

PASTOR JAMES T. MEEKS

Pastor James T. Meeks is the founder and senior pastor of Salem Baptist Church of Chicago, which has been recognized as one of the fastest growing megachurches in the United States. Salem is the largest African American church in Illinois with over 15,000 members.

In 2002, Pastor Meeks successfully ran for Illinois state senator. His win made him the first Independent legislator ever elected to the Illinois Senate. He served three terms, where his major focus was on educational equity. He has also served in positions of leadership including chair of the Education committee as well as joint chairman of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus. Pastor Meeks currently serves as Chairman, Illinois State Board of Education.

In 2005, Pastor Meeks led Salem in the building of the House of Hope, a \$50 million, 10,000 seat community and worship center which is the largest facility built from the ground up for the purpose as a worship venue in the United States.

Throughout his life, Pastor Meeks has served the needs of the people whether it was through legislation on the Senate floor, community organizing events in the streets of Chicago or from the pulpit every Sunday morning.

In 1998, he led a rally to “dry up” the Roseland community, which resulted in the closing of 26 liquor stores. He distributed 30,000 Bibles to residents in the church’s zip code. He provided every prisoner in the state with the Bible on cassette.

The list goes on and in his 38 years of ministry, Pastor Meeks has taken his message of hope and reform around the world including Israel, Africa, China, Jamaica, Argentina, Sweden, the Czech Republic, and Australia.

He is the author of two books, “How to Get out of Debt and Into Praise,” and “Life-Changing Relationships,” which have been received with critical acclaim.

Pastor Meeks and his wife Jamell are the proud parents of four children and five grandchildren.