

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, March 16, 2025

Second Sunday of Lent

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..... Pastor Sterling

Leader: We gather in the wilderness, where Jesus overcame temptation.

People: We come to worship the One who sustains us with His Word.

Leader: In this season of Lent, we seek to draw closer to God.

People: Let us turn our hearts toward Him, trusting in His grace.

Leader: As the psalmist says: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

People: For You are my refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust.

Leader: Jesus reminds us: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

People: We will worship with humility and joy, for He is our strength and salvation.

The Hymn of Praise..... "What a Friend We Have in Jesus"

What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit,
Oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged—
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful,
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy-laden,
Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge—
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In His arms He'll take and shield thee,
Thou wilt find a solace there.

Prayer of Confession:

Dear Lord, we humbly confess that we have sinned against You in our thoughts, words, and deeds. We recognize that our love for You and for our fellow human beings has not been sincere. Please grant us the wisdom to learn from our past mistakes, the courage to improve our current actions and the guidance to lead us towards a future where we may fulfill Your will and walk in Your ways, bringing honor to Your holy name. We pray this in the name of Jesus, Amen!

Assurance of Pardon:

In Jesus Christ, we find redemption and forgiveness. Let us bask in the enduring love of God, knowing that His mercy is everlasting. May we strive each day to live in the light of His grace and forgiveness, confident in His boundless love for us. In the name of Jesus, Amen!

The Invocation Sister Shirley Bailey

The Choral Response..... "Lead Me, Guide Me"

Lead me, guide me along the way;
For if You lead me, I cannot stray;
Lord, let me walk each day with Thee.
Lead me, O Lord, lead me.

The Scripture Lesson (s)

Old Testament Sister Pauline Ford
Genesis 15:1-12

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." ² But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³ And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." ⁴ And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." ⁵ And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ⁶ And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness. ⁷ And he said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess." ⁸ But he said, "O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" ⁹ He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." ¹⁰ And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. ¹¹ And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. ¹² As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him.

New Testament..... Sister Brittany Ford
Philippians 3:17-4:1

¹⁷ Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸ For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. **4** Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

Gospel Brother Joel Bjornstad
(Please stand for the reading of the Gospel)
Luke 9:37-43

On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. ³⁸ And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. ³⁹ And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and shatters him, and will hardly leave him. ⁴⁰ And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." ⁴¹ Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." ⁴² While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. ⁴³ And all were astonished at the majesty of God.

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

Baptism

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