report. We present the following document as the working constitution for the Rising Sun Usher Federation.*

### Constitution

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Article 1. Resolve that this Federation be known as the Northwest Mississippi Usher's Federation of Rising Sun, commonly known as the Rising Sun Usher Federation.

Article 2. The object of this federation shall be to foster the Kingdom of Christ on earth and to train the young people.

Article 3. The officers of the federation shall be the President, Vice President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, and Treasurer, Chaplain, Man Chief, and Lady Chief. All officers shall be elected annually by a majority of the body present on the day of the election.

Article 4. It shall be the duty of the President to preside through the session of the Federation, but in his absence or at his request the Vice President may preside. The president shall appoint standing committees as needed.

Article 5. This Federation shall not adopt rules and regulations that infringe upon the rights of churches, but the constitution together with its by-laws and amendments will constitute the rule of government for this Federation.

Article 6. (a) The officers of this Federation shall constitute the Board of Control and shall be paid annually. Salaries shall be set annually by the body.

(b) This Federation shall hold its rally between each session of the Federation. Each Board shall represent with \$25.00, or whatever it is financially able to do, and the money raised in each rally shall be used for ways and means.

Article 7. (a) The Federation shall have three regular meetings and one annual session each year at whatever church and time chosen by the body, except that the annual meeting of this Federation shall be held on the last Saturday in October.

(b) Resolve that each Usher register with \$3.00.

Article 8. This constitution may be altered or amended at any annual meeting with two-thirds of the members present with proper notice

## Ushers Are Forerunners

Ushers are forerunners. They prepare the Church for the guests by being the first to arrive at the church. They receive the order of the day from the Pastor. They see that the Church is in proper condition to receive the guests. They see that hymnals, fans, church literature, collection envelopes, and any other items that are to be distributed to the congregation are in their proper places. Church ushers are missionaries for the Church for they extend that spirit throughout the congregation.

Ushers, or forerunners, are depicted throughout the Bible. Abraham ushered faithfulness into the world (Genesis 22). Moses ushered the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt into the promise land. The Star of Bethlehem ushered the wise men of the East to the place where Christ was born. John the Baptist, forerunner for Christ, prepared the way. He was the voice crying in the wilderness. (John 1.6-13).

Training is a very important part of our organization. To be good ushers, we must be trained. A few teaching techniques include knowing our Church's program, being polite, courteous, and alert. The primary factor of our training concept includes the use of silent signs. All members of our ministry are responsible for learning the signs. Then, every usher who has been trained can usher in the members together in a uniform manner.

The vision of the Usher Ministry is to be the first point of contact that ushers people into the presence of God and extends the love of Christ to all members and guests. The Usher Ministry is called to:

- To maintain an atmosphere of reverence and order before, during and following Church services.
- Maintain a personal relationship with the Lord through obeying His Word, prayer, supplication, study, and service to win souls to Christ.
- Maintain Agape love between one another and strive for the advancement of our Church individually by supporting our Church mission.
- Contribute tithes and offerings regularly as well as the giving of our time and talents.

Source: Neabsco Baptist Church (n.d.) Ushers Are Forerunners. Retrieved from <http://neabscobaptist.org/631360.ihtml>.

## Greeters Ministry



## USHERS & GREETERS

First Corinthians 12.28 refers to greeters as the ministry of helps. We help the Pastor fulfill the vision God has given him/her by making those who come through the doors of the church feel at home. Our responsibility is to help all who come to worship feel joy, sincerity, importance, peace and comfort when they enter the doors of the church. It is so important that we help everyone feel welcomed.

The Word of God calls us an ambassador of the Most High God to His people. This means that we are His spokespersons on Earth. It is essential to understand, as a Greeter, we are the first persons that visitors and members see when they enter the church door, we have to always show the love of Christ. It is our responsibility to let visitors and members know that we humbly appreciate them fellowshiping with us. We are committed to ensuring guests that guests are served, that their needs and concerns are met, and that they feel the joy of the Lord upon entering our Worship Service. Finally, we work hand in hand with our usher ministry to promote a spirit of hospitality.

