



Introducing Kalimah Priforce

Kalimah Priforce is a self-described, “kid from Brooklyn that grew up in foster care and group homes.” He was raised Haitian Catholic until the age of seven, a month after his first communion, when an incident in which a nun hit him with a ruler across the hand made him decide never to return. From 8-14, he was taught by a community of Buddhist monks and nuns but did not feel spiritually at home.

Kalimah came to St. Columba as part of his campaign for Emeryville City Council. He was immediately compelled by the friendly reception of the community, so much so that after he left 8am Mass that day, headed to meet other faith communities, he “felt the spirit grab [his] handlebars and was pulled back in for the 10:30 morning Mass [and] didn’t leave until one in the afternoon.” He reports that he felt he had found a home. In 2019 he was reunited with his brothers after 23 years of separation through the foster care system. When Kalimah’s brother visited St. Columba along with his former daughter to hear Kalimah sing, it was one of the happiest days of his life. Because of his background, his concept of “family” is much larger than blood relations and counts many “God-Beloveds” to be part of his family. He says: *“Over the past year, I believe God guided me to St. Columba because I needed more than a home, or even community, I needed a sanctuary... What gets me up is seeing everyone’s faces and being reminded through the Word of God that there is life after death.”*

Kalimah feels that his membership on the Pastoral Council is his way of giving back to a parish that saved his life. He also shares his beautiful baritone in the choir and is a member of the Knights of St. Peter Claver, and helps with Faith in Action East Bay, and soon he will be mentoring young people by working with the Scholarship Committee in hopes of helping new members and young people feel a sense of belonging in our community.

His professional life began at age thirteen when he hacked into the middle school attendance records to get into the college prep high school of his dreams! In time, he became an educator and entrepreneur and eventually moved to Silicon Valley in 2010 for his third company, Qeyno Labs (named after his brother who was shot and killed ten years prior), and quickly landed in Emeryville, where he currently serves as a council member for the City of Emeryville, a delegate to the California Democratic Party for Emeryville, Oakland, and Alameda. We are so blessed to count Kalimah as a member of our family of God—and if you can keep up, there is so much more of Kalimah’s story to learn—have a cup of coffee with him and you will find out!