

USHERETTE BOARD NUMBER 2

91st Anniversary

Palm Sunday Concert

featuring

THE MORRIS BROWN COLLEGE ALUMNI CHOIR

SUNDAY, APRIL 2, 2023 AT 4:00PM

Under the directorship of Reverend Alonzo B. Taylor

Welcoming our Triumphant Return

Big Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church
Reverend John Foster, Ph.D., Senior Pastor
220 Auburn Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA

Join us either in person or virtually



April 2, 2023

Usherette Board #2
Big Bethel AME Church
220 Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Dear Usherette Board #2:

It is indeed my pleasure to congratulate you on your annual Palm Sunday Concert at Big Bethel AME Church. Your ministry of serving our congregation has been heartfelt over many decades. “Job well done” for providing faithful service for 91 years as God’s word is still true “I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord than to dwell in the tents of the wicked” – Psalm 84:10.

To President Sis. Maria White Tillman and the entire membership of Usherette Board Number 2, may God continue to bless you individually and collectively.

Sincerely,

Rev. John Foster, Ph.D.
Senior Pastor

220 AUBURN AVENUE, N.E. ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303 PH: 404) 827-9707 FAX: (404)223-3060
WEB: WWW.BIGBETHELAME.ORG EMAIL: JESUS.SAVES@BIGBETHELAME.ORG



April 2, 2023

Good Evening Family and Friends,

I greet you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Please afford me an opportunity to thank our God for our chance to congregate this Palm Sunday. We are blessed to share our love through music, and praise Him through song during this very important time in our church calendar. I welcome everyone to feel the presence of the Lord by ***Welcoming our Triumphant Return*** to our Historic Big Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church 91st Palm Sunday Concert.

Tonight is sure to be a wonderful evening of spirit-filled music as we hear the melodic voices of The ***Morris Brown College Alumni Choir*** under the direction of the Reverend Alonzo B. Taylor.

Psalms 84:10 reads: "Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wickedness." (NIV). Usherette Board Number 2 is committed to serving faithfully and with grace at each first Sunday service. The Board also serves at several church programs upon request.

Please know, your presence and continued support are greatly appreciated. And we thank our generous sponsors, for helping to make our annual event a success.

Your Servant in Christ,

Maria P. White Tillman

President, Usherette Board Number 2
Big Bethel AME Church
220 Auburn Avenue. Atlanta, Georgia 30303



STATE OF GEORGIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
ATLANTA 30334-0090

Brian P. Kemp
GOVERNOR

April 2, 2023

To: Big Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Usherette Board Number 2

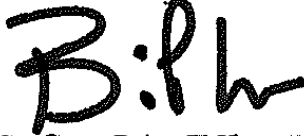
GREETINGS:

On behalf of the State of Georgia, allow me to extend my warmest regards to you as you host and participate in your 91st Palm Sunday Concert.

Please allow me also to welcome your distinguish guests, honorees, their families, and other attendees.

I send my best wishes for a productive event!

Sincerely,


Governor Brian P. Kemp



CONGRESSWOMAN NIKEMA WILLIAMS
GEORGIA'S FIFTH DISTRICT

Big Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church

220 Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Big Bethel AME Church,

For nearly 200 years, your congregation has had a rich history of triumph and resilience that has provided spiritual growth and development to members of your church, with being one of the oldest African American Churches in Atlanta that rests in our historic Sweet Auburn District.

For over 90 years, the Big Bethel AME Church Annual Palm Sunday Concert has served as a primary contributor to the cultural component of Big Bethel as it highlights the artistry of local talents in our community. It is with great pleasure that I recognize the continuation of The Palm Sunday Concert, and congratulating Maria White Tillman for her third year serving as President of the Usherette Board Number 2.

With nearing two centuries of ongoing success and advocacy for our community the Big Bethel AME Church has provided, I hope that you all will use this experience to build bonds and friendships to last a lifetime and to further develop a passion for serving our community.

Yours for the people,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nikema Williams', followed by a stylized flourish.

