

# BETHEL

## African Methodist Episcopal Church

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**Sunday, January 11, 2026, at 10:30 a.m.**

**51<sup>st</sup> Beth Tones Choir Anniversary**



**The Reverend Brandon L. Thornton, *Pastor***

The Reverend Charles A. Lewis, *Presiding Elder, The Mobile District*

Bishop Julius H. McAllister Jr., *Presiding Prelate, Ninth Episcopal District*

### **Ministerial Staff**

The Reverend Doctor Olivia Martin, *Itinerant Elder,*  
***Family, Community & Leadership Development Leader***

The Reverend Irmatine Chastang, *Itinerant Elder,*  
***Congregational Care & Discipleship Leader***

The Reverend Pamela Greene-Irby, *Itinerant Deacon,*  
***Worship & Evangelism Leader***

## Order of Worship

### THE PROCESSIONAL

#### THE DOXOLOGY

*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**

### THE CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall  
stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

**People: For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in  
the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.**

Leader: Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good.

**People: Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our  
God.**

Leader: Blessed are they that dwell in thy house. Lord, I have loved thy habitation and the place  
where thy honor dwelleth.

**People: For 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 Thy sight,  
O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.

**People: O sing unto the Lord a new song, for He has done marvelous things. Make a joyful  
noise unto the Lord, all the earth, and sing praises.**

### THE HYMN OF PRAISE

#### *Hymn # 62 "God of Grace and God of Glory"*

*1. God of grace and God of glory,  
on thy people pour thy power;  
crown the ancient church's story;  
bring its bud to glorious flower.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
for the facing of thls hour,  
for the facing of thls hour.*

*2. Lo! the hosts of evil round us,  
scorn thy Christ, assail his ways!  
From the fears that long have bound us,  
free our hearts to love and praise.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
for the living of these days,  
for the living of these days.*

3. *Cure thy children's warring madness,  
bend our pride to thy control;  
shame our wanton, selfish gladness,  
rich in things and poor in soul.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
lest we miss thy kingdom's goal,  
lest we miss thy kingdom's goal.*

4. *Set our feet on lofty places;  
gird our lives that they may be  
armoured with all Christlike graces,  
pledged to set all captives free.*

*Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
that we fail not them nor thee,  
that we fail not them nor thee!*

5. *Save us from weak resignation  
to the evils we deplore;  
let the search for thy salvation  
be our glory evermore.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
serving thee whom we adore,  
serving thee whom we adore.*

## THE INVOCATION

## THE MINISTRY OF MUSIC

## THE SCRIPTURE READING

*748 The Visit of the Wisemen (From Matthew 2; Luke 2)*

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem.

**Saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him.**

When Herod the King had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

**And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.**

And they said to him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet,

**And you Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the princes of Judah; for out of you shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.**

Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

**And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young Child; and when you have found Him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship Him also.**

When they had heard the king, they depart-ed; and. lo, the star which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was.

**When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.**

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field,

**Keeping watch over their flock by night.**

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them:

**And they were sore afraid.**

And the angel said to them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of joy, which shall be to all people.

**For to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.**

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying,

**Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good-will toward men.**

**Leader:** This is the Word of the Lord to the people of God.

**People:** Thanks be to God!

## **THE MINISTRY OF MUSIC**

## **THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **BETH TONES REFLECTIONS**

## **THE MINISTRY OF GIVING**

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!

## **THE MINISTRY OF MUSIC**

**THE SERMON**  
*The Rev. Pamela Irby*

**THE INVITATION TO DISCIPLESHIP/ ALTAR CALL**  
**THE DOXOLOGY**

**THE BENEDICTION**  
The peace of God which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

**THE POSTLUDE**

## Pastor's Pen

Beloved,

This past week in Bible Study, we leaned into a powerful and often misunderstood principle—first fruits. Scripture reminds us that God is honored not merely by **what** we give, but by when and **how** we give it. First fruit is not leftovers. It is not what remains after everything else is settled. First fruit is the intentional act of putting God first—before the harvest is enjoyed, before the outcome is known, before convenience sets in.

As we prepare for our Pack the Pew Rally, I want to encourage every member to prepare their hearts—not just to show up, but to step up in faith and obedience.

Pack the Pew calls us to do two things:

1. Invite and engage family and friends to worship with us.
2. Invest sacrificially in the life and future of our church.

We are encouraging each pew to raise \$1,800, and yes—much of that can and should come from family, friends, and those we invite to be a part of what God is doing at Bethel. Please hear my heart clearly: first fruit is never replaced by a project. We don't trade obedience for participation. We do both.

If you have already made up in your mind that you are not going to ask anyone to give, I am asking you to prayerfully commit to the \$1,800—or your very best gift. Not out of pressure, but out of principle. Not out of guilt, but out of gratitude for all God has already done.

First fruit says, **“God, You are first.”**

Pack the Pew says, “God, I believe in the vision You've entrusted to this house.”

This is not about equal gifts it's about equal sacrifice and unified obedience and LOVE. My prayer is that we would not miss this moment by holding back what God is calling us to place in His hands.

Prepare your heart. Pray over your commitment. Give your first fruit. And let us Pack the Pews—not just with people, but with faith, obedience, and expectation.

We're ALL IN—together.

With love and expectation,

Pastor B

## **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:**

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**WHAT WAS GOD SAYING SPECIFICALLY TO ME DURING THE SERMON?**