



A Prayer for Troubled Times

DEAR LORD, We're still hoping we'll wake up. We're still hoping we'll open a sleepy eye and think, What a horrible dream. But we won't, will we, Father? What we saw was not a dream. Planes did gouge towers. Flames did consume our fortress. People did perish. It was no dream, and, dear Father, we are sad. There is a ballet dancer who will no longer dance and a doctor who will no longer heal. A church has lost her priest; a classroom is minus a teacher. Cora ran a food pantry. Paige was a counselor, and Dana, dearest Father, Dana was only three years old. (Who held her in those final moments?) We are sad, Father. For as the innocent are buried, our innocence is buried as well. We thought we were safe. Perhaps we should have known better. But we didn't. And so we come to you. We don't ask you for help; we beg you for it. We don't request; we implore. We know what you can do. We've read the accounts. We've pondered the stories, and now we plead, "Do it again, Lord. Do it again."

Remember Joseph? You rescued him from the pit. You can do the same for us. Do it again, Lord.

Remember the Hebrews in Egypt? You protected their children from the angel of death. We have children too, Lord. Do it again.

And Sarah? Remember her prayers? You heard them. Joshua? Remember his fears? You inspired him. The women at the tomb? You resurrected their hope. The doubts of Thomas? You took them away. Do it again, Lord. Do it again.

You changed Daniel from a captive into a king's counselor. You took Peter the fisherman and made him Peter an apostle. Because of you, David went from leading sheep to leading armies. Do it again, Lord, for we need

counselors today. We need apostles. We need leaders. Do it again, dear Lord.

Most of all, do again what you did at Calvary. What we saw here on that Tuesday, you saw there on that Friday. Innocence slaughtered. Goodness murdered. Mothers weeping. Evil dancing. Just as the ash fell on our children, the darkness fell on your Son. Just as our towers were shattered, the very Tower of Eternity was pierced.

And by dusk, heaven's sweetest song was silent, buried behind a rock.

But you did not waver, O Lord. You did not waver. After your Son lay three days in a dark hole, you rolled the rock and rumbled the earth and turned the darkest Friday into the brightest Sunday. Do it again, Lord. Grant us a September Easter.

We thank you, dear Father, for those hours of unity. Disaster did what discussions could not. Doctrinal fences fell. Republicans stood with Democrats. Skin colors were covered by the ash of burning buildings. We thank you for those hours of unity.

And we thank you for these hours of prayer. The Enemy sought to bring us to our knees and succeeded. He had no idea, however, that we would kneel before you. And he has no idea what you can do.

Let your mercy be upon our president, vice president, and their families. Grant to those who lead us wisdom beyond their years and experience. Have mercy upon the souls who have departed and the wounded who remain. Give us grace that we might forgive and faith that we might believe.

And look kindly upon your church. For two thousand years you've used her to heal a hurting world.

Do it again, Lord. Do it again.

Through Christ, amen.

Written by Max Lucado for America Prays. Used by permission.

Ground breaking brings new workforce housing to Tchula

Staff Report

On Wednesday, October 14, Mississippi Regional Housing Authority VI (MRHA VI) broke ground for Jessie Banks Homes, a 22-unit affordable housing development, located in Tchula.

The site is a new construction component of the MS Region VI RAD development which will primarily target families with 14 3-BR and 8 4-BR units.

The \$5,413,240 development, the first major new construction investment to address the housing condition in Tchula in recent past,

is made possible through the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Rental Assistance Demonstration Program (RAD), which seeks to increase the availability of affordable housing. MRHA VI in cooperation with Knight Development and Mississippi Region VI RAD, LP, developers and co-owners, will rehabilitate 138 units of existing housing and construct 120 new units.

This RAD project will impact six central Mississippi counties, creating 633 construction jobs while improving the quality of housing. The project will cost over

\$57 million dollars and is funded by a combination of LIHTC, Bonds and Housing Trust Funds.

Tchula Mayor General Vann and former mayor, Zula Patterson, gathered together with community leaders for a ground breaking to commemorate the start of the Jessie Banks Homes development along with executives from the Mississippi Region VI Housing Authority and Knight Development.

The new construction investment is part of a 9-site Tax Exempt Bond Development that leverages public and private funding that will

bring affordable housing to Tchula. Named for the late Mayor Jessie Banks, who was dedicated to eliminating substandard housing in the community, the 22 unit neighborhood will also rehabilitate 2 existing units.

"It's been a long journey," said Vann. "But today is a good day for the people of Tchula," Vann said. The development is expected to be a 12 month project, meaning it is projected to be ready by November 2021.

"Nationwide, there is not a single county where Americans who earn a minimum wage can actually afford a market-rate two-bedroom house," explained Holly Knight, CEO of Knight Development. "Holmes county is not exempt. But it's not just about the bricks and the sticks," said Knight.

The project aims to address a need for more affordable housing in the area and will make a positive economic impact by bringing jobs and spurring local retail activity.

The neighborhood is Rental Assistance Demonstration project and is part of the largest multi-bond affordable housing project in the state to date. "The Regional Housing Authority is stakeholder in the community," said Executive Director Dr. Hickman Johnson. "We started with the two existing units behind us several years ago. It's been a long time coming, but we are committed to continue building affordable housing in Tchula."



Pictured above, from left: Tchula Mayor General Vann, former mayor, Zula Patterson, and Holly Knight, CEO of Knight Development, pose for a photo opportunity at Wednesday's, October 14, ground breaking. (Photo Submitted)



Ground was broke officially on Wednesday, October 14, for the Jessie Banks Homes housing development in Tchula. (Photo Submitted)



I can remember years ago thinking how neat it would be to have lots of bears in our area. I knew we had some and every now and then one would be spotted on camera and it would make news. Even though I deer hunted within their roaming area, I

never gave much thought as to whether they would bully my deer into the next county and take their turf.

Boy was I wrong! My trail cam pictures have let me know there's a new sheriff in town, he's a little ornerier than the last one, and the

town's not big enough for both. It seems the deer that do come around now are a lot more afraid of the bears than they are the hunters. The ecosystem is about to change.

The bears are not the first animal in my area to move in. The elk did a few years ago with the help of the local fish and wildlife agency's moving van. Just a few years before that, turkey were in that same van - each one of them released in the

same area; the same area my bears want now. Even though we all can get along, there are going to be times when the pressure of living too close to one's neighbor is going to test the resolve of the hospitality of each resident. The ecosystem is changing.

What goes for four-legged animals also goes for the two-legged ones. My area has changed over the past several years.

and as of late, many others have moved in. The faces have changed along with the traffic. And the diversity is substantial. They have come from every part of the country and even from other countries. They bring their own needs for accommodations but also a positivity that has been lacking since the last economic downturn. As a lifelong resident I can bemoan the fact that I'm losing my turf to another gang. I can bemoan longer lines

and slower traffic. But as a Christian I can thank God for bringing to me what I would normally have to go find. People! People who have needs and questions. People who are searching for authenticity and truth. People who will need to find hope when failure comes and life when it seems circumstances have stripped it away. People who need Jesus.

The ecosystem is changing, and I like the change. gary@outdoortruths.org