Nikema Williams

Member of Congress



Andre Dickens
MAYOR



CITY OF ATLANTA

55 TRINITY AVE, S.W.

ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-0300

TEL (404) 330-6100

April 2, 2023

Greetings:

As the 61st Mayor of Atlanta, I am pleased to join the Usherette Board Number 2 at Big Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in welcoming attendees of the *91st Annual Palm Sunday Concert*.

Formed in 1847, Big Bethel A.M.E Church is the oldest African American church in Atlanta. This church represents a crucial part of Atlanta's heritage and history and has occupied its site in the Sweet Auburn District since the late 1880s.

The Big Bethel Usherette Board Number 2 has continued to serve Big Bethel A.M.E Church and the surrounding community. For 91 years, the Annual Palm Sunday Concert has been a primary contributor to the cultural component of Big Bethel, highlighting musical artists, choirs, and groups across Atlanta. The Usherette Board Number 2 is excited to host The Morris Brown College Alumni Choir for this year's concert.

The City of Atlanta extends a warm welcome to those visiting our city for this special occasion. Attendees are encouraged to enjoy our great restaurants and world-class attractions, including the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, Centennial Olympic Park, the Georgia Aquarium, the World of Coca-Cola, and the Atlanta Botanical Gardens.

On behalf of the people of Atlanta, I extend best wishes for a memorable and joyous occasion.

Sincerely,

Mayor Andre Dickens

91st Annual Palm Sunday Concert

THE MORRIS BROWN COLLEGE ALUMNI CHOIR

Under the directorship of Reverend Alonzo B. Taylor
Dr. James Plenty, Morris Brown College Music Chairman
Dr. Adrian Ford, Accompanist

Welcoming our Triumphant Return

SUNDAY, APRIL 2, 2023 AT 4:00PM

Prelude.....Mr. Philip V. Skerrett, Jr., Senior Organist, BBAMEC
Opening Hymn #131, O'er All the Way.....Performed Instrumentally by Mr. Skerrett
Welcome.....Maria White Tillman, President, Usherette Board Number 2
Prayer..... Reverend Charmain Purvis, LMSW Associate Minister
Rejoice the Lord is King.....Congregation

Rejoice, the Lord is King: Your Lord and King adore!
Rejoice, give thanks and sing, And triumph evermore.
Lift up your heart, Lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Jesus, the Savior, reigns, The God of truth and love;
When He has purged our stains, He took his seat above;
Lift up your heart, Lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

His kingdom cannot fail, He rules o'er earth and heav'n;
The keys of death and hell Are to our Jesus giv'n:
Lift up your heart, Lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

The Holy City, Stephen Adams.....Reverend Joyce Young ('00), Soloist
Lift Up Ye Heads O Ye Gates, E.L. Ashford.....Tasha Posey ('02), Soloist
O Divine Redeemer, Charles Gounod.....Parker Burton, III ('99), Soloist
Ride On, King Jesus, Arranged by Moses Hogan.....Alonzo Taylor ('02), Soloist

~ Intermission ~

Greeting.....*Anna Martin, Vice President, Usherette Board Number 2*
Presentation of Usherette Board Number 2.....*Maria White Tillman*

The Lord is My Light.....Kathye J. Gary ('88), Soloist
Hosanna, As recorded by Earnest Pugh.....Allen Robinson ('97), Soloist
Rise Again, As recorded by Dallas Holms.....Authur McClenton ('77), Soloist
Were you There.....Julian Ross ('23), Soloist
He Decided to Die, As recorded by Donald Vails and the Choraleers.....Reima Cummings ('91), Soloist

~ Morris Brown College Alma Mater ~

Please Stand. Words to the Alma Mater are provided on the next page of the Program

Closing Remarks and Benediction.....Rev. John Foster, Ph.D., Senior Pastor

MORRIS BROWN COLLEGE

Alma Mater,

*Pride of earth, Gav'st to me another birth, Haven for all hungry souls, Feeding them shall be Thy goal,
Ever let thy banner be, Emblem of the brave and free, A welcome true to everyone, Until Thy work is done.*

Hail to Thee, maker of men, Honor to Thee once again, Sacred truths on firmest ground,

Hail to Thee, Dear Morris Brown.

