

MT. ZION BAPTIST CHURCH HISTORY & DESTINY OF OUR MINISTRY



WRITTEN BY:

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History & Destiny of Our Ministry

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Written By:

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Dedication

To my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, whose boundless love and unwavering grace caused every memory within these pages. We continue to exist because of Your love and Your many promises!

To my beloved church family, whose enduring support and encouragement have brought this book to fruition. Your love and dedication have illuminated the path of this literary journey, and for that, I am eternally grateful.

Acknowledgments

This writing is a collection of the studies and writings of Ms. Charlotte Taylor and Mr. John Phil McLaney, Jr. They have studied the history of Mt. Zion for decades, and I am indebted to their research for this updated history of the church. Without their studies and love to reveal our past, this work would never have been completed.

Mrs. Margaret Caraway Sanders has been vital in most of the editing of this work and providing many of the images in this book. She has been instrumental in preserving and providing old videos of the church fellowships that can be watched anytime on our church website (www.mountzionfamily.com). Without her, and the efforts of her family, many of these newer historical images could not have been documented.

Chapter 1

The Pastor's Hope



Photo of the Church in November 2023

It is with great honor, humility, and expectant hope that we celebrate the momentous occasion of the 200th Anniversary of Mt. Zion Baptist Church on January 21, 2024. This remarkable milestone is a testament to the unwavering dedication and commitment of believers to reverence our Lord and Savior, Jesus

Christ, to share His Gospel of Salvation, and to maintain the believers' charge to expand the Kingdom of God.

For two centuries, Mt. Zion Baptist Church has survived as a beacon of hope and love in the community. Grown from humble beginnings, this church has shown an unwavering dedication to serving the needs of our members and caring for those in physical and spiritual need around us. From sharing the love of Jesus with the sinner to serving the needs of the community, Mt. Zion has consistently exemplified the true essence of community and Christian character.

In 1824, Barbour County had not been established, but was included in the immense boundaries of the County of Pike; often referred to as the State of Pike. It was in that same year was our church's conception. Mt. Zion was the first Baptist church founded in the northeast corner of Pike County, Alabama, and united with the Conecuh Ridge Baptist Association of Churches. In 1839, a great dissent exploded in the associational conference among the seventeen Baptist churches within the Conecuh Ridge Baptist Association. A church resolution was adopted at the conference that stated,

"We will not hold in union any church that holds any member in her that is a member of any of the following institutions, to wit: Theological Schools, State Conventions, Missionary Society, Bible Society, Tract Society, nor any Society that is

tributary to the missionary plan as it exists in the United States."

It was a result of this strict declaration, that Mt. Zion prayerfully elected to depart the Conecuh Ridge Baptist Association, along with the congregations at Liberty Baptist (Bullock County), Fellowship Baptist (Original Name of Orion Baptist Church in Pike County, Sardis Baptist (Dale County), Clayton Baptist, New Providence Baptist, and Bethel Baptist. Of these "rebellious and dissenting" churches, all but New Providence have endured through the archives of history. While New Providence no longer exists, the cemetery can be found near the original location close to the intersection of (CR 5513 & CR 5512) in Pike County. This decisive motivation for Mt. Zion departing the association was due to the belief that we continue to preach; Jesus died for the salvation of everyone, not an elect few. From our consummation, we upheld the belief of teaching and preaching the love of Jesus to the entire world. Mt. Zion prayerfully departed the Primitive Baptist denomination and joined the Missionary Baptist denomination.

In the early 1840's, Mt. Zion demolished the church building near the intersection of US Hwy 29 and County Road 6629 in Pike County, and relocated across the Pea River into Barbour County. For the first few years, our early church family met under a brush arbor until our first Barbour County sanctuary was constructed in

1845, near our present site. Fifty years later (1895), a new wood frame building was constructed to house our services. That building was later destroyed by a storm, but a vote to rebuild was passed on February 11, 1945. It is this building that has remained the location of our worship services to this day.

At the heart of Mt. Zion's mission is genuine faith in Jesus Christ, the life-changing repentance from sin, and Christ's sincere command to share the way of salvation with our families, our community, and to the ends of the earth. Our church has remained steadfast in our commitment to spreading the message of love, compassion, and forgiveness that Jesus taught, died for, and rose from the dead to proclaim. Throughout the 200 years of worship services, Bible studies, community and outreach events, and youth and children ministries, we have endeavored to offer guidance and support to any person seeking a deeper connection with Jesus Christ.

As the pastor of Mt. Zion, I whole-heartedly believe God called me to serve our congregation. My family and I came here as strangers, but over the years have been welcomed and engrained into the soul of our church family. Two of my children believed on Jesus and were baptized within these sacred walls. Mt. Zion is not just the church I pastor, but is the church that has supportively shaped my whole family.

Before accepting the call to serve at Mt. Zion, I knew very little of history of our church; however, I dived into our history with

extreme optimism. I quickly discovered that many of my relatives were some of the earliest members of Mt. Zion. Those early relatives were my 5th Great Grandparents, William Henry (1785-1849) and Jane Wicker (1787-1860) Gilmore, and my 4th Great Grandparents, Jessie (1802-1876) and Mary Garrett (1806-1888) Brown. However, when Mt. Zion departed the Conecuh Ridge Baptist Association, my relatives chose to remain Primitive Baptists becoming founding members of Ramah Baptist Church in Pike County. I have often joked that my family decided to repent of my ancestors' departure and we have finally returned home to Mt. Zion Baptist Church.

William Henry Gilmore (my 5th Great-Grandfather) was an early member and an elder at Mt. Zion Baptist Church. In the Primitive Baptist denomination, the elder was a minister and caretaker of the congregation. I also discovered that my 3rd Great-Grandfather, Clayton Whitfield Harden, pastored and ministered in several churches in and around the area. During his 30+ years of ministry, he preached and ministered numerous times behind the pulpit of Mt. Zion. After 4 years of my service at Mt. Zion, I discovered that many in our church were direct descendants from Rev. Clayton Whitfield and wife, Mary White Harden. Rev. C.W. Harden was the grandfather of Joseph Clayton (JC) Harden (1906-2004), who sang during the Sacred Harp Singings here at Mt. Zion.



Church Building in About 1945



Sacred Harp Singing at Mt. Zion

In 2021, I uncovered a few pages of C.W. Harden's personal Bible and witnessed his own, hand-written notes written in the

margin. There, he transcribed his outline for a sermon he preached in his years of ministry. On April 10th, 2022, I borrowed from his sermon outline and preached to over 25 of his direct descendants in our congregation. As I have told many family members, "Our grandfather had a few more word to share with his family to prepare us for Heaven."

The significance of our 200th Anniversary goes beyond the passing of time. It represents the rich history, resilience, and faithfulness of a community of believers who have stood the test of time. This 200th Anniversary is meant to...

- Solidify a reminder of the enduring presence of our Father God within His church and His ability to save the sinner throughout the generations.
- Shine as an opportunity for reflection and celebration of the church's accomplishments, growth, and impact on the community we serve.
- Signify honor and acknowledgment for the values and principles that have guided the church throughout our history. It is an occasion to remember the teachings of Jesus Christ and how they have influenced the actions and ministry of the church through the years.
- Serve as a bridge between the past, present, and future. It encourages the church community to reflect on its heritage while also looking forward to the future with hope and

vision. It provides an opportunity to consider how we can continue to grow, adapt, and serve the evolving needs of its members and the wider community moving forward.

- Sharpen the faith, dedication, and perseverance of a community of believers who have faithfully carried the torch of their faith, leaving a lasting impact on countless lives and generations to come.

As we celebrate this glorious milestone, we reminisce on the countless lives that have been positively impacted by the love and ministry of Mt. Zion Baptist Church. We express thanks to the many faithful saints who raised their children in the faith, taught and led sinners to the love of Jesus, and poured their hearts and souls into ensuring Mt. Zion would always remain a devoted church unto the glory of the LORD. We are greatly indebted to the faithful members and late saints who paved the way for the church's development, growth, and heritage. Above all, we celebrate our foundation and the cornerstone of our faith; the Lord, Jesus Christ.

On behalf of all those who have been blessed and affected by the ministries of Mt. Zion Baptist Church, I extend my heartfelt congratulations on this momentous, 200th anniversary. It is my heavenly petition and earthly determination that our church will forever preach and teach the love of Jesus until His glorious return. I pray that our primary purpose will continue to create an atmosphere where imperfect people can find forgiveness from the Risen Savior, encounter the love of the One True God,

produce genuine Christian fellowship and relationships, preach the complete truth in love, be transformed by our devotion through the Spirit, and prepare disciples to interact with our community and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Daniel Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

John Daniel Johnson
Pastor, Mt. Zion Baptist Church

Chapter Two: History Documented



The Playground Renovations in 2022

A great majority of the history of Mt. Zion Baptist Church has been expounded on from the writings of Ms. Charlotte Taylor in her published work, History of Mount Zion Baptist Church, in 1982. Ms. Taylor was born October 23, 1949, and in July 1964 became a member of Mt. Zion Baptist Church. In 1982, the pastor of the church at that time noted:

"[Charlotte] is a fine Christian whose roots are very deeply embedded in this church. The daughter of Eugene "Shorty" and Mary B. Taylor, she has five generations of the Taylor family buried in the Mt. Zion Cemetery. Her interest in history has deepened over the last five years as she has studied and become aware of the influence of the past on the present and future. Ms. Taylor attended Massey-Draughon Business College in Montgomery and graduated from Chauncey Sparks Technical College in Eufaula, Alabama with a diploma in Secretarial Science. For the past 13 years, she has been employed with the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service in Barbour County. She has served as the treasurer of the Barbour Baptist Association since October 1973, and in 1981, received a plaque in appreciation of her faithful, efficient service. For eleven years, she has faithfully served her church as Church Clerk...We are deeply indebted to her for undertaking and so capably fulfilling the task of writing and giving to us the History of Mount Zion Baptist Church."

—Rev. C.S. Scroggins

The year 1808 may well be recorded as the inauguration date of Alabama Baptist history. The first established record of an active Baptist minister in Alabama was in 1808 in Madison County, when John Nicholson led in the establishment of Flint River Baptist Church, the first Baptist Church founded on Alabama soil.

The Baptist ministers who immigrated to Alabama, along with the early settlers, were mainly men with humble talents and limited education and training. However, they were consecrated, sincere, industrious preachers who apparently were untiring in their efforts to preach the Gospel to the lonely struggling settlers in the new land.

Most of them came with a background of influence which had brought about the Second Great Awakening, that had begun in the rural Baptist Churches in Virginia in 1787, and had swept over the South and West for more than 20 years. God's sovereignty was the keynote of the preaching of the Awakening, and the early preachers in Alabama thundered this message into the ears of the early settlers in the wilds of Alabama. The lonely early settlers were responsive to preaching that reminded them of their dependence upon God.

After the settlers had cleared their fields and built their homes, they began to erect church buildings near the center of each community. These early church buildings were small rectangular buildings constructed of logs, with a door at one end. The logs were hewn to a flat surface on each side and notched together at each corner. The cracks were filled with a mortar made of clay.

Mount Zion's history goes back to Pike County, Alabama. The first settlers came into the Pike County area about 1810 or 1812. They cleared the forest for homes and farms in the eastern section

of the county, near Hobdy's Bridge. Soon after the Creek War in 1814-1816, settlers flooded into Pike County in large numbers. The early settlers who came to make their homes in Pike County were primarily from Georgia and the Carolinas. Among the pioneers, no doubt, were Baptists.

