

**AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
NINTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT**

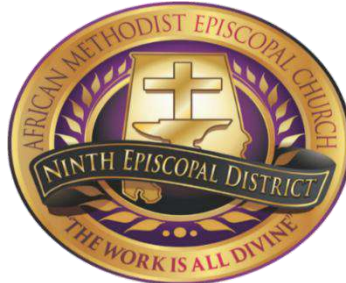
**SIXTEENTH SESSION OF THE  
NORTHWEST ALABAMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

*Annual Conference Theme:*

*Always Moving Forward with Excellence Philippians 3:13-14*

*Quadrennial Theme:*

*The Work Is All Divine Romans 8:28*



*The Opening Worship Service  
and The Sacrament of Holy Communion*

*Wednesday, September 10, 2025*

*Ten thirty in the Morning*

**Bishop Julius H. McAllister, Jr.**

*Presiding Prelate*

**Mrs. Deana Young McAllister**

*Episcopal Supervisor*

*Convening with*

*Bryant Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church  
3125 Spaulding Street - Birmingham, Alabama 36104*

*The Reverend Damien Littlejohn, Host Pastor*

*The Reverend Gloria Hall*

*Host Presiding Elder*

*West Birmingham-Ensley-Greensboro District*

*The Reverend Dwight E. Dillard*

*Associate Host Presiding Elder*

*Birmingham-Florence-Tuscaloosa District*

*The Reverend Bruce W. Hunter*

*Associate Host Presiding Elder*

*South Birmingham-Huntsville-Bessemer District*

# *The Opening Worship Service*

Wednesday, September 10, 2025

10:30 a.m.

**The Reverend Gloria Hall, Worship Leader**

***Presiding Elder of the West Birmingham-Ensley-Greensboro District***

## **THE MUSICAL PRELUDE**

## **THE GREAT PROCESSIONAL**

### **Hymn No. 25**

### **“Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty”**

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;  
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty;  
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee;  
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;  
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,  
Which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide Thee,  
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see;  
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee,  
Perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
All Thy works shall praise Thy name in earth, and sky and sea;  
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!  
God in three persons, blessed Trinity! Amen.

## **THE DOXOLOGY**

## **Choir and Congregation**

### **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

The Reverend Damien Littlejohn

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

**People: For a day in Your 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.**

Minister: Because of the house of the Lord, our God, I will seek Your good.

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

Minister: Blessed are they that dwell in Your house Lord, I have loved Your habitation, the place where Your honor dwells.

**People: For 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 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

The Reverend Debra Ballard

**Hymn No. 304 [Tune: ST. THOMAS SM]**

**“And Are We Yet Alive”**

And are we yet alive, and see each other's face?  
Glory and praise to Jesus give, for His redeeming grace!

Preserved by power divine; to full salvation here,  
Again in Jesus' praise we join; and in His sight appear.

What troubles have we seen, what conflicts have we passed,  
Fightings without, and fears within, since we assembled last.

But out of all the Lord, hath brought us by His love;  
And still He doth His help afford, and hides our life above.

Then let us make our boast, of His redeeming power,  
Which saves us to the uttermost, till we can sin no more.

Let us take up the cross, till we the crown obtain;  
And gladly reckon all things loss, so we may Jesus gain.

**THE INVOCATION**

**The Reverend Sheryl Shipman**

**THE CHORAL RESPONSE**

**Choir and Congregation**

**Hymn No. 580**

African American Heritage Hymnal

**"I Love You, Lord, Today"**

I love You. I love You. I love You, Lord, today because You care for me in such a special way.  
And yes I praise You. I lift You up. I magnify Your name.  
That's why my heart is filled with praise.  
My heart, my mind, my soul belong to You. You paid the price for me way back on Calvary.  
And yes I praise You. I lift You up. I magnify Your name.  
That's why my heart is filled with praise.

**THE WORSHIP THROUGH MUSIC**

**The Conference Choir**

**THE SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**FROM THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES**  
**Psalms 19**

**The Reverend Dr. Ronald D. Sterling**

**THE EPISTLE**  
**James 3:1-12**

**The Reverend Dr. Gwendolyn Pierce**

**THE GOSPEL (All Standing)**  
**Mark 8:27-38**

**The Reverend Damien Littlejohn**

**THE PREFACE TO THE DECALOGUE**

**Hymn #69 [Tune: Woodworth]**

**"From All That Dwell"**

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 (SUMMARY)**

**The Reverend L. Nicole Slater**

Hear what Christ our Savior says, "You shall love the Lord Your God with all  
your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great  
and first commandment. The second is like unto it. You shall love your  
neighbor as yourself. 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.

THE MISSION OFFERING

The Stewardship Committee

THE WORSHIP THROUGH MUSIC

The Conference Choir

THE PRESENTATION OF THE BISHOP

The Reverend Dwight E. Dillard  
*Presiding Elder,  
Birmingham-Florence-Tuscaloosa District*

THE PRESENTATION OF THE PREACHER

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

THE SERMONIC HYMN

The Reverend Lasagne Smith

**Hymn No. 283**

**"I Am Thine, O Lord"**

I am Thine, O Lord, I have heard Thy voice,  
And it told Thy love to me;  
But I long to rise in the arms of faith,  
And be closer drawn to Thee.