*To her precepts praise accord, To them may we e'er be bound, And bow and thank the gracious Lord,
For dear ol' Morris Brown.*

The circumstances that evoked the founding of Morris Brown are traditionally linked to a visit by a group of Clark College trustees to Big Bethel Church to interest the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME Church) supporters in furnishing a room in their institution. In response to the proposition, layman Steward Wiley said, "If we can furnish a room at Clark College, why can't we build a school of our own?" These words ignited a flame in the mind of Reverend Wesley John Gaines who went on to become the founder of Morris Brown College.

On January 5, 1881, during the North Georgia Annual Conference at Big Bethel, Rev. Gaines introduced a resolution calling for the establishment in Atlanta of an institution for the moral, spiritual, and intellectual growth of Negro boys and girls. The steps between the resolution and the opening were few and simple: the Georgia Conference was persuaded to join the endeavor. An assembly of trustees from both conferences convened at Big Bethel and selected the Boulevard site as the school's home. In May of 1885, the State of Georgia granted a charter to Morris Brown College of the AME Church.

On October 15, 1885, just 20 years after Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, 107 students and nine teachers walked into a crude wooden structure at the corner of Boulevard and Houston Streets in Atlanta, Georgia, marking the opening of the first educational institution in Georgia under sole African-American patronage. That institution was Morris Brown College, named to honor the memory of the second consecrated Bishop of the AME Church.

In this conception, Morris Brown College was established on Christian beliefs and chartered as a private, coeducational, liberal arts college engaged in teaching, research, and public service in the arts, humanities, social and natural sciences and professional programs. The mission of Morris Brown College is to provide educational opportunities in a positive and nurturing environment that will enable its students to become fully functional persons in our global society.

Morris Brown College, in its commitment to academic excellence, provides experiences that foster and enhance intellectual, personal, and interpersonal development for students who have demonstrated the potential to compete in a challenging undergraduate liberal arts program of study.



MORRIS BROWN COLLEGE

This page of the 2023 Palm Sunday Concert Program is dedicated to the members of the Usherette Board Number 2 who are also distinguished alumni of Morris Brown College: Marion Gates Council, Geraldine Edmonds Dodson Chandler, Miriam Redding, Janet Waymer, Sharon Humphery, Annette Petty, and Gail Coleman. In honoring their beloved Morris Brown College, these women leave testimonies, memories, and words of wisdom to future alumnae.

MARION GATES COUNCIL

Words cannot express my feelings and love for my beloved alma mater, Morris Brown College. I received a good education. I learned to understand others, myself, and the world. The administration was beneficial because I had two small children to care for as an undergraduate student.

As I reflect, I am very honored and happy for the support that that the administration provided. I went on to graduate and have a well-established career, thanks to my time, education, and tenure as a student at Morris Brown College.



Marion Council as a student at Morris Brown College.

GERLADINE EDMONDS DODSON CHANDLER

In 1988, I was hired by Interim President, Dr. Gloria Anderson, to launch the Morris Brown College's Annual Fund Campaign. In my first year, the largest amount of money was raised in the College's. To further secure my position, I enrolled in the College's Adult Degree Program where I earned my Bachelors Degree in Organizational Management with a minor in Business Administration. I was then accepted into the Executive MBA Program at Georgia State University where I completed one year.

My words of encouragement to any adult who has not completed their degree is, **"It is Never Too Late"** ! Whatever the reason was that prevented you from attending and completing college earlier in life - just know that you can **Always Go Back** ! I look forward to participating in the recent partnership formed by Morris Brown College and the John Marshall Law School as a member of the first graduating Class of 2025.



Annette Petty as a student at Morris Brown College

MIRIAM REDDING

I came to Morris Brown College from the country, a small Georgia town, Pleasant Valley. Morris Brown College gave me a stellar education that I will forever be grateful in receiving. My fondest memories were being named as an honor student and becoming a member of my beloved sorority, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated. My soon-to-be sorority sisters ensured that my line sisters and I maintained our grades by tutoring and directing us in the direction of other means of support. They reminded each of us daily that our education was a top priority and stressed that our moral character must remain unblemished. To this day, several of my big sisters and line sisters remain dear friends.

