

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

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, October 26th, 2025

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

The Praise & Worship..... The 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.....Pastor Sterling

Leader: 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.

Leader: 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.

Leader: 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.

Leader: 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.....“Hold To God’s Unchanging Hand”

Time is filled with swift transition,
Naught of earth can stand,
Build your hopes on things eternal,
Hold to God’s unchanging hand.

Refrain
Hold to His hand, God's unchanging hand;
Hold to God's unchanging hand;
Build your hopes on things eternal;
Hold to God's unchanging hand.

Trust in Him who will not leave you,
Whatsoever years may bring;
If by earthly friends forsaken,
Still more closely to Him cling.

Covet not this world's riches,
That so easily decay;
Seek to gain the heavenly treasures;
They will never pass away.

When your journey is completed,
If to God you have been true,
Fair and bright the home in glory
Your enraptured soul will view.

The Invocation.....Brother Micah Eli Wright

The Choral Response....."We Are One"

We are one, we are one, We are one in the Spirit, we are one.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! We are one in the Spirit, we are one.

The Scripture Lesson (s): *Easy-to-Read Version*

Old TestamentSister Brooklyn Ford

Isaiah 41:10

¹⁰ Don't worry—I am with you.
Don't be afraid—I am your God.
I will make you strong and help you.
I will support you with my right hand that brings victory.

"This is the Word of the Lord."

New Testament.....Brother Soren Powell
1 Corinthians 13:7

⁷ Love never gives up on people. It never stops trusting, never loses hope, and never quits.

"The Word of God for the people of God."

GospelBrother Connie Tripp III
(Please stand for the reading of the Gospel)
John 14:27

²⁷ "I leave you peace. It is my own peace I give you. I give you peace in a different way than the world does. So don't be troubled. Don't be afraid.

"May the Lord bless the hearers and doers of His Word."

Litany for Breast Cancer Awareness.....Sister Doris Hardy

Leader: Gracious God, we come before you with hearts full of compassion and hope, lifting up those affected by breast cancer.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Grant those diagnosed with breast cancer strength and courage.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For families and friends who support their loved ones, give them patience and love.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For medical professionals and researchers, bless their hands and minds.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who have lost their battle, may they rest in your peace.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For survivors, may their stories inspire hope.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For communities that rally in support, strengthen their bonds.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For all who live in fear and uncertainty, remind them of your constant presence.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Let us hold fast to the words of Isaiah 41:10, "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

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 (Summary)

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 Caregiver's Story – Hope in the Dark

Rose Maria Owens—Caregiver of Raquel Smith (Pink Topps)

Montell Dewayne Washington—Caregiver of Sandra Calloway Fields (Thrive Together)

Introduction of the Speaker.....Pastor Sterling

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

The Message.....Rev. Dr. Letitia Watford

Presiding Elder, Phenix City District

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

Guest Speaker



Dr. Letitia Williams-Watford accepted Christ as a child, and many times over since then. She presently serves as Presiding Elder of the Phenix City District, Ninth Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, under the stellar leadership of Bishop Julius H. McAllister, Jr. and Supervisor Deana McAllister. While a pastor in the (Old) Alabama and the Alabama River Region Annual Conferences, she served both urban and suburban congregations. In these milieus, she had the privilege of building churches—both people and facilities. In February 2004, while retaining her first pastoral assignment, she became the first woman appointed as Presiding Elder in Alabama, serving the Camden-Prattville District. Reassigned to the pulpit, she led Murdock Chapel at Pike Road in building its newest sanctuary, while retaining and upgrading some aspects of the facility's earlier iterations. In December 2015 she was assigned as Presiding Elder of the Tuskegee District in the Northeast Annual Conference, where she served nine years. At the close of the 2024 Northeast Annual Conference, Bishop McAllister, Jr. reassigned her to *the* District, where she boldly declares and decrees, "The Phenix is *still rising!*"

Presiding Elder Letitia Watford is bi-vocational. As a solo-practitioner whose office is located in Union Springs, Alabama; she has provided dental services to literally thousands of patients, across five contiguous, mostly rural counties. Her practice aims to offer quality services and care, beginning with A-I assisted interpretation of digital radiography. In 2024, Dr. Williams (her professional name) was recognized by the Central Section of the National Dental Practice Based Research Network for excellence in Clinical Research. In 2023, she was recognized by the Mu Chapter of Iota Phi Lambda as Businesswoman of the Year. AME-WIM bestowed upon her the 2018 Connectional Jarena Lee Award, celebrating Dr. Watford as the woman most recognized (at that time) for leading and mentoring women clergy across the state of Alabama.

To the glory of God alone, Dr. Watford claims a number of sons and daughters in ministry, serving the Ninth District and beyond. For several Quadrenniums, she has served as an AME Clergy representative to the Pan-Methodist Commission. At the Commission's behest, Black Methodist denominations in Alabama are collaborating with Faith in Action Alabama, to call continued attention to an ongoing sanitation crisis of epic proportions across the Blackbelt of Alabama, and particularly Lowndes County.

As an undergraduate, Dr. Tish attended Howard University, in Washington, DC, where she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in her junior year. She graduated with a Doctor of Dental Surgery Degree, also from Howard University. Working her way through dental school,

she met her future husband Bro. Thomas Watford, Jr. A good Catholic, Bro. Watford could have never imagined that one day he would be a District Consultant in the AME Church. But, before that, he would journey alongside Dr. Tish as she returned to school, not once, but twice, obtaining the Master of Divinity and the Doctorate of Ministry Degrees from Beeson Divinity School. Every place ministry carried Dr. Watford and her spouse, Tom, has was there - quiet. Yet and still, numbers of youth and young adults have been drawn to and now claim him as their mentor and sage. Together, the Watfords are proud parents of Geneva Marie, and equally proud grandparents of Sophie Marie Watford Lawrence and R. Watford McKinney.