According to available records, the some of the oldest Baptist churches in the area, were Mt. Zion, Bethel, Salem, Briar Creek, and Bethlehem, which were organized in 1824. Mt. Zion's first building was constructed on Pike County Road 6629, near US Hwy 29 in that same year. The church established a cemetery that is still in existence to this date. The cemetery is referred to both as the "Old Mt. Zion Cemetery" and the "Renfroe Cemetery." The following people in buried in this cemetery: Jonie Abercrombie (1898 - 1899), Mary R. Armstrong (1873 - 1873), Epsey M.M. Austin (1829 - 1903), Nancy Ann "Mamie" Austin (1849 - 1935), William J. Austin (1824 - 1903), William J. Austin Jr. (1849 - 1921), Maggie East (1877 - 1949), William A East Sr. (1860 - 1936), William A. East Jr. (1894 - 1924), James F. Faircloth (1882 - 1950), John T. Faircloth (1882 - 1951), Miranda E. Renfroe Faircloth (1881 - 1976), Nancy Hightower Faircloth (1856 - 1910), Willie A. Renfroe Faircloth (1894 - 1963), Elizabeth Fuller (1848 - 1913), Hollinger Fuller (1919 - 1995), Infant Son Fuller, Mary A. Fuller (1923 - 2010), Wiley Fuller (1850 - 1889), Wiley C. Fuller (1886 - 1961), William H. Fuller (1916 - 1916), James A. Harden (1848 - 1912), Eula Mae Harp (1898 - 1899), Henry H. Harp (1868 - 1917),

Elsie Lee Locklar Helms (1867 - 1905), Howard C. Helms (1895 - 1965), Elizabeth W. Hutto (1817 - 1889), Carrie A. Locklar (1879 - 1963), Conley Locklar, Eugene J. Locklar (1882 - 1949), Granny Locklar, Unknown Locklar, Charles T. Minshew (1876 - 1895), Ira Myers (1810 - 1888), Rachel Ann Howell Myers (1828 - 1898), Douglas M. Oakes (1902 - 1937), Eliza Oakes (1903 - 1982), Glenda S. Oakes (1953 - 1953), Gussie Oakes (1913 - 1977), James P. Oakes (1866 - 1929), Jessie Oakes (1954 - 1954), Joseph H. Oakes (1927 - 1991), Linda Lou Oakes (1948 - 1954), Louie H. Oakes (1920 - 1980), Pearlean W. Oakes (1903 - 1941), Shelby H. Oakes (1900 - 1972), Susan Oakes (1956 - 1956), Viola D. Oakes (1914 - 2003), Wade Phillip Oakes (1949 - 1980), William P. Oakes (1923 - 1982), William Red Oakes (1934 - 1984), Georgia V Harp Park (1866 - 1926), Georgia V. Park (1866 - 1926), Eliza Jane Austin Pryor (1859 - 1934), Rev Alonzo "Lonnie" Renfroe (1880 - 1952), Amanda Matilda McCurley McKerley Renfroe (1859 - 1889), Annie Florence Wesley Renfroe (1883 - 1909), Daniel Renfroe, Enoch Renfroe (1832 - 1899), Enoch Renfroe, Florida Fuller Renfroe (1857 - 1928), Foster Q. Renfroe (1916 - 1937), PFC Garvin Edward Renfroe (1923 - 1998), Ida D. Wilkes Renfroe (1878 - 1963), Infant Daughter Renfroe (1903 - 1903), Infant I Renfroe, Infant II Renfroe, Infant III Renfroe, Infant IV Renfroe, Infant V Renfroe, Isaac Quitman Renfroe Sr. (1898 - 1944), James Arthur Renfroe (1886 - 1968), James Scott Renfroe (1909 - 1919), Jennie

Missouri Turner Renfroe (1899 - 1994), John T. Renfroe (1878 - ?), Larry B. Renfroe (1952 - 1965), Lee Ransom Renfroe (1876 - 1918), Levie O. Renfroe (1892 - 1949), PVT Neil Renfroe (1837 - 1862), Quitman Riley Renfroe Sr. (1924 - 1974), Robert H. Renfroe (1915 - 1916), Roy Franklin Renfroe (1919 - 1919), Ruth Wilkes Renfroe (1883 - 1949), Sarah E. Williamson Renfroe (1838 - 1873), Shirley Renfroe (1926 - 1975), Wilson D. Renfroe (1912 - 1917), Winfield S. Renfroe (1851 - 1909), Elizabeth Riley (1829 - 1898), John Thomas Sr. (1777 - 1849), Dallas Williams (1883 - 1935), Georgie H. Williams (1889 - 1925), Infant Son Williams, Pleasant Washington Williamson (1813 - 1881), and Rebecca C. Ingram Williamson (1814 - 1902).

Regrettably, early church records do not provide the names of the founding members of Mt. Zion. During our early years, the church was a member of the Conecuh River Baptist Association of Pike County, Alabama. This association was organized in Hopewell Meeting House on Friday, November 7, 1828. At this meeting, Mt. Zion's sent two members, A. Medlock and R. Lock (this is probably a miscopy of the original and A. Head and R. Lock were the delegates. The Head family was predominant in the area in the 1820's - 1840's, then moved to Texas). The church was recorded to be composed of only 16 members.

Below are the minutes of the first annual meeting of this association which are on record at Samford University Library:

MINUTES OF THE FIRST ANNUAL SESSION OF THE CONECUH RIVER BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, CONVENEED AND CONSTITUTED AT HOPEWELL MEETING HOUSE, PIKE COUNTY, ALABAMA, ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1828, AND CONTINUED UNTIL SUNDAY EVENING FOLLOWING.

The introductory sermon being delivered by Brother Wall from 1st John 4:15 "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God. God dwelleth in him and he in God."

After which the following eight churches: Bethel, Fellowship, Mount Zion, Salem. Hopewell, Providence, Good Hope. and Shiloh were constituted into an Association called the Conecuh River Baptist Association by Brethern James, M.W. Moore and George Brown from the Alabama Baptist Association in conjunction with Elders David Wood, Thomas Wall and Hillsman Hill on the following principles:

- 1. We believe in One only true and living God and there are three persons in Him; the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.*
- 2. We believe the scriptures of the old and new testament are the word of God and the only rule of faith and practice.*
- 3. We believe in the doctrine of eternal and particular election.*

4. *We believe in the doctrine of original sin.*
5. *We believe in man's incapacity to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature. by his own free will and ability.*
6. *We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God only by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.*
7. *We believe that God's elect shall be called. regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Ghost.*
8. *We believe the Saints shall persevere in Grace and never finally fall away.*
9. *We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ and that true believers are the only subjects of these ordinances and that the true and only mode of Baptism is by immersion.*
10. *We believe that the punishment of the wicked will be everlasting and the joys of the righteous will be eternal.*
11. *We believe that no ministers have a right to the administration of the ordinances, only such as the regularly called and come under the imposition of hands by the presbytery.*

Our church ancestors held to these foundational statements for nearly 15 years. At the annual meeting churches in the Conecuh Ridge Baptist Association, a great dissent took place. Shockingly, it was over the issue of ministerial knowledge and the need of teaching and sharing the gospel.

The Conecuh River Baptist Association met with Liberty Church in Pike County in October, 1839. Liberty was one of the stronger churches in those early days. The time had come, in the judgement of the leaders, for a showdown on the issue of missions. Therefore, the Conecuh River Baptist Association, in its 12th Annual Session on October 26, 1839, appointed a committee to draw up a resolution concerning the issue and to present it before the Association for a vote. The committee, consisting of seven messengers (W.J. Pouney, J.M.N. Pugh, A. Driskin, C.A. Dennis, J.R. Smith, A.C. Townsend, and the Moderator, Daniel Dozier), met in the nearby Beulah Church and prepared the resolution. The report of the committee was brought before the Association the next day.

At the time of the reading of the Association's doctrinal resolution there were 28 churches joined in the Association with 851 members. When the final vote was taken, 17 churches voted in favor of the new resolutions, but 8 voted in opposition. The session went on record as opposed to missions and educated ministers and the Association split into two factions. The opposing churches were: Liberty, Fellowship, Salem, Sardis, Clayton, Mt. Zion, New Providence, and Bethel. These eight churches consisting of 252 members withdrew from the Conecuh River Baptist Association and formed a new body, which they called Missionary Baptists.

These “dissidents” went on record with a continual promise to obey the Great Commission by Jesus who stated, " Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20). Several members, displeased that Mt. Zion chose to leave the association, withdrew membership and founded Ramah Baptist Church. A short time later, Mt. Zion would join the Salem Baptist Association and their belief in the commandment to share the Gospel with the world.

The missionary minded believers that remained continued to retain the name of Mt. Zion. They became inactive for brief period, and oral history reveals the church building was used for a school house. In the early 1840's, the log church building was torn down and moved across Pea River to Barbour County. Church services were held under a brush arbor until the log building could be rebuilt.



Example of a Brush Arbor

According to research, the building was erected on the Howell Place, also known as the Bradley Place on Barbour County Highway 9, where services were commenced once more. It was learned that later a disturbance occurred among the church body and the man who owned the land the sanctuary was built nailed up the doors of the church, and forbade the members to have services there. Services were later held on the Lathram Place, also known as the Cox Place, south of the Bradley Place. Unfortunately, there is no record of how long services were held there. However, in 1845 the first church building was constructed at its present location.



Mt. Zion in 1945



1992 Singing - Johnny McLaney, Curtis Rich, Julian Abercrombie, Doyle Sanders & Ollie Johnson



Pre-1945 Picture at Mt. Zion - Johnny McLaney, Curtis Rich, Julian Abercrombie, Doyle Sanders & Ollie Johnson

Chapter Three: The Dissent



The greatest discord among most Christian denominations does not revolve around the type of music or the style of preaching, but on the power of God in the life of a believer. Some denominations believe that it is impossible for a truly, repentant believer to lose their free-gift of salvation; while others teach that one can lose their salvation and must continually repent, be forgiven, and be saved from sin. Some denominations believe that

God gave each person a free will to make individual choices; while others believe that God has predestined all things, including those who will deny the faith and those who will reject it. It was because of these varying disagreements in the fundamental beliefs, our early church divided into the “New School” or Missionary Baptists and the “Old School” or Primitive Baptists. The “Old School” Baptists withdrew from membership and founded Ramah Baptist Church, on US Hwy 29 near Josie, in Pike County. The “New School” believers migrated across the Pea River into Barbour County, and continued the ministerial work we still strongly adhere to.

These core beliefs have framed what we at Mt. Zion have continued to believe and preach. Even though these differences have been established, the central cornerstone will always remain Jesus Christ and His work on the cross. It's important to note that while there is significant diversity among many Christian denominations, we continue to share core beliefs about Christ's divinity, the centrality of scripture, and the significance of Christ's atonement.

Primitive Baptists draw their beliefs directly from the 1611 King James Version of the Bible. They assert that if it can't be supported in Scripture, they will not allow it. Back in the 1830s, there was a grave division in our church body over the following issues:

- First, was the issue of free-will or predestination.

Predestination suggests that God has predetermined the

eternal destiny of every individual, including their salvation or damnation. In the 1830s, many at Mt. Zion began to believe that individuals have the ability to make choices and decisions freely, without any external determinism. Therefore, everyone is responsible for their own actions and decision, and implies moral responsibility for one's life.

- Secondly, a fundamental doctrine in the Primitive Baptist faith is the limited power of Jesus' death on the cross. They hold to the belief that, even though Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament, conceived by the Holy Spirit, was crucified, died, and rose from the dead, but His sacrificial death paid the full sin debt for His elect. They hold that Jesus died to save only His elect, chosen before the foundations of the world. These are a specific number of people who can never be lost. This became a major dissent, as many of began to believe that Jesus died for the salvation of anyone that places their faith in Him, not a chosen few.
- A third divisive argument arose among those who can serve in the church. While we continue to hold to the biblical practice permitting only male clergy, some maintained that this requirement should be extended to anyone who serves in a leadership role in the church: teachers, music leaders, etc. Many of us at Mt. Zion began to understand the spiritual

gifts given by the Holy Spirit to believers. These gifts were given regardless of gender. Romans 12 states, "Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. For just as we have many parts in one body and all the body's parts do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually parts of one another. However, since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to use them properly: if prophecy, in proportion to one's faith; if service, in the act of serving; or the one who teaches, in the act of teaching; or the one who exhorts, in the work of exhortation; the one who gives, with generosity; the one who is in leadership, with diligence; the one who shows mercy, with cheerfulness" (Romans 12:1-8).

- Fourthly, ministers in the Primitive Baptist faith are referred to as "Elders." It is a biblical word, and there is nothing

wrong with referring to a minister as an elder. However, Primitive Baptist followers believe that their elders are to be self-trained, without the necessity of Bible Schools or Seminaries. While we continue to assert that God should call a man to the ministry (and not a seminary), we believe that it is acceptable for a man of God to seek education and grow in the knowledge of the LORD.

- A fifth division was the believe in sending out missionaries into the world. Primitive Baptist affirm that the elect will be saved by Christ and Christ alone. Therefore, no missionary or missionary work can help to save souls. They declare that since mission work is not mentioned in the gifts of the church. Since there are no need for missionaries, there would be no need for Women's Missionary Unions, Brotherhood Ministries, or Mission Boards. Many us felt the necessity of Christ's command to, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I commanded you" (Matthew 28:19). Therefore, a church split was a necessity.
- A sixth division revolves around the use of musical instruments in the church. Since the New Testament does not record musical instruments being used in Christ, Primitive Baptists have not allowed their use.

- Lastly, since Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Training Union, Bible Studies, etc., are not found in the Scriptures, they should be rejected. The New Testament church does instruct mothers to teach their children the Bible at home, but we began to believe that Christian education should be taught in churches also. In addition, since women are to remain quiet in church, they being allowed to speak to teach children in church would be a violation of core beliefs.

Chapter Four: The Land & Buildings



Baptism Service at Mt. Zion Baptist Church about 1904

Front Row - Lola Coggins, Annie Lee Coggins, Bessie Coggins, Bessie Danner, Eula Taylor, Irene Kelly, Gussie Dykes, Fannie Thomas. Second Row - Preacher Reynolds, Joe Olds, Perry Danner, J.R. Taylor, Dennis Scroggins, Duff Scroggins, Pete Abercrombie, Ellis Dawson, Henry Green, Alto Norton, and Preacher "Jim" Gullledge.

The early history of Pike and Barbour Counties is inseparable. Until the formation of Barbour County, on December 18, 1832, almost all present-day Barbour County, south of the old Indian dividing line, was a part of "Old Pike County". Louisville, Alabama, founded in 1817, was the location of the Pike County Courthouse

until Monticello became the seat of government for Old Pike in 1828.