To the students at Morris Brown College, my words of wisdom: Please know why you are there. While having fun, you need to remain focused and, most importantly, earn your degree.



Gail Coleman as a student at Morris Brown College

MORRIS BROWN COLLEGE

Reverend Alonzo B. Taylor

Director of the Morris Brown College Alumni Choir



Reverend Alonzo B. Taylor is the son of the late John Taylor and Shelia Taylor of Edison, Georgia. He began his musical journey singing in the Youth Choir at Union African Methodist Episcopal Church in Bluffton, Georgia where his family were active members. He was also an active member of the Young People and Children's Division. At age 16, was hired as church musician at Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Ft. Gaines, Georgia under the leadership of his uncle, Rev. E. F. Thompson. He later served at Wesley Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church under Rev. Nathaniel Brown in Blakely, Georgia. After finishing high school, he ventured to Morris Brown College in Atlanta, Georgia. While in college, he joined the Morris Brown Concert Choir and became the student Director under Dr. Sharon J. Willis in 1999. He received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Music Education with a concentration in vocal performance in 2002. After completing college, he accepted a position in the Atlanta Public Schools System as an elementary music teacher. This is currently his 20th year teaching elementary music.

Since graduating from Morris Brown College, he has served for All Good Road United Methodist Church, Peace Lutheran Church and Riverdale First United Methodist Church. His longest tenures were served as Minister of Music of St. Mark Lutheran Church and the Director of the Cathedral Choir at Central United Methodist Church. In 2009, he served as the Director of the Team Lutheran Singers. He has also served as Assistant Director of the Morris Brown Alumni Choir under Dr. Sharon J. Willis. He served in this position, until Dr. Willis passed the baton to him.

In addition to his degree in Music Education, he possesses a Masters of Teaching from Grand Canyon University. He has also obtained a Masters of Biblical Counseling and a Masters of Divinity from Luther Rice Seminary. He was ordained in 2009 by the World Council of Independent Christian Churches. He currently serves as the Director of Children and Youth at Hoosier United Methodist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. He also serves as the Program Director for the Access to Music Education Program with The Gift of Music Foundation.

He is a 15 year veteran of the United States Army Forces and was commissioned as an officer in 2009.

He has been married to his wife, Zipporah for seventeen years and they have three sons: Micah, John and Timothy.



The Morris Brown College Alumni Choir

Under the Directorship of Reverend Alonzo B. Taylor

Dr. Adrian Ford, Pianist

Ella Lewis, Organist

Sopranos

L'Tanya Moore-Copeland
Marjorie Carruthers
Riema Cummings, '91
Lorna Freeman
Kathye Gary, '88
Paulette Heard
Phaidra Horton, '12
Zelda Kennedy
Monica Mason
Ronica Paul
Tasha Posey, '02
Carmen Richardson
Virginia Tabor
Joanne Trawick

Altos

Monica Brooks
Allyson Brown
Mattie Coleman
Eloise Dukes
Lawanda Murphy
Cathy Rone, '04
Zipporah Taylor
Laronnia White
Willene White-Smith, '77
Joyce Young, '00

Countertenor

Parker Burton, III, '99

Tenors

Matthew Bailey, '86
Robert Crawford, '00
Elston Montfort
Henry J. Porter
James Pullin, Jr
Jullian Ross, '23

Basses

Joseph Bryan
Darrell Hurston, '91
Damian Koen
Landon Lee
Richard Marion, '64
Allen Robinson, '97
Samuel Smith
Wendel Stephens

**Choir members with no class year are Friends of Morris Brown*

Legacy Dedication to the Women of Usherette Board Number 2

The Usherette Board Number 2 began with a vision that called a group of women to serve unselfishly for the Big Bethel AME Church and the community it empowers. The late Mrs. Viola Miller, a dedicated member, fulfilled this vision in 1931 by establishing the Junior Usherette Board during the pastorate of the Reverend B.G. Dawson. The mission of this Board was to serve with a pure heart and welcome each member and visitor in love and with a renewed spirit.