Unwillingness to Change. This more or less follows from the first two categories. *Once we immerse ourselves in self-pity and once we discover that we are a victim, the logical conclusion is that we can't or won't change.* Unfortunately, this type of negative thinking tends to reinforce itself. Since we can't change, then our behavior can't be our own fault. So, we never have to face it honestly. We say, "It's no use trying. I'll never change" and "I have every right to be hurt and I'm not going to give it up" or "I know it's wrong but I'm not going to stop" or "God made me this way so it's not my fault."

Anger and Bitterness. Usually, this is the logical outcome. *Once we begin to pity ourselves, we become victims.* But victims can't be blamed, right? Therefore, we refuse to face the possibility that we are the source of our own problems. When others suggest otherwise, we get angry, defensive, and bitter. We remember every miserable thing ever done to us. We stew in our juices over the slightest negative remark made by others. We hold grudges even though we say we don't. We glare and turn our heads when we see our "enemies." We shut them out cold. Negative thinking leads to negative living.

Our thoughts matter! In contrast to the destructive nature of negative thinking, there are countless benefits of positive thinking. Years ago Dr. Norman Vincent Peale wrote a best-seller entitled *The Power of Positive Thinking*. But he wasn't the first positive thinker. *That honor should go to the Apostle Paul.* At the end of his letter to the Philippians, he gives an eight part prescription for positive thinking that, if followed, has the power to transform our lives, "*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things*" (Philippians 4.8, NIV).

Paul says, "Think on these things." It's a command. It's in the present tense. *Keep on focusing our thoughts in these eight areas.* Find the true and think about it. Find the noble and think about it. Find the lovely and think about it. Find the virtuous and think about it. Do it and verse 9 tells us that "*the God of peace will be with you.*" Those who think on these things experience God's peace in their lives. They become positive. That's what happens when Jesus Christ takes control of a life. He changes it from the inside out. Think on these things!

Source: Keep Believing Ministries (1994). Think on these Things. Retrieved from <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/1994-07-24-Think-On-These-Things>.

## 2011 Spiritual Enrichment Section

### Think on these Things?

More than a generation ago, when the computer revolution had just begun, the pioneers in the field coined a brand-new word. In those days, not many people knew how to operate a computer and those who did made many mistakes. Sometimes the novice experts entered the wrong data only to discover a universal truth: *If the raw data is bad, the computer can't do anything good with it.* What you put into a computer determines what comes out. If you put the right data in, the right answers come out. The reverse is also true.

In order to express that truth, a new word was coined. It describes in four letters both the cause and consequences of putting the wrong data into the computer. The word is *GIGO*. It stands for "Garbage In, Garbage Out." Those four letters summarize a huge truth about computers. What we put in determines what we get out. If our input is garbage, guess what our output will be? Garbage.

*What is true of computers is also true of the human mind.* That comparison is appropriate because the human mind has often been compared to a computer. In fact, the human mind is far more complex than the most advanced computer. But the basic principle of GIGO is still true: Garbage In, Garbage Out. What we put into our minds determines what we get out.

How's our thought lives? We are either negative or positive thinkers. So many people struggle with negative thinking. Negative thoughts poison the mind and ultimately the soul. Let's consider four kinds of negative thinking:

**Self-Pity.** We all fall into this trap sooner or later. Life is hard for all of us. As the saying goes, into each life some rain must fall. It's easy to think that somehow we've been dealt an unfair hand, that while our neighbor is basking in sunshine, we're living in a perpetual downpour. This self-pitying person says, "You don't know what I'm going through" or "You try living with this 24 hours a day and see how happy you are."

**Blaming.** This is the other extreme. Blaming is an attempt to find a scapegoat for our problems. We can't face life on our own; so we find another person who seems to be the source of our problems. It might be our significant other. It could be our children or our parents. It often is a friend, a neighbor, or our boss or someone at church. Blaming is dangerous because it leads to continuous victimhood.

### Ushering Is More a Ministry than a Function

Ushering is more a ministry than a function..."Ushering is a lot more than showing someone to their seat. Ushering is a ministry," said Victor Davis, pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Richmond, Va. "We need to move past the ushering board into seeing ushering as a way to spiritually and physically meet the needs of the church." The role of the usher should be seen as a ministry to men and women in fulfilling the call to be a servant like Jesus, Davis said.

"When I asked ushers what their primary need was, they told me over and over there was a need for training," said Davis, adding that all he could find were manuals explaining ushering techniques. "We needed more than what to wear or how to stand. We needed to take ushering to a different level."

