



## The Music of Sunday Chapel Services at Stewpot

by  
Josh Wiener, Pianist

Stewpot is well known in our community for providing nourishment to those in need. On Sundays at 12:30 p.m., chapel services at Stewpot provide spiritual nourishment as well.

Our services have been led by an outstanding rotation of spiritual leaders, and it has been my pleasure to work with each one of them. The first service leader that I worked with was Reverend Jo Hollman, who has since retired. I will always be thankful to Jo for asking me to play on Sundays, and fondly remember her heartfelt, upbeat prayers and messages. We were fortunate to have Reverend Dexter Branscome in our rotation for a while, a humble man, a gentle soul, with the capacity for speaking both plainly and profoundly at the same time. Regrettably, Dexter's health would not allow him to continue, and we miss him a great deal.

For the last couple of years our rotation has consisted of Stewpot's Executive Director, Frank Spencer, along with Reverend Cathy Funches and Reverend Hilliard Carter. Each of them deserves praise.

Frank and I share a bond because we are attorneys who have practiced a long time now, and our religious faith has grown with the passing years. Frank and I both love music, and although I typically lead three hymns after our opening prayer, it's not uncommon for Frank to call for another!

Cathy Funches is a woman of faith whose wonderful spirit and message resonates with those who attend our services, and she represents the best of our Jackson community.

And then there is Reverend Hilliard Carter, who lost his eye sight and both his arms as a soldier in Vietnam. It is a humbling experience for a pianist who relies on his eyes and his hands to realize what a man can accomplish without these faculties. Reverend Carter has suffered equally if not greater than those to whom he preaches. His abiding faith in God, and his peace and equanimity are truly inspiring. His lovely, gracious spouse guides him to chapel, and she opens his message by softly reading the passage from Scripture.

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### Director's Corner

Stewpot held its 26<sup>th</sup> annual meeting this year on February 1<sup>st</sup>. An annual meeting of the membership is required because under the corporate bylaws of Stewpot, the Annual Meeting is the time that Stewpot Board members and officers are elected. The Annual Meeting is also the time used to inform the membership about the status of the various Stewpot ministries and the budget for the New Year adopted by the Board.

This year, I was excited to be able to tell the membership about Stewpot's 2 new ministries, the Rev. Donnell Flowers Emergency Shelter for Women and Children and

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Stewpot  
Executive  
Director**

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Greta Bates, Arts Program Director,  
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# New Beginnings

Greetings,

This is my first opportunity to contribute to the newsletter, and I am pleased to do so. I am grateful to God and to Stewpot Community Services for the appointment and assignment to work as Assistant Director of Brumfield House Men's Shelter.

Since this is a first for me, and it is the beginning of a new year, I want to address new beginnings. What a great opportunity it is to be able to begin again. After living through the past year's ups and downs, God gives us a chance to start anew. I find this particularly fascinating in my encounters with guest and clients at Brumfield House. I find myself dealing with men who all have testimonies of horrible pasts and crippling addictions.

It is refreshing to know that because of God's grace, anyone who desires to can forget the past and begin again. It is amazing to know and understand that God forgives and forgets our pasts and secures an awesome present and glorious future for us. When we allow our minds to be renewed, we may become transformed to walk in our new beginnings. I am encouraged to begin again one day at a time. "This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." Psalms 118:24.

***Kenneth E. Vance***  
***Assistant Director of***  
***Billy Brumfield Shelter***

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## Stewpot Needs

### Community Kitchen

Paper products (napkins, paper towels, etc.)  
Plastic forks, cups, and disposable plates  
Disposable gloves

### Virginia's Playhouse

Art supplies  
Hats, socks, and gloves  
Underwear for men, women, and children (all sizes)  
Personal hygiene items (soap, shampoo, razors, etc.)

### Sims House/Matt's House

Bed linens and towels  
Personal hygiene items  
Volunteer or group to provide activities for children while school is out for the holidays

### Billy Brumfield Shelter

Volunteer group to provide dinner (weekly or monthly)  
Personal hygiene items (razors, soap, etc.)

### Neighborhood Children's Program

New toys for children and teens  
School supplies

### Food Pantry

Non-perishable food items (flour, sugar, canned vegetables, canned meat, rice, etc.)

*Contact Lauren Dove at 601-353-2759 or at [ldove@stewpot.org](mailto:ldove@stewpot.org) if you can help with any of these.*

## New Ministry Needs

### Opportunity Center

Volunteer plumbers and carpenters

### Flowers Emergency Shelter for Women and Children

New baby furniture  
Linens (for twin and full size beds)  
Towels  
Pots and pans  
Small Kitchen Appliances

## Stewpot Newsletter

If you are receiving this newsletter and do not wish to, please contact us at 601-353-2759 or by e-mail at [www.stewpot.org](http://www.stewpot.org).

