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Bicentennial Of The A.M.E. Tradition

Denomination
celebrates 200 years
of affirmation and
spirituality

By Douglas C. Lyons

TWO hundred years ago in Philadelphia, Pa.—the same year delegates from the original 13 colonies signed the Constitution—a small band of Black Christians walked out of St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church in a protest that led to the founding of an enduring religious denomination—the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

On that November Sunday, the church began seating Blacks in the rear of the balcony, a form of segregation

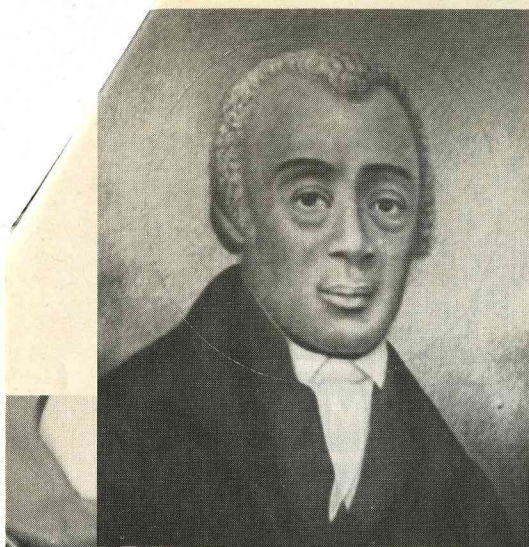


that troubled Richard Allen and other Black members of St. George's. While Allen and others were being led to their new seats, the minister called for prayer and the Black worshippers fell to their knees in an area reserved for Whites. The ushers tried to pull the group from the floor. When the prayer was completed, Allen and others walked out of the church in protest, and Allen later added a revealing amen, "and they were no more plagued by us in the church."

Today, the AME church is the nation's oldest Black religious denomination, boasting a membership of 1.8 million persons in the United States and another 1.7 million members worldwide. The church has a rich history of civil and social rights activities, ranging from the 1856 founding of Wilberforce University to last year's success-

AME leaders, unveiling a historic marker at Wilberforce University, include (l. to r.) Bishops Vernon Byrd and Rembert Stokes, Dr. Yvonne Taylor, Bishops Vinton Anderson, John Adams, Phillip Cousin and Frank Reid Jr., and Dr. Henderson Davis.





A former slave, Richard Allen (inset) founded Philadelphia's Mother Bethel AME Church in 1794. In Bicentennial salute, AME members proudly parade past the venerable Philadelphia church.



A.M.E. Bicentennial *Continued*
ful election of U.S. Rep. Floyd Flake (D.-N.Y.), an AME minister.

But as its members celebrate the church's bicentennial, AME officials are preparing for the mounting challenge the denomination, and the Black community in general, will face during the church's next century. "What do we need to carry into our third century?" asks Bishop Vinton R. Anderson, the church's bicentennial chairman. "It's more than simply rattling dead men's bones by talking about Richard Allen and our forefathers. It's a heritage that we pass on to our children because it is a reminder of our struggle."

Allen, whose name would become synonymous with the AME church, was born into slavery in 1760. By his 20th birthday, he had purchased his freedom and embarked on his ministry. Following the walkout from St. George's church, Allen and his group purchased an abandoned blacksmith shop, and in 1794, a Methodist bishop dedicated the new building as the Bethel Church. It would take another 22 years before Allen's church would win its independence from the Methodist denomination. On April 10, 1816, Allen was named bishop of the new church. "A lot of people say, 'You didn't have a church in 1787,'" says Dr. Henderson Davis, the AME's historiographer. "But, we had the kind of thing that makes up spiritual initiative. That's the thing we want to really celebrate."

Celebration of the AME Bicentennial began last February in Philadelphia with the church's "Founder's Day" ceremonies honoring Allen and his first AME church, now called Mother Bethel. Recently, the church has held other activities worldwide, including educational seminars at Wilberforce University, a national political forum in Washington, D.C., and "The Dover-Philadelphia-Baltimore Trek," retracing Allen's journey from slavery to freedom. Activities will continue through June when the church will hold its General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas.

Still, with such social problems as drug abuse, illiteracy, inadequate housing and unemployment abounding, AME leaders say there is a lot of work to do in carrying out Allen's edict. Church officials say they will outline new program initiatives during the June conference.

According to church officials, new initiatives under discussion include offering more church college preparatory courses for Black students and

George's Church, the nation's oldest Methodist church edifice, was the site of the historic protest, which 200 years ago led to the founding of the AME church.



A.M.E. Bicentennial *Continued*

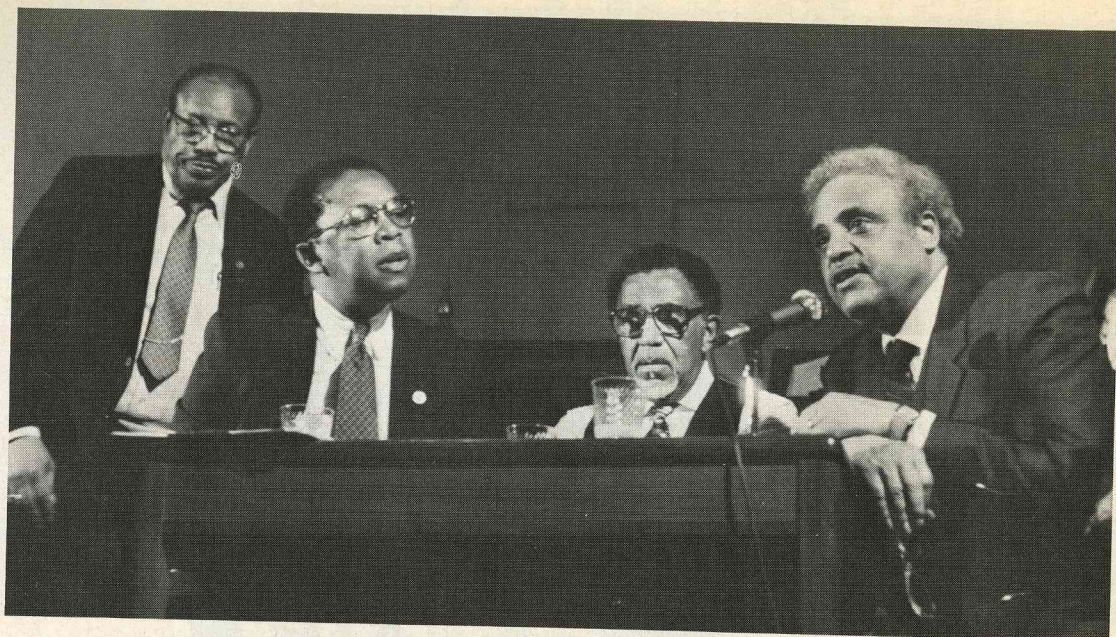
increasing programs designed to aid disadvantaged Blacks. "This has been part of our historic mission," says Bishop Rembert E. Stokes, president of the Council of Bishops. "But, it needs to be redefined and the programs accelerated." AME officials also hope the church's third century will see internal changes that will make the denomination's administration and its local churches more effective. Some church officials also hope to see the election of a Black woman as bishop in the near future. "I do think we'll see a Black woman bishop, and I don't think it will be too long into our third century," Stokes said.

