

BETHEL
African Methodist Episcopal Church

714 Savannah Street
Mobile, Alabama 36603
251.206.0013
bethelamemobile9@gmail.com

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 21, 2025 at 10:30 AM



2025 Theme: “*The Gift of His Presence*”

Matthew 1:23

Reverend Brandon L. Thornton, Pastor
Reverend Charles A. Lewis, Presiding Elder
Bishop Julius H. McAllister, Jr., Presiding Prelate, 9th Episcopal District

Ministerial Staff

Reverend Doctor Olivia Martin, Itinerate Elder
Reverend Irmatine Chastang, Itinerate Elder
Reverend Pamela Greene-Irby, Itinerate Deacon

The Order of Worship

Rev Dr. Olivia Martin, Worship Leader

The Musical Prelude Musicians

The Processional The Choir

The Doxology *“Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”*.....

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.

The Call to Worship.....**Rev. Dr. Olivia Martin**

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 have loved 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! I will sing of loyalty and justice to you, O Lord, I will sing.**

The Opening Hymn.....The Bad Boys of Bethel Choir and Congregation
“Joy to the World” - NO. 120

1.Joy to the world! The Lord is come; Let earth receive her King; Let
very heart prepare Him room, And heaven and nature sing, And heaven and
nature sing, And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.
And heaven and nature sing, And heaven and nature sing.

2 Joy to the world! The Savior reigns; Let men their songs employ; While fields
and floods, rocks, hills, and plains Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding
joy, Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy,

3. No more let sins and sorrows grow, Nor thorns infest the ground; He comes to
make His blessings flow Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is found, Far as,
far as the curse is found.

Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is found,

4. He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the nations prove The
glories of His righteousness, And wonders of His love, And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders of His love.

And wonders of His love, And wonders of His love, Amen.

The Morning Invocation.....Rev. Dr. Olivia Martin

The Choral Response.....The Bad Boys of Bethel & Congregation
“Thank You, Lord” – No. 531 – AAHH

***Thank You, Lord, thank You, Lord, thank You, Lord,
I just want to thank You, Lord.***

***Been so good, been so good, been so good,
I just want to thank You, Lord.***

Selection.....The Bad Boys of Bethel Choir

The Moment in Advent

Led by: The Johnson Family

SCRIPTURE READING John 3:11-17 (NRSV))

¹¹ “Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you^[a] do not receive our testimony. ¹² If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.^[b] ¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.^[c]

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷ “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT LITANY: LOVE

Leader: Church family, as we continue our Advent journey, we remember the candles we've lit along the way.

On the first Sunday, we lit the candle of **HOPE**, trusting that God comes ALL IN for us.

(The family lights the HOPE candle.)

Leader: On the second Sunday, we lit the candle of **PEACE**, celebrating that Christ is our calm in every storm.

(The PEACE candle is lit.)

Leader: Last Sunday, we lit the candle of **JOY**, rejoicing that wherever Christ is present, joy rises.

(The JOY candle is lit.)

Leader: Today, we light the fourth candle—the candle of **LOVE**. This is the final candle of Advent, pointing us toward the Christ Candle that we will light on Christmas as we celebrate His arrival.

People: We thank You, Lord, for Your love that came close.

Leader: John tells us that God's love isn't theory or emotion—it's action. God loved us so much that He came Himself. Not an angel, not a messenger—He came as Emmanuel, **God with us**.

People: Your love meets us where we are and makes us who we can become.

Leader: Our Advent theme, “**The Gift of His Presence**,” reminds us that the purest expression of love is presence. God didn't watch from afar—He stepped into our story.

People: Emmanuel—Your presence is our greatest gift.

Leader: And as a church living out our theme “**ALL IN**,” we commit to love one another fully, freely, and faithfully.

Not halfway.

Not when it's convenient.

But ALL IN—just like the God who came ALL IN for us.

People: Teach us to love ALL IN—like You love us.

Leader: Today we light the **LOVE** candle, praying that the love of Christ will fill our families, our relationships, our community, and our church.

*(The family lights the **LOVE** candle.)*

People: Let love be born in us again.

Leader: Christ our Hope, Christ our Peace, Christ our Joy, and Christ our Love—prepare our hearts for the celebration of Your birth as we draw near to Christmas.

All Together:

Emmanuel, God with us—fill us with Your love today. Amen.

The Acknowledgement of Visitors, Welcome and Announcements....Sis. Morgan Peterson

The Bringing of the Tithes and Offering
(please stand and recite the Giver's Affirmation)

The Giver's Affirmation

This is my seed. It shall meet all my needs.
I give it today, because I obey – my God and His command.

My tithe is out of obedience and love. My offering is my sacrifice.
My return shall be magnified, because I've learned to give right.
I'm the head and not the tail, a lender and not a borrower, on top and not beneath.

Because I give, I am blessed – in the city and in the field.
I'm blessed because I give my God my best.
Today and every day, I am blessed!