## Director's Corner

(cont. from cover)

the Opportunity Center day shelter. Both of these new ministries will open within the next couple of months.

This year, we had a large number of Board Members ending their service as directors making this Annual Membership Meeting somewhat of a melancholy time. We are losing individuals that have served a long time on the Board and have worked hard to continue the large Stewpot ministry and to find the support necessary to fund our 18 ministries. This year, the following members rotated off the Board: Mike McRee, Rev. Jim White, Lib Allison, Rob Farr, William Boxx, Phil Eide, and Alice Perry. Thanks to each of you and I know you will keep Stewpot close in your hearts.

Thankfully, other faithful and well qualified individuals have been selected to fill the vacancies. Newly elected Board members and their church affiliation are: Jane Anna Barksdale, St James designee; Charles Parrott, Northminster Baptist; Eileen Shaffer, Christ United Methodist; Christopher Powell, St James Episcopal; Sister Trinita, the Dominican Order; Karen Livingston Wilson, Pearl St AME; Bennie Butts, Christ United Methodist; and Lyle-Andrew Booderas, St Richard's.

Officers elected for 2007-2008 are: President of the Board - Beth Orlansky, Beth Israel; Vice-President - Sheldon Alston, Fondren Presbyterian; Treasurer - Holmes Adams, St. Andrews; and Secretary - Margie Cunningham, St. Peters.

Thanks to all these who have agreed to serve as Board members and officers for 2007.

To Everybody in the Stewpot Family, please join us in praying for a blessed 2007 for Stewpot!!

**Rev. Frank Spencer**  
**Executive Director**

# What Makes Us Who We Are

I tried something new with Virginia's Playhouse this year. Instead of doing the usual New Years activities like making resolutions and planning to be better somehow than we were last year, I decided we would do something more visible. We created life-size pictures of ourselves. We traced each other on large pieces of cardboard and then found shoes, clothes, and accessories to dress ourselves for the New Year.

The concept was to create a picture of how we wanted to be. It turned out to be so much more than that. Since we were dressing a thin piece of cardboard, the clothing options were almost endless. They were not limited to clothes that actually fit their real life bodies. They could choose whatever style of type they wanted. Shoes were the same. It was interesting to see what they chose. Many of them were a surprise. Clothes that matched were adorned with shoes and accessories. Everyone's likeness was much thinner than their actual selves too. Painstaking efforts were taken by some to make sure they didn't stuff too much newspaper into their clothing. Some even changed their height making themselves shorter or taller than they actually are. Faces and hands were painted a shade lighter or darker than reality. Many of them gave themselves hair that was thicker or longer than their own had been in years. When I hung our portraits up side by side, we were a good looking group.

I was a little worried though that they did not look enough like us. I knew who each one was and how they had dressed themselves, but had we created something that truly reflected who we are and want to be, or had we leaned too far toward an ideal worldly fantasy. To my relief we had not. The rich, colorful personalities of each of them were so evident in their likenesses that everyone knew who they were. Some were a little hard to decipher because of height and size changes, but if you looked at them long enough, little clues gave them away. They way they put their hat on crooked, or how they leaned their shoulders to one side. The point of the project was to give ourselves a visual representation of what we wanted to be. What it really did was remind us how much our physical appearance doesn't make us who we are. They are only the shells which house our souls and personalities. That is what makes us who we are.

***Heather Logan***  
***Director of Virginia's Playhouse***

## Spring is in the air...

Well, not exactly. It certainly doesn't feel like spring outside, but inside the Arts Program is buzzing with activity. Virginia's Playhouse will put on a talent show on Tuesday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, at 1:30pm. The show will follow lunch and will involve singing, dancing, and poetry reading. You might even hear a joke or two.

At the Children's Program, the Pre-K through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade will have story time and the 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade will be busy as well. The 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade is currently rehearsing for a play that they will perform on March 8<sup>th</sup>, at 3:30pm. Those not involved in the play will be taking piano lessons.

Things are budding at the Teen center too! They are preparing for their own talent show to be performed on April 19<sup>th</sup>, at 4:30pm. Our special event for this program will be the debut of Stewpot's very own African Drum Ensemble. The teenagers will begin drumming lessons on February 16<sup>th</sup>, to be instructed by Dr. Loye Ashton of Tougaloo College. Look for more information about our Drum Ensemble in future issues.

Hope to see you at some of our upcoming events. Come watch us bloom!