In the July 4, 1889, TROY MESSENGER, Mrs. Minnie Harrell, an early settler of this area, arriving with her father from Twiggs County, Georgia, in 1821, tells of Jesse Burch, a local Methodist preacher, preaching the “first sermon she heard in the county” in 1822 “in the courthouse, then at Louisville.” According to church history, the Louisville Methodist Church was founded at a series of bush arbor meetings held near the old spring in 1820, making it the oldest continuous church in Pike or Barbour Counties. The old Pike County Courthouse at Louisville would later serve as the first Courthouse and County seat of Barbour County, until a suitable building could be constructed at the new town of Clayton, Alabama in 1834.

The Battle of Hobdy’s Bridge (February 1836) and the Battle of Pea River (March 25, 1837) were both fought in the swamp separating the two counties, and the subsequent removal of the Creek Indians from the area resulted in a flood of settlers pouring into the region in the late 1830s and early 1840s. These settlers primarily from South Carolina, North Carolina and Georgia made both sides of Pea River their home, establishing farms, churches, schools, and ultimately cemeteries. In some cases, churches, like Mt. Zion Baptist Church, were formed in Pike County and later moved to their present locations in Barbour County.

Large families settled on both sides of Pea River. Family ties continually crossed county boundary lines as children from these families intermarried. Large families settled on both sides of the river. Regardless of whether you claim Pike or Barbour as your home - we are family. The peoples of west Barbour County and east Pike County share a common heritage, a common history, and a common bond which the muddy waters of Pea River cannot separate. Many of our ancestor's rest under the sacred soil of "Old Pike". [Written by John Phil McLaney, Jr., in Resting In Peace: The Barbour County, Alabama, Photographic Tomb Records: Volume 1]

In the early 1840s, the log church building in Pike County was torn down and moved across Pea River to Barbour County. Church services were held under a brush arbor until the log building could be rebuilt. According to research, the building was erected on the Howell Place, later known as the Bradley Place on County Road 9, where services were started again. It was learned that later a disturbance occurred among the church body and the man who owned the land the building was on nailed up the doors of the church and forbade the members to have services there. Services were later held on the Lathram Place, known later as the Cox Place, south of the Bradley Place. Unfortunately, there is no record of how long services were held there.

By 1845, Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church had moved to its current location, the juncture of County Road 9 and Caraway Lane. According to Mrs. Mary Jane Kelly Caraway, who lived near the church the majority of her life, her mother and grandmother both indicated that the original log church building was located at 9 Caraway Lane, where John P. & Gwendolyn McLaney's shop was located in 2009. The old log church was used as a barn during the early 1900s, until it was torn down.

A Mt. Zion Elementary school was started soon after the church moved to this location in 1845. Classes were held in the old log school house which was located near where the tennis courts are today. Later, a one room building of plank construction (located where the 1970 fellowship hall was built) was used, and this building was expanded in 1922 when a store building was moved from across the road (Huey Lee Sanders place in 2009) and connected to this structure to provide more educational space. When the wooden building became unstable, the elementary school moved into the first floor of the old Woodsman of the World Hall which had been built in 1901 just east of the road that ran in front of the old cemetery.

On October 5, 1851, Mount Zion hosted the 13th Annual Meeting of the Salem Baptist Association and was received into this association at that time and remained in the association until October 1885. In 1890 Mount Zion joined the Eufaula Baptist

Association, which is today known as the Barbour Baptist Association.

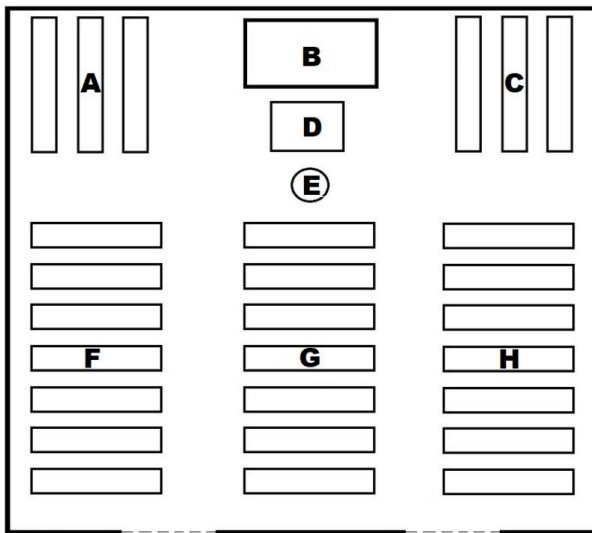
The property on which the church building now stands given by Mr. Thomas "Tommy" Taylor (3rd Great-Grandfather of Charlotte Taylor), according to Mr. Neil O. Myers, a relative of Mr. Taylor's living in Waynesboro, Virginia. Tommy Taylor deeded two acres of land to the deacons for a church around 1845.

Several people have deeded land to the church for the cemetery. John A. Reynolds and S. E. Reynolds, his wife, deeded one-half acre of land to the trustees of the church for burying ground on November 30, 1880. This deed is recorded in the Barbour County Judge of Probate Office, Clayton, Alabama, in Deed Book A on page 3.

In 1881, Matthew Fenn gave two acres of land to the church for burying ground. This deed was filed in the Barbour County Judge of Probate Office, Clayton, Alabama, on March 30, 1903 at 12 o'clock and recorded in Deed Book Y on page 64.

In 1895, a new wood frame building was constructed at Mount Zion. Lumber was hauled by mule-drawn wagons from Louisville, Alabama. Mr. R.A. Kelly built the new church building. The church had two front doors and three sections of pews. The ladies and younger children sat on the right side and the men sat on the left side of the church. The young people and unmarried couples sat in the center section. The pulpit was in the center of the back

(west) wall, with a pump organ directly in front of it. A wood burning heater sat between the congregation and the pump organ. Pews on the left (south) side of the church were used as the "Amen corner", and pews on the right (north) side of the church were for the choir. In 1939 electric lights were installed in the building. In 1933 and again in 1944 the church building was damaged by tornadoes. As a result, on February 11, 1945 the church voted to build a new sanctuary.



Model of the 1895 Church Building (Not to Scale)

A - Amen Corner, B - Pulpit, C - Choir, D - Organ, E - Wood Stove, F - Men's Side, G - Young/Unmarried Section, H - Women's Section

On June 14, 1960, Mary Charlotte Smith and her husband, Dr. C. H. Smith, gave land to the church for cemetery plots. This deed is recorded in the Barbour County Judge of Probate Office, Clayton, Alabama, in Deed Book SS on page 141.

The church purchased land for \$225 from Carrie Bell W. Wesley and her husband J.L. Wesley on March 1, 1972. The deed is recorded in Deed Book C-10 on page 271 in the Barbour County Judge of Probate Office, Clayton, Alabama.

On February 5, 1973, Mr. J. B. Emerson donated to Mount Zion Church a plot of land known as the Smith Place. This deed is recorded in the Deed Book C-14 on page 351 in the Barbour County Judge of Probate, Clayton, Alabama.

The last land to be given was that to which to build the pastorium. This plot of land was deeded to the church on July 9, 1976, by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Caraway. This deed is subject to the Reversionary Clause hereinbelow:

In the event the premises described herein shall cease to be used by said Mount Zion Church, its successors or assigns, for religious purposes, it shall thereupon revert to and vest absolutely in the Grantors, their heirs and assigns, forever.

This deed is recorded in the Deed Book C on pages on 45 and 46 and was file August 4, 1976 at 9:00 a.m. in the Barbour County Judge of Probate Office, Clayton, Alabama.

The current church building was constructed just south of the 1895-1945 building, and was enlarged. The lumber for the new building was purchased from Mr. Arthur Green, and Mr. T.R.

Sanders was the contractor. The old church building, and the two-story Woodsmen of the World Building (which had been used as a school house) were both torn down and lumber from both were used in constructing the new building. The new building was constructed with a vaulted ceiling, had two front doors, four windows on the south side, three windows and a door on the north side, which was used to bring coffins in and out of the sanctuary for funerals.

In 1950, Sunday School rooms were added to the back of building, which included the first indoor restrooms. Up until this time, outhouses served this purpose: a three-hole bench for the women was located at the back gate between the African-American cemetery and the old cemetery, while a one seat toilet for the men was located just east of the baptismal pool, down at the spring, near the Huey Lee Sanders house (across the street from the present location).

The annual Sacred Harp Sing was held at Mount Zion on the second Sunday in May and drew large crowds. According to a newspaper article, in 1894 there were over 1,500 people in attendance at the all-day sing and dinner on the ground after the event.

The old baptismal pool for Mt. Zion was located across the road under the old oak trees at the Huey Lee Sanders place. Fed by a natural spring, the pool was originally made of wood. Later a cement block pool was constructed. This pool was used until the

indoor church baptistry was installed. The old spring provided some of the coldest water anywhere around, as many of the older members of Mt. Zion can attest to. The old baptismal pool became unsafe and was filled up by John Phil McLaney, Jr., Johnny McLaney and Huey Lee Sanders in the early 1990s. Up until that time, the pool was always covered by a wooden top which the children were warned to never get near for fear of falling into the dry pool. The pool was made of two different types of cement blocks, and in later years, the older blocks used in the construction of the lower sides of the pool just crumbled to dust. Water for the church was pumped uphill from a reservoir near the spring to the church house. After "city water" came to the area with the formation of the West Barbour County Water System, the old spring was no longer used for drinking water and soon dried up. A flowerbed surrounded by railroad cross ties marks the location of the old baptismal pool today.

In 1956, two Sunday school rooms and a vestibule were added to the front of the building, asbestos siding was added to the building, and the first air conditioners were added. In 1970, the first fellowship hall was built and the sanctuary remodeled; including a total re-designing of the pulpit area. During these renovations, an indoor baptistry was installed in the church. Mrs. Jean Olds Penders, a member of the church, painted the mural on

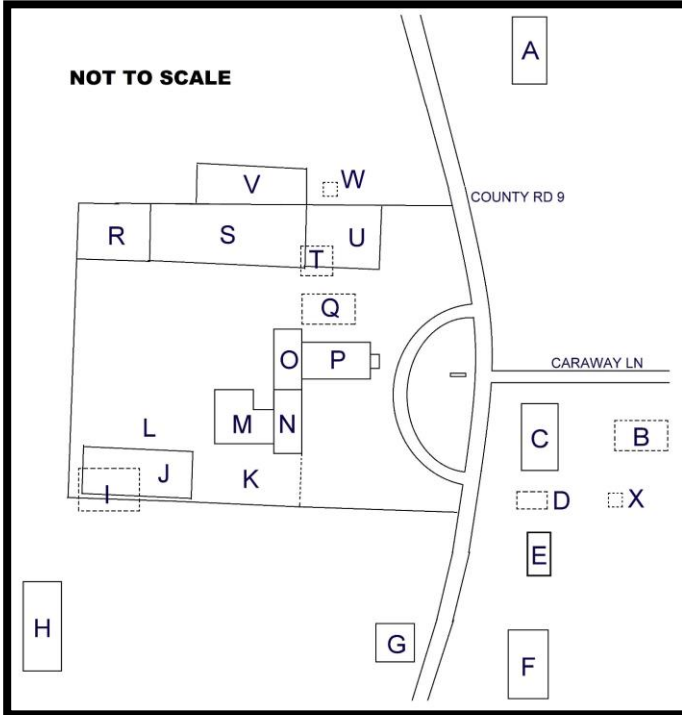
the wall behind the baptistry. The first person baptized in the new baptistry was Larry Dykes.

After the renovation, the church held a dedication service on October 18, 1970. There they rededicated themselves by stating, *“We present this building to be dedicated to the glory of God and the service of men. ‘How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of host: Except the Lord build a house, they labor in vain who build it. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name.’ To the glory of God the Father, who has called us by His grace; to honor His Son, who illuminates and strengthens us. To Thee, O Lord, we dedicate this house for the worship of God in prayer and praise, for the preaching of the redeeming gospel, and for the observance of the sacred ordinances. We dedicate this house, for the hallowing of family life, for teaching and guiding the young, for the perfecting of the saints, for the promotion and righteousness, and for the extension of the Kingdom of God. We dedicate this house in gratitude for the labors of all who love and serve this church; in loving remembrance of all those who have finished their course, in hope of a blessed immortality through Jesus Christ our Lord, we dedicate this house. We now, members of the body of Christ, grateful for our heritage, and sensible of our responsibility, do dedicate ourselves anew to the worship and service of Almighty God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”*

In 1981 & 1982, the church underwent a massive remodeling: new round top frosted glass windows were installed, the funeral

door on the north side was closed and replaced by a window, a back window was removed from both the north and south side of the church, the choir loft was enclosed, new doors to the choir loft and back Sunday school rooms installed, new choir rail added, wainscoting on the outside walls was removed, a new steeple was installed, all sheetrock was removed and replaced, the two original front doors were closed off, and new pews and wall to wall carpet were purchased.

Sometime in the late 1980s, the fellowship hall addition was completed, adding new restrooms, a nursery, and larger fellowship room. In March of 2005, a massive hail storm destroyed all the windows on the south side of the church. As a result, a massive remodeling was completed, including new lighting, new stained-glass windows, replacement of all siding on the church, converting the front Sunday school rooms into a pastor's study and audio control room, removal of the old gas space heaters from all areas, and painting of the choir rail.



