

## **Biographical Sketch of Gregory J. Bentley**

Rev. Gregory J. Bentley was born in Thomasville, Alabama on October 30, 1969 to Juanita Bentley and William Thomas, Jr. He was raised in Pine Hill, Alabama in an extended family household, which included his mother, Juanita, his grandmother (“Mama”), the late Virginia Howze, his great aunt (“Nannie”), the late Estella Black, and his grandfather (“Daddy”), the late Aubry Howze.



Rev. Bentley was baptized and raised in the Saint Paul Primitive Baptist Church. He graduated from Pine Hill High School in 1986 and matriculated at Stillman College, in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, the only HBCU founded by the “Southern” Presbyterian Church (PCUS). During his time at Stillman, he joined the Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church and answered his call to the ministry. In addition to being raised in a Christian home, Rev. Bentley’s sense of call was heavily influenced by his college mentor, Dr. C.H. Thomas, a member of the religion faculty and an ordained Presbyterian minister. Dr Thomas taught him that a minister must have “the learning and the burning.” Convinced of the importance of seminary training, after receiving the Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Stillman in 1990, he matriculated at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia from which he received the Master of Divinity degree in 1995. He continued his studies at Auburn University at Montgomery and graduated with the Master of Education degree in 1997. He was ordained at the Northern Heights Presbyterian Church in Selma, Alabama on November 30, 1997 and led a bivocational career of pastoring and teaching Biology and physical science in the public school system until he came to Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, in 2001. He was called to the pastorate of the Fellowship Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama on January 1, 2012.

Rev. Bentley has served in various capacities in political and civic affairs, including a term as chairman of Minority Affairs for the Tuscaloosa County Democratic Party. He is a member of Leadership Tuscaloosa, Goshen Lodge #530 (Prince Hall), and Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

Rev. Bentley contends, “The church is a hospital for sinners and not a museum for saints. It is a vanguard and repository of our noblest aspirations, traditions and values. In addition to the Black Church, the Black Family and the Black School must be mission priorities if we are to fully develop our potential as a people.”

Rev. Bentley enjoys good music...from Beethoven to Bessie Smith to BDP to Bluegrass. He also likes to read and play chess.

He lives in Huntsville with his wife Diann and his daughters Miriam and Johari.