

First Sunday Back

by
Darren Canady

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Agency Information

CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
Sister Vera Lattimore-Cooper	A Church lady. Black.	40s+	F

The sanctuary of The Greater Metro
Rising Star of Bethlehem Missionary
Baptist Church.

SISTER VERA LATTIMORE-COOPER addresses
us from a lectern. Maybe she's also on
camera and being televised.

SISTER VERA LATTIMORE-COOPER

Good morning, Saints!

First giving honor to God who is the head of my life, and to
Reverend Doctor Tracy L. Handy, who is the undershepherd of
this flock - I am Sister Vera Lattimore-Cooper and I bring
you greetings from your Church Announcement Ministry! As the
Word says "I was glad when they said unto me" - *what saints?*

Say it again!

"I was glad when they said unto me" - *WHAT?!*

*I was glad when they said unto me, let us go in to the House
of the Lord! Amen and amen! Yes!*

Before we get in to the announcements for this Sunday - I
think we oughta acknowledge the - the - the - momentousness
of this moment. We have come through the dark, y'all.
Precious Lord took our hand and led us on in to the light. Is
He not worthy to be praised?

Are we not now walking in the light - the light the psalmist
told us about?! The beautiful light, somewhere where the
dewdrops of mercy are shining bright - *somebody oughta shout
right there!*

Y'all know Miss Rona tried to have us locked in, locked down,
and masked up! She tried to have her way. This pandemic tried
to run this here - BUT YOU KNOW WHAT?! The song said: TROUBLE
DON'T LAST ALWAYS!

That oughta be your praise break *right there!*

(She catches herself from full
on catchin the spirit)

Woosah!

I almost went to a place, saints!

Aaaaaaaaaaactually...

You know what?

I hadn't planned this - but - you know since I got the mic
I'ma say a few things.

Let me tell you what I don't need no more of: I am sick and tired of little boxes around folks' faces. I don't pay my good tithe money to be havin nobody's Zoom church. If y'all send me any more text messages with Meeting ID and password again, I'm callin you and cursin' you out myself - I mean - uh - lettin you know I ain't havin' it.

Sorry, Pastor.

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaactually--

Nawl. I ain't sorry - cuz let me tell y'all somethin' else!

What I don't need not nar' one more bit of these sad little Praise and Worship songs to an empty sanctuary or - and I'm sorry Brother Kenwood - with your special backgrounds. Ain't nobody fooled, we know you're in ya mama's basement and that's that on that.

Now I'ma get to the announcements but I got one more other thing, too-- no, no, no Pastor I'ma finna add this and then I'll go on about my business but--

(a sharp beat)

Hey hey hey now Pastor - wait a minute - you smellin' yo'self now, you tryna get buck with me?

(sharper beat)

No no no Tracy Handy, I will sit down when I'm good and ready!

(to congregation)

Look here. It has been fourteen months, two weeks, and six days since I stood behind this mic last, and so I got some things I will say!

Now look. By the time we shut the church doors down last year I was pretty honestly sick of most of y'all. Half you dames walkin up in here with your kitten heels that was two sizes too small for your big ol feet. Most of you brothas couldn't find a decent pair of slacks that didn't look like somethin you pulled off the clearance rack of House of Tarzhay. That's Target for you slow folks. You know I'm on the Finance Ministry, too, so I know most of y'all are some cheap-ass Negroes when it comes to puttin your coins in the offering plate--!

(taps mic)

Hey hey hey - oh so you thought cuttin my mic was gonna stop me? Baby I been doin announcements since before Greater Metro Rising Star of Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church even HAD a Sound and AV Ministry. BABY, MY VOICE WILL CARRY WITH OR WITHOUT YOUR MICROPHONE!

ANYWAY! As I was saying - when Tracy closed these doors I was good and ready to be in my Black-ass house, praising my Black Jesus, and not have to fool with you folks for a good long while--

But then a good long while turned in to three months.
And then six.

And then we lost Sister Rosa.
And Brother Max.
And Sister Lee.
And Brother Tony.

And we could come sing up on up to glory.
And I couldn't come wipe Myrna's tears away.
And I couldn't hold Rosa's grandbabies.

And I found myself wanting...

Wanting..

Wanting..

I wanted those stale donuts and Tampico juice for Sunday School breakfast.

I wanted Brother Kenwood on the organ, missing half the notes and jackin up the choir entrances.

I wanted Tracy misreading and misunderstanding the scripture cuz he didn't finish his degree like he should have.

I wanted to see your feet overflowing those kitten heek church pumps.

I wanted your finest Target clearance rack fashions.

Look here.

I know y'all think I'm a nasty ol biddy. Vera Lattimore-Cooper knows how you roll. But fourteen months, two weeks, and six days later I never thought I could be this glad to see y'all's triflin' asses! I am thuh-RILLED to be up in here and know good and well you gonna put two dollars in the offering plate - I just wanna rejoice today that you're here! That you came back - that I can touch your wrinkled old hands again - that I can see you smile with your gaps and the gold around your teeth.

Miss Rona and police and hurricanes and no jobs and Zoom boxes tried to take as many of out as they could BUT WE HERE! And we lookin so human! We might be roughed up, riled up, and washed up - BUT WE HERE!

And sweatergawd I ain't lettin none of y'all go!

I feel a party in my spirit! A party and a song - fall on in behind me Brother Kenwood.

A gospel chord. Or two. We should think a good ol fashioned spiritual is bout to slay us all in the spirit

SISTER VERA LATTIMORE-COOPER

(Slowly, then pickup momentum.
Yes, she is bustin out "Before
I Let Go")

You make me happy
This you can bet, yeah
It's clear right beside me, yeah (come on, come on)
And I won't forget (come on, come on)

*Don't act like you don't know it! Hit me with that good beat,
Brother Kenwood!*

A funk beat does indeed drop.

SISTER VERA LATTIMORE-COOPER

C'mon y'all - I said we gon' party!

(leading the congregation)

And I really love you
You should know
I wanna make sure I'm right, boy
Before I let go

She starts to hit a joyous groove.

BLACKOUT