A - Pastorium, B - Location of Old Building When Moved Across the Road and Used a Barn in 1895, C - Westbrook Home, D - Baptismal Pool (1840s-1970s), E - Residence, F - Gates Home, G - Volunteer Fire Dept., H - Location of Brick School Building (1933-1949), I - Old Log School House (Began in 1800s), J - Basketball Court, K - Playground #1, L - Playground #2, M - Fellowship Hall Addition in 1990s, N - Fellowship Hall Built in 1970 and Location of Another Wood School Building in the Early 1900s, O - Sunday School Area Built in 1950s, P - Current Sanctuary Built in 1945, Q - Location of Old Church (1845-1895), R - Back Cemetery, S - Old Cemetery, T - Old Woodmen of the World Hall (1901-1945), U - New Cemetery, V - African American Cemetery, W - Women's Outhouse, X - Men's Outhouse

State of Alabama }
 Barbour County }
 that we John A }
 Reynolds & A. C. Reynolds
 his wife } for and in consider-
 ation of the Respect and interest
 we have for the Grave yard at
 Mt Zion Church ^{in Barbour County} } that the Said
 Grave yard and Burying ground may
 be better cared for we do hereby give
 Grant and convey unto the trustees
 of Said Grave yard (viz) Callars Fern
 John Haslar R. C. Brabham B. W.
 Emerson W. B. Lane S. V. Co. H. M.
 Boyd, and their Successors in office
 the following Described Real Estate
 (viz) one half of an acre of Land
 Lying and being in the N.E. 1/4 of W. 8 1/4
 of Section Twenty Township 10 R 24
 So as to include the Grave yard at
 Mt. Zion Church to have and to
 hold to the Said Trustees and their
 Successors for Ever in testimony whereof
 we have hereunto set our hands and
 seals on this the 20th day of November
 1880
 in the presence of }
 J. S. Boyd }
 J. S. Green }
 J. A. Reynolds }
 A. C. Reynolds }

The 1880 Deed to the Church Grounds

175th anniversary
**Mt. Zion Baptist Church
celebrates milestone**

BY RHONDA SANDERS

Mt. Zion Baptist Church near Louisville recently celebrated

from Columbus adorned the driveway to remind everyone of older days. Portraits of previous pastors hung on the wall in the



PRESENTS PLAQUES - Barbour County Associational Director R C Belcher presents a plaque to the Rev. Jim Corley, pastor of Mt. Zion Baptist church, commemorating the church's 175th anniversary.

175 years of service to the Lord in combination with homecoming..

Mt. Zion's history starts in 1824 in Josie, AL, with 16 members. The first church building was constructed in 1845 at its present location. In the beginning, there were three sections of pews, one for the men, one for the women and small children, and one for youth and unmarried couples.

The Rev. Jim Corley preached to a full house on September 21, 2003. Chairs had to be placed in the aisles, foyer and choir area to accommodate all those attending the service.

Months of planning were evident. Classic and antique cars

fellowship hall. Many of the church members wore old-fashioned clothing. Old farm equipment was also on display in the church yard, and everyone received an old-timey fan as a memento.

Associational Director R C Belcher presented plaques from the Barbour Baptist Association and the Alabama Historical Society commending the church for their accomplishment.

After the Sunday morning service, everyone was invited for lunch in the fellowship hall, and then gathered back in the sanctuary where all ages of church members and guest singers, even some from as far as Graceville, FL, participated in a song service celebration.

Chapter Five: More Services = More Worship



New Members in 2023
(Some are Not Pictured)

Today, Mt. Zion holds three services each week to learn, grow, and worship the Risen Savior (10:00 AM & 11:00 AM on Sunday, and 6:00 PM on Wednesdays). In the early days, church services were only held once a month, and those services were held on the 4th Sunday of each month. In 1900, the service dates were changed to the first Sunday of every month, and preaching services began being held on the mornings and evenings in 1949.

Under the pastorate of Rev. Swinson Kimbrough, the church voted to hold serves every 1st and 3rd Sunday in August 1957. In July of 1958, the church voted to hold services every Sunday.

In the early years, church business meetings were held following the worship service on Sunday. At these meetings, people were encouraged to join the church fellowship. As early as 1895, prayer meetings were reported to take place, but were sparse.

From the 1960s through the mid-2010s, Mt. Zion offered many opportunities to our members for training and drawing closer to God. Throughout these years, we offered services on Sundays consisting of Sunday School, a morning worship service, and Bible classes and worship service in the afternoon. The church voted to cease Sunday evening events and focus more devotion to the Sunday morning and Wednesday night services in the mid-2010s.

Mt. Zion has undergone various changes in the past 15 years, and one notable shift is the discontinuation of Sunday afternoon Training Union and worship services. This decision has been influenced by several factors, including evolving demographics, changing priorities, and the rise of alternative forms of worship. One significant reason for this change is the lack of participation of church members. Society is constantly evolving, and it is the responsibly of the church to meet their needs, without compromising the message.

Unlike previous generations, we now have immediate access to God's Word, worship services, and social interaction thanks to the internet community. While online service will NEVER replace the necessity gathering together, it is a benefit. Scripture commands us to not abandon "our own meeting together, as is the habit of some people, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near" (Hebrews 10:25). The message must remain the same, but the delivery must meet societal demands to share the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ with those who want salvation through Him.

In 2020, everyone across the planet had their lives altered because of the deadly virus, known as COVID-19. Alabama, along with the federal government, ordered the closing of churches and business, declaring a State of Emergency. For nearly 4 months, were forced to cease worship in our church building on County Road 9, but our church did not stop gathering together. We know that our church is not confined to four walls. Our church was created in the Gospels, with Jesus being our head and we being the varying parts.

During this time, we began hosting live, online worship services, which allowed our church body to remain in continual fellowship with one another. An online prayer-chain was established that permitted our members to connect with each other with the push of a button. Though separated by illness and

locations, we were able to share the love of Jesus and preserve the true message unceasingly. We also began posting our services on our church website, and currently receive over 6,000 visitors per month. We have received messages from people across the United States, and even a body of believers in the Philippines who have been impacted by our online services. For over a year, a church in the Philippines joined us online every week until they were able to call a pastor for their congregation.

In 2022, we acted on faith to create additional small group studies for our members. Within a year, Sunday School attendance tripled in size. Classes began being offered to children in every age group, a new teen's class was established, and new young adults' class was created. These smaller groups are essential to maintain friendship, fellowship, and following Christ to a fuller commitment. Even our young teens and college age students began joining together on Sunday afternoon for Bible Study, Prayer and Fellowship.

In 2023, the fellowship hall was refurbished, including repainting by the Williams Family, and a replacement of all the carpet. The overgrow flower beds were restored by several men of the church and three A/C units were replaced.



The 2023 Flower Bed Renovation

From our conception, Mt. Zion has affirmed the belief that salvation is not just for us, but for every corner of the globe. The church is not about a building, but a relationship. Through this belief and obedience to God's command, He has increased the membership of Mt. Zion expeditiously.

Throughout history, the term "church" has been commonly associated with a physical structure, often adorned with architectural beauty and religious symbols. However, the essence of our church extends far beyond bricks and mortar. At our core, the church is the collective body of believers, united by faith, and committed to living out the teachings of Jesus Christ. The true church transcends our walls and embraces the essence of community, faith, and shared belief.

A church, first and foremost, is a gathering of believers in Christ who find strength, support, and encouragement in one another. While the physical building plays a function in facilitating communal worship, the true significance lies in coming together to express devotion, gratitude, love, and reverence for Jesus Christ. The focus is not on the building (the color of the carpet, the stain on the ceiling, or our personal comforts, but on the spiritual communion that occurs when hearts harmonize in prayer, songs, worship and thanksgiving. The church exists to provide a nurturing environment for fostering spiritual growth, personal development, mentoring, counseling, and guidance. Through the sharing of wisdom, experiences, challenges, and victories, we are better able find strength, guidance, and encouragement. In a nutshell, our church actively seeks to serve and engage with the community we are a part of; emphasizing the need to spread love, compassion, and goodwill. By engaging in such actions, we demonstrate our commitment to embody Christ's teachings of love, mercy, and justice. Mt. Zion is not about a building, but a genuine sense that we are to go everywhere that will ultimately bring honor and glory to our Savior.

In 2023, Mt. Zion experienced the greatest increase in membership in over 100 years. The picture at the beginning of the chapter details many of those who joined our church family. Those that chose to unite with our church in 2023 were: Myrlene "Mo" Caraway, the Clark Family (Rustin, Kayla, Caroline & Mia), the

Currie Family (Jeremy, Ashley, Ruger & Case), the Hagler Family (Nate, Melanie, Jaxon Baker & Natalee), the Perry Family (Kinnen, Raeleigh & Oakland), the Phillips Family (Kevin, Michelle, Kaydee & Zach), the Pickett Family (Jason, April & Claudia), Von & Tammy Sawyer, Tommy & Tonya Thomas, and the Williams Family (Kristy, Lane, Kyle, Sylvanna, Caleb, Shyanne & Samantha).





Mt. Zion's Christmas Party Attendees in 2023

*"Experiencing God...
Building Relationships...
Preaching With Power...
Discovering Talents...
& Growing with Christ!"*

Mt. Zion's Mission Goal and Mission Statement

Chapter Six: The Ministers of Mt. Zion



Pre-1945 Photo

Stafford Scroggins, Haywood Sheppard, Louie Olds, A.D. Olds (Teacher),
Lamar Green, Wilmer McClendon, J.B. Moats, Horace Todd, John Foy
Napper, James Huey Phillips, Lemon Baker, Luvern Williams, Curtis Dykes, B.
Thomas.

Through the years, Mt. Zion has been fortunate to have dedicated men of God to lead us. Their education and experience have varied vastly, but their love for Jesus has been displayed by their dedication to preaching, loving, and the watchful care of the God's children. According to early oral records, Ira Myers was one

of the first pastors of the church. He is buried in the old cemetery of Mt. Zion in Pike County. As the rule in other Baptist churches, pastors were called to the church by a majority vote from the membership. The pastors received little pay in the late 1800's and early 1900's. In 1906, Pastor J.A. Seay received only \$26.85 a year as his salary. Our church has had many pastors who were currently enrolled in undergraduate work at a Bible College. Called pastors have had education ranging from no education to a Ph.D, and have ranged in age from 21 to 80. Some pastors have travelled long distances to bring the Sunday messages, and others pastored multiple churches while serving our church. Pastor E.W. Blow (1962-1966) was the first minister that lived on the church field in a rented house from Mr. George Dewey Currie.

The following pastors have served our church throughout history: William Lee (1852-1854), W.W.B. Weston (1854), W.H.C. Perkins (1869), W.T. Mosely (1889-1891), George Washington Harrison (1892-1898), J.A. Phillips (1899), J.M. Loftin (1900-1903, 1907-1910), David C. Allen (1904-1905), J.A. Seay (1906), J.W. Reynolds (1911-1915, 1928-1929), Fletcher M. Shirah (1917-1920), Alonza Renfroe (1921-1927, 1931-1934), W.C. Henson (1930, 1934-1938), A.B. Canant (1939-1941), W.T. James (1941-1948), Keidell Thomas (1948-1954), James W. Harden (1954-1955), Swinson Kimbrough (1955-1956, 1957-1961), Dowling Woodham (1956-1957), E.W. Blow (1962-1966), Ottis G. Cobb (1966-1968), L. Roy Gober (1968-1971), John Hipps (1971-1972),

Wade Atwell (1972-1975), Jerry Long (1975-1977), C.S. Scroggins (1977-1980), Curtis Rich (1980-83, 1987-98, 2014-2015) Robin Sims (1984-1985), Dr. L.G. Meadows (1985), Roy Atkins (1985-1987), Jim Corley (1998-2007), Josh Pierce (2007-2010), Dr. Don Hatcher (2011-2013), Ross Kilpatrick (2013-2014), Roger Waldrop (2016-2017), and John Daniel Johnson (2018-Present).

RESUME OF VARIOUS PASTORS

G. W. Harrison was licensed May 31. 1884. and ordained August 30. 1886. at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church. The first Sunday School was organized under his leadership.

J. A. Phillips was born in Barbour County. He was licensed September 15, 1888, and ordained June 30, 1895, at Elam Church. He pastored the church in 1899.

J. W. Reynolds was the first to pastor the church on two different occasions (1911-1915 and 1928-1929). While pastoring the church he lived in Ariton, Alabama. Coming to preach, he would ride the train to Louisville, Alabama, where some of the church members would pick him up and bring him out to the church field. On Monday morning they would carry him back to Louisville and put him on the train to go home. At this time, the church was paying him \$100 a year. Rev. Reynolds was always paid at the end of each month. One thing which has been remembered

about him is that he would always say, "You owe me \$8.33 & 1/3 cent." He always stressed this one-third cent.

Fletcher Marion Shirah was born January 16, 1881, and died February 1, 1959. He was licensed to preach February 2, 1908, by Pine Level Baptist Church and ordained there May 30, 1909. For 49 years he pastored numerous churches in Southeast Alabama. He served Mount Zion from 1917 to 1920.

