

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

Saint John AME Church

708 15th Street North

Birmingham, Alabama 35203

The Reverend Dr. Ronald D. Sterling, Pastor || Sister Kim C. Sterling, First Lady



Sunday, March 17, 2024

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Celebrating 150 Years

“Faithful Through the Ages: Celebrating God’s Grace and Mercy”

The Reverend Chris Dowdell Walker, *Guest Preacher*

Welcome.....Brother Garry Evans

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..... Pastor Sterling

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..... "How to Reach the Masses"

How to reach the masses,
Men of every birth,
For an answer Jesus gave the key;
"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, I'll draw all men unto Me."

Refrain
Lift Him up, Lift Him up,
Still He speaks from eternity:
"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, I'll draw all men unto Me."

Oh! The world is hungry
For the Living Bread,
Lift the Savior up for them to see;

Trust Him and do not doubt the words that He said,
"I'll draw all men unto Me."

Don't exalt the preacher, don't exalt the pew,
Preach the gospel simple, full and free;
Prove Him and you will find that promise is true,
"I'll draw all men unto Me."

Lift Him up by living as a Christian ought;
Let the world in you the Savior see;
Then all will gladly follow Him who once taught,
"I'll draw all men unto Me."

The Invocation Sister Shirley Bailey

The Choral Response..... "Give Me a Clean Heart"

Give me a clean heart,
So I may serve Thee.
Lord fix my heart
so that I may be used by Thee.
For I'm not worthy
Of all these blessings
Give me a clean heart
And I'll follow Thee.

The Scripture Lesson (s)

Old TestamentSister Sandra Calloway Fields
Jeremiah 31:31-34

³¹"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³²not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. ³³For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Gospel Sister Terry Beasley

(Please stand for the reading of the Gospel)

John 12:20-33

²⁰Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. ²¹So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." ²²Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵Whoever loves

his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.²⁷ “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. ³¹Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

Hymn No. 69 From All That Dwell Below the Skies..... Sister Terry Beasley

*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..... Sister Terry Beasley

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 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.

Memorial..... Sister Evelyn Beasley

The Pastor’s Words and Greetings to Visitors

The Presentation of the Speaker

The Hymn of Preparation.....Music Ministry

“Great is Thy Faithfulness”

Great is Thy faithfulness,
O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not,
Thy compassions, they fail not:
As Thou hast been
Thou forever wilt be.

Refrain

*Great is Thy faithfulness!
Great is Thy faithfulness!*

*Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand
hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness,
Lord unto me!*

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine with ten thousand beside!

The Sermon.....Rev. Chris Dowdell Walker
St. Paul AME Church, Eastlake

The Invitation to Christian Discipleship

The Blessing of the Offertory (Tithes/Offerings/Benevolent)
All things come of Thee, O Lord; and of Thine own have we given Thee. Amen.

Honoring our Past and Present Church Pillars.....Mr. Nicolas Young
Mr. Noah Young

The Apostles' Creed

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

Rev. Chris Dowdell Walker
Guest Preacher



Chris D. Walker is the daughter of Katherine (deceased) and Newstell Dowdell, Jr. She is married to Joseph W. Walker, Jr. Together they raised five children and they have twelve grandchildren.

Chris Dowdell Walker is an ordained elder in the AME Church. She has served as pastor for 27 years. During this time-period she served the following three churches: St. Matthew, Emmanuel and is currently the pastor at St. Paul Eastlake. She worked to combine the St. Matthew and Emmanuel congregations. She has provided leadership in the development of outreach programs on both the local and state levels. In 2015 she conceived, developed and launched the first ever 9th Episcopal District Food Bank. All AME churches in Alabama were encouraged to bring food items that are then sorted, stocked, bagged and distributed across the State of Alabama to hungry families. In recognition of this work she was awarded the Spirit of Compassion award.

Chris received both a BSW and MSW from the University of Alabama. She started her career at the Jefferson County Department of Human Resources (DHR) and she worked there in various capacities for 21 years. While employed there she became the first African American Program Supervisor and Program Manager in Child Welfare and the first to supervise the development of local resources and the first local accounting unit. She was also a major contributor in writing Jefferson County DHR's implementation plan to address the R.C. Consent Decree.

Chris was hired at UAB in 1999 as the BSW Field Director, making her the first full time African American faculty in Social Work. During her tenure with the Social Work Program she also serves as the BSW program director and led the program through the accreditation process to successfully be reaffirmed in 2008. As field director she has partnered with over 100 agencies that provide internships for BSW students, developed a blended capstone seminar, utilized technology to monitor students' progress in placements and presented innovative field concepts at national conferences.

In May 2017, Chris Walker stepped down as Field Director of the UAB Department of Social Work, a position she has held for 15 years. In her tenure at UAB, she has partnered with agencies across Birmingham in an effort to provide our students with internship opportunities, develop an innovative educational program and mentor thousands of social work students. She has served locally on over 21 boards and committees and offered her expertise as a licensed social worker to young, developing agencies. In recognition of her devotion to the field of social work the **Chris Dowdell Walker Excellence in Field Scholarship** was established in her honor.