

THE FOURTEENTH SESSION OF THE
NINTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Southwest Alabama Annual Conference

THE CLOSING WORSHIP SERVICE | FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2023 | 3:00 PM



THEME:

A Call for Prophetic Visions

MICAH 6:8

HOST CHURCH AND PASTOR
BETHEL AME CHURCH, MOBILE
THE REVEREND TREVOR E. WOOLRIDGE – PASTOR

THE REVEREND CHARLES A. LEWIS - HOST PRESIDING ELDER
MOBILE DISTRICT
THE REVEREND ANTONIO THOMAS - ASSOCIATE PRESIDING ELDER
CAMDEN DISTRICT

BISHOP HARRY L. SEAWRIGHT
PRESIDING PRELATE

REVEREND SHERITA MOON SEAWRIGHT
EPISCOPAL SUPERVISOR

Closing Worship Service
Preacher



Reverend Dr. Joseph N. Cousin, Sr.

The Closing Worship Service

Friday, October 20, 2023

3:00 p.m.

The Reverend Antonio Thomas, Worship Leader
Presiding Elder of the Camden District

THE PROCESSIONAL

Hymn #520

“Come, We That Love the Lord”

(We’re Marching to Zion)

Come, we that love the Lord, and let our joys be known,
Join in a song with sweet accord, join in a song with sweet accord,
And thus surround the throne, and thus surround the throne.

Refrain

*We’re marching to Zion, beautiful, beautiful Zion;
We’re marching upward to Zion, the beautiful city of God.*

Let those refuse to sing who never knew our God;
But children of the heavenly King, but children of the heavenly King,
May speak their joys abroad, may speak their joys abroad.

Refrain

The hill of Zion yields a thousand sacred sweets
Before we reach the heavenly fields, before we reach the heavenly fields,
Or walk the golden streets, or walk the golden streets.

Refrain

Then let our songs abound, and every tear be dry;
We’re marching through Immanuel’s ground,
We’re marching through Immanuel’s ground,
To fairer worlds on high, to fairer worlds on high.

Refrain

THE DOXOLOGY

Choir and Congregation

Hymn #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 Trevor E. Woolridge

Leader: Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;

People: Break forth into joyous song and sing praises.

Leader: Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre and the sound of melody.

People: With trumpets and the sound of the horn; make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord.

Leader: Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who live in it.

People: Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy.
At the presence of the Lord, for He is coming to judge the earth.

Leader: Here we are Lord! We have come into your house praising your faithfulness, giving thanks for your mercy, and seeking your soul-feeling joy.

People: Thank you for creating us and giving us life and breath today.
Thank you for your son Jesus Christ, our Savior, and for the Holy Spirit whose presence unites us as your people.

All: Let us sing praises unto the Lord who has never failed us yet!!

THE HYMN OF PRAISE

The Reverend W.W. Nixon

Hymn #394

"We Are Often Tossed and Driven" (We'll Understand It Better By and By)

We are often tossed and driven on the restless sea of time,
Somber skies and howling tempests oft succeed a bright sunshine,
In that land of perfect day, when the mists have rolled away,
We will understand it better by and by.

Refrain

*By and by, when the morning comes,
All the saints of God are gathered home,
We'll tell the story how we've overcome;
For we'll understand it better by and by.*

We are often destitute of the things that life demands,
Want of food and want of shelter, thirsty hills and barren lands,
We are trusting in the Lord, and according to His word,
We will understand it better by and by.

Refrain

Trials dark on every hand, and we cannot understand,
All the ways that God would lead us to that blessed Promised Land;
But He guides us with His eye, and we'll follow 'till we die,
For we'll understand it better by and by.

Refrain

Temptations, hidden snares, often take us unawares,
And our hearts are made to bleed
For a thoughtless word or deed,
And we wonder why the test when we try to do our best,
But we'll understand it better by and by.

Refrain

THE PREPARATION FOR PRAYER

**Conference Choir
and Congregation**

“I Pray for You”

I pray for you, you pray for me and watch God change things. (2x)

THE INVOCATION

The Reverend Gladys Figures

THE CHORAL RESPONSE

**Conference Choir
and Congregation**

“We Need to Hear from You”

We need to hear from You,
We need a word from You,
If we don't hear from You,
What will we do?
Wanting you more each day,
Show us your perfect way,
There is no other way we can live.

THE SCRIPTURE READING

The Reverend Mia Cole

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 Willie Burns

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 PRESENTATION OF THE BISHOP

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

THE PRESENTATION OF THE PREACHER

Bishop Harry L. Seawright
*Presiding Prelate of the
9th Episcopal District*

THE SERMONIC HYMN

The Reverend Ivory James

“Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus”

Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus, just to take him at His word;
Just to rest upon His promise, just to know, “Thus, saith the Lord.”