Davis decided to write his own training material for ushers. Along with Florence Canada, whom Davis had worked with for eight years, he wrote "Ushering with a Mission." "Ushering with a Mission" outlines five purposes for ushering: worship, discipleship, evangelism, fellowship and ministry.

"As an usher's minister, you need to intentionally lead your ushers to encompass all five areas," Davis said. "First of all, your ushers must have a personal relationship with Christ. Encourage them to have a daily devotional time," Davis said. He also encouraged ushers to be involved in a group where they can pray and study the Bible with others.

"Your ushers must be able to share Jesus Christ with others," Davis continued. "Evangelism is key to being a Great Commission usher." He noted that ushers at his church use the FAITH strategy to prepare for evangelism in their community.

Davis also underscored participation in a stewardship class. Ushers often witness by their lives, he said, and it is important that the church see their ushers following the biblical mandate of stewardship.

"We don't force anybody to tithe, but we let them know that it is a biblical principle. In many churches, tithing is not the issue. The real issue is priorities. We tithe to JC Penney's, to Visa and MasterCard. We must set our priorities straight." Ushers must keep in mind that when people come to church, they have needs, Davis said.

"People want to be in a church where everybody knows their name," he said. "It is the usher's job to find out who they are and how they can serve them." He encouraged ushers to get involved in ministries beyond ushering, including prison ministry, clothing drives and visitation.

"You have to be intentional -- ushering doesn't just happen on Sunday. Meeting their needs doesn't happen by accident," Davis said. Noting the role of ushers at funerals, Davis said, "I would encourage all ushers to participate in some kind of workshop on understanding grief.

"We have a lady at our church who has such a way of ministering to the needs of the hurting. She always has a box of tissues in her pocket, and anytime she's at a funeral and sees someone crying, she leaves her post and sits with that person, offering them comfort. She is truly doing God's work."

Source: Campbell, Brandy (2002) Ushering is more a ministry than a function, pastor says. Retrieved from <http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=14040>.

### What Does It Mean to Be an Usher?

Unique  
Spiritual  
Helpful  
Eager  
Righteous  
Servants

Ushers are the ultimate servants in the church. Their only responsibility is to meet the needs of fellow members as well as any visitors. As a result, ushering is one of the most important services a Christian can perform.

Servitude is the heart of ushering. We are meeting both the physical and spiritual needs of the church, not to mention representing the church to anyone else who may come walking through the door. Through our actions and demeanor we are a representative not only of the church, but of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ushering is not just another job in the church, but rather one of the most important and rewarding services one can perform.

### Health and Wellness Ministry Basics

Health and wellness ministries focus health promotion. Instead of asking only, "What makes people sick and how can we provide a healing ministry to save or heal them?" We need to also ask, "What keeps people well and how can we provide a whole person health ministry that will keep them that way?" We preach and teach the message of the interconnectedness of faith with health healing and wholeness in the Bible to help people achieve the fullness of a life spiritually transformed by the love and power of God.

The goals of health and wellness ministry ought:

- to improve the health of all members through an established health ministry that focuses on Trinity Wellness: wholeness for body, mind and spirit.
- to help reduce health disparities by encouraging our members to participate in early detection, education classes, disease prevention and health screening programs.
- to increase quality of life and years of healthy living by assisting our members to understand health and wellness issues.

What can this ministry do for the congregation? The Health and Wellness Ministry provides information about community healthcare resources and encourages health promotion through periodic screenings and education related to health and wellness topics. It provides an opportunity to combine the physical body and the spiritual well-being of an individual into total health care.

What are the limitations of this ministry? Members of the health and wellness ministry do not diagnose illness, prescribe or supply medicine, or perform invasive procedures, i.e. giving injections, drawing blood, changing dressings. Persons in need of these procedures are referred to appropriate providers and agencies.

Sources: St. Ailbe Catholic Church (2011). Health and Wellness Ministry. Retrieved from [http://www.stailbe.org/Min\\_Wellness.htm](http://www.stailbe.org/Min_Wellness.htm).

St. Susanna parish (2010). Health and Wellness Ministry. Retrieved from <http://www.stsusanna.org/Ministry/HealthWellness.aspx>



Referral Source: Serves as a liaison between the church and community resources. Helps them access health care through county facilities if they have no insurance.

