



# SAINT JAMES A.M.E. CHURCH

*One Church, Two Locations*

Newark Campus:

588 Martin Luther King, Jr., Blvd. • Newark, NJ 07102

South Orange Campus:

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Pastor Ronald L. Slaughter, Senior Pastor

January 25, 2017

## “State of the Church Address”

In the words of the Apostle Paul in Philippians 1:3-5 (NIV), “I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

Once again, I begin this address in the same spirit of my last five addresses using the Apostle Paul’s greeting to the church of Philippi. I thank God for Saint James African Methodist Episcopal Church. One Church, Two Locations. You are truly the apple of my eye! There is not a day that goes by, that I do not thank God for assigning me to this incredible ministry. Since June 12, 2011, over nine hundred and seventy persons have walked down the aisle of our worship facilities to make a decision for Christ and to join our family. I am incredibly proud of every member that is a part of this family. Each one of you is helping this church to “Make Disciples, Build Families, and Meet Needs.”

Saint James had another remarkable year in 2016. Over one hundred and nine souls joined our family. Our South Orange Campus at SOPAC is literally running out of seats weekly. God is definitely exceeding our expectations in South Orange, NJ. As a result of God’s blessings, Saint James will need to engage in strategic planning concerning our South Orange Campus and begin looking for a new permanent location soon. The “Dirt to Destiny” Capital Campaign is off to a fantastic start. Presently, we are at 90% of our first year goal. I am most proud of the debt that we have liquidated over the past six years. In 2016, Saint James liquidated over \$90,000.00 worth of debt. Currently, we are indebted to only three more vendors. Aside from our bank loans, by the end of 2017, we will be indebted to only one vendor. God has been very kind to Saint James AME Church. The State of our Church is GOOD!

In 2017, Saint James will work towards embracing our theme for the year, “F.O.C.U.S.” Yes, it’s time to FOCUS!” In order for the vision to come to fruition in 2020 (or sooner), every member of our family must “F.O.C.U.S.” on the prize (Philippians 3:14) for which God has ordained for this ministry. In order to win the prize, every member must be Faithful, Obedient, Committed, Unselfish, and willing to Serve (Service).

It is essential that Saint James become more of an “Outside-In” Church, rather than an “Inside-Out” Church. The communities surrounding our Newark and South Orange Campuses must know that we are here and that we care. Exhibiting care and making our presence known, involves more than charity, worship, and a historic building. Becoming an “Outside-In” Church requires effective evangelism, changing the culture of our community, and a willingness to get our hands dirty (social & economic justice). I believe by Faith, when we “F.O.C.U.S.,” we can revitalize this community, city, state, and world, as well as make this corridor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. the premier corridor in our country.

None of the aforementioned can be accomplished without much prayer, love, and sacrifice. I recently shared with a member who met with me, that I finally have a prayer and devotional life. Until this year, I have had a pretty good prayer life. Prayer and Devotion are two distinctly different things. I was good at talking to God, but I was terrible at carving out time for God (Devotion). Now I have become disciplined enough just to spend time with God without requesting anything from God. As God is growing me, I am praying that God begins to grow each and every one of us! Some of our faithfulness, obedience, commitment, unselfishness, and service has been mediocre at best. God deserves better! We must do better! Our church is about 70% tithers. Sorry, that was an “**Alternative Fact.**” Sadly, our church is below 40% when it comes to tithing. I have shown you in six years that I do not want your money/resources. I have been transparent (a little too much per the finance committee). I have led with integrity. None of that convinced 60% of this congregation to trust God with 10%. Therefore, I am asking you to do it for God. Not for me, do it for God. I can assure you, if you are faithful, obedient, committed, unselfish, and willing to serve, God will bless you beyond your wildest dreams.

In conclusion, let us not grow weary in well doing! (Galatians 6:9) We are on a spiritual journey/walk with God. 2017 is the year we lay the foundation for the vision of this house to be built upon. I pray that I can count on you to “F.O.C.U.S.,” this year and to help make this the best year in our church’s history. Remember, If it is of God, It will not Fail! (Acts 5:39)

As always, I remain,

God’s Humble Servant,



Ronald L. Slaughter,  
Senior Pastor