AME officials have scheduled a

Members of the church's Young People's Division march in this summer's "Dover-Philadelphia-Baltimore Trek," an event which attracted more than 2,000 members. At right, Joseph Robinson, a member of the Young People's Division, reenacts stirring rendition of Allen's work as a minister.



Treasurer, Dr. Joseph McKinney (l.), joins veteran civil rights leaders (l. to r.) John E. Jacob, president of the National Urban League; the Rev. Joseph Lowery, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Rev. Benjamin L. Hooks, executive director of the NAACP, during an AME political forum in Washington, D.C.



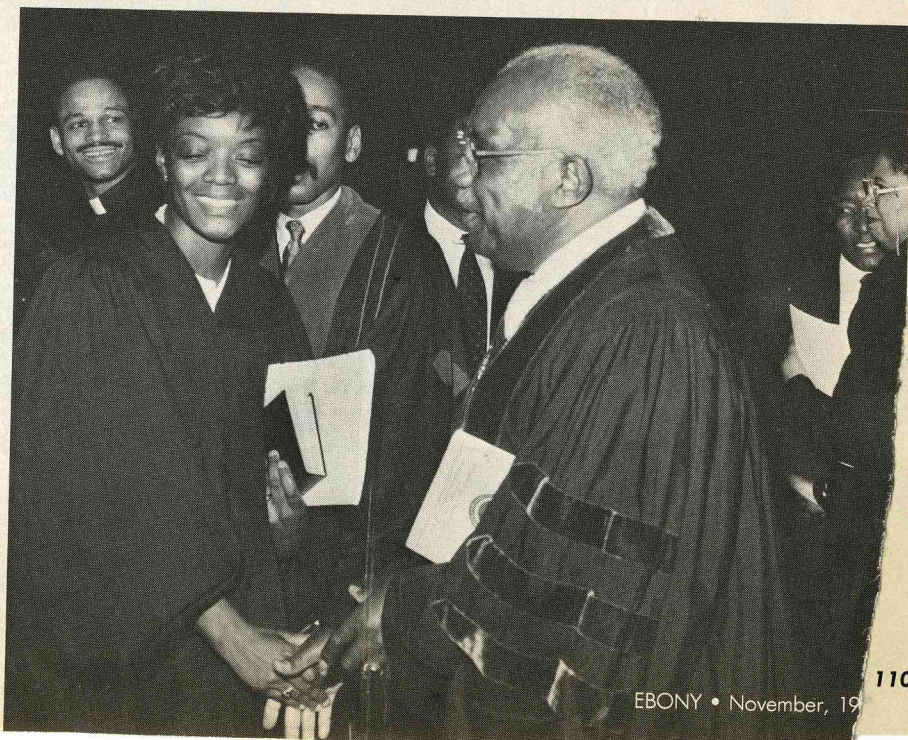
Edith Ming (left) World President of the Women's Missionary Conference presents the Sara Allen Award to (l. to r.) Coretta Scott King, Daisy Bates and Rosa Parks for achievements in civil rights.

Below, AME Bishop Richard Allen Hildebrand greets Helen Marie-Burton, a newly ordained deacon. Bishop Rembert Stokes hopes the church will soon name a woman bishop.

A.M.E. Bicentennial *Continued*

planning session this December in Savannah, Ga., to discuss and identify new church strategies to deal with lingering social problems, Anderson says. "I do think there are a lot of people in the church who are ready for change," he says. "I think a lot of people are really serious about how the church will survive."

With a 200-year track record of civil and social rights, AME church leaders hope the bicentennial celebrations will serve as a springboard to a more productive future. "I hope that we are at a point of a true renaissance of the church," Anderson says. "It's a good time for us. I think if we don't use this milestone in our history to grab onto this new opportunity, then we will be making a terrible mistake."





St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church is a member of a large number of A. M.E. churches world-wide that are a part of the Connectional Church.

OUR MOTTO

"God our Father, Christ our Redeemer, The Holy Spirit our Comforter, Humankind our Family" expresses our desire to be inclusive of all God's children.

The A.M.E. Church was founded by ex-slave, Richard Allen, and has grown over the past 216 years to a membership in excess of 3 million. There are twenty Episcopal Districts in North and South America, England, India, and Africa. The State of Alabama is the Ninth Episcopal District. The Presiding Bishop is the Right Reverend James Levert Davis, and the Presiding Elder is Reverend Oliver Allen, Jr.

St. John A.M.E. Church was organized in 1885, among its founders was ex-slave, Dr. William Hooper Councill, the founder of Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University. For over 127 years, St. John has served as a center of worship, spiritual development, social justice and change. The many civic and cultural events include those held by NAACP, SCLC, the City Council, and the Alabama Democratic Conference. Meetings include voter registrations, City Council prayer breakfasts, and the Greater Huntsville Interdenominational Ministerial Fellowship.

We invite you to come and witness the dynamic ministry manifested by God through our Pastor, the Reverend Dr. Patrick Clayborn. His pastoral ministry emphasizes: Spirituality, Evangelism, Stewardship, Scholarship, and Service.

CHURCH MINISTRIES

There is something for everyone.

Missionary Outreach, Soup Kitchen, Prison Ministry, Fifty-Plus-Ministry for seniors, Women's Ministry, Prayer and Praise Team, Marketing Ministry, Computer Skills Ministry, AMEN Newsletter, Single Adult Ministry, Music Ministry, Koinonia Ministry, Children's Bible Class, Bible Study, Love Feast Fellowship, Tape/Media Ministry, Vacation Bible School for the Family, Lay Organization, Sons of Allen, Comprehensive Christian Education program, including Scholarship opportunities for church members, and Church fellowship opportunities.

St. John
AME Church
welcomes



*Rev. Dr. Patrick & Rev. Sheri
Clayborn*

St. John AME Church
229 Church Street,
Huntsville, AL 35801



South Birmingham-Huntsville
Bessemer District
Rev. Oliver Allen, Jr.
Presiding Elder



9th Episcopal District
Rt. Rev. James L. Davis
Servant Bishop

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Titus 1:8-9

A New Season: Entering New Territory

ST. JOHN A.M.E. CHURCH WELCOMES REV. DR. PATRICK & REV. SHERI CLAYBORN

Titus 1:8-9

Hospitable

Loves What is Good

Self-Controlled

Upright

Holy

Disciplined

Reverend Clayborn was born and raised in Memphis, TN, by loving parents – John and Lois Clayborn. After completing his primary and secondary education in the Memphis City Public Schools, he attended Morehouse College and the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, GA, where he earned undergraduate degrees in Mathematics and Electrical Engineering, respectively.

