

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



HOPE • PEACE • JOY • LOVE

# LOVE

Sunday, December 22, 2024

## Order of Worship

**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:** Come, let us worship the Lord our God, who is our refuge and strength.  
(Psalm 46:1)

**People:** We come, seeking God's presence and peace.

**Minister:** The Lord is our light and our salvation; whom shall we fear? (Psalm 27:1)

**People:** We come, trusting in God's grace and love.

**Minister:** Let us lift up our hearts and voices in praise and thanksgiving. (Psalm 100:4)

**People:** We come, ready to worship and glorify God's holy name.

**Minister:** For the Lord is good; His steadfast love endures forever. (Psalm 100:5)

**People:** We come, rejoicing in the hope and promise of our Savior.

**Minister:** Let us worship the Lord with gladness and enter His presence with singing!  
(Psalm 100:2)

**All:** Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness!  
Come into his presence with singing! (Psalm 100:1-2)

**The Song of Celebration.....“O 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;

**The Invocation ..... Bro. Freddie Robinson**

**The Choral Response..... “Walk in the Light”**

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.

**LOVE: THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**LEADER:** Let us magnify the Lord, and let our spirit rejoice in God our Savior. For through God’s love, God has looked with favor upon us.

**RESPONSE:** Love has sought us out, and we open our hearts to receive and to share.

**LEADER:** God’s mercy extends throughout generations, and God has shown strength for us. For through God’s love, God has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts and has brought down the powerful from their thrones.

**RESPONSE:** Love has sought us out, and we open our hearts to receive and to share.

**LEADER:** Let us turn our hearts toward love, for through love God has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. God has come to our aid and remembers us in God’s tender mercy.

**Light three purple candles and one pink candle.**

**ALL:** We light the candle of love today, believing in the power of love to triumph over evil. We wait with great anticipation for Love to take on flesh and dwell among us, and we open our hearts to be ready to receive. Amen.

**OLD TESTAMENT ..... Sister Renay Pickett**

**Micah 5:2-5**

<sup>2</sup> But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for me  
one who is to be ruler in Israel,  
whose coming forth is from of old,  
from ancient days.

<sup>3</sup> Therefore he shall give them up until the time  
when she who is in labor has given birth;  
then the rest of his brothers shall return  
to the people of Israel.

<sup>4</sup> And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord,

in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.  
And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great  
to the ends of the earth.  
<sup>5</sup> And he shall be their peace.  
When the Assyrian comes into our land  
and treads in our palaces,  
then we will raise against him seven shepherds  
and eight princes of men

**PSALM..... Sister Vernice Byrd**

**Psalm 80:1-7**

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,  
you who lead Joseph like a flock.  
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.  
<sup>2</sup> Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh,  
stir up your might  
and come to save us!  
<sup>3</sup> Restore us, O God;  
let your face shine, that we may be saved!  
<sup>4</sup> O Lord God of hosts,  
how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?  
<sup>5</sup> You have fed them with the bread of tears  
and given them tears to drink in full measure.  
<sup>6</sup> You make us an object of contention for our neighbors,  
and our enemies laugh among themselves.  
<sup>7</sup> Restore us, O God of hosts;  
let your face shine, that we may be saved!

**GOSPEL..... Sister Yolonda Carter**

**Luke 1:46-55**

***(Please stand for the reading of the Gospel)***

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, <sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, <sup>48</sup> for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; <sup>49</sup> for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. <sup>50</sup> And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. <sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; <sup>52</sup> he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; <sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. <sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, <sup>55</sup> as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever."

**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 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.*

**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**