

The Pastor's Pen

August 13, 2017

Wallace Charles Smith, D.Min.
Senior Minister



Homecoming is a celebratory tradition in the African American churches that stems primarily from the South. It is a time of reflection, reaffirmation, renewal, and rededication of lost souls, visitation of members who have united with other churches, and an exciting time of fellowship with family and friends. For 153 years, Shiloh has paused during the “lazy-hazy-crazy days of summer” to celebrate all of the norms that homecoming represents: spirit-filled worship, Biblical preaching and teaching, personal testimonies and lively and robust singing. In addition to safeguarding and maintaining our honored traditions of homecoming, we incorporate the innovations of social media to highlight and promote social justice as an ongoing ministry at Shiloh, and to channel all of our homecoming information, ministries, activities, and events through the online #ShilohDCHomecomingJoy. Selfies, for example, have become a global phenomenon and a big part of our everyday lives. This year, we will hold our first *selfie celebration* on Homecoming Sunday! During our time of greeting, we will be encouraged to take selfies of ourselves, with friends and with our families and post them on our Facebook pages and other social media accounts.

The Bible has a consistent theme of redemption, *Ye who are weary come home*. Homecoming at Shiloh is a time when souls weary of mega-church entertainment and prosperity preaching disguised as Gospel can return and find many of Shiloh’s traditions intact, and yet see evidence of innovation in our outreach to the community, in how we plan and promote our ministry programs and how we stream to make available our worship services through social media. Ultimately, our intentional balance between tradition and innovation will help us achieve our theme in, *“Becoming the voice of justice for the Black church in America.”*