Once Rev. Clayborn completed his undergraduate work, he answered the call of God on his life and enrolled in seminary. While there, he met and married his wife Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn. He earned the Master of Divinity and Master of Theology from Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, GA. Rev. Clayborn also served as an adjunct instructor in the Philosophy and Religion Department of Spelman College.

Alongside educational pursuits in seminary, Rev. Clayborn pursued ordination in the A.M.E. Church and served on the ministerial staff of Big Bethel AME Church in Atlanta, GA. He is an ordained itinerant elder. Shortly after ordination, Rev. Clayborn went to Drew University in Madison, NJ, and earned the Master of Philosophy and the Ph.D. in Liturgical Studies with a focus on Homiletics. He also served as an adjunct Homiletics instructor at New Brunswick Theological Seminary in New Brunswick, NJ, and served as a Religion Instructor at St. James Preparatory School in Newark. In addition, Rev. Clayborn was on the ministerial staff of St. James AME Church there. While living in New Jersey, he and Rev. Sheri had a son, who is still keeping them on their toes -- Patrick Clayborn, II. Rev. Clayborn recently taught at Methodist Theological School in Ohio as an Assistant Professor of Homiletics, and was a pulpit associate at St. Paul AME Church in Columbus, OH. He was Assistant Professor of Homiletics at The Theological School of Drew University in Madison, NJ from January 2011 to December 2011 and during that time he also served at St. James AME Church in Newark, NJ, as a pulpit associate.

REVEREND SHERI

The Reverend Sheri Smith Clayborn earned a bachelor's degree in religion from Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia and a Master of Divinity degree, with an emphasis in black church studies, from Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta.

FAITH - FAMILY - FELLOWSHIP

Reverend Clayborn was appointed Pastor of St. John AME Church, Huntsville, Alabama, on December 4, 2011. Reverends Patrick and Sheri find joy in each other, their son Patrick II, loving their family, serving in church, empowering their community, and being children of God.



Theme: Fitting the Description of a Great Spiritual Leader

Titus 1:8-9

Original



ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Historical Marker & Plaque Application

PROPERTY NAME

St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

ADDRESS

229 Church Street, Huntsville, AL 35801

COUNTY

Madison

CONTACT PERSON NAME

St. John AME Church P.O.C. Barbara Johnson

TELEPHONE

256-534-3265

EMAIL

office@stjohnhuntsville.com

FAX

MAILING ADDRESS

229 Church Street
Huntsville, AL

CITY AND STATE

Huntsville, AL

ZIP

35801

HISTORIC REGISTER INFORMATION

Indicate which historic register the cemetery is listed on.

NOTE: A cemetery must be listed individually or as a contributing resource in a historic district to purchase a historical marker or plaque with the state cemetery seal. Cemetery Historical Markers are available that feature the state cemetery seal.

☒ Alabama Register of Landmarks & Heritage

Date of Listing: June 27, 2019

☐ National Register of Historic Places

Date of Listing:

☐ Alabama Historic Cemetery Register

Date of Listing:

Size of Marker Requested (Height by Width):

24" x 30"

30" x 42"

Plaque (16.5" x 16")

☐ \$1670 (same text on both sides)

☒ \$2350 (same text on both sides)

☐ \$490

☐ \$1880 (different text on both sides)

☐ \$2690 (different text on both sides)

Size of Post Requested: ☒ 7' or ☐ 10' (add \$25)

Proposed Marker Narrative: (use additional sheets if necessary)

Please refer to attachment A

Location of Marker: (Provide a written description of where the marker will be erected and include a sketch map showing roads, sidewalks, and other identifiable landmarks on the site. Use additional sheets if necessary).

**Alabama Historical Commission
Historical Marker & Plaque Application**

Page 2

BILLING INFORMATION

A sponsoring individual or organization is required to pay Sewah Studios upon invoice. Do not send money to the AHC.

NAME <u>St. John AME Church</u>	TELEPHONE <u>256-534-3265</u>
EMAIL <u>office @ stjohnehuntsville . com</u>	FAX
MAILING ADDRESS <u>229 Church Street</u>	

CITY AND STATE <u>Huntsville, Alabama</u>	ZIP <u>35801</u>
--	---------------------

SHIPPING

For historical markers, prepaid delivery service is curbside delivery to a commercial delivery address. Add \$75 for shipping to a residential address. Plaques can be delivered to a residential or commercial delivery address by UPS (no extra charge for residential address). Contact Sewah Studios at (888)557-3924 for specific shipping questions.

SHIP TO THE ATTENTION OF <u>Reverend Maurice Wright, II</u>	TELEPHONE <u>256-534-3265</u>
--	----------------------------------

COMPANY NAME <u>St. John AME Church</u>
--

STREET ADDRESS (NO P.O. BOXES) <u>229 Church Street</u>
--

CITY AND STATE <u>Huntsville, AL</u>	ZIP <u>35801</u>
---	---------------------

EMAIL <u>office @ stjohnehuntsville . com</u>	FAX
--	-----

APPROVAL OF PROPERTY OWNER(S)

It is the responsibility of the applicant requesting the marker or plaque to secure approval of the property owner, whether it is privately or publicly (city, county, state or federal governments or right-of-way) owned. Property owner or designated official's signature(s) must appear below.

We request that the Alabama Historical Commission approve this Historical Marker and/or Plaque.

St. John AME Church
Sponsoring Organization

Ra Maurice Wright II
Signature of Official of Sponsoring Organization

11-18-19
Date

Maurice Wright II
Property Owner or Authorized Officer (Please print)

Ra Maurice Wright II
Signature of Property Owner or Authorized Officer

11-18-19
Date

Return this Form and Any Attachments to:
Alabama Historical Commission
Attn: Hannah Garmon
468 S. Perry Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900



ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The State Historic Preservation Office

468 S. Perry Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900
Voice: (334)242-3184
Fax: (334)262-1083
www.ahc.alabama.gov

Historical Marker & Plaque Program

PURPOSE

The Alabama Historical Commission (AHC) historical marker program began in 1975 to assist Alabama historians and historic preservationists in educating the public about historically significant properties in the state.

HISTORICAL MARKERS

Sewah Studios in Marietta, Ohio manufactures all AHC markers and plaques in the "Georgia" Pattern. Historical markers are available in two sizes, small (24"h x 30"w) or large (30"h x 42"w) and come standard with a 7' post (a 10' post is available for an extra charge of \$25). The Alabama Historical Commission seal is used as the emblem in the crest. The person ordering the marker is responsible for sending payment directly to Sewah Studios upon invoice. The AHC Historical Marker Coordinator must authorize Sewah Studios to manufacture each marker. The current price for a marker ranges from \$1500 to \$2690 depending on the size of the marker and the amount of text. The price includes delivery.

