



Passing the Mantle to St. Stephen's 7th Pastor

The St. Stephen Missionary Baptist Church of East Point, Georgia installed its 7th Pastor on Saturday, March 29th 2025, in the church's packed sanctuary. After over a year without a spiritual leader due to the passing of the church's longest tenured and well-known Pastor, the late Reverend Earl L. Calloway, St. Stephen called the Reverend Kenyatta (Ken) L. Jelks, Sr. as its new leader. Jelks, a native Atlantan, served as the Senior Pastor of Mt. Tabor Baptist Church in Columbus, Georgia for nearly twelve (12) years. During his tenure at Mt. Tabor Pastor Jelks reconnected the church with local, state, and national conventions, lead the church in several property acquisitions, and implemented and completed a quarter of a million dollar sanctuary renovation project with no remaining debt. "I am humbled by God's call to transition to an assignment that holds such a vibrant footprint of faith in the city of East Point, with energetic outreach in the surrounding communities, and to stand on the shoulders of such a prolific predecessor in the person of the late Pastor Earl L. Calloway". Jelks is married to Mrs. Na'Taki O. Jelks, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Environmental Science at Spelman College, and they are the proud parents of one son, Kenyatta Jelks, Jr. (K.J.), a 10th grade honor student at Maynard Jackson High School.



A Baby's Welcome



At St. Stephen, we live out God's love not just in words, but in action. On May 11, 2025 during a baby dedication led by Pastor Ken Jelks, we witnessed compassion in its purest form. Our congregation welcomed a baby boy named Knowledge Thompson into our church family. Recently, Kendra Thompson accepted the sacred role of motherhood through adoption, welcoming Knowledge into her heart and home. In a world where many children long for love and security, her act of faith reminds us that family is not defined by blood alone, but by the boundless love God calls us to share. As a church, we have surrounded Knowledge and his new family with prayers, encouragement, and tangible support, reflecting God's love in action. In doing so, may this new beginning be a beacon of

hope, reminding us that through love, we truly become the family God intended.

Brothers & Sisters Worthy of the Call

On Sunday, March 16, 2025 the Deacon and Deaconess Ministry celebrated their 44th anniversary during the morning service. Minister Tyler Penland was the Spiritual Leader and the Earl L. Calloway Gospel Choir sang uplifting songs of praise. The keynote speaker for this occasion was our very own Pastor Ken Jelks. Pastor Jelks was introduced by our First Lady, Dr. Na'Taki Jelks. Pastor Jelks delivered a stirring message from Acts 6:1-4 and 1 Timothy 3:8 entitled "Table Manners".



"Brothers and Sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth." ~1 Corinthians 1:26



During the service, Deacon Edward Bigby and Deaconess Pam Hurt paid tribute to past members with a ceremonial candle lighting and moment of prayer. Also, Pastor Jelks announced that every 3rd Sunday will be set aside to recognize married couples within the membership.

During the month of March, the anniversaries of Deacon Daniel Jackson, Deaconess Adrian Jackson, Deacon Cedric Hurt and Deaconess Pam Hurt were acknowledged. Pastor Jelks reminded the congregation that marriage is "God's secret weapon".

Health & Wellness

Mo. Eldoris Weston of the Health and Wellness Ministry gave a historical presentation on Mary Eliza Mahoney, the first African American to graduate from nursing school and work as a professionally trained nurse. She also recognized several women from St. Stephen for their outstanding contributions to nursing: Deaconess Wanda Johnson, Sis. Jackie Martin, Sis. Karen Tolbert, Sis. Natalie Weems, Mo. Wilma Williams, Mo. Eldoris Weston, and the late Sis. Cherry Worthy. The Health and Wellness Ministry continues to support the church's vision by engaging members in informative and health-focused activities that promote awareness and encourage sustainable, healthy lifestyles.



Feeling Sweet or Salty? Check Those Numbers!

Get your blood pressure and glucose checked every 4th Sunday after service in the upstairs meeting rooms.



WHY SHOULD I TITHE?

GIVING TO GOD'S STOREHOUSE:

One day, a fellow believer asked, “Do you tithe?” “Yes!,” I replied. “Why do you ask?” He confessed that tithing was a struggle. Reading scripture on the subject only deepened his uncertainty. He wasn’t sure why his church emphasized the 10% principle, reasoning it wasn’t part of the Ten Commandments.

I could relate. There was a time when I, too, questioned whether the church truly needed my hard-earned money. My “lack-mentality” clouded my ability to see tithing through the eyes of faith. Rather than overwhelm him with theological explanations, I took a different approach—one inspired by how Jesus taught through simple stories.