The Junior Usherette Board was later renamed *Usherette Board Number 2* due to its growing membership and responsibilities. One of the most critical responsibilities placed on the newly established Board was to serve on Holy Communion Sunday. As is the custom of the AME Church to dress the sanctuary in white on Holy Communion Sunday, so is the uniform of the Board today, which consists of a white skirt suite accented with a corsage and a single strand of pearl jewelry.

Presenting the Annual Palm Sunday Concert was also included as a responsibility of *Usherette Board Number 2*. To date, for more than 90 years, the concert has served as a way to share in the joy and celebratory spirit that was demonstrated when Jesus entered Jerusalem. It also serves as a primary contributor to the cultural component of Big Bethel AME Church as it highlights outstanding musical artists, choirs, and groups in the City of Atlanta. Today, *Usherette Board Number 2* is pleased to present the Big Bethel AME Church *Welcoming our Triumphant Return* featuring an extension of our strong history, the Morris Brown College Alumni Choir.

The Annual Palm Sunday Concert further serves as a milestone where the members reflect on the legacy of the Board. In this, *Usherette Board Number 2* commemorates this section of its 2023 Annual Palm Sunday Concert journal to the legacy of the sisters who laid the foundation as well as those members who continue to work within the legacy.

The Founding Sisters of Usherette Board Number 2

Mattie Bell Acey
Imogene Cooper
Rebecca Dickerson
Katie Reese

Helena Rivers
Viola Sutton Miller
Lillian Wright

The Legacy Sisters of Usherette Board Number 2

Nina King Anderson
Mary L. Bentley
Elizabeth Boswell
Amanda Carnes
Sylvia Coleman
Julia Fountain Coles
Sujette Fountain Crank
Christine Dickerson

Minnie Dyer
Gwendolyn Edge
Evelyn Jones Frazier
Mary Y. Greene
Mattie Florence Johnson
Lois Jones
Ola Love
Clara McKinley

Nina King Calhoun Miller
Ruth Naylor
Lillian J. Pullum
Lylah Richardson
Julia Rivers
Lillian Rush
Eunice M. Thomas
Amelia Thornton

Hazel Walker
Kathryn Wakefield
Oretha B. Waller
Maxine Walters
Thelma D. Walters
Odessa Weaver
Lois Young

91st Annual Palm Sunday Concert

Usherette Board Number 2 Members



Kawanza Alston-Smith, 12
Tanyika Black, 11
Gail Coleman, 13
Nancy Cooke, 40
Donna Crim, 14
Eunice Davis, 23
Willene Freeman, 13
Karen Fordham Jordan, 16
Sheila Hawkins, Ph.D, 4
Leigh Haynes, 17
Cynthia Holt, 8
Jennifer Horton, 17
Sharon Humphery, 12
Alfredda Jackson, 16
Vickie Johnson, 12

Linda Jolly, 17
Anna Cornelious Martin, 8
Kali McCloud, 23
Wanda R. Patterson, 21
Carolyn E. Smith, 22
Alane Sullivan, 9
Ruth Sisk Harris, 14
Cynthia Turner, Ph.D., 22
Bernice A. Walters, 23
Maria White Tillman, 9
Nita Yates, 13

Silver Anniversary⁺

Brenda S. Boddie, 27
Marian Council, 29
Geraldine Dodson, 29
Beatrice Ingram, 28
Elizabeth Smith, 29
Janet M. Waymer, 28

Pearl Anniversary⁺⁺

Geraldine P. Burton, 37
Jacqueline Michael, Ph.D. 34
Martha Thomas, 33
Trudy Tinnin, 35

Ruby Anniversary⁺⁺⁺

Rachael Humphrey, 41
Rosalyn Johnson, 41
Sonja Mason, 40
Regenia McFarland, 41
Annette G. Petty, 45
Miriam D. Redding, 46
Charleise Young, Ph.D., 41

The number following number denotes years of service to Usherette Board Number 2.