***Greta Bates***  
***Director, Arts Program***

*For more information about any of the arts' events, please contact Greta at [gbates@stewpot.org](mailto:gbates@stewpot.org)*

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# The Music of Sunday Chapel Services at Stewpot (cont. from cover)

When I started playing at Stewpot, we used a set of old Methodist hymnals, but they had rather small print and it took a good bit of effort to put them in the chairs and take them back up after services. With considerable help from my wife, Judy Wiener, I compiled a new song book which we have been using the past two years. We gathered hymns from the Southern Baptist hymnal, which I am familiar with from playing at my wife's church in Winston County, Mississippi, as well as hymns from the National Baptist Hymnal, which is used in many black churches. I had the print substantially enlarged while cutting the paper down to an easy to handle size. The nice folks at Quick Print on Capitol Street were patient with my incessant revisions until we got it just right!

Quite a few of the National Baptist hymns were new to me, but they have become treasured parts of my religious music repertoire. I also included some patriotic songs, and old "Negro spirituals" such as *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*. There are close to forty hymns in the songbook, and on any given Sunday we may be singing well known songs like *Blessed Assurance* and *How Great Thou Art*, or somewhat lesser known songs like *Pass Me Not* and *Throw Out The Lifeline*.

After our opening song service, we invite anyone in the congregation who wishes to do so to come up front and share a song of their choosing; often, the songs are of their own creation. Some weeks, we have no "takers," which is fine, we just move on to the message, but we have also had some amazing *a cappella* (unaccompanied) singers come forward over the years, culminating in a rousing round of applause and hearty "amens." Like just about every volunteer at Stewpot, I have received a far greater reward from my participation than what I have contributed. In addition to meeting and getting to know our spiritual leaders, and members of the Stewpot family like Calvin, Don, Bobby and Lee, I get to meet the generous people from our community's places of worship who bring and serve the Sunday meal, and I have become a friend to people who regularly attend services like Clyde and Myrt, and they are a friend to me. A number of the people who attend our services are homeless, many suffer mental disease and addictions, while others are economically disadvantaged people from nearby neighborhoods and communities. We have families with children who come often. But we also see many people only one time, or perhaps for a week or two, never to be seen again.

Although we average 20 – 25 in attendance, I remember that Sunday a couple of months ago when at 12:35 p.m. there was just one gentleman sitting in chapel. Cathy Funches decided without hesitation that this gentleman deserved no less than if we had a "full house," and by golly we sang and Cathy preached as though we had many. Fortunately, a few stragglers came in before we were done to round out the congregation. I also fondly recall this past Christmas season when December 24 fell on a Sunday — the warmth and spirit of singing Christmas hymns and carols at Stewpot.

On the first Friday night of each month, my weekend starts at Beth Israel Congregation, where I have directed and accompanied the volunteer Shirim Choir for ten years. I am proud to be a Jew, and proud that Beth Israel Congregation has been an important part of Stewpot ever since its founding. While my love for Jewish music is deep indeed, I gladly play and sing Christian hymns at Stewpot because this is what most of the people in attendance know and cherish. At the same time, our Chapel services can be led by anyone of faith, and in the years to come I am hopeful that clergy from the Jewish, Islamic and other faiths will come join us at Stewpot.

My parents gave me the means and opportunity to become a pianist, and I thank God and Stewpot for allowing me the privilege of playing at Sunday chapel services.



***Josh Wiener, Pianist***

(Pictured left: Frank Spencer, Cathy Funches, Ollie Carter, and Josh Wiener gather for a picture after Stewpot's Annual Membership Meeting.)



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## Faith Meeting Needs In Our Community



Stewpot's annual fundraiser **Taste of Mississippi: Homegrown Hunger Relief** is scheduled for March 26, 2007 at Highland Village from 7-10 p.m. It will feature live music, a live auction featuring Mississippi art, a silent auction including Viking products, and culinary delights from more than 35 fine restaurants. Please mark your calendar to attend. Tickets are \$60 per person.

### How You Can Help with Taste of Mississippi!

- Interested in volunteering the night of Taste of Mississippi...contact Heather Logan at 601-353-2759 or [hlogan@stewpot.org](mailto:hlogan@stewpot.org). Volunteer tickets are only \$25 each.
- If you would like to sell tickets to Taste of Mississippi in advance at your church or place of business, please contact Rev. Cathy Funches at 601-353-2759 or [cfunches@stewpot.org](mailto:cfunches@stewpot.org).
- If you would like to help pick up or solicit silent auction items, please contact Archie Stringer at 601-932-4553.
- Are you able to help hang up Taste of Mississippi poster in the Jackson metro area? If you are, please contact Lisa Henegar at 601-824-0648.
- Is your place of business interested in making a donation (a service or item) to the silent or live auction? If so, please contact Lauren Henderson at 601-353-2759 or [lhenderson@stewpot.org](mailto:lhenderson@stewpot.org).