

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH, UCC

LAYMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

BLACK HISTORY PROGRAM

**Celebrating the Legacy
of
Historical Black Colleges and Universities
in
Alabama**



Special Guest Speaker

Dr. Quinton T. Ross, Jr.

President of Alabama State University

February 16, 2025

First Congregational Christian Church, UCC

Montgomery, Alabama

Rev. Rodtric Robinson, Pastor



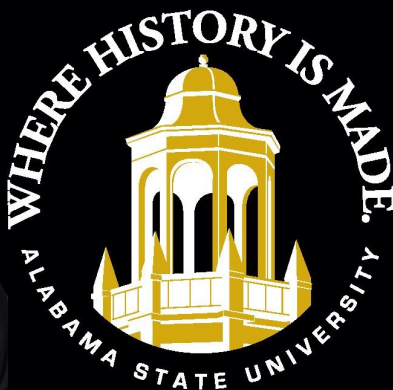
Located on the corner of Union and High Streets, the First Congregational Christian Church was built in 1872 by the American Missionary Association (AMA), a Protestant mission group from New England who fought against slavery and founded schools to educate Blacks. Rev. Dr. George Whitfield Andrews, a missionary from the north, established the church and served as the first pastor.

Earlier, in 1868, the AMA had built the Swayne School on the corner of Union and Grove Streets, the first primary school for Blacks in Montgomery. Together, the First Congregational Christian Church and the school formed the nucleus of the Centennial Hill neighborhood from which other institutions grew in Montgomery's black community. The Montgomery Industrial School for Girls, known as Miss White's School, was located on South Union Street, across the street from the church. Founded in 1886 by Alice White, it was also under the sponsorship of the AMA.

One other notable school receiving funding from the AMA is now Alabama State University. Begun in 1867 as the Lincoln School of Marion, it gained AMA sponsorship in 1868. The school relocated to Montgomery in 1887.

For more than a century, our church stood in the middle of a thriving black district. It was through the efforts of many talented and committed individuals who by combining their philosophical beliefs created a thriving economical, educational and spiritual community. Centennial Hill neighborhood was home to such illustrious leaders as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; Victor Tulane, a merchant and community leader; Dr. Cornelius Dorsette, Montgomery's first black physician; James Rapier, Alabama's first black congressman; Businessmen James Hale, Henry Allen Loveless and Elijah Cook; Nathan Alexander, editor, businessman and prominent officeholder; State Senator John W. Jones; State Board of Education member, Peyton Finley; and the Rev. G. Franklin Lewis, longtime pastor of First Congregational Christian Church.

Our Guest Speaker



President Quinton T. Ross, Jr.

Dr. Quinton T. Ross, Jr., serves as the 15th President of Alabama State University, his beloved alma mater, with a transformative vision and unwavering commitment to servant leadership. Since assuming office in October 2017, Dr. Ross has spearheaded a remarkable turnaround for ASU, focusing on fiscal stability and debt reduction resulting in significant financial transformation for the institution.

Under his leadership, ASU has witnessed over a \$20 million investment in comprehensive infrastructure enhancements, including security upgrades, and multiple modernization projects. Dr. Ross's strategic initiatives have propelled ASU to unprecedented heights, exemplified by its reaffirmation by the SACSCOC through 2030.

Through innovative partnerships and a strategic roadmap titled FOCUS 2030, Dr. Ross has expanded access and opportunities for ASU's diverse student body, resulting in remarkable academic achievements and fundraising milestones. His leadership has elevated ASU's national standing, among the nations top Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Dr. Ross's influence extends beyond campus borders, as evidenced by his appointments to state and national boards and councils, including the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities Board of Advisors, the HBCU Capital Financing Advisory Board, Thurgood Marshall College Fund Board of Directors, Chairman of the Southwestern Athletic Conference commission, to name a few. He has been recognized with numerous accolades, including the Thurgood Marshall College Fund's 2023 Educator of the Year award.

A passionate advocate for education and diversity, Dr. Ross's legacy is defined by his dedication to empowering young minds and fostering progress and inclusivity. With a distinguished career spanning over 29 years in education, he continues to make impactful contributions as an educator, administrator, and statesman.