Advocate: Helps members of the congregation navigate their way through managed care and helps them articulate their concerns to the health care community.

*"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2.10, NIV).*

Health and wellness ministry is an ideal opportunity for those whom God has prepared through experience, education, and skills to combine their faith and their profession in a practical way within the context of their congregation.

Examples of Activities in health and wellness ministry:

- Blood pressure screening;
- CPR training;
- Classes on topics like ;

*Heart Healthy Living, Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care Decisions, Breast Health Awareness, Depression, Living Through Personal Crisis, Stress Management, Lifestyle Well*

- Support Groups-Grief, Diabetes, Depression, Weight Loss;
- Visitation;
- Outreach into the community; and
- Health Resource Referrals-for those without insurance, needing community services

*"Each one should use whatever gift they have received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" (1 Peter 4.10, NIV).*

Source: Frizzell, Carol Ann, RN (2010). Meeting the Challenge of the 21st Century: Fulfill Your Ministry Retrieved from <http://www.embracingourdaying.com/resources/wellnessmin.php>.

## **2011 Suggested Monthly Health and Wellness Observances**

On pages 6-10, we share suggested monthly health and wellness observances. Remember that congregational health ministries do not practice medicine or provide medical care, but educate and empower. The goal of congregational health ministries' is facilitating access to accurate information and finding a voice to address disparities. Bringing a specific health issue to the forefront each month throughout the year is one way to ensure coverage of a wide range of health topics of interest and concern to your congregation.

We had a good start in 2010 campaign. *Let's all be driven to do better in 2011!* What *should* ministry members do?

- Ask God for guidance and His blessing.
- Gain the blessing of your congregation's leader.
- Follow the monthly guide of health observances.
- Make brochures, handouts, and worship bulletin inserts.
- Make announcements early and often each month.
- Involve other congregation members, neighbors, and co-workers.
- Take pictures; keep a scrapbook.
- CREATE EXCITEMENT!!!

Brief information is given for each observance. For more information and helpful web links, go to the monthly health observances section of the regional health and wellness webpage: [www.midsouthchurches.org/health\\_and\\_wellness](http://www.midsouthchurches.org/health_and_wellness).

### **JANUARY**

#### **National Volunteer Blood Donor Month**

Sponsor a "Post Holiday Blood Drive" at your church in partnership with your local blood donation center. Go to [www.midsouthchurches.org/health\\_and\\_wellness](http://www.midsouthchurches.org/health_and_wellness) for a link to local Mississippi blood donation centers.

#### **Cervical Health Awareness Month**

Highlight issues related to cervical cancer, HPV disease, and the importance of early detection. Some of the issues you may wish to highlight are personal stories of women and family members/caregivers battling issues related to their persistent HPV/pre-cancer and/or cervical cancer.

## **FEBRUARY**

**Heart Disease and Women.** On the Sunday, February 13 everyone is encouraged to wear something red to bring awareness to the number 1 killer of women – heart disease. Also, members may wish to participate in Wear Red Day – Friday, February 4.

**American Heart Association (AHA) “Go Red Better U” Physical Activity Challenge** encourages women to follow the AHA’s 12-week “Go Red Better U” free physical fitness activity program – for details go to [www.goredforwomen.org/BetterU/index.aspx](http://www.goredforwomen.org/BetterU/index.aspx).

**Children’s Dental Health Month**, sponsored by the American Dental Association, raises awareness about the importance of oral health.

## **MARCH**

**Taste Test Sunday (March 20)** promotes healthy meals at church functions. Have desserts prepared in accordance with guidelines for diabetics and persons at risk for diabetes. Invite the congregation to sample them after worship. Promote a contest among members to collect recipes with healthy substitutions for a “Healthy Cookbook.”

**National Nutrition Month ®** is a nutrition education and information campaign created annually in March by the American Dietetic Association. The campaign focuses attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits. The theme for 2011 is "Eat Right with Color."

## **APRIL**

**STD Awareness Month.** The Center for Disease Control recognizes April as STD Awareness Month, an annual observance to raise awareness about the impact of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) on the health of Americans and the importance of individuals discussing sexual health with their healthcare providers and, if sexually active, their partners.

