

God Our Father, Christ Our Redeemer, Holy Spirit Our Comforter, Humankind Our Family

SAINT JOHN AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

708 15th Street North || Birmingham, AL 352030

Rev. Dr. Ronald D. Sterling, Pastor

The Third Sunday of Advent



The Celebration of Advent

Sunday, December 11, 2022 – 10:00am

THE PRELUDE.....Music Ministry

THE DOXOLOGY....."Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow"

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise Him all creatures here below.
Praise Him above ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

THE CALL TO WORSHIP.....Pastor Ronald D. Sterling

Minister: O come, let us worship and bow down.

People: **Let us kneel before the Lord our maker.**

Minister: For He is the Lord our God.

Together: **And we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.**

THE HYMN OF CELEBRATION.....“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”

Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee, God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee, opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day!

All Thy works with joy surround Thee, earth and heaven reflect Thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around Thee, center of unbroken praise;
Field and forest, vale and mountain, flowery meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain, call us to rejoice in Thee.

Thou art giving and forgiving, ever blessing, ever blest,
Wellspring of the joy of living, ocean depth of happy rest!
Thou art Father, Christ our brother, all who live in love are Thine;
Teach us how to love each other, lift us to the joy divine.

THE PRAYER.....Brother Chaz Carter

THE PRAYER RESPONSE.....“Give Thanks”

*Give thanks, with a grateful heart;
Give thanks, to the Holy One
Give thanks, for He has given, Jesus Christ, His Son. (Repeat)*

*And now let the weak say I am strong, let the poor say I am rich, because of what the Lord has done for us
And now let the weak say I am strong, let the poor say I am rich, because of what the Lord has done for us,
Give thanks.*

**THE SCRIPTURE READING.....Sister Kierra Giles
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 (English Standard Version)**

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

THE PREFACE TO THE DECALOGUE

*From all that dwell below the skies, Let the Creator's praise arise;
Let the Redeemer's name be sung, Through every land by every tongue.*

CONTEMPORARY DECALOGUE.....Rev. Xavier Beasley

Hear the commandments of God to his people: I am the Lord your God who brought you out of bondage. You shall have no other gods but Me.

You shall not make for yourself any idol.

You shall not invoke with malice the Name of the Lord your God.

Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

Honor your father and your mother.

You shall not commit murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not be a false witness.

You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

THE GLORIA PATRI

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost:
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be; world without end. Amen.*

(Please remain standing for our Confession and Declaration of Pardon)

THE CONFESSION AND DECLARATION OF PARDON.....Rev. Charles Marie Davis

Minister:

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Let us together make our confession to God:

The Confession - Minister and People:

O Lord, our God, other Lords have had dominion over us; Our transgressions are multiplied before thee and our sins testify against us. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name; and deliver us, and purge away our sins for thy name's sake.

The Declaration of Pardon:

Lord, be merciful unto us, for we have sinned against thee. O Lord, make clean our hearts within us and take not thy Holy Spirit from us. Thus said the Lord, if my people shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; Then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin. Amen.

Candle lighting - Candle of Joy - Pink



Brother Pierre Mede (*Father*), Sister Lonita Mede (*Mother*) 2 Children:

Father: From the last two Advent Sundays, we re-light the candle of HOPE and the candle of PEACE (*Mother lights 2 Purple candles while Father speaks*)

Today, is the Third Sunday of Advent and our focus is JOY. We live in joyful anticipation of the coming of Jesus Christ, reminded that even now in God's presence we have fullness of joy. We will live lives of joy, dancing and praising and laughing and singing, even as we await God's promised eternal joy.

Mother: We receive God's gift of joy as a reminder that beyond this temporary life of sorrow and testing, a time will come when, "there will be an abundance of flowers and singing and joy."

Child 1: Is there JOY in your home? You do know that only the Holy Spirit can give fullness of joy. He loves to place joy in our hearts; no joy in the heart, no JOY in the home!!!

Child 2: Today, we ask God to refill those places in our hearts where joy is fading or missing. In this Advent Season, let joy fill our hearts. (*Together, Children: light the pink candle and father prays*):

Father: Let us pray. God of Joy, we bask today in Your splendor and majesty and draw from Your well of joy. We repent for those times we withheld sharing Your joy with the sad, lonely, and depressed. Let Your light shine in them to remove the shadows that darken their spirits. Restore the joy of Your salvation in us, that our deserts will blossom and JOY will flow from our lips. Amen and Amen.

Choir and Congregation sing: **"Joy to the World"**

*Joy to the world! The Lord is come: Let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare him room
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing*

*Joy to the earth! the Saviour reigns: Let men their songs employ
while fields and floods rocks hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy*

THE PASTOR'S WORDS & GREETINGS TO VISITORS

THE BLESSING OF THE OFFERTORY (*Fishes / Offerings / Gifts to be given after the benediction*)

THE SERMONIC SELECTION.....**Music Ministry**

THE MESSAGE.....**REV. DR. RONALD D. STERLING**

THE INVITATION TO CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

An invitation to accept Jesus as Savior

THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH*

A statement of what we as Christians believe.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. The third day he arose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty: From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the church universal the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sin, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE DOXOLOGY.....**"Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow"**

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Praise Him above ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

THE BENEDICTION.....**Rev. Dr. Ronald D. Sterling**

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.