

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

## Saint John AME Church

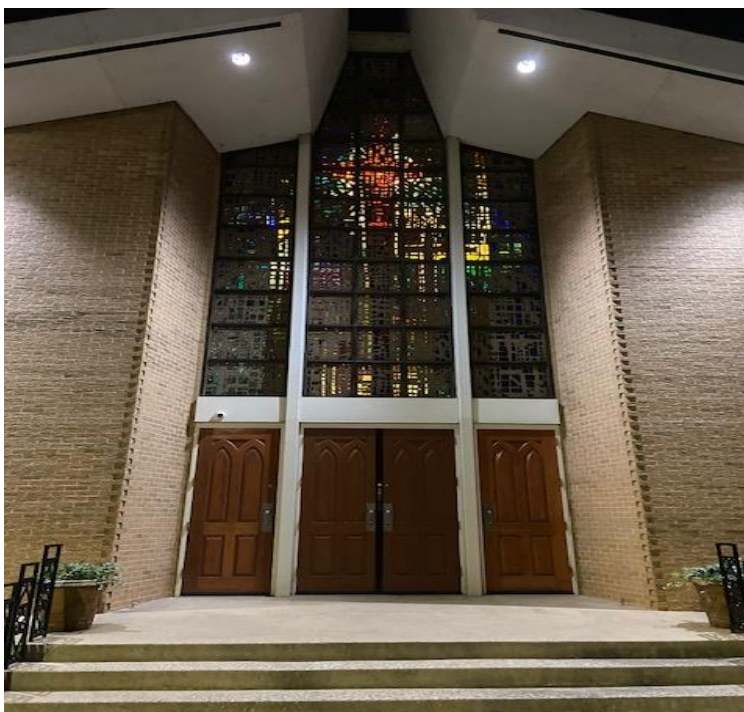
708 15<sup>th</sup> Street North

Birmingham, Alabama 35203

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

### Mission

Saint John's mission is to "love God and love others" by ministering to the social, spiritual, and physical development of all people.



**Sunday, February 23, 2025**

### Seventh Sunday After Epiphany

**The Praise & Worship.....Music Ministry**

**The Doxology**

**AMEC Hymn No. 647 [Tune: Old 100]**

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 (Psalm 40:1-5 NRSV)..... Pastor Sterling**

**Minister:** I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry.

**People:** He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.

**Minister:** He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in him.

**People:** Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods.

**Minister:** Many, Lord my God, are the wonders you have done, the things you planned for us. None can compare with you; were I to speak and tell of your deeds, they would be too many to declare.

**The Hymn of Praise..... “Lift Every Voice and Sing”**

Lift every voice and sing  
Till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise,  
High as the listening skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.

Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,  
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,  
Bitter the chastening rod,  
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;  
Yet with a steady beat,  
Have not our weary feet come to the place for which our fathers sighed.

We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,  
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered;  
Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last  
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,  
God of our silent tears,  
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;  
Thou who had by Thy might, led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.  
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee;  
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world we forget Thee;  
Shadowed beneath Thy hand, may we forever stand,  
True to our God, true to our native land.

**The Invocation ..... Brother Kelvin Riley**

**The Choral Response**

**The Scripture Lesson (s)**

**Old Testament ..... Sister Deborah Thomas**

**Genesis 45:3-11, 15**

<sup>3</sup> And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence. <sup>4</sup> So Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, please." And they came near. And he said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. <sup>5</sup> And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. <sup>6</sup> For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. <sup>7</sup> And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. <sup>8</sup> So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. <sup>9</sup> Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; do not tarry. <sup>10</sup> You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. <sup>11</sup> There I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come, so that you and your household, and all that you have, do not come to poverty.'

**New Testament..... Brother Freddie Thomas**

**1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50**

<sup>35</sup> But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" <sup>36</sup> You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. <sup>37</sup> And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. <sup>38</sup> But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. <sup>42</sup> So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. <sup>43</sup> It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. <sup>44</sup> It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. <sup>45</sup> Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. <sup>46</sup> But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. <sup>47</sup> The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. <sup>48</sup> As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. <sup>49</sup> Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. <sup>50</sup> I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Gospel ..... Rev. Xavier Beasley

(Please stand for the reading of the Gospel)

Luke 6:27-38

<sup>27</sup> “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup> bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. <sup>29</sup> To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic<sup>a</sup> either. <sup>30</sup> Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. <sup>31</sup> And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them. <sup>32</sup> “If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. <sup>33</sup> And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. <sup>34</sup> And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. <sup>35</sup> But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. <sup>36</sup> Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. <sup>37</sup> “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; <sup>38</sup> give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

### The Preface to the Decalogue

#### AMEC Hymn No. 69 From All That Dwell Below the Skies

*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 Decalogue (Abridged)

**Leader:** And God spake all these words saying, “I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

**Hymn:** *Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.*

*Nearer my God, to thee!  
Nearer to thee, E'en though it be a cross  
That raiseth me;  
Still all my song shall be,  
Nearer, my God, to thee,  
Nearer, my God, to thee,  
Nearer to thee.*

**Leader:** 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, Amen.*

**Ministry of Stewardship** (Tithes/Offerings/Benevolent)  
*All things come of Thee, O Lord; and of Thine own have we given Thee. Amen*

**Announcements and Acknowledgements** ..... **Pastor Sterling**

**A Moment in Black History** ..... **Kaden and Caleb Riley**

**The Worship through Music**.....**Music Ministry**

**The Message**..... **Pastor Sterling**

**The Invitation to Christian Discipleship**

**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

**Doxology (Contemporary)**

**Benediction**