**World Health Day (WHD): Thursday, April 7.** The World Health Day is celebrated to create awareness of a specific health theme to highlight a priority area of concern for the World Health Organization: 2011 - Antimicrobial resistance and its global spread.

**National Public Health Week (April 3-9).** The public health community has celebrated this observance by focusing on an issue that is important to improving the public's health: 2011 “Healthiest Nation in One Generation.”

## **Starting a Health and Wellness Ministry in Your Church**

The Health Ministry concept is based on the belief that the interrelationship of body, mind, and spirit is such that when one is touched the whole is affected. One third of the recorded Gospels demonstrate Christ's concern for the physical and emotional as well as spiritual needs of those to whom he ministered.

The church is a natural caring community that consistently interacts with individuals from birth to death in all socio-economic groups. Historically, the community of faith has been a place of hope and healing. Today, nurses, and other medical professionals, as well as laypersons, through their act of caring, are bringing a unique role to this ministry of healing within the church.

As members of the church, health and wellness ministry members facilitate the use of the resources within the congregation and the community to provide services based on the assessed health and wellness needs of the congregation and surrounding community. Health ministry members do not duplicate existing health services, but seeks to bridge the gaps, delivering and coordinating educational, preventive, and supportive services not otherwise available.

The role of the health and wellness ministry may include the following:

**Health Educator:** Provides information to raise the health awareness of the church community through a variety of options that include classes, workshops, newsletters, seminars, support groups, and health fairs.

**Personal Health Counselor** (for those trained as faith community nurses or community health workers): Advocates for individuals by offering knowledge of options for health and a supportive presence as members of the church make choices for their lives. Reinforces physician's plan of care.

**Facilitator and Resource:** Helps to identify the many health and wellness needs within the faith community and coordinates resources within the congregation. Recruits, trains, and supervises volunteers for many support functions within the church, such as visiting the sick, providing transportation, and organizing support groups.

## APRIL

**World Health Day (WHD): Thursday, April 7.** The World Health Day is celebrated to create awareness of a specific health theme to highlight a priority area of concern for the World Health Organization.

**National Autism Awareness Month** In order to highlight the growing need for concern and awareness about autism, the Autism Society has been celebrating since the 1970s. The United States recognizes April as a special opportunity for everyone to educate the public about autism and issues within the autism community.

### **The “Ten Commandments” of the Health and Wellness Ministry**

Although a spirit of Agape love should radiate through the work of our health and wellness ministries, here are set of “ten commandments” for a Spirit-led ministry.

1. Thou shalt accept a higher power as the source of healing.
2. Thou shalt recognize the whole person: mind, body and spirit.
3. Thou shalt strive for a balanced life and recognize one’s limits and boundaries.
4. Thou shalt be compassionate and sensitive to others.
5. Thou shalt listen without judgment.
6. Thou shalt be a supportive presence for people who are facing life’s challenges.
7. Thou shalt offer hospitality, healing and hope within a nurturing community.
8. Thou shalt welcome and support people who experience mental illness.
9. Thou shalt combat stigma and dispel myths about mental illness.
10. Thou shalt acknowledge joys and concerns of self and others.

Source: First United Methodist Church, LaGrange, Illinois

## MAY

**“Bells for Remembrance” Breast Health Awareness**, on Mothers’ Day, is a faith-based public awareness campaign designed to highlight the importance of good breast health and assure that women are aware of resources within the community for screening, information, treatment and support. Health Ministries are asked to ring a hand-bell, organ, or chime:

- Once in support of prevention through annual mammograms, clinical breast exams and month breast self-examination;
- Twice in support of those struggling with and surviving breast cancer; and
- Thrice in memory of those who have lost their lives to breast cancer and in support of their families and loved ones.

**American Stroke Month.** African Americans have higher rates of stroke than any other racial or ethnic group. Churches are invited to conduct Power Sunday educational activities the first Sunday in May. Go to [www.midsouthchurches.org/health\\_and\\_wellness](http://www.midsouthchurches.org/health_and_wellness) to download a Power Sunday kit.

**National High Blood Pressure Education Month.** About 74.5 million people in the United States have high blood pressure, which is also called *hypertension*. Hypertension increases the risk for heart disease and stroke, the first and third leading causes of death in the United States.