PLAQUES

A mountable plaque is also available for purchase. The plaque measures 16"h x 16.5"w and also features the Alabama Historical Commission seal as the emblem in the crest. The cost is \$490, which includes mounting hardware and delivery.

FUNDING

No state funds are available for markers or plaques. Individuals and organizations must have available funds to purchase it before the AHC submits the order. The cost of the marker is paid directly to the marker company upon invoice.

ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES

To receive an AHC marker, the property must be listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places or the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage; as a contributing resource in a listed National Register or Alabama Register Historic District. A cemetery historical marker is available for cemeteries.

RESTRICTIONS ON MARKER TEXT

The purpose of the Alabama Historical Commission marker program is to educate the public about the significance of a historic property. Therefore, information about the property and/or information from the Alabama Register, National Register, or the Historic Cemetery Register file must be included on the marker. The names of living persons of less than national significance will not be considered for inclusion in marker narratives. The names of the people or the organization erecting the marker is allowed on the sponsor line at the bottom of the marker/plaque.

PROCEDURES FOR SECURING A MARKER or PLAQUE

1. An application must be completed and submitted to the AHC Historical Marker Coordinator. An acceptable reference must be given for all statements to be included on a marker. Photocopies of unpublished sources should be submitted. Faxed or emailed copies of the marker text will be accepted. However, the text will not be sent to the marker company until hard copies of the marker application with original signatures are on file in the AHC office.

2. The AHC Marker Coordinator will edit the narrative and submit a copy to the person or organization for approval. Suggested changes must be returned to the AHC Historical Marker Coordinator. The AHC staff has final approval of all narratives submitted.
3. Once the marker text is finalized by the AHC and verified by the applicant, the AHC sends an authorization letter to Sewah Studios who then manufactures the marker. Sewah Studios begins to process the order as soon as it is received.
4. The marker is shipped by a freight carrier to commercial addresses only. No residential addresses or post office boxes. Plaques are delivered by UPS to a home address.
5. Please allow at least 6-12 weeks from the date the marker company receives the text before planning a public event to unveil the marker.

ERECTION

The erection of markers is the responsibility of the individual or organization ordering the marker.

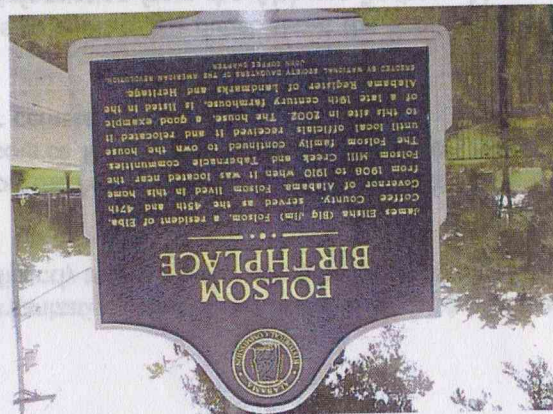
DEDICATION

The dedication of the marker is left entirely to the group who ordered the marker.

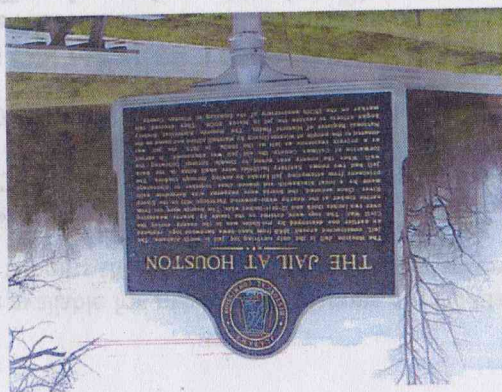
MAINTENANCE

All future maintenance of historical markers is the sole responsibility of the applicant.

Examples of AHC Markers & Plaques



Historical Marker (Small 24" h x 30" w)



Historical Marker (Large 30" h x 42" w)



Historical Plaque (16" h x 16.5" w)

Historical Markers Pricing Guide (effective May 1, 2018)

(Sewah Studios, Inc. determines the price, not the Alabama Historical Commission)

All Prices includes gold leaf lettering, shipping and a 7' post. Add \$25 for a 10' post.

Marker Size	Amount
24" x 30" (same text on both sides)	\$1670
24" x 30" (different text on each side)	\$1880
30" x 42" (same text on both sides)	\$2350
30" x 42" (different text on each side)	\$2690

Lettering Guide

30" x 42"	20 lines per side 62 letters/spaces per line
24" x 30"	16 lines per side 43 letters/spaces per line

AHC PLAQUES

A wall-mounted plaque is available for \$490 (includes mounting hardware & delivery).

Plaque text will follow a similar format as below:

The John Doe House c. 1858 has been placed in the Alabama Register of Landmarks & Heritage by the Alabama Historical Commission June 16, 2014 Sponsored by Dr. John and Mary Doe	The John Doe House c. 1858 was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on June 16, 2014 Sponsored by Dr. John and Mary Doe
--	---

Other Services Available from Sewah Studios, Inc.

Refurbishment Costs

Refurbish only (minor repair and paint refinish to like new condition; round trip prepaid freight included): \$800

Cap Replace & Refurbish: \$900

Replacement Post: \$350 for 10' post / \$325 for 7' post

Contact Sewah Studios for more information at (888) 557-3924

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions concerning the Alabama Historical Commission Historical Marker Program, please contact:

Hannah Garmon
Historical Marker Corridnator
468 S. Perry Street
Montgomery, AL 36130-0900
Phone: 334.230.2644
Fax: 334.262.1083
Hannah.Garmon@ahc.alabama.gov



ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Historical Marker & Plaque Application

PROPERTY NAME

ADDRESS

COUNTY

CONTACT PERSON NAME

TELEPHONE

EMAIL

FAX

MAILING ADDRESS

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Location of Marker: (Provide a written description of where the marker will be erected and include a sketch map showing roads, sidewalks, and other identifiable landmarks on the site. Use additional sheets if necessary).

St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church, Huntsville, was organized by Dr. William Hooper Council and others in 1885. Dr. Council was an ordained elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and also the founder and first president of Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University. St. John is currently in the South Birmingham-Huntsville-Bessemer District of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference of the Ninth Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The first church services were held in a barber shop on the corner of Miller and West Holmes Streets.

The first church building was erected at 218 Church Street in 1900. In April of 1971 the church moved into a newly erected facility at 229 Church Street. This church was built under the leadership of the late, Reverend Samuel Shelby Hereford who passed on April 9, 1971, never having preached in the new facility. The Reverend Hereford was succeeded by The Reverend Dr. Homer Littlefield McCall. Dr. McCall served for forty years, from 1971 to 2011, making him the longest serving pastor of St. John AME Church when he retired.