Refrain

*Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him! How I’ve proved Him o’er and o’er!
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus! O for grace to trust Him more!*

O how sweet to trust in Jesus, just to trust His cleansing blood;
Just in simple faith to plunge me, neath the healing, cleansing flood!

Refrain

Yes, ‘tis sweet to trust in Jesus, just from sin and self to cease;
Just from Jesus simply taking life and rest, and joy and peace.

Refrain

I’m so glad I learned to trust Thee, precious Jesus, Savior, friend;
And I know that Thou art with me, will be with me to the end.

Refrain

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

Reverend Dr. Joseph N. Cousin, Sr.
*Pastor, Allen Temple
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Woodstock, Georgia*

**THE INVITATION TO
CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP**

The Reverend Cleitis Walker

Hymn #413

“Yield Not to Temptation”

(1st and 2nd Stanza)

Yield not to temptation, For yielding is sin;
Each victory will help you some other to win;
Fight manfully onward, Dark passions subdue;
Look ever to Jesus, He’ll carry you through.

*Ask the Savior to help you, Comfort, strengthen and keep you;
He is willing to aid you, He will carry you through.*

Shun evil companions, Bad language disdain;
God's name hold in reverence, Nor take it in vain;
Be thoughtful and earnest, Kindhearted and true;
Look ever to Jesus, He will carry you through.
Refrain

THE WORSHIP THROUGH GIVING

**THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
OF VISITORS AND EXPRESSIONS
OF APPRECIATION**

Bishop Harry L. Seawright

THE RESOLUTIONS

THE STATISTICIAN'S REPORT

THE DISCIPLINARY QUESTIONS

MOTION TO ADJOURN



The Commissioning Service

Friday, October 20, 2023

THE HYMN

The Reverend James Allen

Hymn #242

"A Charge to Keep I Have"

A charge to keep I have, a God to glorify,
A never dying soul to save and fit it for the sky.

To serve the present age, my calling to fulfill;
O may it all my powers engage to do my Master's will!

Arm me with jealous care, as in Thy sight to live,
And O, Thy servant, Lord, prepare, a strict account to give!

Help me to watch and pray, and on Thyself rely
Assured, if I my trust betray, I shall forever die. Amen.

THE PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES

THE PRAYER

The Reverend Albert Robinson

THE SCRIPTURE (II Timothy 4:1-5)

The Reverend Dr. Melvin Hitchens

THE DISPATCHING HYMN

The Reverend Carl Greene

Hymn #220

"Go, Preach My Gospel"

"Go, preach My gospel," saith the Lord.
"Bid the whole earth My grace receive.
Explain to them My sacred word;
Bid them believe, obey, and live.

"I'll make My great commission known, and ye shall prove
My gospel true by all the works that I have done
And all the wonders ye shall do.

“Go, heal the sick; go, raise the dead;
Go, cast out devils in My name;
Nor let My prophets be afraid,
Though Greeks reproach and Jews blaspheme.

“While thus ye follow My commands I’m with you till
The world shall end; all power is trusted in My hands;
I can destroy and can defend.”

He spake, and light shone round His head,
On a bright cloud to heaven He rode.
They to the farthest nation spread
The grace of their ascended God.

THE READING OF APPOINTMENTS

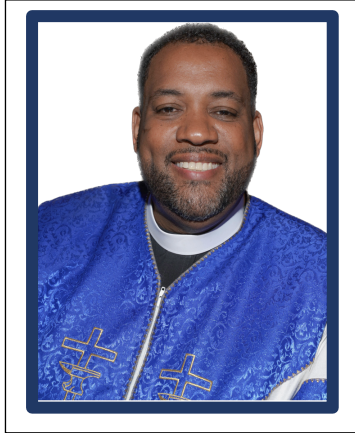
Hymn #45

“God Be with You Till We Meet Again”

God be with you till we meet again; By His counsels’ guide, uphold you;
With His sheep securely fold you: God be with you till we meet again.
Till we meet, till we meet, till we meet at Jesus’ feet;
Till we meet, till we meet; God be with you till we meet again. Amen.

THE BENEDICTION

*Reverend Dr. Joseph N. Cousin, Sr.
Pastor, Allen Temple
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Woodstock, Georgia*



Reverend Dr. Joseph Nathaniel Cousin, Sr. (D.Min.) was born on June 21, 1973, the fifth son of Bishop Philip and Mrs. Margaret Joan Cousin. Reverend Cousin has four brothers, Philip Jr., Steven, David, and Michael all of which are Reverends in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Reverend Cousin is married to the former Carisalyn Nicole Williams and they are the proud parents of one beautiful daughter Miriam Joy and one son Joseph Nathaniel, Jr.