Alonza Renfroe pastored the church two different times. He lived in Pike County and his membership was at Bethel Baptist Church in Banks, Alabama. Rev. Renfroe preached on fourth Saturdays and Sundays and rode on a buggy. He was also a farmer. One time while he was pastoring Mount Zion, he was pastoring six other churches at the same time. Rev. Renfroe is buried in the church's old cemetery near Josie, Alabama.

W. C. Henson served as pastor in 1930 and 1934-1938. During his long years of ministerial work, he served as pastor of many churches in Alabama. Ten years of his fruitful ministry were rendered to the people of the Louisville Baptist Church of which he was pastor from 1928 to 1938. He retired from active pastorates in 1942, but continued to hold revival meetings and do supply work until ill health terminated this work. Those who knew Rev. Henson were sincerely devoted to him in loving appreciation of his faithful ministry.

Amuel Berry Canant pastored the church from 1939 to 1941. He was married to Haullie F. Bounds and they had four children.

Rev. Canant attended Howard College and Southern Baptist Seminary in New Orleans. While pastoring a church in Wilton, Alabama, he sat in on many classes at Montevallo College. During his ministry at Mount Zion, Rev. Canant's pay was the day's offering. Once it was 6¢.

Keidell Thomas was called to Louisville Baptist Church in 1947. Soon after moving to Louisville, Alabama, he was called to serve Bethlehem, Prospect and Mount Zion Churches on Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons. During his ministry at Mount Zion he baptized 70 persons into the fellowship of the church.

Swinson Kimbrough was ordained September 23, 1951, at Northside Baptist Church, Troy, Alabama. He attended Howard College. Rev. Kimbrough is married to Virgie Kimbrough and they have one son, Donald (Donnie). Rev. Kimbrough served the church on two different occasions. During his ministry, the church moved from half-time to full-time services and adopted a budget. He served as Vice-Moderator of the Barbour County Baptist Association in 1959-60.

L. Dowling Woodham was ordained May 2, 1952, at Prospect Baptist Church. He attended Baptist Bible Institute Graceville, Florida (Baptist University of Florida). Rev. Woodham is married to Shellie Mae Warr Woodham, and they have six children. During his ministry at the church several accepted Christ and Mr. Tommie (Tom) Thomas was licensed and ordained to preach the Gospel.

Since leaving this church, Rev. Woodham has pastored several other churches.

E. W. Blow moved onto the church field in February, 1962. He was ordained in 1953 at Macedonia Baptist Church. Birmingham. Alabama. He is married to Vermelle Blow and they have two daughters, Dianne and Brenda, and four grandchildren. Rev. Blow was very active in the Association. He served as Moderator, Vice-Moderator. Chairman of Missions Committee, and Chairman of Evangelism Committee. At the July 16, 1963, Executive Committee Meeting of the Barbour County Baptist Association, the Mission's Committee reported that Rev. Blow had organized a Mission at Antioch. At this time, the Mission's Committee presented an application for pastoral aid for Rev. Blow. The application was approved by the Executive Committee with the recommendation that \$50 per month be granted to this cause. During his ministry at Mount Zion, there were 41 baptized, 14 members received by letter, and the church enrollment reached its peak of 277. The following preachers brought messages during summer revivals: Rev. Travis Hitt, Rev. Joe Brown, Rev. Buddy Hanna, Rev. Comer Williamson, and Evangelist Jimmy Chapman. The light fixtures in the sanctuary were installed and the first restroom was installed in the church. During his ministry the church had singings on the fourth Saturday night in each month. In August of 1966 he was dismissed from the church.

Ottis Cobb accepted the pastorate of the church on October 9, 1966, at an annual salary of \$3510. He is married to Thelma Cobb and they had one daughter, Brenda, and one granddaughter. The Cobbs lived in Ariton, Alabama. Rev. Cobb served well in the pulpit and the church community. He was well respected by all. During his ministry a singing school was conducted by him. The church bought 100 new Baptist Hymnals which are presently being used (as of 1982). Rev. Cobb may also well be remembered for his poetry. In 1969, he published a book entitled 100 Poems with a Message. He resigned June 9, 1968. and accepted a call to pastor Richland Baptist Church in Pike County. While pastoring there, his soul passed from his frail body into heavenly eternity.

L. Roy Gober became the pastor of our church in September, 1968. He accepted the call at an annual salary of \$3640. Rev. Gober was ordained in December 1968, at Pleasant Valley Baptist Church, Attalla, Alabama. He attended Etowah High School and Gadsden State College. He is married to Larue O. Gober, and they have two daughters and one son. Rev. Gober was a student at Baptist Bible Institute (Baptist University of Florida).

Curtis Rich surrendered his life to the call to preach in 1960. He was licensed in his home church (Kinsey Baptist Church) in 1960, and ordained in 1961. He has served churches in Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama. He became the Director of Missions

(DOM) in Bullock Centennial Association, and served from 2006-2008. He then served as the DOM in the Barbour Association. His longest tenure in the pastorate has been at Mt. Zion. Even though he has served our church at various times, he has served the church for nearly 18 years. He was instrumental in the renovations to the church and pastorium, the addition of the steeple, and the paving of the church driveway. He attended school in Houston County and attended Norman Junior College in Georgia. He later graduated from The Baptist College of Florida (Florida Baptist University). He is married to Dorothy Elaine Rich.

Don Hatcher is married to Trish, and they celebrated their 54th Wedding Anniversary in 2023. They are the parents of three children and have twelve grandchildren. Their oldest son, Don Jr. is a pastor in Niceville, FL and their son-in-law, Jeremy Davis, is a pastor in Dothan, AL. Don will celebrate his 50th anniversary in the ministry in July 2024. He was the pastor at Mt. Zion from March 2011 until March 2013. Before coming to Mt. Zion, Don pastored fulltime at four churches in Pensacola, Miami, Mobile, and Troy. In 2013, he began serving the Barbour Baptist Association as the Associational Mission Strategist and still serves in that capacity. Don attended the University of South Alabama. He has a Bachelors Degree in the English Bible (1976), a Masters Degree in Theology (1980), and a Doctorate in Theology (1984).

John Daniel Johnson began pastoring Mt. Zion on February 4, 2018. He is married to Jessica, and they have three girls: Trinity,

Tiffany, and Charity. He was ordained in 2003, and has served churches domestically and internationally for 20 years. He is a highly-decorated United States Army Combat Veteran, and served from 2001 to 2009, serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. He completed a Theological Degree in 2004 from The Baptist College of Florida (Baptist University of Florida), and continued graduate biblical studies at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Liberty University. He has a Master of Science in Criminology from Troy University, written six books, and is a police officer in Pike County, Alabama.

Photos of Our Pastors



Allen



Atwell



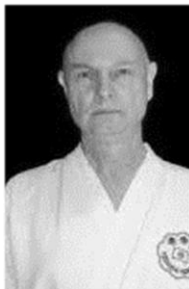
Blow



Canant



Cobb



Corley



Gober



Green



Harden



Harrison



Hatcher



Henson



Hipps



James



Johnson



K. Thomas



Kimbrough



Kilpatrick



Long



Olds



Pierce



Renfroe



Reynolds



Rich



Scroggins



Shirah



Thomas



Waldrop



Woodham

:

Ministers from Mt. Zion

A number of ministers were raised and called to preach from within the walls of Mount Zion. These men were: C. S. Scroggins, James W. Harden, Wallace V. Green, Louie Olds, Tommie (Tom) Thomas. Charlie Sheppard, John Phil McLaney, Jr., and Justin T. Abercrombie.

C. S. Scroggins was ordained into Gospel Ministry the fifth Sunday in June, 1947. Rev. Lowe of Abbeville. Alabama. Preached the ordination sermon.

On Sunday, February, 1950, **James W. Harden** stated to the church that he felt the call to the ministry. The church voted

unanimously to license him to preach. Then in January, 1952, Mr. Harden was ordained for the work of the Gospel Ministry. He was satisfactorily examined by Dr. Andrew M. Smith. Special prayer was by Rev. Keidell Thomas. The ordination sermon was by Dr. A. Y. Napier. Charges were given by Rev. C. H. McKnight. Rev. C. S. Scroggins presented a beautiful Bible to Rev. Harden. Rev. Harden married Flossie Dykes Harden, and they had two daughters and one son.

In August, 1953, **Wallace V. Green** made the statement to the church that he was called to preach the Gospel. He asked the members of the church to license him and they did. On November 27, 1955, at 3:00 p.m., Mr. Green was ordained at Monticello Baptist Church. Banks. Alabama. Rev. Green attended Baptist Bible Institute. Graceville, Florida. He has pastored churches in Pike, Coffee, Dale, Barbour, Houston, Calhoun. and Jefferson Counties in Alabama and Liberty County in Florida. He has served as Associational Vice Moderator, Associational Clerk. Chairman of Evangelism. Instructor in Associational Work. and Member of Associational Committees. Rev. Green married Celia Johnson Green and they have three children. He was invited back to Mount Zion in the summer of 1980 to conduct revival services.

Louie Olds joined the church in July, 1940. He was ordained in October. 1955. at Kendrick Memorial Baptist Church. He married Maurine McLendon Olds and they had six children.

Tommie (Tom) Thomas was licensed and ordained at Mount Zion. Rev. L. Dowling Woodham recommended him to the church. He was ordained in 1957 while Rev. Woodham was pastoring the church. Rev. Thomas' first pastorate was Evergreen Baptist Church. He also pastored a number of churches in Pike County. Rev. Thomas and his wife, Sallie Elizabeth (Lizzie) Trawick Thomas had one daughter, Tommie Mae (Mrs. Odell Dykes), three grandchildren, and one great-grandson.

John Phil McLaney, Jr. is the son of Johnny and Gwen Sanders McLaney. He was ordained into the Gospel Ministry in April 1993 at Mt. Zion Baptist Church. For over 35 years, he has been involved in ministry, and is the Assistant



Pastor of Ramah Church. He attended Bethany Bible, holds a Bachelors in Social Science from Troy University, and a Masters Degree in Library & Information Studies from the University of Alabama. He is married to Mary, and they currently live in Enterprise, Alabama, with their two sons, Casey and Justin.

Justin Thomas Abercrombie was adopted as an infant by Julian and Deborah Abercrombie in 1984, and they raised him to love and obey the Lord Jesus through the people of Mt. Zion

Baptist Church. He is married to Cammie, and they have three boys, Nathanael (9), Shepherd (6), and Thomas (2). After six years of serving as a loan officer in two banks, he believed that the LORD was calling him to serve Christ with all his time and effort. This was confirmed by the church when Justin was licensed to preach on November 21, 2010. He then accepted a pastorate at Center Ridge Baptist Church in Ariton, Alabama, ordained on December 7, 2014, and faithfully served there for five years. He has served on staff at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, and is currently Pastor of Shepherding and Discipleship at Fisherville Baptist Church outside of Louisville, Kentucky. He received a BSBA from Auburn University in 2005, an MBA from Troy University, in 2007, and Master of Divinity in 2015 and a Doctorate of Educational Ministry in 2019 from Southern Seminary.



L-R: Cammie, Deborah, Nathanael, Thomas, Julian, Justin, & Shepherd

Chapter Seven: Our Staff and Leaders



The role of a deacon at Mt. Zion is an important one, as deacons are typically seen as servant-leaders who assist the pastor and church congregation in various ways. They are often responsible for ministering to the practical and spiritual needs of the church members, as well as assisting in the administration of church ordinances such as baptism and the Lord's Supper. They may also be involved in visitation of the sick and elderly, as well as

helping to care for the practical needs of the church building and property.

Above all, the primary role of a deacon is being a faithful and strong believer in Jesus Christ, actively serve the church community and support the pastor in leading the congregation. Deacons are often seen as role models within the church, exemplifying a life of faith and service. In addition to their practical responsibilities, they are to be spiritual leaders in their home, in the church, and in the community. The role of a deacon at Mt. Zion is one of service, leadership, and spiritual guidance, with a focus on meeting the practical and spiritual needs of the church community. Thankfully, we have been blessed to have many of these types of men serve our church.



The Licensing of Justin Abercrombie in 2011.

Justin is pictured holding the certificate. He is surrounded by the deacons of the church. From L-R, the deacons present are: Doyle Sanders, Ronnie Sanders, Odell Dykes, Jeffery Dykes, Julian Abercrombie, Leo Dawson, and Johnny McLaney.

The first record of deacons was found in 1900. The list of deacons that have faithfully served Mt. Zion have been (in order of election): Robert P. Howell (1900), J.H. Scroggins (1900), Travis Sims (1904), Oscar H. Taylor (1904), J.F. Taylor (1906), A.H. Olds (1906), Guss Green (1934), Oscar Green (1934), Will Boyd (1934), Charlie Olds (1934), Ellis Dawson (1934), Clifford Phillips (1945), Glenn Olds (1945), Charlie Sheppard (1945), Willie Dykes (1950), Odell Dykes (1950), Tommie Thomas (1950), Arthur Green (1950), Jimmie Dykes (1957), Louie Baker (1957), Dewey Coggins (1957), Doyle Sanders (1957), Huey Lee Sanders (1957), Tommy McLendon (1957), Julian Abercrombie (1979), George Dewey Currie (1979), Johnny McLaney (1979), Ronnie Sanders (2007), Jeffery Dykes (2007), Leo Dawson (2007), and Tommy Westbrook (2016).