On June 27, 2019, St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church was listed in the Alabama Register of Landmarks & Heritage by the Alabama Historical Commission.

Dedicated March 2020 on the occasion of the church's 135th anniversary.

Words...221

Characters & spaces...1,387

Lines.....27

Marker Script Evidence Sources

- Grady, Z. L. 2000. *The History of the African Methodist Church in Alabama*. Birmingham, Alabama: Banner Press.
- A Rich History of St. John AME Church
- The Weekly News, newspaper article, June 16, 1971
- Obituary for the Reverend Samuel Shelby Hereford
- Page from the St. John Heritage Series for The Reverend Dr. Homer Littlefield McCall
- 2018 and 2019 Church Anniversary Worship Program covers

	Statement	Evidence
#1	St. John A.M.E., Huntsville was organized by Dr. William Hooper Council and others in 1885.	The History of the AME Church in Alabama Pg. 54
#2	Dr. Council was an ordained elder in the A.M.E. Church and also the founder and first president of Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University.	The History of the AME Church in Alabama Pg. 54
#3	St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church is currently in the South Birmingham-Huntsville-Bessemer District of the Northwest Alabama Annual Conference of the Ninth Episcopal District of the African Methodist Church.	A Rich History Inside page of the 133 rd Church Anniversary Program St. John AME Church First paragraph
#4	The first church services were held in a barber shop on the corner of Miller and West Holmes Streets.	The History of the AME Church in Alabama Pg. 54
#5	The first church building was erected at 218 Church Street in 1900.	The History of the AME Church in Alabama Pg. 54
#6	In April of 1971 the church moved into a newly erected facility at 229 Church Street.	The History of the AME Church in Alabama Pg. 55
#7	This church was built under the leadership of the late, Reverend Samuel Shelby Hereford. Reverend Hereford who passed on April 9, 1971, never having preached in the new facility.	The Weekly News, June 16, 1971 Greater St. John's Door Open Father's Day Obituary of The Reverend Samuel Shelby Hereford

#8	The Reverend Hereford was succeeded by The Reverend Dr. Homer Littlefield McCall. Dr. McCall served for forty years, from 1971 to 2011, making him the longest serving pastor of St. John AME Church when he retired.	The History of the AME Church in Alabama Pg. 55 The St. John Heritage Series Page Biography of The Reverend Dr. Homer L. McCall's
#9	On June 27, 2019, St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church was listed in the Alabama Register of Landmarks & Heritage by the Alabama Historical Commission.	AHC Certificate
#10	Dedicated March 2020 on the occasion of the church's 135th anniversary.	March 2018 and March 2019 Church Anniversary Programs

THE HISTORY of

The African Methodist

Episcopal Church

in Alabama



**The History
Of the
African Methodist Episcopal Church
In Alabama
1868 - 1999**

229
Hui

Copyright © 2000

Compiled and edited by

Ninth Episcopal District
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Historical Committee

Banner Press
112 Walter Davis Drive
Suite 102
Birmingham, Alabama 35209

ISBN # 0-87121-000-2

The History
of the
African Methodist Episcopal Church
1868-1999

*Bishop Zedekiah LaZett Grady, Presiding Prelate
Ninth Episcopal District*

HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

Mrs. Donnell B. Anderson, Chairman

Mrs. Gussie B. Boyd	Rev. Homer McCall
Ms. Carolyn Cummings	Mrs. Barbara Mitchell
Rev. A. T. Days	Mrs. Dorothy Moten
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Rev. James Jackson	Rev. Johnny Rutledge
Mrs. Thomasine S. Jackson	Rev. David Sylvester
Ms. Bernella Knight	Rev. Dennis Terry

Editing Committee

Mrs. Mary B. Blankenship
Dr. Susie W. Crenshaw
Ms. Bettye J. Foreman
Mrs. Doris R. Hardy
Rev. Robert J. Rumley

*The Printing Press
Birmingham, Alabama*

the church was totally destroyed by fire. Worship services were held in the Rosedale High School and the church parsonage.

Under the pastorate of the Rev. Frederick Divers in 1950 the church basement's floor was restored from its damage resulting from the falling of the church bell during the fire. This enabled the congregation to enter and worship together on the church premises again. The Presiding Elder was Rev P. T. Matherson and the Rev. S. L. Greene the Bishop. The trustees at this time were T. Drake, L. H. Stinson, L. A. Vann, H. Rowe, S. Cooley, C. Law, W. Readous and P. D. Williams.

In 1957 under the pastorate of Rev. L. V. Sheffield, we were able to occupy the upstairs portion of the church on Easter Sunday. Easter Sunrise Services commemorate this event unto this day. Rev. Sheffield was instrumental in helping to get the church rebuilt. The trustees at this time were: W. Readous, chairman, S. A. White, T. Johnson, E. L. Labon, H. Rowe, T. Drake, T. Peasant, C. Law, P. D. Williams, R. Facen, and E. Hicks. The stewards were: I. Jackson, chairman, F. Pickett, secretary, J. Treadwell, B. White, J. B. White, Ike Floyd, W. Hicks, L. Howze, P. Paulk, F. Ellis, P. McGraw, Will Brown, and C. Powell. The Presiding Elder at that time was Rev. J. S. Thompkins and the Bishop was the Rt. Rev. C. A. Gibb.

Other pastors who have served are among the following: The Rev. A. L. Lamar, Rev. J. F. Holmes, Rev. J. C. Faulks, Rev. Pouncy, Rev. E. Mixon, Rev. C.H. Lott, Rev. R. Grier, Rev. P. W. Jones, Rev. J. W. Nashville, Rev. Bruce W. Hunter, Rev. Horace J. Fitchard, and Rev. Reginald Servant.

Saint John African Methodist Episcopal Church

229 Church Street, Huntsville, AL

- ① → Dr. William Hooper Council and others organized St. John Huntsville in 1885. The first church services were held in a
- ④ — barbershop on the corner of Miller and West Holmes Streets. Dr.
- ⑤ → Council was ordained an Elder in the AME Church. In addition to organizing St. John and serving as the first Pastor, Dr. Council ↔ was the founder and one of the most distinguished Presidents of Alabama A&M University. In 1900, the first church building was
- #5 → erected on Church Street. Ministers serving St. John besides Dr.



A Rich History

ST. JOHN AME CHURCH



 **Saint John African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church** is in the South Birmingham-Huntsville-Bessemer District of the Northwest Alabama Conference of the Ninth Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The Ninth Episcopal District consists of the State of Alabama and the Presiding Bishop is the Right Reverend Harry L. Seawright with Reverend Albert Hyche serving as our Presiding Elder.