## JUNE

The First Sunday is **National Cancer Survivor’s Day**®, an annual, worldwide Celebration of Life. Participants unite in a symbolic event to show the world that life after a cancer diagnosis can be a reality. Recognize cancer survivors in your congregation and/or community.

**Summer of Health and Wellness Vacation Bible School.** Integrate the 9-5-2-1-0 health and wellness curriculum into your church’s VBS. Go to [www.midsouthchurches.org/vacation\\_bible\\_school](http://www.midsouthchurches.org/vacation_bible_school) to download the 9-5-2-1-0 guide.

**National Myasthenia Gravis (MG) Awareness Month.** MG is part of a large class of diseases known as "autoimmune," or "self-immune," disorders, in which the body’s immune system deploys antibodies to attack its own tissues.

**Fireworks Safety Month (through July 4)**(See July observances.)

## JULY

**UV Safety Month.** In the summer, the sun is bright and there is a great danger the sun can harm the eyes from exposure to the ultraviolet rays of the sun.

**Fireworks Safety Month (through July 4).** During the months of June and July, Americans nationwide are encouraged to observe fireworks safety. While fireworks can be a cheerful reminder of warm, summertime weather, and fun times spent with family and friends outdoors. The fact remains that they are still extremely dangerous and should be used with caution and responsibility.

**International Group B Strep (GBS) Awareness Month.** GBS is bacteria naturally found in the digestive tract and birth canal of 1 in 4 pregnant women. These women “carry” or are “colonized” with GBS. However, GBS can come and go at any time so each pregnancy can be different. Babies can be infected by GBS before birth and up to 6 months of age because of their underdeveloped immune systems.

## AUGUST

**National Immunization Awareness Month** is a great way to rally local organizations in your immunization education efforts. Communities are encouraged to plan local health screenings or fairs, media events and other related immunization outreach efforts during the month to promote the benefits of immunization.

**National Minority Donor Awareness Day** is celebrated **August 1** as a time to educate individuals on the need for minority donors and the facts surrounding organ, blood, and tissue donation.

## SEPTEMBER

**Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.** Encourage all men over 50 to take a prostate exam. Prostate cancer is a common and very treatable when detected early!

**National Cholesterol Education Month** is a good time to get your blood cholesterol checked and take steps to lower it if it is high. It is also a good time to learn about lipid profiles and about food and lifestyle choices that help you reach personal cholesterol goals

**Sunday, September 11 Regional Healthy Congregations Emphasis Worship** spotlights local health and wellness efforts and continues the promotion of the 2011 Healthy Congregations Conference.

## 2012 First Quarter

### Suggested Monthly Health and Wellness Observances

## JANUARY

**National Volunteer Blood Donor Month.** Sponsor a “Post Holiday Blood Drive” at your church in partnership with your local blood donation center. Go to [www.midsouthchurches.org/health\\_and\\_wellness](http://www.midsouthchurches.org/health_and_wellness) for a link to local Mississippi blood donation centers.

**Cervical Health Awareness Month.** Highlight issues related to cervical cancer, HPV disease, and the importance of early detection. Some of the issues you may wish to highlight are personal stories of women and family members/caregivers battling issues related to their persistent HPV/pre-cancer and/or cervical cancer.

**Birth Defects Prevention Month.** Highlight issues related to preventing birth defects, which effect which account for 20% of all infant deaths and cost more than \$8 billion in life time care.

## FEBRUARY

**Heart Disease and Women.** On the Sunday, February 8 everyone is encouraged to wear something red to bring awareness to the number 1 killer of women – heart disease. Also, members may wish to participate in Wear Red Day – Friday, February 6.

**National Eating Disorders Awareness Week (February 24-March 1)** focuses on individuals and families affected by eating disorders.

## MARCH

**Taste Test Sunday (March 18)** promotes healthy meals at church functions. Have desserts prepared in accordance with guidelines for diabetics and persons at risk for diabetes. Invite the congregation to sample them after worship. Promote a contest among members to collect recipes with healthy substitutions for a “Healthy Cookbook.”

**American Diabetes Association's Diabetes Alert Day (March 27)** is held to call attention to diabetes and to encourage everyone to find out if they are at risk. While diabetes is often a hereditary condition, it is still possible to develop diabetes even if you have no known history of it in your family. In addition, type 2 diabetes is often preventable through regular medical checkups and a healthy lifestyle.