As of 2024, Mt. Zion is honored to have these men serve our church in the position of deacon:



ABERCROMBIE



DYKES



MCLANEY



SANDERS



WESTBROOK

Christian Education

Christian education plays a vital role in the life of Mt. Zion, serving as a means of nurturing and equipping believers for spiritual growth, service, and ministry. It encompasses a broad range of educational activities aimed at deepening believers' understanding of the Christian faith, promoting spiritual formation, and empowering individuals to live out their faith in the world. One of the primary goals of Christian education at Mt. Zion is to provide a solid foundation in biblical knowledge and theological understanding. This involves the study of scripture, Christian doctrine, church history, and ethics. Through classes and small group studies every individual is given the opportunity to grow in their understanding of the Bible and the teachings of the Christian faith.

Beyond intellectual knowledge, biblical education seeks to foster spiritual formation and personal growth. This included practices such as prayer, meditation, spiritual disciplines, and the cultivation of Christian virtues. The aim is to help individuals deepen their relationship with God, grow in their faith, and

develop a Christ-like character. Furthermore, Christian education provides training in areas such as evangelism, discipleship, pastoral care, and leadership development. These equipping efforts allow individuals to engage in various forms of ministry and outreach, utilizing their gifts and talents for the benefit of others. Christian education in the church serves to foster a vibrant, informed, and mission-minded community of believers who are equipped to live out their faith in both word and deed. It is a key component of the church's mission to make disciples and to be a light to the world.

In 2023, the following teachers have been faithfully sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ at Mt. Zion:





2023 Teaching Staff

Pictured: Jeffery Dykes (Superintendent), Connie Sanders (Senior Adults), Ronnie Sanders (Senior Adults), April Pickett (Mixed Adults), Kevin Phillips (Mixed Adults), Kayla Clark (Youth & Singles), Kristy Williams (Youth & Singles), Karen Green (Pre-Teens), Michelle Phillips (Pre-Teens), Angela Dykes (Children), Margaret Sanders (Children), Melanie Hagler (Infants) & Jessica Johnson (Nursery)

Secretaries

The position of a secretary at Mt. Zion is not only significant but also carries immense responsibility and dedication. Their exceptional organizational skills ensure that everything runs smoothly and efficiently within the church. Beyond administrative

tasks, the secretary is entrusted with the vital duty of maintaining accurate records and documentation. They play a key role in preserving the church's history by meticulously recording important events, baptisms, weddings, and other significant milestones.

Their attention to detail ensures that these precious moments listed in this book are not lost but rather cherished for generations to come. From administrative duties to record-keeping and fostering effective communication, they are the backbone that ensures the smooth functioning of the church. Their unwavering commitment and passion for their work contribute to the overall spiritual well-being of the congregation. I pray we will always extend our heartfelt appreciation to all the dedicated secretaries who have served Mt. Zion. Their tireless efforts behind the scenes deserve our recognition and gratitude.

The following members have served secretarial duties throughout the years. The dates listed are the dates that servants began their role as the church secretary. These faithful servants are: W.B. Lane (1869), L.L. Cochran (1891), W.J. Sims (1894), Ira Myers (1895), L.L. Cochran (1897), R.A. Kelly (1902), E.W. Spires (1906), J.W. Weston (1907), J.C. Medley (1920), W.M. Boyd (1925), Elba Howell (1930), J.E. Dawson (1930), Stout Weston (1931), Juanita Abercrombie (1940), Roy Olds (1940), W.M. Boyd (1941), Stout Weston (1941), Annie Mae Dykes (1952), Merrill

Dykes (1955), Tommy McLendon (1962), Victor Green (1963), Huey Lee Sanders (1966), Charlotte Taylor (1971-2020), & Jessica Johnson (2020-Present).

Financial Officers

The treasurer of Mt. Zion holds a position of great importance and responsibility. Just as a ship cannot sail without a captain, a church cannot function effectively without a treasurer at its helm. The treasurer serves as the financial steward of the church, ensuring that its financial resources are managed wisely and transparently. They are entrusted with the task of safeguarding the financial integrity of the church, overseeing the budget, and managing the inflow and outflow of funds. This responsibility extends beyond simply keeping track of the numbers; it involves prudent decision-making that aligns with the church's mission and values.

While churches are built on faith, trust, and goodwill, financial matters require an additional layer of accountability. The treasurer provides that necessary oversight, ensuring that funds are handled ethically and in accordance with legal and ethical standards. By maintaining accurate financial records and providing regular reports, they facilitate transparency, allowing the congregation to have full confidence in how their contributions are being utilized. They foster a sense of trust and

unity by ensuring that financial information is communicated clearly and effectively. By engaging with the congregation, they educate and inspire individuals to contribute to the church's mission and vision. This collaboration allows the church to achieve its goals, whether it be improving facilities, supporting charitable causes, or expanding outreach programs. The role of a treasurer in a church cannot be underestimated, as they are the custodians of financial integrity, providing accountability, transparency, and sound financial management. Their expertise and guidance contribute to our sustainability and growth, while fostering trust and unity within the congregation has allowed us to preach and share the gospel these 200 years.

The following members have faithfully served in this role, and the dates included are the date they started in their ministry. Our church treasurers have been: A.H. Coggins (1902), T.E. Owens (1920), J.E. Dawson (1926), Ellis Dawson (1930), J.H. Trawick (1934), Guss Green (1935), H.S. Weston (1937), Guss Green (1941), J.E. Dawson (1946), Clifford Phillips (1947), Merrill Taylor (1951), Louie Baker (1958), Merrill Dykes (1961), & Julian Abercrombie (1984-Present).

Music Ministry



Mt. Zion Choir 2023

Music has played a vital role in history of Mt. Zion. Firstly, it has helped to create an atmosphere of worship and reverence. Music has allowed us to express our faith, joy, and gratitude through harmonious melodies and lyrics. Secondly, music has served a form of spiritual teaching. We sing hymns, choruses and praise songs that help to reinforce our understanding of the Scriptures. Thirdly, when we come together to sing and worship, it creates a sense of togetherness and belonging. Fourthly, music has allowed us to pour out our hearts to God, offering praise, thanksgiving, and supplication. Lastly, music has the power to uplift spirits, provide comfort in times of sorrow, and instill hope in our Savior, Jesus Christ.

In the early days, the church had a pump organ. Mrs. Clyde Baker (grandmother of Charlotte Taylor), who was very active in the church, played this organ until a tragic accident took her life.

She was the first organist mentioned. At an early age of 14, Mary, of Mrs. Baker's daughters and Charlotte Taylor's mother, learned to play this organ 'by ear.' Mary participated in a music class while she was in the fifth grade in school and learned the sound of notes. By recognizing the sound of notes, Mary learned to pick the notes out on the organ. She started playing for the church at 15 years of age and played this pump organ until the church bought its first piano in 1944.

The church has always been fortunate to have several pianists in the congregation. Some of those who have served as elected pianists are: Estelle Dawson McLendon. Tommie Mae Dykes, Janice Coggins Powers, Shirley Cochran, Glenda Green Dykes, Rita Boyd Kinsel, Linda Dykes Helms, Deborah Dykes Abercrombie (present pianist), Louise Dykes and Edwina Currie Dykes, Angela Dykes (present assistant pianist) and Timothy Currie. Tim was the only man ever to serve the church in this capacity.

In September, 1977, a Wurlitzer organ was donated to the church by members and friends. On sale the organ cost \$1,554.80. Mr. Melvin Olds, a former member, donated \$500 of the above amount for the purchase of the organ.

On October 16, 1977, the church voted to call their first minister of music – Bill Metcalf. He accepted this position at an annual salary of \$2600. Bill, a native of Dothan, Alabama, was a

student at Troy State University, majoring in music. The choir showed much progress under his leadership. One main highlight was the presentation of a Christmas Cantata. During Bill's ministry at the church, he started a piano fund. A new Kimball piano was delivered to the church on November 11, 1978. The piano was purchased by contributions made by various interested persons.

During the summer of 1978, Mr. Metcalf left the church to work with the Southwestern Book Company. During his absence, the church voted to ask David Watson. He was a native of Greenville, Alabama. After Mr. Metcalf returned in the fall, both young men decided to stay and share the responsibility of directing the choir. The church agreed for them to do so.

In December, 1978, under the direction of David Watson, the choir presented the cantata entitled "His Love Reaching" by Peterson. These two young men can be given much credit for helping the church see its potential for a good music program. Mr. Metcalf resigned effective February 25, 1979. Mr. Watson resigned in June, 1979, to take a position at Calvary Baptist Church, Eufaula, Alabama. The church regretfully accepted their resignations but wished each God's greatest blessings as they moved on to other places of service.

Although their service was short lived the choir accomplished much. Two Christmas cantatas were presented. The choir participated in a county-wide Music Festival and Hymn Sing at the First Baptist Church in Eufaula, Alabama, and was the featured

choir at an annual "M" Night Program also held in Eufaula at Parkview Baptist Church.

On July 4, 1979, the church called Dwight Green, a Troy State University student majoring in music, to serve as minister of music on a temporary basis. He resigned effective September 1, 1979.

December 5, 1979, the church voted to ask Mrs. Tonja Green, a member of the church to serve as choir director. She very willingly accepted. Mrs. Green served well in this capacity until August 15, 1982, when she and her family moved to Dothan, Alabama.

Over past few years, we have been blessed with musical talents and direction of Ronnie Sanders, Rhonda Sanders Shierling, Jeffery Dykes, Deborah Abercrombie, and Angela Dykes, not to mention all the faithful members that have sung in the church choir.



Singing at Mt. Zion



Standing: Ronnie Sanders, Margaret Caraway Sanders, Johnny McLaney, Gwen Sanders McLaney, Tommy Westbrook, Connie Sanders Westbrook, Douglas Phillips, Sylvia Sanders Phillips / Seated: Huey and Reba Sanders



Jeffrey and Angela Long Dykes met at Mt. Zion years ago. He remembered, "It was the first time I ever saw Angela. My parents couldn't go to church that night, but Angela did. When I got home I told my parents, 'The most beautiful girl in the world was at church tonight.'" Jeffrey tearfully added, "When I got up the courage to ask her for a date; on that very first date, I knew that she was the one for me."

Chapter Eight: Special Events & Singings



December 17, 1977 -

Mt. Zion Choir Presents "Love Transcending"

Front Row: Sylvia Phillips, Mittie Jo Dykes, Charlotte Taylor, Julian Abercrombie, Marty Dykes, Timothy Currie, Carolyn Abercrombie, Frieda Green, Majorie Currie, Gwen McLaney, & Bill Metcalf // Second Row: Louise Dykes, Mary Taylor, Tommie Mae Dykes, Chuck Caraway, Steve McLendon, Jeffery Dykes, Melody Phillips, Edwina Currie, & Deborah Abercrombie

Sacred Harp Singings

Sacred Harp singing is a form of a cappella choral singing that has its roots in early American church music traditions. It takes its name from the shape-note hymnals that were commonly used in this style of singing, one of which was titled "The Sacred Harp."

The style of singing was extremely popular in churches in the American South, particularly in the early 19th century.

In Sacred Harp singing, participants typically gather in a "hollow square" formation, with singers arranged by vocal part (treble, alto, tenor, bass). The musical notation used is based on shape notes, which are a system of music notation designed to facilitate congregational and choral singing. This system assigns different shapes to different pitches, making it easier for singers to read and learn new music. The repertoire of Sacred Harp singing consists primarily of hymns, anthems, and spiritual songs, many of which date back to the colonial and early American periods.

The style of singing is characterized by its powerful, full-throated sound, with an emphasis on unaccompanied vocal harmonies and often vigorous, exuberant singing, without use of musical instruments. The singing is typically robust and participatory, with a focus on the communal experience of making music together.

In 1876, Mt. Zion began hosting May Singings, and the Sacred Harp Singings were always held on the second Sunday. People came from far and near, by various modes of transportation with their basket lunches. They arrived early, and often stayed all day. At noon, people ate their meals on the church grounds and enjoyed a time of fellowship.

On May 19, 1894, the Clayton Courier (newspaper) recorded, "At the singing at Mt. Zion Church near Zeigler on Sunday last, the

number of people in attendance was estimated at 1500 [you read that right, 1500!]. Plenty of food was prepared and all enjoyed the occasion in a most pleasant manner. A gentleman, who gave us the item, remarked that all were in excellent humor, and sociability and great kindness between each other were exhibited by those present."



Sacred Harp Singing at Mt. Zion

175th Homecoming Anniversary

The Eufaula Tribute wrote,

"The strength and faithfulness of close-knit rural community is rapidly being replaced by urban sprawl. But one place it can still be found is in the small Barbour County community known as Boot Hill, about 10 miles from Louisville on Barbour County Road 9. The community recently had good reason to celebrate when one of the cornerstones of the community, Mount Zion Baptist Church, marked 175 years of service to God."