Saint John Huntsville was organized by Rev. Dr. William Hooper Council and others in 1885. The first church services were held in a barber shop on the corner of Miller and West Holmes Streets. Dr. Council was ordained an elder in the A.M.E. Church. In addition to organizing St. John and serving as the first Pastor, Dr. Council was the founder and one of the most distinguished presidents of Alabama A&M University. In 1900, the first church building was erected on Church Street. Ministers serving St. John besides Dr. Council include Reverends Patterson, Shelton, Goodlow, Williams, Todd, Brooks, Newell, Evans, Hill, Brice, Douglas, Cook, Thompson, Scott, Oliver, Woods, Lamar, White, Hughes, Howard, Stone, Dennis, Foxx, Hereford, McCall, Clayborn and our current pastor, Reverend Maurice Wright, II.

In 1971 the church moved into a newly erected facility at 229 Church Street. From this strategic location at a corner in downtown Huntsville, St. John opens its doors to the community. The many civic and cultural events hosted by St. John include NAACP meetings and programs, inaugural prayer service for the President of the City Council of Huntsville, graduation for the Phoenix program, Greater Huntsville Interdenominational Ministerial Fellowship and Interdenominational Ministerial Spouses Association services, voter registration, Alabama Democratic Committee meetings, Race Unity programs, and the originating point for the NAACP Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. March.

St. John continues to have a strong affiliation with Alabama A&M University through its members, outreach to students and financial support. Transportation is available for students who desire to attend worship. Four of the eleven presidents of Alabama A&M University have been members of St. John, the founder and first president, Dr. Council, eighth president, Dr. David Henson; the ninth president, Dr. John T. Gibson, Sr.; and the eleventh president, Dr. Andrew Hugine, Jr.



Council include Reverends Patterson, Shelton, Goodlow, Williams, Todd, Brooks, Newell, Evans, Hill, Brice, Douglas, Cook, Thompson, Scott, Oliver, Woods, Lamar, White, Hughes, Howard, Stone, Dennis, Foxx, Hereford, and our present pastor, Dr. Homer L McCall.

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Under the current leadership of Pastor Homer L. McCall, St. John has active ministries for members and the community. Strong emphasis is placed on the WORD - through preaching, teaching and Christian living. St. John's motto is "*A People In the Word-- serving people In the world.*"

Handy Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church
Gadsden, AL

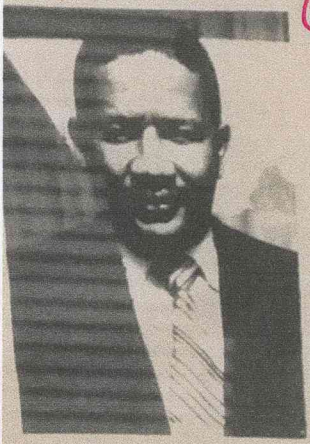
There was no written record of the church prior to 1994, but the memories of the late Mr. Henry J. Cook recalled that Handy Chapel began in the early 1900's as a part of the Attalla Circuit. The first church was in an alley in the Steel Plant Quarters. There was a Baptist Church across the alley. In the early teens, the company decided to tear down both churches

GREATER ST. JOHN'S DOOR TO OPEN

FATHER'S DAY

The New Pastor

#8



REV. H. L. MCCALL

The Rev. Homer L. McCall, new pastor of Greater St. John A.M.E. Church, Huntsville, Alabama is a native of Montgomery, Alabama.

He is the son of the late Mr. Edward C. McCall and Mrs. Bertha R. Mc-

Call. He accelerated to college from the 10th grade of the Alabama State University Laboratory High

School, Montgomery, in 1957 upon passing the Cooperative Intercollegiate Examination. He received his B.A. degree from Morehouse College, Atlanta, Ga. in 1963, with

a major in English, and minor in French.

Rev. McCall then went on to attend Yale University Divinity School, New Haven, Conn., from 1962-1964.

He received a Merrill European Study-Travel Scholarship while a student at Morehouse and studied at the Sorbonne (University of Paris) in France, during academic year 1960-61, and received a diploma in French Civilization from

that institution. He also studied at Oxford University in England during the summer of 1961 and received a Certificate of Completion from there.

He taught two years, 1963-71, at Daniel Payne College, Birmingham, Ala., in the Theology and Humanities Departments. He has also

pastored St. Paul A.M.E. Church, Montgomery, Ala., and the Warrior Circuit of the North Alabama Conference.

Rev. McCall is married to the former Mahle Jones.

Bible Thought

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as some do, but exhorting one another and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

The Late Pastor

#7



REV. S. S. HEREFORD

Perhaps one of the saddest notes that has struck African Methodism in recent years was the sudden passing of Rev. Samuel S. Hereford, pastor of St. John A. M. E. Church, Huntsville, Alabama.

The impressive funeral service was held Thursday afternoon, April 15 at two o'clock p.m. at the St. John A. M. E. Church, Huntsville, Alabama. Rev. W. R. Pogue, Presiding Elder of the South Birmingham-Huntsville District, presiding.

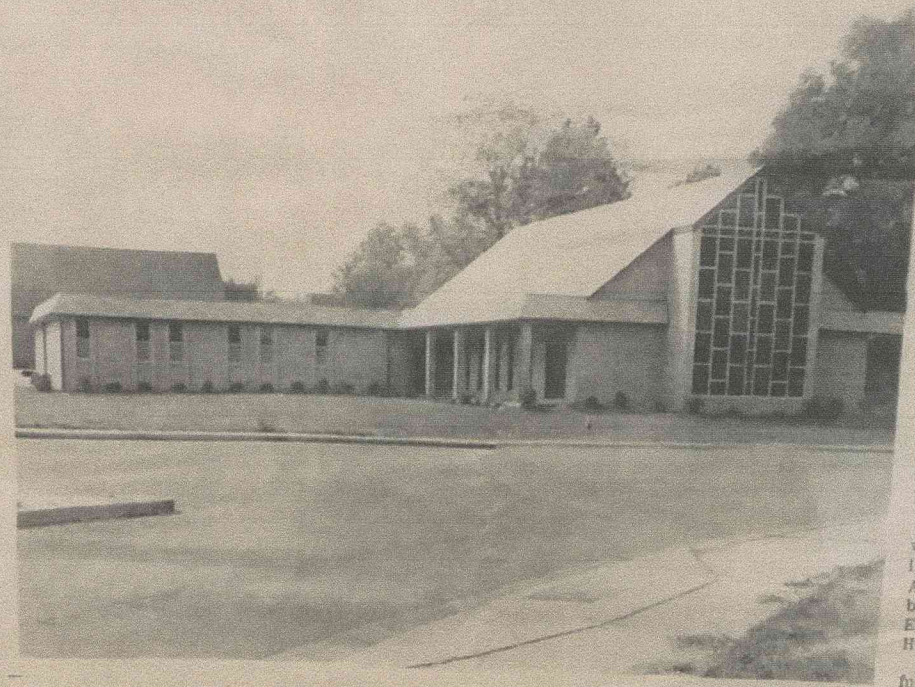
Long before the hour of the funeral, people from all over the state and from all walks of life crowded into the church and streets to give respect and take the last look at the fallen prophet of God.