Reverend Cousin is a graduate of Hampton University, 1995, with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science; 1998 Boston University School of Theology with a Master of Divinity Degree; and 2004 Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary with a Doctorate in Marriage and Family Therapy. Further study was done at Oxford University, in Oxford England in conjunction with the Oxford Round Table, as well as representing emerging African American leaders in Israel through an endeavor sponsored by Project Interchange and the American Jewish Committee. Reverend Cousin has served on the General Board of the AME Church, as Vice-Chair of the Credentials Committee of the General Conference for both the 2012 and 2016 sessions, as Chair of the Credentials Committee in the 2021 General Conference, as a member of the General Conference Commission, the Dean and Chair of the Board of Examiners of the Michigan Annual Conference, and Treasurer of the Atlanta North Georgia Annual Conference.

Reverend Cousin began his pastoral ministry in 1997 at Bethel A.M.E. Church, in Schenectady, New York. He has served Mount Zion A.M.E. Church, in Norristown, Pennsylvania, and Morris Brown A.M.E. Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In November 2004, he was appointed to Bethel A.M.E. Church in Ann Arbor, Michigan. During his tenure, Bethel experienced significant growth both spiritually and numerically. From a complete renovation of the sanctuary-including new pews, pulpit, carpet, and other aesthetic improvements to audio-visual improvements including the purchase of screens, projectors, and high-definition cameras, the church was prepared for the challenges of live streaming worship and online giving. An administration building was purchased that allowed the establishment of a nursery and church bookstore. New ministries established included the University of Michigan Campus Outreach, Health and Wellness, Children's Church, and "Bridge the Gap" (a ministry connecting young families with senior citizens who lived alone).

In June of 2017, Reverend Cousin was appointed to lead the Allen Temple A.M.E. Church in Woodstock, Georgia. Since his arrival, the church has taken on the task of liquidating its mortgage and has renovated the sanctuary. Reverend Cousin believes that God has infinite blessings in store for His Church. Reverend Cousin finds joy in preaching, teaching, and providing multi-faceted ministries for God's people. Through Reverend Cousin's belief of a growing church being a serving church, God continues to bless his ministry.

The Memorial Service - 2023

The Hymn of Praise

Hymn #328 “Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me”

Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood, From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure, Save from wrath and make me pure.

While I draw this fleeting breath, When my eyes shall close in death,
When I rise to worlds unknown, And behold Thee on Thy throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee.

The Prayer

The Scripture

1 Corinthians 15:50-58 (NIV)

I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”^[a]
“Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?”

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God!
He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

The Roll Call of the Names of the Deceased

The Moments of Remembrance (2 minutes)

The Bishop’s Response

The Closing Hymn

Hymn #245 “God Be With You Till We Meet Again”

God be with you till we meet again; loving counsels guide, uphold you,
May the Shepherd’s care enfold you; God be with you till we meet again.

Refrain

*Till we meet, till we meet at Jesus’ feet.
Till we meet, till we meet, God be with you till we meet again.*

The Closing Prayer

THE ORDER FOR THE RETIREMENT OF PREACHERS

THE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In the name of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, let us enter into this service of retirement of preachers from active work in the ministry of the church. Let us pray.

THE INVOCATION

Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings, with your most gracious favor, and further us with your continual help, that in all our works, begun, continued and ended in you, we may glorify your Holy Name, and finally by your mercy obtain everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

THE PRESENTATION OF THE PREACHER(S)

The secretary of the Annual Conference will present the preacher(s) who is/are retiring.

Bishop ____, the (Name of Conference) Annual Conference desires formally to recognize at this session the completion of the active service of (number of) minister(s). As secretary of the Annual Conference, I present to you this/these faithful minister(s) for this service of recognition, in appreciation of their untiring labors in the Christian ministry.

*The secretary will then call the name of the person(s) retiring.
They will stand before the Bishop.*

THE RESPONSE

Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves. Psalm 126:6

THE STATEMENT OF ACHIEVEMENT

The presiding elder, or someone appointed by the bishop shall present a brief statement of the ministerial activities of each preacher to be retired.

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. Hebrews 11 : 1, 2

THE MESSAGE OF TRIBUTE

People, the record of your active ministry is written. It is written in the record of God. Your Church is deeply grateful for your ministry and for the care which you have exercised in faithfully fulfilling your vows of ordination. May the precious memories of your years of sacrificial service and fruitful labor be blessed and hallowed.

And now, as you yield your official responsibilities in the active ministry of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, be assured that the years that are yet to be, may be filled with good works and become the crown of all your ministry, bringing glory and honor to you and to the church. The congregation of which you will be a member will look to you for spiritual guidance and godly example. Your colleagues in the ministry will continue to seek and respect your counsel. They will annually listen for your answer to the "Roll Call" of the Annual Conference.