*Refrain*

*Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,  
To the cross where Thou hast died;  
Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,  
To Thy precious, bleeding side.*

Consecrate me now to Thy service, Lord,  
By the power of grace divine;  
Let my soul look up with a steadfast hope,  
And my will be lost in Thine.

*Refrain*

O the pure delight of a single hour  
That before Thy throne I spend,  
When I kneel in prayer, and with Thee, my God,  
I commune as friend with friend!

*Refrain*

There are depths of love that I cannot know  
Till I cross the narrow sea;  
There are heights of joy that I may not reach  
Till I rest in peace with Thee.

*Refrain*

**THE ANNUAL SERMON**

**The Reverend Dr. T Eric Nathan**  
*Grant Chapel*  
*African Methodist Episcopal Church*  
*Birmingham, Alabama*

**THE INVITATION TO  
RECEIVE CHRIST**

**The Reverend Dr. Carmen Walker Ellerbee**

**“Let the Church Say, Amen”**

Let the church say, Amen. Let the church say, Amen.  
God has spoken, so let the church say, Amen.

**THE WORSHIP THROUGH GIVING**

**The Stewardship Committee**

**THE RESPONSE**

**“We Give Thee But Thine Own”**

We give Thee but Thine own, Whate’er the gift may be,  
All that we have is Thine alone, A trust, O Lord, from Thee. Amen.

**THE PRESENTATION OF THE  
EPISCOPAL SUPERVISOR**

**The Reverend Bruce W. Hunter**  
*Presiding Elder,*  
*South Birmingham-Huntsville-Bessemer District*

**GREETINGS FROM OUR  
EPISCOPAL SUPERVISOR**

**Supervisor Deana Young McAllister**

**THE PRESENTATION OF THE GENERAL OFFICER**

**Bishop Julius H. McAllister, Jr.**

**GREETINGS FROM OUR GENERAL OFFICER**

**Reverend Brian K. Blackwell**  
*Executive Director,*  
*Department of Retirement Services*

*The Sacrament of Holy Communion*

*Bishop Julius H. McAllister, Jr.*  
*Chief Celebrant*

**THE GENERAL CONFESSION**

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all people, we acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness which we from time to time most grievously have committed by thought, word and deed against Your Divine Majesty, provoking most justly your wrath and indignation against us. We do earnestly repent and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us. Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father, for your Son our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake; forgive us all that is past, and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please You in the newness of life, to the honor and glory of your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

## **THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION**

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who of Your tender mercy did give Your only Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer death on the cross for our redemption, who made thereby His oblation of Himself, once offered, a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; and did institute and in His holy gospel command us to continue a perpetual memory of that His precious death until His coming again; hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech You, and grant that we, receiving these Your creatures of bread and wine, according to Your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of His death and passion, may be partakers of His most blessed body and blood; Who in the same night that He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and gave it to His disciples saying, Take, eat, this is My body which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of Me. Likewise after supper He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them saying, Drink all of it, for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins; do this, as often as you shall drink it, in remembrance of me. Amen.

## **THE SHARING OF THE ELEMENTS**

### **THE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**The Reverend Damien Littlejohn**

### **THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

**The Reverend Vicki L. Mayberry**

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**

**The Reverend Nathan**



***The Reverend Dr. T. Eric Nathan***  
***Grant Chapel***  
***African Methodist Episcopal Church***  
***Birmingham, Alabama***

Reverend Dr. T. Eric Nathan is a native of Columbus, Georgia; however, the formative years of his childhood were spent under the watchful care of his grandmother in Phenix City, Ala. His Christian experience stems from an ecumenical structure that bridges the denominational traditions of the Catholic, Baptist, and Methodist churches into one. To be sure, as a youth, Dr. Nathan was baptized and became an active member of Gaines Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church (Phenix City, Ala). Licensed to preach in 1987, ordained an Itinerant Elder in 1991. In 1994, he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Art Education from Alabama A&M University. In 1998, he received the Master of Divinity degree in Christian Education. In 2018, he earned the Doctor of Ministry degree in Pastoral Professionalism & Spiritual Care (Summa Cum Laude) from Turner Theological Seminary at the Interdenominational Theological Center, located in Atlanta, Georgia. His doctoral project is entitled *Let's Talk: Using Art to Bridge the Intergenerational Communication Gap Between Elders and Youth of Grant Chapel AME Church in Birmingham, Alabama*.

Dr. Nathan has pastored six distinct congregations in East and North Alabama, respectively:

- 1991-1992 Livingston Chapel A.M.E.C. (Guntersville, Alabama)
- 1992-1995 Oak Grove A.M.E.C. (Newell, Alabama)
- 1995-1999 St. Paul A.M.E.C. (Lanett, Alabama)
- 1999-2003 Greater St. Paul A.M.E.C. (Florence, Alabama)
- 2003-2005 Payne Chapel A.M.E.C. (Birmingham, Alabama)

He is currently the pastor of Grant Chapel A.M.E. Church in Birmingham, Alabama, where he has served for the last 20 years.

For the last 22 years, he has served as Dean of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference Board of Examiners for Ministerial Education.

As his life theme and mantra, Dr. Nathan maintains: ***"I am the workmanship of God, and I am God's work in progress."***