Dr. Ross is a distinguished graduate of ASU and is actively involved in various civic and community organizations, including Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., and the 100 Black Men of America. Beyond his professional achievements, he cherishes his role as a devoted husband and father, embodying the values of excellence, integrity, and compassion.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH, UCC

638 High Street at Union Montgomery, AL 36106

Laymen's Fellowship

Black History Program

February 16, 2025

Darryl Sinkfield, Master of Ceremony

Prelude	Dr. George West Southern University
Welcome/Occasion	Felix Parker
Invocation	Deacon Sam Martin
Music	Tuskegee University Choir Dr. Wayne Barr, Director
Offertory	Ushers
Introduction of Guest Speaker	Rev. Rodtric T. Robinson
Guest Speaker	Dr. Quinton T. Ross, Jr.
Music	Tuskegee University Choir Dr. Wayne Barr , Director

Presentation of Awards

Bro. Curtis Stewart

Cecil St. Clair Legacy Award

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Laymen's Appreciation Award

|                                    |                         |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Recognition of Visitors and Guests | Darryl Sinkfield        |
| <i>"Lift Every Voice and Sing"</i> | Audience (Please Stand) |
| Remarks and Benediction            | Rev. Rodtric Robinson   |

### **NOTICES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

First Congregational Christian Church and members of the Laymen's Fellowship welcome you to our Annual Black History Program. Please join us immediately following the service in the Fellowship Hall for a reception as we honor our guest speaker and Black History Month honorees.

## OUR HONOREES

Dr. Daniel K. Wims, Alabama A&M University

Dr. Quinton T. Ross, Jr., Alabama State University

Mr. Olivier Charles, Bishop State Community College

Dr. Kemba Chambers, H. Council Trenholm State Community College

Dr. Patricia G. Sims, J. F. Drake State Community & Technical College

Dr. Cynthia T. Anthony, Lawson State Community College -

Dr. Bobbie Knight, Miles College

Dr. Leslie N. Pollard, Oakwood College

Dr. Stanford Angion, Selma University

Dr. Yolanda W. Page, Stillman College

Dr. Walter M. Kimbrough, Talladega College

Dr. Mark A. Brown, Tuskegee University

### **A Brief History of HBCU's**

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were established in the United States in the 19th century to provide higher education opportunities for Black Americans. They were founded in an era of segregation, when most other postsecondary institutions were not open to people of color. Alabama State University was the first black college in the state, established as the Lincoln School in Perry County by nine former slaves as a private institution in 1867. One year later, the Alabama Board of Education designated the school a state teaching institution, allotting it some state funding. After several name changes, the school moved to Montgomery in 1887. It was designated Alabama State University in 1969. Located in a hub of desegregation and civil rights activities, the institution played a leading role in negotiating racial strife in the 1950s and 1960s.

Each of the HBCUs contributes to the overall education of the Alabama citizenry as well as the economic life of the state. They are each unique in their strengths, but also share a common history of supporting the uplift of African Americans and the community as a whole.

## **Laymen's Fellowship Cecil St. Clair Legacy Award**



The Cecil St. Clair Legacy Award is given in honor of the esteemed Mr. Cecil St. Clair. As a long-standing president of the Laymen's, his leadership has left an enduring legacy, continuously influencing and shaping the vision of current leaders. Mr. St. Clair would have been deeply honored and proud of the Laymen's fellowship for bestowing the "Cecil St. Clair Legacy Award" in his name. He was a firm believer

in the transformative power of education for all.

## **Special Acknowledgements to the Percy Gill Foundation**



Percy Gill dedicated himself to enhancing the quality of life for African Americans by fostering educational and economic development opportunities. He was an active advocate for the Laymen's Fellowship Black History Programs. We extend special recognition and gratitude to the Gill family for their generous contribution.

## **Membership**

Darryl Sinkfield, President  
George Lee, Vice President  
Curtis Stewart, Treasurer  
Leon Forniss, Secretary  
William Grimes, Chaplain  
Rev. Rodtric Robinson  
Gaston Andrews

Christopher Bass  
Chase Bass  
Bob Crum  
Stephon Crum  
Rosevelt Gooden  
Jerome Gray  
Jermaine Harding  
Carmello Hicks

Reginald Miller  
Sam Martin  
Felix Parker  
Radley Porterfield  
Lomorris Stanley  
Thornton Warmack  
Theodore White, Sr.

# Lift Every Voice and Sing

By James Weldon Johnson

Lift every voice and sing  
Till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise  
High as the listening skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.  
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us,  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun  
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,  
Bitter the chastening rod,  
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;  
Yet with a steady beat,  
Have not our weary feet  
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?  
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,  
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,  
Out from the gloomy past,  
Till now we stand at last  
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,  
God of our silent tears,  
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;  
Thou who has by Thy might Led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.  
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,  
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;  
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,  
May we forever stand.  
True to our God,  
True to our native land.

# **Alabama Historically Black Colleges and Universities** *(prior to 1964)*

**Alabama A&M University**

**Alabama State University**

**Oakwood University**

**Stillman College**

**Tuskegee University**

**Talladega College**

**Selma University**

**Miles College**

**Bishop State Community College**

**J.F. Drake State Technical College**

**Lawson State Community College**

**H. Councill Trenholm State Community College**