I asked, “Have you eaten at a fine restaurant lately?” “Yes,” he replied. Using a familiar scenario, I framed tithing in a relatable way. “Imagine dining at a five-star restaurant—where the food, ambiance, and service are exceptional. The bill arrives with suggested gratuities: 18%, 20%, or 25%. Based on the outstanding experience, which would you choose?”

He paused, then answered, “At least 20%, maybe even 25%, if the service was great.” I nodded. “Would you say God’s provision, favor, and love are five-star?” He chuckled. “Absolutely! God’s giving is supreme.” “So why is it difficult to give back just 10% of what He has blessed us with? If His giving is supreme, why not honor Him with 10% in tithes and 10% in offerings?” Tithing is a way of saying, “Lord, I am grateful and I give back in faith.”

Tithing is not a rigid financial demand—it is about faith, gratitude, and obedience. It is a reminder that everything we have comes from God, and by tithing, we honor Him and support His Kingdom’s work. Now is the time to trust God with our finances and honor Him through faithful giving. When we tithe, we acknowledge His provision and invest in His Kingdom.

Let’s step beyond hesitation and into obedience, knowing that God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7).

**GOD'S
GIVING IS
SUPREME**

**TITHING IS
ABOUT FAITH,
NOT
OBLIGATION**

Teaching Moment

Tithing is about
faith, gratitude,
and obedience

**Are we showing
gratitude to God
through our tithes
and offerings?**

**Will we trust Him
with our resources?**



The Heartbeat of St. Stephen Ministry

New Members



A thriving church is built on fellowship, faith, and service. Long-standing members provide wisdom and stability, while new members bring fresh energy, diverse perspectives, and a passion for growth. They are not merely attendees—they are future leaders, dedicated servants, and vital contributors to God’s plan. Their enthusiasm strengthens ministries and helps advance the church’s mission through discipleship.

St. Stephen Missionary Baptist Church’s New Member Ministry ensures that newcomers feel seen, valued, and

embraced. Investing in their faith journey nurtures Biblical stewardship and sustains the ministry for generations. To empower new members, we offer classes on:

- **SALVATION**
- **SPIRITUAL GIFTS**
- **EVANGELISM**
- **GIVING**

THESE CLASSES TAKE PLACE ON 1ST, 2ND, AND 3RD SUNDAYS (9:00–9:45 AM) AND 4TH SATURDAYS (9:00 AM–12:00 NOON) at St. Stephen Church. Our leaders, Min. Wesley James (Adult classes), Charnet Clark, and Tiffany Sorrell (Youth classes)—provide mentorship, hospitality, and discipleship.

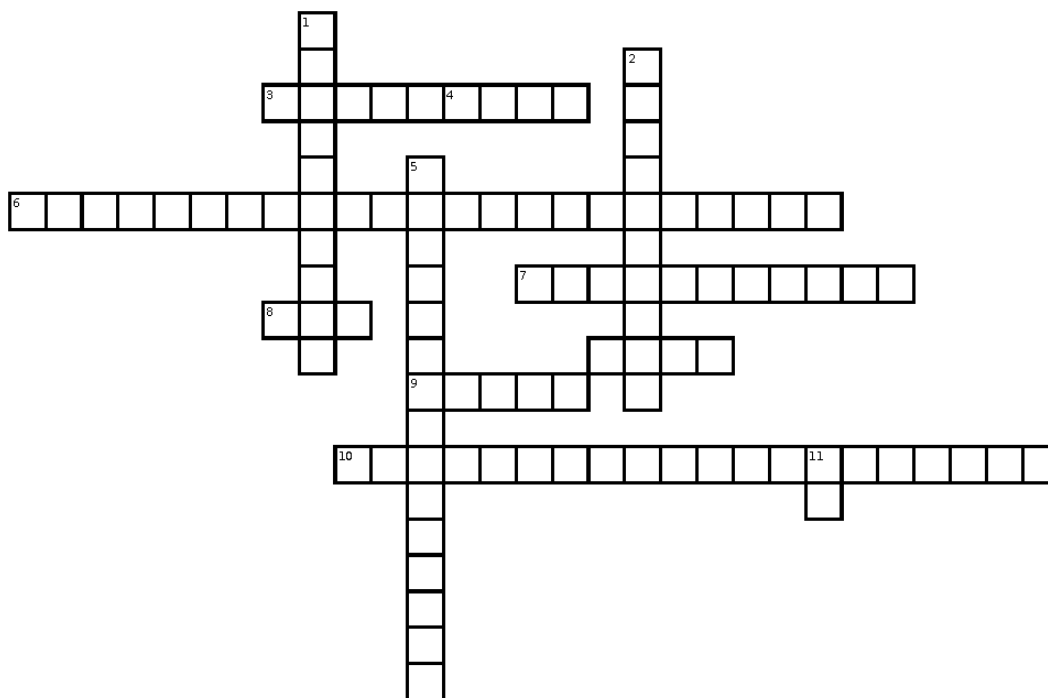
As we welcome new members, let us celebrate their presence and recognize how they enrich worship, strengthen ministries, and deepen our collective spiritual journey. The question to ask ourselves is: **How CAN WE EMPOWER NEW MEMBERS TO EMBRACE THEIR GOD-GIVEN PURPOSE?**

