

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

Order of Worship

December 24, 2023 - 10:00 AM



HOPE • PEACE • JOY • LOVE

CHRIST

CELEBRATING CHRIST TIME OF ARRIVAL

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..... "Oh 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, all ye bright hosts 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

LOVE: THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

By: Reverend Dr. Adunnola Waterman French

The Fields' Family

LEADER: On this Fourth Sunday of Advent, we join in worship to celebrate LOVE—recalling God’s extended love to all peoples. God is love. God created love and gifted love. As we wait on the second coming of Christ, remind us, O Lord, that your love abides forever.

RESPONSE: Lord, deepen our love for you and our love for others.

LEADER: Transform us in the power of your love. Let your love guide us whenever we think, speak, or act. Let us love each other as you have loved us. “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.” [1 John 4:7]

RESPONSE: Lord, deepen our love for you and our love for others.

LEADER: We thank you for the assurance that when nothing else can help, your love will provide the strength to carry on. May you kindle in our hearts, the pure flame of your eternal love; empower us so we may walk in your light and your love.

ALL: We light the candle of love today, proclaiming that our hearts are filled with your pure, everlasting, and all-encompassing love. Lord, as we wait and worship, may we be persistent in hope, may we pursue peace with passion, may joy overflow in us, through us, beyond us, and may you magnify your love in us beyond measure, now and always, we pray, Amen.

The Invocation**Sister Shirley Bailey**

The Choral Response..... **“Jesus, the Light of the World”**

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.

The Scripture Lessons

Old Testament Sister Camilla Avery
Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever with my mouth I will
make known your faithfulness to all generations.
² For I said, "Steadfast love will be built up forever;
in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness."
³ You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one;
I have sworn to David my servant:
⁴ 'I will establish your offspring forever,
and build your throne for all generations.'"

New Testament Dr. June Payne
(Please stand for the reading of the Gospel)
Luke 1:46b-55

And Mary said,
"My soul magnifies the Lord,
⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
⁴⁸for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.
For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
⁴⁹for he who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
⁵⁰And his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;
⁵²he has brought down the mighty from their thrones
and exalted those of humble estate;
⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.
⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
⁵⁵as he spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his offspring forever."

Hymn No. 69 From All That Dwell Below the Skies..... Rev. Laurel Thornton

*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

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.

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

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

**Special Dance Presentation Featuring
The Angels of Jeremiah**



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’ 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