

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

## Saint John African Methodist Episcopal Church

708 -15<sup>th</sup> Street North || Birmingham, AL 35203

Rev. Dr. Ronald D. Sterling, Pastor



### The Celebration of Christmas

Sunday, December 25, 2022 – 10:00am

Prelude.....Music Ministry

#### *The "CHRIST" Candle Lighting*

*Pastor Ronald Sterling and Sister Kim C. Sterling*

Advent candles are a part of Christian traditions that serve as a reminder that Jesus came as Light into our dark world.

The first candle symbolizes HOPE: The prophets of the Old Testament, especially Isaiah, waited in hope for the Messiah's arrival and now we wait for His second coming.

The second candle represents PEACE: The angels announced that Jesus came to bring peace—He came to bring people peace with God and with each other again.

The third candle symbolizes JOY: The angels announced to the shepherds in the field, "good news of great joy to all people.

The fourth candle symbolizes LOVE: For God so **loved** the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Today's candle is white and it represents light and purity and is called the "CHRIST" candle: it represents Christ coming into the world. It is placed in the middle as a reminder of the preeminent place of Christ as the Center of our hope, our peace, joy, our love and our Salvation.  
*(Light CHRIST candle)*

***Walk in the Light***

*Walk in the light, beautiful light.  
Come where the dewdrops of mercy shine bright.  
Shine all around us by day and by night.  
Jesus the Light of the world.*

**Call To Worship.....Pastor Ronald D. Sterling**

Pastor: O Lord open thou our lips.

**People: And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.**

Pastor: Praise ye the Lord.

**People: The Lord's name be praised. Amen.**

**Hymn of Celebration....."O Come, All Ye Faithful"**

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem  
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels:

Refrain

O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
O sing citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;

Yea, Lord we greet Thee, born this happy morning,  
Jesus, to Thee be all glory given;  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;

**Invocation.....Brother Chaz Carter**

**Prayer Response....."O Come Let Us Adore Him"**

*O come let us adore Him,  
O come let us adore Him  
O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!*

*For He alone is worthy...*

*For He alone can save you...*

**Scripture.....Sister Taya Hardnett**  
Isaiah 9:2-7 (English Standard Version)

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

**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.*

**Ministry of Music.....Sister Kibibi Jones**

**Confession and Declaration of Pardon.....Rev. Charles Marie Davis**

Let us stand and state our confession together: Let us examine ourselves before God as we  
confess our sins:

O God, who on the first day made light, and whose Spirit fills the world, allow me, poor drifter, to receive some of Your light so that I can see my sinfulness with clarity. Shine Your divine light on my neglects, offenses, abuses, and all manner of darkness that has displaced Your grace in my heart. Let me rejoice in what You find delightful, and hate what You hate, so as to become more like You, and follow Your ways after this confession. Amen.

**Declaration of Pardon**

O God, who of your great mercy has promised forgiveness of sins to all those who turn to you with true repentance and sincere faith; Have mercy upon us. Pardon and deliver us from all our sins. Confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, and bring us to everlasting life: through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Thank You, O God, for Your forgiveness. Amen.

**Pastor's Words and Greetings to Visitors**

**Blessing of the Offertory** *(Tithes / Offerings / Benevolent)*

**Sermonic Selection.....Music Ministry**  
"O Holy Night" – Sister Monica Irish

SERMON.....REV. DR. RONALD D. STERLING

**Invitation to Christian Discipleship**

**Affirmation of Faith**

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 on 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 sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

*Go, tell it on the mountain  
Over the hills and everywhere  
Go, tell it on the mountain  
That Jesus Christ is born*

**Benediction.....Rev. Dr. Ronald D. Sterling**

*Amen. Amen. Amen.*

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