REFLECTIONS OF A FLAME

The Prayer Line Ministry at Stephen Missionary Baptist Church reflects Luke 18:1: “man ought to pray and not faint.” Established in 2015 by Minister Zanders Wooden, the ministry began from a vision of prayer uniting believers. Joined by Minister Wesley James, Min. Wooden leads prayer every Wednesday and Friday at 6 a.m., sharing scripture and a short message before praying over the Prayer Torch List—names submitted by members and the community. The ministry reaches beyond state lines and supports families through food, clothing, and financial aid. Each month a member prays daily over the list. Open to all, the ministry continues to grow, offering a powerful space for connection, service, and faith through consistent, heartfelt prayer.



Heart, Mind, & Soul



Down:

1. Pastor's favorite line is "I am preaching, I hope you are _____"?
2. The #7 biblically means _____?
5. What is the name of the list the prayer ministry prays over? (the word "list" is included in the answer)
11. What is the name of Pastor and First Lady's son?

Across:

3. What anniversary did the Deacons and Deaconess celebrate on the 3rd Sunday in March?
4. How many classes does the New Members ministry offer?
6. What does the health and wellness ministry check? _____ and _____ (the word "and" is included in the answer)
7. Who is the 7th Pastor of St. Stephen?
8. How many children do the Pastor and First Lady have?
9. What is a tenth?
10. What is the Pastor's Wife's Name?

God's Heartbeat

God's Word is His heartbeat—revealing His character, promises, and desires. As we draw near and listen, we encounter the living God and are drawn into deeper love, intimacy, and alignment with who He is.



Heartcheck

A heart check is God's gentle conviction, prompting us to examine the posture of our hearts.

GIVING



Do you give God your best or your leftovers?



Whose heart are you more concerned about when you give? Yours or the one you're giving to?





From The Pastor's Pen

My Brothers & Sisters,

There's a clause at the beginning of John 19:28 that I recently preached from which says, "After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished...."

Of course and by no means has everything been accomplished. However, **AFTER** five months together as new Pastor and people, **AFTER** Installation Services have come and gone, and **AFTER** onboarding with what I would argue is one of God's choice churches, I believe that "we've got something special".

Don't get me wrong, because as a person of high standards, it's just my nature to be motivated by the notion that there is always room for improvement. However, I must admit that your energy, your interest and your anointing are indicators to me that you are ready to make moves. And moves in my view are not manifested unless The Master's Hands are involved.

Moves have been made by your increased and consistent attendance. Moves have been made regarding your reception to serving this present age as we celebrate the legacy of the past and embark upon promises of the future; and moves have been made even by way of your improved commitment to giving.

But how many of us understand that good beginnings mean nothing without continued growth, committed effort, progressive partnership and prioritized prayer? The character Forrest Gump put it this way when he ran to the end of his driveway, his county and the state line- "well, I figured since I've come this far, I may as well just keep on going".

My co-laborers in Christ, since we have seen that God is doing something special with us together, we may as well just keep on going. Now is not the time for us to become comfortable and rest on our laurels. Rather, now is the time for us to prove to the enemy, to ourselves and to God Almighty, that the **BEGINNING** of us is only a sneak peak at the **REST** of us.

In other words, as the Apostle Paul said to the Corinthian church, "eyes have not seen, nor have ears heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for them that love Him".

GOD BLESS YOU ST. STEPHEN! LET'S GET READY TO GO HIGHER!



Yours in Christian Service,
Reverend Ken L. Felks, Sr
Senior Pastor
St. Stephen Missionary Baptist Church

Meet the Newsletter Ministry

Monica Callier - Managing Editor
T'Cheznavia Cherry - Creative Technologist
Joyce Elder - Copy Editor
Raquel Martin - Staff Writer
Dr. Binta Masani - Photographer/Staff Writer