The funeral service was most impressive, for one could feel the impact, and view the magnitude of the eternal impression this young man made upon the Rocket City and its surrounding communities. He had made an outstanding contribution in the Inter-Denominational Ministers' Alliance, the Y.M.C.A., Boy Scouts, N.A.A.C.P., the Masons, and many other social, civic, and fraternal agencies.

Standing as a living monument to his leadership and administrative ability is the beautiful newly-completed St. John's. This new structure has all the modern facilities that will make a church relevant, and help us spread her spiritual wings. This new plant cost over \$175,000.

It was his ambition to worship in the new sanctuary Easter Sunday, but God gave him a seat in the midst of the company of the Four and Twenty Elders.

Rev. Hereford was one of our most able and aggressive young men. He was quiet, personable, and dignified. He never sought the laurels of the general church. Yet he was easily one of the most competent secretaries in the Church. He gained this title by acquiring the necessary skills to do the job. He was a devoted husband and father, having reared and educated three daughters and two sons. The family did the unusual by requesting that all floral offerings be made to the Building Fund of St. John A. M. E. Church.



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE PASTOR,
OFFICERS, & MEMBERS OF THE GREATER ST. JOHN'S A.M.E.
CHURCH UPON THE COMPLETION OF THIS FINE EDIFICE

WE WERE GLAD TO HAVE BEEN CHOSEN
AS GENERAL CONTRACTOR
FOR THIS FINE HOUSE OF GOD

QUALITY CONSTRUCTION COMPANY
1007 HUNDLEY DR., N.W.

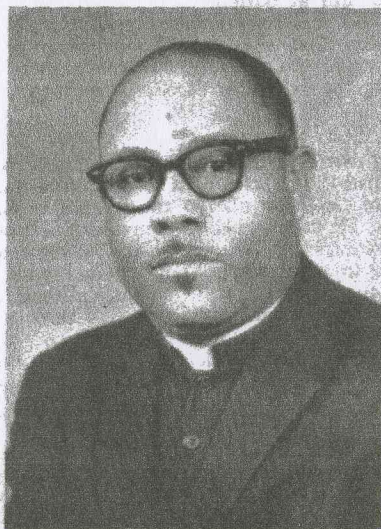
passed
April 9

Obsequies

Of The Late

Reverend

Samuel Shelby Hereford



THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 1971

2:00 P. M.

ST. JOHN'S A. M. E. CHURCH

#7

#8

The Reverend Homer Littlefield McCall, Ph.D

Reverend Dr. Homer Littlefield McCall, a native of Montgomery, Alabama, served as the pastor of St. John A. M. E. Church, Huntsville, for four decades. He received his calling as a child and at a tender age found himself consoling and reassuring family members of God's love. He excelled in academia and not only graduated from Morehouse College in 1962 with a B. A. degree in English and French, but continued his educational development via many rare opportunities, such as matriculation at the Sorbonne, University of Paris, France, Exeter College, University of Oxford, England, and the Yale University Divinity School, New Haven, CT. Dr. McCall received the Master of Divinity (1975) and the Doctor of Ministry in (1980) degrees from Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN.



Reverend McCall is a man of God and a family man. He emphasizes that his first commitment is to God, and immediately follows this with his statement of undying love to his family, his children, Homer II, Sonya and Gale and his grandchildren. His wife, Mable stood by him and with him in marriage and ministry for 45 years until her death.

Always willing to serve and share his talents, Dr. McCall provided workshops and training sessions for ministers and other leaders throughout the state. He is well respected by legions of past and current students, faculty, staff and administrators at Alabama A&M University where he is often called upon to provide spiritual counseling and leadership at the university and in the community when the need arises.

He served as Pastor of St. John A.M.E. Church, Huntsville, Alabama 1971-2011; Assistant Professor, Department of English and Foreign Languages 1972-2010 and as University Chaplain AAMU, Normal, Alabama 1989-2010.

He has been called upon and chosen to serve in many capacities, such as Ninth District Dean of Ministers and Secretary of North Alabama Conference; Instructor, Huntsville Site, NTGSR, Huntsville Madison County (1999); Leadership Class, 2003; Leadership Alabama Class; AAMU Community Development Corporation; UNCF Community Wide Committee; Spiritual Director

North Alabama Habitat for Humanity; Life Member NAACP; Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity; Morehouse Alumni Association; Honorary Member 20 Distinguished Men of Huntsville; Chaplain, Huntsville Chapter 100 Black Men of America and President, Greater Huntsville Interdenominational Ministerial Fellowship (1997-1999) and member until his retirement. In 2001, he attended the World Methodist Conference in Brighton, England.

He is a prayer warrior. Pastor McCall readily petitions God in a most eloquent and earnest way, whether in a worship service, at a public event, in a hospital room or on a telephone conversation. His sermons demonstrated the formal religious training as well as the life experience and belief system of one who can offer Christ and chronicle God's goodness.

Rev. McCall is the recipient of many honors and awards. Among the most prestigious was the distinguished Pastor and First Lady of the Year Award from the Ninth Episcopal District in 2010. After retiring from Alabama A&M University, he received the distinct honor of Professor Emeritus (2010) and Chaplain Emeritus (2011). Dr. McCall was honored with an Endowed Scholarship in his name at his beloved AAMU in May 2017. To God be the Glory, the Best is yet to come.