Selection.....The Bad Boys of Bethel Choir

The Preached Word.....Pastor Thornton

The Invitation to Christian Discipleship

The Affirmation of Faith

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 at 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 Benediction.....Pastor Thornton

The Postlude.....Musicians

PEOPLE BEING HEALED

Sis. Ann Coleman	Sis. Anita Lewis	Sis. Carolyn Oliver
Sis. Latasha Hall	Sis. Deborah Mack	Sis. Nicole Rocker
Bro. Claude Hollings, III	Bro. David McCall	Sis. Geneva Williams
Sis. Lillie Johnson	Bro. Ulysses McNeal	Sis. Viola Wills
Bro. David Blackwell	Bro. Walt Dickerson	Sis. Elaine McCants

PRAYER LIST

Rev. Brandon L. Thornton and First Lady Shandra Thornton

Sis. Ardelia Andrews	Sis. Rosa Gordon	Sis. Diane Smith
Sis. Amelia Cade Bacon	Sis. Julia James	Bro. Eddie Smith
Sis. Mary Bennett	Rev. Donna James' Mother	Sis. Omega Taylor
Bro. Ronnie Blackmon	Sis. Faydene Morris	Sis. Emmer Bryant
Sis. Katherine Parker-Williams	Bro. Tamyrick Nunn	Sis. Donna Wills
Bro. Charles Wills, Jr.	Rev. Irmatine Chastang	Sis. Aquilla Rush
Sis. Annie G. Cockrell	Sis. Jackie Erskine-Porter	Bro. John Rush
Bro. Ronald Witherspoon	Sis. Tataneshia Rush	Sis. Vernetta Giles
Bro. Chris & Sis. Lenor Drexler		Sis. Vanessa Young-Dickerson

BEREAVEMENT

Please keep the following families in prayer:

Dunn/Greene/Giddens Families
The Jones Family

The Dale-Clark Family
Pastor Barndon Thornton's Family

**If you have names to add to the Being Healed List, Prayer List, or
Bereavement List, please contact Sis. Emma Prince.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- As we prepare for the Advent season, we invite you to help **beautify** our Sanctuary with **Poinsettias**. If you would like to contribute, donations of \$15.00 are welcome. Please place your contribution on your tithe envelope in the “**Special Offering**” section. We encourage all members to participate. Poinsettias will be placed in the Sanctuary on the second Sunday of Advent..
- The Alice P. Lewis Usher Board will be sponsoring a community outreach activity for Alta Pointe Health Systems Women’s Specialty Group entitled Coats for Tots. If anyone would like to donate a coat, please contact Sis. Jennifer McCord, President. The coats will be collected on Sunday, December 21, 2025 and distribute to Alta Pointe Health Systems, 2400 Gordon Smith Drive on Monday, December 22, 2025 at 11:30 am. Thank you.
- Voices of Praise will not rehearse on Saturday, December 27th.
- Youth Choir will rehearse, Saturday, December 27th 12:00 pm – 1:30 PM
- Mass Choir Rehearsal will be held Saturday, January 3, 2026 - 10:00 – 11:30 AM.

Weekly Activities

- Sunday Church School – 9:00 AM
- Bible Study – Zoom Call – 6:30 pm (Zoom (ID: 282 060 9533)
- Communion for Sick & Shut -In Wednesday after 1st Sunday
- Call the church office to schedule 251-206-0013

Church Office Hours

- Tuesday – Friday 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
- Contact: 251-206-0013

Key Contacts:

- Facility Needs – Sis Dorothy Crittenden | 251-391-2810
- Announcements – Sis. Emma Prince | 251-554-6259
- Administration Office – 251-206-0013
- Pastor – Rev. Brandon L. Thornton | 334-614-9217

Bethel's College Students

Pray for their Success

Kennedy Black

Sarah Fair

Samiah Morris

Alivia Cannon

Kellen Fairley

Jalen Prince-Woodland

Hayley Cleaton

Marlon Fairley

Winston Salter

Chelsea Cooper

Ethan Oliver

Wynstonee Salter

**Khelsea Cooper
Kierra Giles**

Jazzlyn Gaillard

BETHEL HIGHLIGHTS

Happy Birthday for the week of December Birthdays

Williams, Sis. Jermine M.	December 21
McGlasker, Sis. Rene	December 21
Johnson, Omar	December 21
Bush, Daylon J.	December 22
Fleming, Sis. Annie Mary	December 23
Sykes, Sis. Yurlean	December 23
Sewell, Shavontee S.	December 23
Scott, Bro. Stanley	December 24
Dembo, Bro. Melvin	December 24
Blackwell, Sis. Geraldine M.	December 26
Stokes, Sis. Agatha	December 26
Scott, Sis. Kimberly	December 27
Andrews, Bro. Patrick	December 27

******* We would like to celebrate all Birthdays and Anniversaries in the coming year! To ensure your special day is included, please update your profile in Church Center. We want to stay connected with you.***

Christmas Fantata

PRESENTED BY THE
MUSIC MINISTRY
OF BETHEL A.M.E. CHURCH

Sunday,
DECEMBER 21, 2025
6:00PM

BETHEL A.M.E. CHURCH
REVEREND BRANDON L. THORNTON, PASTOR
714 Savannah Street, Mobile, AL 36603



SERMON APPLICATION

HEARING GOD'S WORD IN THE SERMON

Since we forget 90% of what we hear, it has been suggested that note-taking will double the percentage of what we may receive during the hearing of God's Word.

PARTICIPATE IN THE SERMON

SERMON SCRIPTURE: _____

SERMON TITLE: _____

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: _____

THE OUTLINE OF THE MAIN POINTS:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

WHAT WAS GOD SAYING SPECIALLY TO ME DURING THE SERMON?
