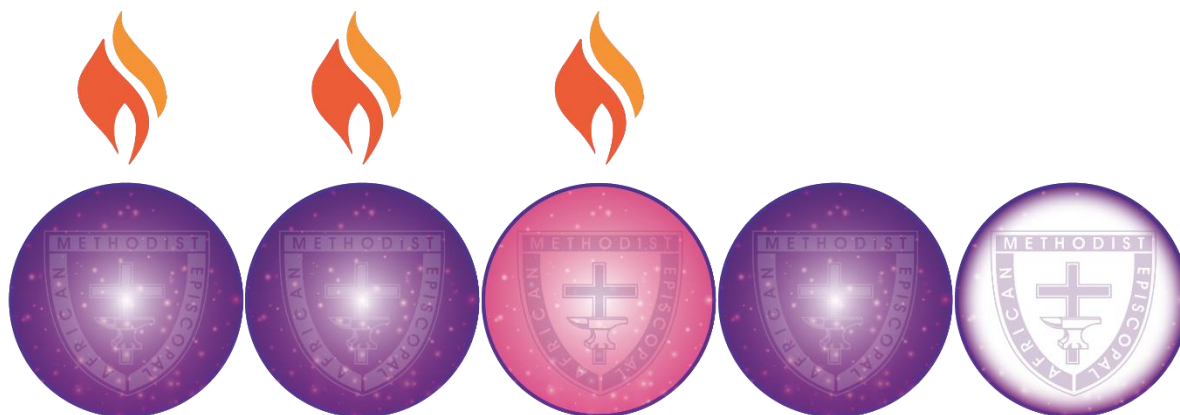


God Our Father, Christ Our Redeemer, Holy Spirit Our Comforter, Humankind Our Family

Saint John African Methodist Episcopal Church
708 15th Street North • Birmingham, Alabama 35203
Rev. Dr. Ronald D. Sterling, Pastor



HOPE•PEACE•JOY•LOVE

JOY

CELEBRATING CHRIST TIME OF ARRIVAL

Order of Worship

December 17, 2023 - 10:00 AM

The Praise & Worship.....Music Ministry

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

The Call to Worship..... Kya Dillard

Minister: I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord! Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem!

People: **For a day in your courts is better than a thousand, elsewhere, I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.**

Minister: For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good.

People: **They are planted in the house of the Lord, they flourish in the courts of our God.**

Minister: O Lord, I love the habitation of your house, and the place where your glory dwells.

People: **But the Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him.**

Minister: Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my Rock, and my Redeemer.

People: **O sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done marvelous things! Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth, sing praises!**

The Hymn of Praise..... "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King, And peace to men on earth!

How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him, still The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, the we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Emmanuel!

The Invocation Charleston Collins

The Choral Response..... “While We Are Waiting, Come”

While we are waiting, come;
While we are waiting, come.
Jesus our Lord, Emmanuel,
While we are waiting, come.

With pow’r and glory, come;
With pow’r and glory, come.
Jesus our Lord, Emmanuel.
While we are waiting, come.

Come, Savior, quickly come;
Come, Savior, quickly come.
Jesus our Lord, Emmanuel,
While we are waiting, come.

CHILDREN’S CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

Clara Dillard, Rachel Long, Savannah Collins, Luke Bjornstad, Micah Wright,
A’Millian Colvin, and Rodarrius Colvin, Jr.

SPECIAL VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL SELECTION

Brooklyn Ford and Eron Collins

JOY: THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

By: Reverend Dr. Adunnola Waterman French

The Tripp Family

LEADER: As we journey in Advent, we are reminded of the joy that awaits us. We pray that as we reflect on the good news—the Savior’s birth— we may be filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. The King is coming, and we rejoice.

RESPONSE: Lord, let your joy fill our hearts as we lift our hearts in praise.

LEADER: We rejoice knowing that there is the fullness of joy in the presence of God. Fill us with joy that cannot be contained but shared with others. Let us be messengers of peace, joyfully spreading your love wherever we go.

RESPONSE:

Lord, let your joy fill our hearts as we lift our hearts in praise.

LEADER:

The joy we experience is not influenced by what is happening around us because joy comes from knowing Jesus. This joy that we have is the gift of God; the world did not give it, and the world cannot take it away. *“In your presence, O God, is joy and contentment. Show me the path that leads to life.”* [Psalm 16:11]

Light two purple candles and the pink candle.

ALL:

We light a candle of joy today, declaring that the joy of the Lord is our strength. We praise and thank for the hope that Christ gives us, the peace that Christ brings us, and the joy that Christ pours into our hearts. Hear our prayers, and fill our hearts with your love, now and always, Amen.

The Scripture Lessons

Old Testament Miranda Mede

Isaiah 61:1-4

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified, They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

New Testament Olivia Mede

(Please stand for the reading of the Gospel)

Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Hymn No. 69 From All That Dwell Below the Skies.....Sterling Dean Colbert

*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.*

The Summary of the Decalogue.....Sterling Dean Colbert

Hear what Christ our Savior saith, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto It; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

The Gloria PatriSterling Dean Colbert

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.

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

All things come of Thee, O Lord; and of Thine own have we given Thee. Amen.

The Pastor's Words and Greetings to Visitors

The Hymn of Preparation.....Music Ministry

The Sermon.....Pastor Sterling

The Invitation to Christian Discipleship

The Apostles' CreedElisabeth Jackson

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

The Doxology

The Benediction.....Pastor Sterling