"Mount Zion as a congregation began in Josie in the early 1800s, with only 16 members. The first church building was constructed in 1845 at its present location. Times were very different then, and the church was divided into three sections of pews: one for the men, one for the women and small children, and one for youth and unmarried couples. The church has been a member of the Barbour Baptist Association since 1935. The Rev. Curtis Rich served as the longest-term pastor, and the Rev. John Hipps served the shortest term."

"The 175th anniversary was celebrated in conjunction with homecoming September 21, and Pastor Jim Corley preached to a full house. The crowd was so large, chairs had to be placed in the aisles, foyer and choir area to accommodate all those attending the services. Months of planning was evident. Classic and antique cars from Columbus adorned the driveway to remind everyone of older

days. Portraits of previous pastors hung on the wall in the fellowship hall. Many of the church members wore old fashioned clothing. Old farm equipment was also on display in the churchyard and everyone received an old-timey fan as a memento."

"Associational missionary R.C. Belcher presented plaques from the Barbour Baptist Association and the Alabama Historical Society commended the congregation for its accomplishments. After the Sunday morning service, everyone was invited for lunch in the fellowship hall and then gathered back in the sanctuary where all ages of church members and guest singers, even some from as far as Graceville, FL, participated in a song service celebration. As successful as Mount Zion's past has been, the future looks just as promising. The rural church has a strong youth group of about 30 young people who love the church."

"Rhonda Sanders, 17, grew up near Mount Zion, and attributes the closeness of the church family to the church's isolation. "The church is separated from a lot of what goes on" she said. "Pastor Corley calls it 'Walton's Mountain', because the congregation is like one large family. We all grew up together." Sanders plans to go away to college after she graduates from Dixie Academy, but the thought of leaving the good family environment of her church is difficult. "The older people don't look down on the youth,"

Sanders said. "They encourage the youth and build them up. We all love it."

"Some of the guys in the youth group have a band called "Exceeded Roots" and some of the girls have a singing group, "The Daughters of Zion." The boys have played at youth rallies and the girls have sung at school. Unlike many rural churches that are dying with their aging congregations, Mount Zion, with a strong youth group in place, has the assurance that its 175th anniversary is far from its last."



Pastor Corley Receiving the 175th Anniversary Plaque



Inside the Sanctuary on the 175th Anniversary

Easter Egg Hunts

In many pre-Christian societies, eggs held associations with spring and new life, but early Christians adapted these beliefs, making the egg a symbol of the resurrection, and the empty shell

a metaphor for Jesus' tomb. In the medieval period eating eggs was forbidden during Lent, the 40-day period before Easter. On Easter Sunday the fast ended with feasting and cheerfulness, and eggs were considered an important part of these celebrations. The Protestant reformer, Martin Luther, organized egg hunts for his congregation. The men would hide the eggs for the women and children to find. This was done to symbolize the story of the resurrection, in which the empty tomb was discovered by women.

Throughout the years, Mt. Zion's has held Easter Egg Hunts around the time of the day we celebrate the Death, Burial and Resurrection of Jesus. These events have been a source of joy, laughter, excitement, and fellowship where we teach the true meaning of Easter to our children.



Easter 1989

(Justin Abercrombie, Rhonda Sanders, Amanda Dykes, Whitney Dykes, Melanie Dykes, and Marcey Sanders)



Easter 1992

(Whitney Dykes, Melanie Dykes, Rhonda Sanders, Cristal Caraway, Amanda Dykes, Jeffery Danner, Justin Abercrombie, Jeremy Dykes, Cassie Caraway & Ashley Dykes)



Easter 2023

Vacation Bible School

Mt. Zion has always had faithful servants who desired to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the children of the community. Through the years, we have held Vacation Bible School to serve as a platform for children to deepen their understanding of faith in Jesus and spiritual growth. Through engaging activities, interactive lessons, and biblical teachings, children begin to develop the early foundation of Christian beliefs within a nurturing and joyful environment. It allows them to learn the Christian faith in a fun and interactive way. In addition, VBS has enabled us to strengthen our ties with our community. By opening our doors to children of all backgrounds, we demonstrate our commitment share the Gospel.

VBS has always provide us a window to connect with families who may not regularly attend religious services. For many of us, Vacation Bible School holds a significant place in our hearts. Through its focus on spiritual growth, community outreach, and providing a meaningful summer experience, it serves as a beacon of faith, unity, and education. So, let us continue to embrace and support Vacation Bible School, knowing that it plays a vital role in shaping the lives of our children, strengthening our communities, and fostering a deeper connection with our belief in Jesus.



Vacation Bible School 1991



Vacation Bible School 2023 - In the Summer of 2023, Mt. Zion hosted one of the largest VBS in the history of the church.



Worship Service in Late 2022



Cast in the Children's Play Back in the Late 1980s

Chapter Nine: Plays, Parties, & Parades



Pre-1945 Picture at Mt. Zion

Top Row (L-R): Mrs. Charlie Sheppard (Teacher), Velma Sims, Mary Baker, Ruby Scroggins, Virginia Dykes, Luvinia Wilson & Emma Jean Green. Front Row (L-R): Maurine McClendon, Mozelle Sheppard, Mavis Sanders & Mittie Joe Baker

Throughout the years, Mt. Zion has always strived to host annual Christmas plays, Fall Festivals, Vacation Bible Schools, singings, dinners, and fellowship events.

These events have provided our families with opportunities to learn about the Christian faith engagingly and safely. Through

Christmas plays and Vacation Bible school, we have faithfully taught children about the story of Jesus, the significance of Christmas, and genuine, biblical teachings. Our fellowship events have fostered a sense of community and belonging within the church. By participating in fellowship events and festivals, church members can connect, build relationships, and offer support to one another and our community. These events have been essential to serve as a way to reach out to our community. They have provided us with an avenue for a welcoming environment for non-members to engage with Mt. Zion and learn about the Christian faith.

We believe by involving children in these activities, we encourage whole families to participate in the life of the church. This strengthens the family unit and creates opportunities for shared spiritual experiences. Over the years, these events have offered opportunities for celebration and enjoyment within the church community. They provide a break from routine and offer a chance for families and individuals to come together in a joyous and lighthearted atmosphere.

Overall, these events have played a crucial role in nurturing faith, building community, and providing opportunities for shared experiences within Mt. Zion. It is these fond memories of our church that we desire to cherish. Through these events, we have continued to grow, both physically and spiritually.



The Little Presents in 1992

(Melanie Dykes Hagler, Dykes, Jeremy Currie, Amanda Dykes Lolley, Justin Abercrombie, Rhonda Sanders Shierling & Whitney Dykes Bruce)



Christmas Play 2023



Clayton Parade Welcoming Troops Home in 1993



Christmas Play in 2022

Chapter Ten: Our Cemeteries



Picture of the Church & Cemetery in Early 2000s

The first cemetery was started while Mount Zion Church was in Pike County, south of Josie. This cemetery is still in use today and is known as the First Mount Zion Cemetery, Old Ramah or Renfroe Cemetery. The present cemetery at Mt. Zion on County Road 9, has been enlarged numerous times.

According to Mrs. Mary Jane Kelly Caraway, the Taylor Family Cemetery, was already in use before the church moved to this location in 1845. This is collaborated by the fact that Mr. Thomas “Tommy” Taylor deeded the original two acres of land to Mount

Zion Church in 1845. The Taylor log house (Taylor - Emerson - Caraway), located just east of the church, was built before the Creek Indian War of 1836 and survived the Battle of Pea River and Pea Creek and the Battle of Hobdy's Bridge. Reportedly the cabin was used as a fort house, and gun ports were cut into the log walls for defense purposes. The cabin was built in the same style as Fort Yargo, near Winder, Georgia, with the same type rifle ports.

Mrs. Caraway's grandmother recalled when a Creek Indian came by the old house to visit his family's native burial ground before returning to Oklahoma. This Indian burial ground was located between Mount Zion Church and the old Taylor log house, between the three original springs, (somewhere on the Terry and Susan Olds Bishop Place in 2009).

The oldest marked grave in the cemetery is that of Matthias C. Taylor, (1788-1860) although a grave marked by a pile of rocks (rock cairn), marking the burial place of child by the name of Lee, is said to be the oldest grave in the cemetery.

Several people have deeded land to the church for the cemetery. John A. Reynolds and S.E. Reynolds, his wife, deeded one-half acre of land to the trustees of the church for burying ground on November 30, 1880. Matthew Fenn gave two acres of land to the church for a burial ground in 1881. These two gifts constituted the old section of the Cemetery. In 1960 Dr. C. H. and Mary Charlotte Smith gave the church the land for the new cemetery and the African-American cemetery. In 1972, the church

purchased land for expansion of the cemetery from J.L. Wesley and his wife Carrie Bell W. Wesley for \$225. In 1973 Mr. J.B. Emerson donated the last land given for use with the cemetery.

The cemetery can be divided in several sections, [1] the new part of the cemetery, east of the original road to the African-American cemetery; [2] the African-American cemetery, on the north side of the property; [3] the old cemetery, located between the original road, the African-American cemetery, the back access road, and the side church yard; [4] and the old cemetery west of the back access road.

The original cemetery was surrounded by a fence, cedar trees, and an access road. The Woodsmen of the World building was located at the south west corner of the new cemetery from 1901, until it was torn down in 1945. After 1945 a fence was extended down the north and south sides of the new cemetery and possible the east side, but by the early 1970s, the fence on the east side of the new cemetery had been removed.

After Hurricane Eloise came through the area in 1975, much of the cemetery fence and nearly every cedar tree had to be removed due to storm damage. Many of the older graves were also caving in, causing a hazard to anyone entering the cemetery. According to Leo Dawson, this point was made very clear when a pallbearer at the funeral of one of the members of the Olds Family (probably Harvey Joseph Olds) fell into a grave, during the

funeral. On April 29, 1978, a special church cemetery working-day was called and numerous loads of dirt were hauled and dumped in the old part of the cemetery where graves were caving in. The ground was leveled, and dead and damaged cedar trees along with the cemetery fence were removed. At this time centipede grass was planted in the cemetery and the old practice of keeping the cemetery hoed out was stopped. Later, sometime in the late 1990s, the fence between the African-American and white cemetery was removed, along with the old outhouse.



STATE OF ALABAMA
ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
468 SOUTH PERRY STREET
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-0900

FRANK W. WHITE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

June 16, 2009

TEL: 334-242-3184
FAX: 334-240-3477

Mr. John Phil McLaney, Jr.
1784 North Main Street
Louisville, Alabama 36048

RE: Mt. Zion Baptist Church Cemetery, Barbour County, Alabama

Dear Mr. McLaney:

Congratulations! Mt. Zion Baptist Church Cemetery has been favorably reviewed and is now listed on the Alabama Historic Cemetery Register. A certificate indicating that the cemetery has been placed on the register will be mailed out shortly. In addition, a press release announcing this listing will soon be sent out to the appropriate news outlets.

The Alabama Historic Cemetery Register is a prestigious listing of historic cemeteries in Alabama. The Alabama Historical Commission considers historic cemeteries particularly worthy of preservation and appreciation, and therefore deserving of this special recognition.

For your information, Mt. Zion Baptist Church Cemetery is the fifth cemetery in Barbour County listed on the Alabama Historic Cemetery Register, which features 304 cemeteries statewide.

Please know that the Alabama Historical Commission sponsors a historical marker and plaque program to recognize cemeteries that contribute to the unique history of Alabama. Cemeteries that have been added to the register are eligible to purchase a historical marker or plaque through this office. Please contact me if you are interested in purchasing a historical marker or plaque for this cemetery.

For additional information on the other programs offered by the Alabama Historical Commission, please contact me or visit our website at www.preserveala.org.

The Alabama Historical Commission appreciates your efforts to preserve Alabama's historic resources. I wish you much success in all endeavors and look forward to working with you on future preservation projects.

Very truly yours,

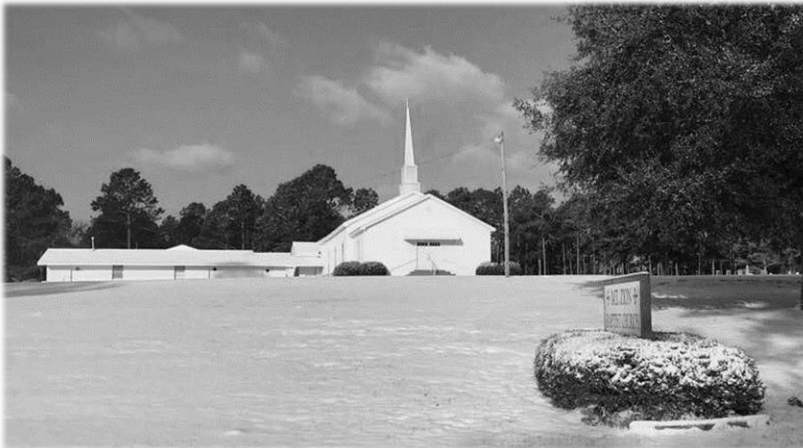
Lee Anne Wofford
Architectural Survey & Cemetery Program Coordinator
(334)230-2659
LeeAnne.Wofford@preserveala.org

cc: Barbour County Commission
Historic Chattahoochee Commission
Barbour County Genealogy Group
Alabama Cemetery Preservation Alliance, Inc.