ALABAMA REGISTER OF LANDMARKS AND HERITAGE

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

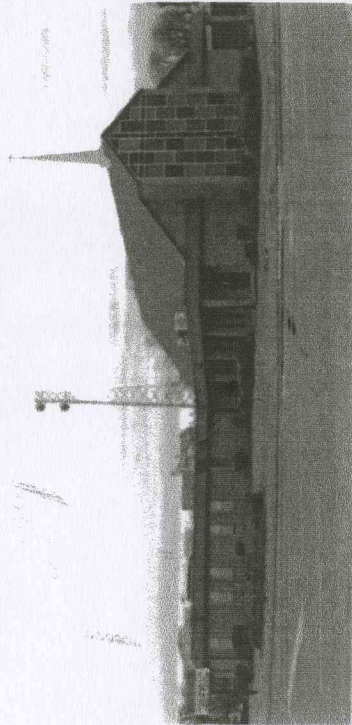
ST. JOHN AFRICAN METHODIST

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

LOCATED IN MADISON COUNTY

WAS LISTED ON

JUNE 27, 2019

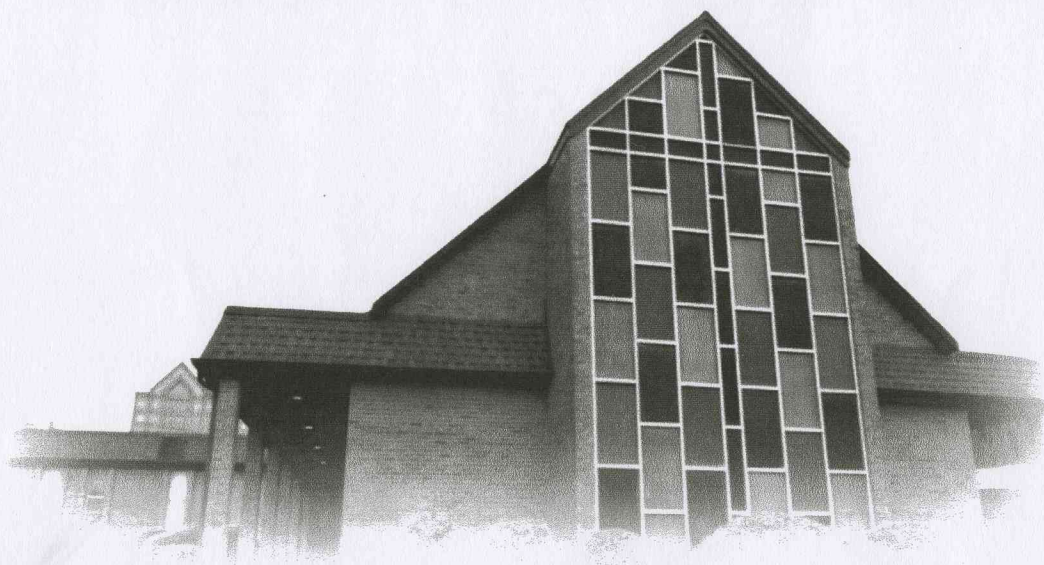


Kay Ivey
GOVERNOR OF ALABAMA

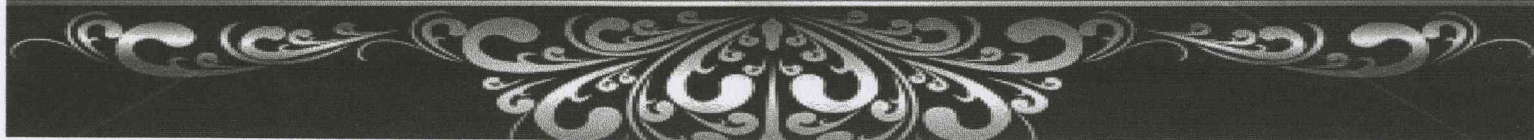
Lisa D. Jones
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

SAINT JOHN

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH



Reverend Maurice Wright, II—Servant Pastor

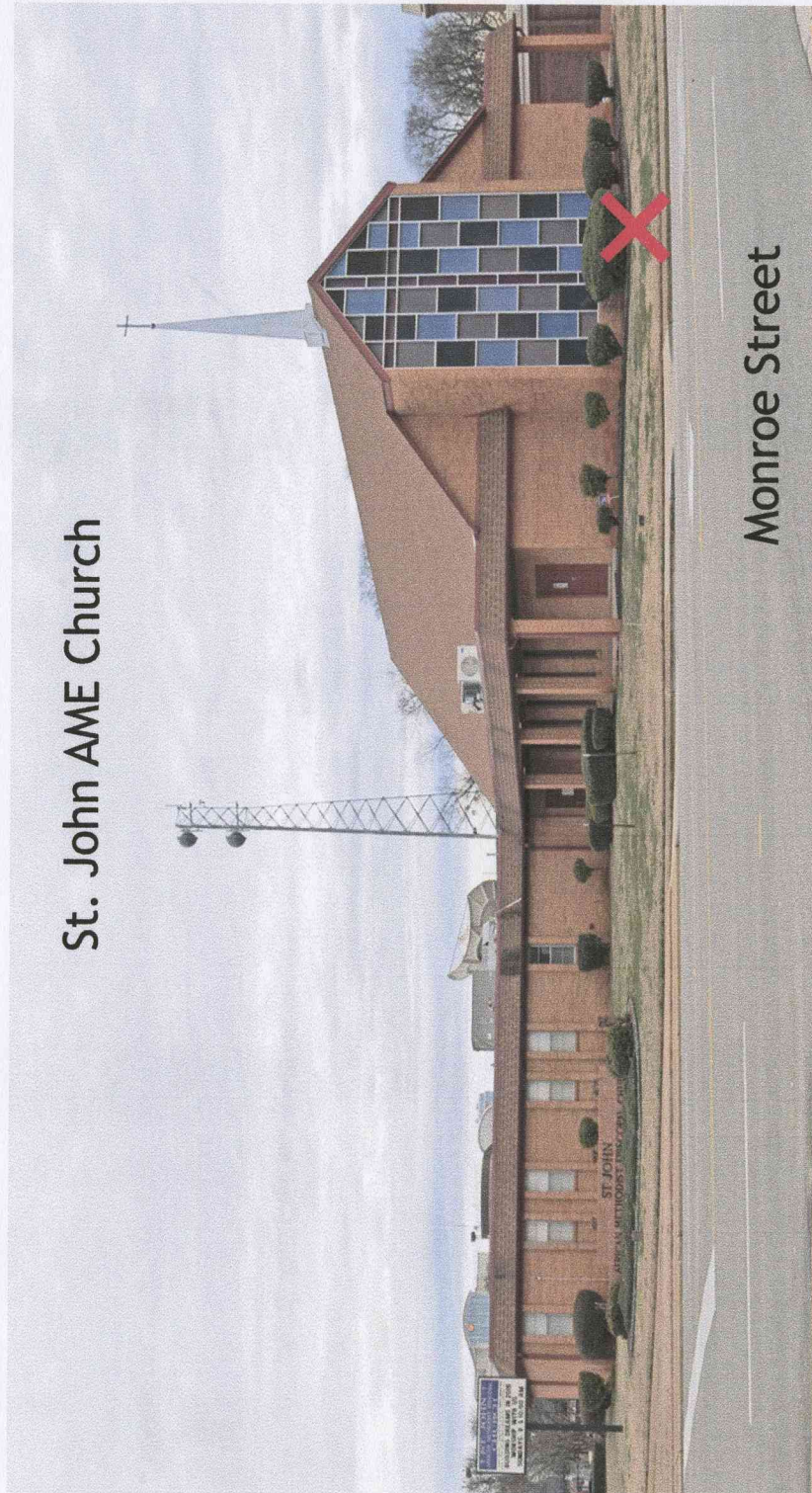


ST. JOHN
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

134th Church Anniversary

Theme: Tell The Next Generation

THE REVEREND MAURICE WRIGHT, II
SERVANT PASTOR



The proposed site for the historical marker is on the north facing side of the church, facing Monroe Street, in front of the stain glassed windows, in the grassy portion of the grounds, a couple of feet away from the side walk. The red /x/ marks the proposed location.