+More than 25 Years of Service; ++ More than 30 Years of Service; +++ More than 40 Years of Service

91st Annual Palm Sunday Concert

*A Special Note of Appreciation from Madam President
to the Usherette Board Number 2 Executive Bard*

Proverbs 3:15 *"She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her."*

Thank you for your leadership over the past four years. Together we have worked to help ensure our beloved board served with grace and sisterly unity. The time and hours you have spent with me over the years in the pre-planning, text messages, leadership emails, and briefings do not go unnoticed.

Together we have weathered the global coronavirus pandemic no matter if we wore gloves, masks, or face shields and stood at a social distance. We remained committed to servicing our Lord, Jesus Christ. Thank you for all your contributions and participation in planning our board gathering of relaxation and renewal of sisterly love and for standing in the gap – when help was needed at any point during my Presidency.

I love you, and may God bless you and yours.



Maria White Tillman
President



Anna Martin
Vice-President



Wanda Patterson
Treasurer



Ruth Sisk Harris
Parliamentarian



Karen Fordham Jordan
Courtesy Chairperson



Miriam Redding
Chaplain



Kwanza Alston-Smith
Recording Secretary



Tanyika Black
Asst. Recording Secretary



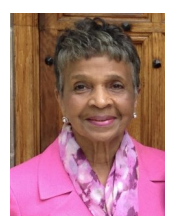
Annette Petty
Head Usher



Rosalyn Bussey Johnson
Head Usher



Geraldine Dodson
Asst. Head Usher



Dr. Jacqueline Michael
Asst. Head Usher

91st Annual Palm Sunday Concert

Acknowledgement of Sowers

On behalf of the Usherette Board No.2, we would like to express our gratitude for the dedicated sowers who have blessed our efforts to bless the ministerial works of the Big Bethel African American Methodist Episcopal Church

Underwriters

Mrs. Brenda & Mr. James Boddie
Mrs. Geraldine Burton +
Mrs. Eunice L. Davis +
Mrs. Geraldine Dodson Chandler +
Mrs. Nancy Cooke +
Ms. Gail Coleman +
Mr. Marvin and Pamelale Fleming
Attorney Stanley Foster
Ms. Cynthia Holt +
Mrs. Jennifer C. Horton
Mrs. Rachael Humphrey +
Ms. Sharon Humphery +
Ms. Rosalyn Johnson +
Mr. John and Thomasine Jordan
Mr. Patrick, Anna, & Emily Martin +
Ms. Sonja Mason +
Mrs. Kali McCloud +
Mrs. N. Nannette McGee
Drs. Price & Jacqueline Michael +
Mr. Charles Moore
Mr. William and Annette Petty +
Ms. Miriam D. Redding +
Ms. Ruth Sisk-Harris +
Mrs. Luelle Sutton
Mr. Ernest & Mrs. Patricia Tate
Ms. Maria White Tillman +
Ms. Trudy L. Tinnin
Ms. Donna Williams

Guarantors

Mr. Keith Burnett
Mrs. Barbara DuPree
Mr. Keith Halford
Ms. Ida M. Martin
Mrs. Wanda Patterson +
Dr. Stanley J. Pritchett
Rev. M. Gwen Senatle
Mrs. Onell Sheats
Ms. Martha Thomas +
Ms. Cheryl Taylor
Dr. Cynthia Turner +

Patrons

Mr. Mike Brown
Mrs. Ethel Hicks
Mr. & Mrs. Bernard Hines
Mr. Oliver E. Hudson
Ms. Barbara Johnson
Ms. Tawana A. Jones
Mrs. Rose M. Jones
Mrs. Shirley Kimble
Mr. Richard Marion
Ms. Regenia McFarland +
Ms. June Nutter
Mrs. Tallulah Ragsdale
Mrs. Rose Scofield
Mr. Michael Stephens
Ms. Shirley Simmons
Ms. Daphne Stowe
Mrs. Louvenia Thomas
Ms. Catherine Wainwright
Mrs. Annie L. Youngblood

+ Depicts Contributors who serve as members of Usherette Board Number 2

91st Annual Palm Sunday Concert

A Few Wonderful Memories Shared during the Past Four Years