## Member Churches' Usher Day Schedule

Dean Hill \_\_\_\_\_

Enon Springs \_\_\_\_\_

New Bethany \_\_\_\_\_

New Fellowship \_\_\_\_\_

New Hope-Walls \_\_\_\_\_

Oak Grove \_\_\_\_\_

Oak Hill \_\_\_\_\_

Paradise \_\_\_\_\_

Rising Sun \_\_\_\_\_

St. Paul \_\_\_\_\_

Second Baptist-Hernando \_\_\_\_\_

Second Eudora \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Notes

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**Healthy Congregations Conference 2011**  
October 7-8, 2011 Brown Baptist Church; Southaven, MS  
Friday: Health and Wellness Tour at Various Locations  
Saturday: Annual Conference Workshops and Seminars

## OCTOBER

**National Church Safety and Security Month.** Congregations are asked to perform a “top down” safety and security inspection of their houses of worship and grounds including fire evacuation and tornado drills. With the blessing of your leader, involve others by contacting your insurance company, local fire department, and law enforcement agency about other tips on safety and security measures.

**October 7-8, 2011 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Healthy Congregations Conference at Brown Baptist Church; Southaven, MS.** Health and wellness tours at various locations on Friday, October 7. Check the websites for information: [www.midsouthchurches.org](http://www.midsouthchurches.org).

**National Breast Cancer Awareness Month** observances have been at the forefront of promoting awareness of breast cancer issues and have evolved along with the national dialogue on breast cancer.

## NOVEMBER

The American Diabetes Association sponsors **Diabetes Awareness Month** to focus on one of the fastest growing healthcare crisis. There are approximately 75 million Americans either at risk for type 2 diabetes or who currently have diabetes.

**National Donor Sabbath Weekend (November 13-15)** is set aside to raise awareness about the critical need for organ and tissue donors and to encourage individuals to register as organ and tissue donors and share their decision about donation with family members today to save lives tomorrow.

**Great American Smoke Out Thursday, November 17.** Health Ministries can promote tobacco cessation activities throughout the month in partnership with the Tobacco Free coalition in your area. Consider asking your local elected officials to adopt a “no smoking policy” in public places where you live!

## DECEMBER

**1 World AIDS Day** is dedicated to raising awareness of the AIDS pandemic caused by the spread of HIV infection. Health Ministries are asked to wear red ribbons, provide information, and a time for quiet reflection in recognition of all those stricken with HIV/AIDS.

**National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month** provides opportunities to reinforce the dangers driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

## Call to Worship Guide

### **The Usher's Psalm**

The Lord is my light. He is the joy of my salvation, of whom then shall I be afraid.

I am a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord. Yea though I meet with unpleasant conditions, I must keep smiling, for I must enter into His presence with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise.

Yea, though I walk through the shadow of unkindness, I must smile, for the beauty of the Lord is upon me; my countenance is filled with light, the light of love, patience and endurance. I shall strive to give joy to the sorrowful, hope to the lost, sunshine to the darkness, and I shall remain a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord, as long as I live.

### **Church Usher's Prayer**

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, bless O Lord, this your servant as You did bless the sons of Levi who ministered in Your Holy Temple. Grant me devoutly to minister in Your house. Your name be hallowed. Your Kingdom come and Your will be done through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

Healthy Living Goal: **Personal Responsibility**: "...do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6.19, NKJV)

### **Usher's Platform**

Preamble: **Doorkeeper**: "*I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.*" (Psalm 84.10)

Aim: **Service**: To serve the Lord Jesus, through the service we render to humanity.

Motto: **Ready to serve**: "*Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.*" (Colossians 3.24)

Watchword: **Study**: "*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" (2 Timothy 2.15)

### **Usher's Pledge** (place right hand over heart)

I pledge by the help of God to do my best to serve my church with a pure heart, clean hands, and a breath that will not be offensive to those I welcome into the house of the Lord.

I further pledge to abide by the rules and regulations of the ministry and my superior officers; to attend my meetings and serve when called upon, unless I can give a reasonable excuse; and to keep my financial obligations of the ministry as near as possible.