THE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
www.preserveala.org



PRESENT RECITAL - Piano students of Susan Bishop recently presented their spring recital. Upon completion of the recital each participant received a music pin and pencil. Students, shown left to right, front row, are Rhonda Sanders, Whitney Dykes, Kendall Currie, Justin Abercrombie; back row, Dana Powers, Emily Bowden, Abbey Clark and Nathan Currie.



Chapter Eleven: Our Beliefs & Pledges



Our Children Praying at VBS 2022

PREAMBLE

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other churches.

ARTICLE ONE – NAME

This body shall be known as Mt. Zion Baptist Church, located at 777 County Road 9, Louisville, Alabama 36048.

ARTICLE TWO – OBJECTIVES

- To be a dynamic spiritual body empowered by the Holy Spirit to share Christ with as many people as possible (in our church, community, and throughout the world).
- To be a worshipping fellowship, experiencing an awareness of God, recognizing His person, and responding in obedience to His leadership.
- To help people experience a growing knowledge of God and man.
- To be a church which ministers unselfishly to people in the community and the world in Jesus' name.
- To be a church whose purpose is to be Christ-like in our daily living – by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality, and possession to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE THREE – STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

A. The Holy Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter.

Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

B. God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

1) God the Father (Yahweh)

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise.

God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

2) God the Son (Jesus)

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

3) God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through

illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration, He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

C. Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into humanity. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined

toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

D. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

- 1) Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus

Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.

- 2) Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.
- 3) Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.
- 4) Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

E. God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will

never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

F. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

G. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

H. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

I. The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

J. Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

K. Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and

repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

L. Education

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the

Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

M. Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

N. Cooperation

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and

benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

O. The Christian and the Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every

Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

P. Peace and War

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

Q. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group

or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

R. The Priesthood of the Believer

Acceptance of the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer is based upon Scripture which presents the reality of God as Spirit indwelling each believer. The result is that the body of Christ (the church) functions as each member is given leadership through the Spirit. This responsible involvement with God is sometimes referred as the "Soul Competency of the Believer." Included in this relationship is the access each believer has through Christ to God the

Father as well as the responsibilities which become his in ministry and witness.

S. The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

ARTICLE FOUR – OUR PLEDGE TO GOD

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord, Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, we do now, in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expense of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment, to avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger; to seek God's help in abstaining from all drugs, food, drink, and practices which bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardize our own or another's faith, and be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will, as soon as possible, unite with a like-minded church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.



Mother's Day 2019



Father's Day 2019



"Shorty" Taylor, Mary Taylor and Ruby Sanders



Christmas Angels in 2019



Church Fellowship in the Late 1970s



A Portion of the VBS 2023 Attendees

Chapter Twelve: Our Future



The Sanctuary During the COVID Pandemic of 2020. For Nearly 4 Months, We Refused to Stop Worshipping & Met Online Weekly

The concept of Jesus' imminent return has been a fundamental doctrine taught for 200 years at Mt. Zion. Our teaching is based on the biblical fact that Jesus will return to earth to raise those dead, and take his followers to heaven, where they will live with him for eternity (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17). However, with the recent decline in church attendance and the rise of secularism in the world, some may question the relevance of the church's preaching, education, and sharing of the Gospel into the future.

One of the primary reasons why we at Mt. Zion should continue preaching the truth in this fallen world, educating the young in the faith, and sharing the Gospel to every area in the world is to preserve the truth of the Christian faith and Scriptures. In John 8:31-32, Jesus states, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly My disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." It is the responsibility of our church to preach and teach the truth of the Bible, and keep our teachers and preachers accountable to that truth. We must continue to engage to evangelism and education (discipleship) to ensure that future generations will inherit the true Christian faith and not be misled by false teachings.

Holding to our belief in Jesus' imminent return, it becomes even more critical for us to preserve the truth. The apostle Paul, in 2 Thessalonians 2, warns about the rise of the "man of lawlessness," who will deceive people with false signs and wonders. In this context, the church's role in proclaiming and upholding the truth becomes even more crucial. By equipping believers with the truth, the church can help them discern between what is true and what is false, especially in the face of false teachings claiming to be from God.

Another reason our members should continue educating the young and making disciples of believers is that the future of the Christian faith lies in their hands. The church must always

endeavor to invest in the spiritual growth of these to ensure the purity of the faith. Always remember to love them like Jesus!

While we should be ready for Jesus to return, we must remember that the Gospel is not just about the end times but about living a Christ-centered life in the present. We cannot stop sharing the love of Jesus with our community and the world. The Bible teaches the importance of passing on the faith to the next generation, and this responsibility should not be neglected, even in light of the belief that Jesus is coming soon.

Finally, Mt. Zion must continue sharing the Gospel and loving the community because it remains the most crucial mission of the church and command of Jesus. In His great commission, Jesus commands his followers to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). The imminent return of Jesus should serve as a motivator for the church to spread the Gospel with a sense of urgency.

To the members of Mt. Zion, we must not be complacent about reaching those lost in their sins. Instead, it should spur us to share the Gospel with greater dedication and fervor. The assurance of Christ’s imminent return should serve as a reminder. These 200 years of Mt. Zion’s ministry should remind us that time is limited, and there are still many who have not heard the good news. Therefore, continue to love God, love one another, forgive as often as you can, share the Gospel every day, and do not

compromise the truth taught in God's Holy Word. Members of Mt. Zion, make the Apostle Paul's conviction your conviction. He boldly stated, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

The Family of Mt. Zion Baptist Church

(Updated December 31, 2023)

ABERCROMBIE, Amber Lewis
Rose

ABERCROMBIE, Carolyn

ABERCROMBIE, Julian & Deborah

ABERCROMBIE, Peyton
Hailee Sconyers

ANDREWS, Larry & Cheryl

AUSTIN, Foy

BETHEA, Vernia Jane Frazier

BEST, Gary & Shelia

BRUCH, Joyce Conner

BULLARD, Walter Steven

BULLOCK, Cupie Dean H.

CALHOUN, Sara

CARAWAY, Chet

CARAWAY, Chuck & Myrlene "Mo"

CARPENTER, Sherry Greene

CLARK, Rustin & Kayla
Caroline & Mia

CURRIE, George Dewey

CURRIE, Jason

CURRIE, Lynn & Reba

CURRIE, Jeremy & Ashley
Ruger & Case

DYKES, Adam

DYKES, Earl & Fay

DYKES, Jamie

DYKES, Jeffery & Angela

DYKES, Nelma Williams

DYKES, Sherri Currant

DYKES, Earl Jr.

ELMORE, Summer

FAIRCLOTH, Evelyn

FENN, Shelia

FOREMAN, Danny

FOXX, Jeannie Frazier

FRAZIER, Randy

GATES, Billy

GATES, Bill & Arlene
Todd

GATES, Darren

GOLDEN, Jenelle Conner	KIDD, Brandon & Megan <i>Kaedince, Alivia & Cooper</i>
GREATHOUSE, Ann McLaney	KINSEL, Jeri Ann
GREEN, Chad	LOVETT, Marie Conner
GREEN, Charlie	LUDLUM, Juanita
GREEN, Charlie Thomas	MASSEY, James & Marie
GREEN, Mark & Khris	MATUSEFICH, Mary Shepperd
GREENE, Jason	MCGILVRAY, Wayne & Teresa
GREENE, Karen <i>Wesley</i>	MCGILVRAY, Judy
HAGLER, Nate & Melanie <i>Jaxon Baker & Natalee</i>	MCLANEY, Johnny & Gwen
HARDEN, Joyce McLendon	MCLANEY, John Phil
HERBERT, Charles	MCLENDON, Darren & Wanda
HELMS, Haran & Carolyn	MCLENDON, Steve & Pam
HULEN, Marcie	NEWGARD, Aaron & Kimberly <i>Bella & Asher</i>
JOHNSON, John Daniel & Jessica <i>Trinity, Tiffany and Charity</i>	OLDS, Dean
JOHNSON, Ollie	OLDS, Ralph
JONES, Susie Lee Austin	PARKER, Betsy Jordan
JONES, Marie Caraway	PARMER, Jackie & Emily <i>Kelsey</i>
JONES, Tommy	PERRY, Kinnen & Raeleigh <i>Oakland</i>
JORDAN, Brandon	PHILLIPS, Rosa Mae
KEY, Larry & Anna	PHILLIPS, Shelly F.

PHILLIPS, Sylvia

PICKETT, Jason & April
Claudia

PIERCE, Josh & Shana

POWELL, Earl

POWELL, Gerald

PRICE, Kayla
Christian and Colton

PRICE, Kory & Shelby
Oakleigh

PRICE, Zachary & Tori
Easton, John & Beau

RENFROE, Mary

SANDERS, Dusty

SANDERS, Randy & Connie

SANDERS, Ronnie & Margaret

SANDERS, Shelia Baxley

SAWYER, Von & Tammy
Callie

SHIRLEY, John & Janet

TAYLOR, Charlotte

THOMAS, Tommy & Tonya
WESTBROOK, Tommy & Connie

WILLIAMS, Sam

WILLIAMS, Kristy Phillips
*Wesley, Kyle, Lane, Sylvanna,
Caleb, Shyanne, Samantha*

Meet the Authors



Charlotte Taylor is the daughter of Eugene (Shorty) and Mary Baker Taylor (both of whom are buried in Mt. Zion's cemetery). Charlotte was born again and joined Mt. Zion when she was 15 years old. She graduated from Louisville High School, attended Massey - Draughon Business College, and received a diploma in Secretarial Science from Chauncey Sparks State Technical School. She retired with 25 years of service as an

Administrative Secretary from the Auburn University Extension Service in Clayton, Alabama, and retired with 26 years of service as the Clerk of the West Barbour County Water Authority. For nearly 50 years, she has been dedicated to the upkeep of the church grounds and cemetery. She served over 20 years as the Church Clerk of Mt. Zion, and served 18 years as the Treasurer of the Barbour Baptist Association. In 1982, she wrote and published the History of the Mount Zion Baptist Church. Six generations of the Taylor family were active at Mt. Zion, and after their passing, were laid to rest in the church cemetery. One of Charlotte's favorite hobbies is gardening. She is quite possibly the longest serving member of the church.



John Phil McLaney, Jr. is the son of Johnny and Gwen Sanders McLaney. He was ordained into the Gospel Ministry in April 1993 at Mt. Zion Baptist Church. He has been actively involved in ministry for more than thirty-five years, serving as a pastor, teacher, crisis counselor, worship leader, organist and pianist. After injuring his right hand in an accident, and experiencing a miraculous healing, he began playing piano by ear and by

note. As a result, he has been privileged to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and song across multiple denominations, leading worship services in Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Assembly of God and Pentecostal churches. He served at Dykes Baptist Church in Louisville, Alabama, for nearly 20 years. The last six years he has been the Assistant Pastor and pianist at Ramah Church. He attended Bethany Bible College (Divinity College & Seminary) in Dothan; received a Bachelor's Degree in Social Science Education from Troy State University (1993); and a Master's Degree in Library & Information Studies from the University of Alabama (2006). For eight years he taught in the public-school system, before becoming a reference and research librarian at Troy University for eleven years. His historical preservation work has resulted in many publications, historic markers, and numerous cemeteries, landmarks and places being recognized through the Alabama Historical Commission. John Phil and his wife, Mary, currently live in Enterprise, Alabama, with their two sons, Casey and Justin.



John Daniel "JD" Johnson has been serving Mt. Zion since February 2018. JD has been in the ministry since he was 16 years old, and was ordained in 2003. He is a U.S. Army Veteran and served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, and has been a police officer for over 10 years. He is a graduate of Zion Chapel High School, Baptist University of Florida (formerly The Baptist College of Florida), New Orleans Baptist

Theological Seminary, and Troy University. He is married to Jessica Lynne Johnson, and they have 3 children, Trinity, Tiffany, and Charity. He is the author of 6 books, and enjoys reading, writing, painting, playing guitar, and being with his family.

“He who testifies to these things says,
'Yes, I am coming quickly.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.
The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.”

~ Revelation 22:20-21

MT. ZION BAPTIST CHURCH

LOUISVILLE, ALABAMA

WITH 2000 YEARS OF DOCUMENTED HISTORY OF THE CHURCH ALL OVER THE WORLD, THIS BOOK SEEKS TO DOCUMENT THE CONTRIBUTION OF 200 YEARS THE MEMBERS OF MT. ZION BAPTIST CHURCH HAVE MADE TO BUILD THE KINGDOM OF GOD. HUNDREDS OF LIVES HAVE BEEN CHANGED BY MT. ZION'S SERVICE TO THE LORD, JESUS CHRIST. THROUGHOUT OUR 200-YEAR HISTORY WE'VE HAD JUST TWO PURPOSES; TO LOVE JESUS AND TO LOVE OTHERS. THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN TO SHARE WITH THE WORLD HOW WE HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLISHING THAT TASK AND WILL CONTINUE UNTIL THE LORD RETURNS.



JOHN PHIL MCLANEY, JR



CHARLOTTE TAYLOR



JOHN DANIEL JOHNSON