

# *The Pastor's Pen*

**December 17, 2017**

Wallace Charles Smith, D.Min.  
Senior Minister



Last Sunday's **Messiah** was an exceptional and memorable presentation. Each year we have come to expect the splendid quality of the musicians, the directors, and the inimitable Senior Choir and friends. This year, young artists were featured, who by all estimates were some of the finest we have heard. We were thrilled with our own George Mensah, Jr., who sang one of the tenor recitatives matchlessly! We commend Reverend and Mrs. Mensah for their rearing of George, Jr., into the fine young man we have watch grow and develop right before our eyes. We know God has much good work ahead for this superb man of God.

We also want to acknowledge two other Shiloh members for their significant achievements. **Judge Anna Blackburne-Rigsby** recently returned from Rome, where she presented a paper to the Vatican Pontifical Academy of Science and Social Science for a conference on Human Trafficking. Judges from around the world were invited to the conference to discuss human trafficking and its connection to organized crime. Pope Francis was in attendance. As we recently acknowledged, Judge Blackburne-Rigsby continues to be one of the most influential leaders in our area and we thank God for her exceptional work. On Thursday, December 14, **Dr. Sandra Jowers-Barber** was sworn in as a member of the DC Historic Preservation Review Board. We wish Deacon Jowers-Barber much success as she enters this new and important role.

As we continue to live out our theme, "*To be the voice of justice for the Black church in America,*" we note that the results of the election for the Senate seat in Alabama were an indication that God is not inactive in human history. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." The defeat of Roy Moore in that special election had implications far beyond his sexual predator accusations. He, when asked by a Black reporter when America was last great, said "I think it was great at the time when families were united — even though we had slavery — they cared for one another.... Our families were strong, our country had a direction." Moore has also gone on record as stating that getting rid of constitutional amendments after the Tenth Amendment would 'eliminate many problems' in the way the U.S. government is structured, which means the Thirteenth, abolishing slavery would be in play.

Black Alabamians were not fooled by these not too veiled dog whistles; they overwhelmingly rose up with one voice and said 'No; enough is enough.' Notably, Black women voted against Moore at a whopping 98% percent!

The Alabama election does not signal the end of the battle for justice. It does portend that justice will never come about through complacency. Never again can we afford to stay home on Election Day and remain indifferent to the process. In the words of the abolitionist Wendell Phillips, "*Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.*" As we fight for justice, let us remain eternally vigilant.