

# Salisbury District

*Western North Carolina Conference*

*Piedmont Episcopal District*



# LOCAL CHURCH *History*



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Reverend Dr. Grant Harrison Jr., Presiding Elder & Dr. Joanne Harrison, First Lady

# Forward

**It was the year 1879.** Rutherford B. Hayes was president. Frank Woolworth opened the first of many five and ten cent stores. The first transcontinental railroad was completed. Using a carbonized thread, Thomas Edison tested the first practical electric light bulb, which lasted 13 1/2 hours before burning out. Lewis Latimer, an expert in electronics, worked for a rival firm, but later joined Edison and helped improve on the electric light bulb. Latimer was one of the most successful black inventors. 1879 was the end of a seven-year depression. The Central North Carolina Conference of The A.M.E. Zion Church was organized November 18, 1879.

**It was the year 1891.** Benjamin Harrison was president. New York City's Carnegie Hall had its grand opening concert, featuring noted Russian composer Peter Ilych Tchaivoksky, as guest conductor. The first long distance transmission of alternating electric current occurred in this year. Thomas Edison displayed his kinetoscope, an early motion picture exhibition device in this year. The Western North Carolina Conference of The A.M.E. Zion Church was organized on November 25, 1891, being set off from the West Central Conference, with about a half of the former conference's territory within its bounds.

The Sensational Salisbury District had her start in the Central North Carolina Conference, later becoming one of the first three Presiding Elder Districts in the newly formed Western North Carolina Conference. Later, the Winston Salem District would be set off from the Salisbury District.

The present seventeen (17) churches of the Salisbury District each have a distinctive story to tell, a story of God's grace and mercy, of love and sacrifice, and of the vision of the founders, in the midst of post Reconstruction Era America.

I am humbled to be a part of the continuing story of our district and invite you to read about us and how God has made us **The Sensational Salisbury District**.

Yours in Christ,

*Dr. Grant Harrison, Jr.*

Presiding Elder, Salisbury District

The A.M.E. Zion Church

# ABOUT US

## The Sensational Salisbury District

### Who We Are

We are the Salisbury District, members of the Western North Carolina Conference of the Piedmont Episcopal District in The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Our Presiding Elder is the Reverend Dr. Grant Harrison Jr. and Dr. Joanne Harrison is our First Lady.

The Salisbury District is comprised of 17 local churches located throughout the counties of Cabarrus, Rowan, Iredell, and Davie. We know the names of churches in the Salisbury District and where they are located. However, what we do not know is the history of the 17 local churches.

Under the leadership and assistance of Mrs. Mary G. Dawkins, member of Miller's Chapel A.M.E. Zion, who served as the Salisbury District Secretary for almost 50 years, she coordinated the gathering of local church history for the District's Historical Society. Beginning with the Official Journal of the 37th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference of The A.M.E. Zion Church, this much requested information about our 17 local churches is found on the Local Church History page of the Salisbury District website.

Many thanks are due to Mrs. Mary G. Dawkins for all of the hard work done to make this effort possible.

## Our Local Churches

The Salisbury District local churches include Soldiers Memorial, Moore's Chapel, Marable Memorial, Sandy Ridge, Southern City Tabernacle, Zion Wesley, White Rock, St. John, New Hope, Sills Creek, Cedar Grove, Third Creek, Miller's Chapel, South Iredell, Liberty, Providence, and Ardis Chapel of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

*Official Journal: 37th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference, The A.M.E. Zion Church*

*Jones Tabernacle A.M.E. Zion Church, Indiana State Fairgrounds, Indianapolis, IN*

*May 6-20, 1964*

**Presiding Elders:** "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." I Timothy 5:17. Salute the captains who have steered the "old ship of Zion," sailing through many storms (any more).

### Western North Carolina Conference

Captain Lonnie Clark, Charlotte District

Captain Claude Norment, Salisbury District

Captain Andrew Seagle, Lincolnton District

Captain Frank Blakey, Charlotte District



Captain Samuel Burke, Winston-Salem District

Captain Charles Anthony, Statesville District

*Minutes from the Official Journal*

*45th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference of The A.M.E. Zion Church*

*Wednesday, July 24 through Friday, August 2, 1996*

Meeting at Full Gospel A.M.E. Zion Church, Temple Hills, MD

1. Soldier's Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church: Reverend Johnson Asibou
2. Moore's Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church: Reverend Alonzo Parsons
3. Marable Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church: Reverend Grant Harrison
4. Sandy Ridge A.M.E. Zion Church: Reverend Bobby Smith
5. Southern City Tabernacle A.M.E. Zion Church: Reverend Calvin Miller
6. Zion Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church: Reverend Carlton Williams
7. White Rock A.M.E. Zion Church: Reverend Edward White
8. St. John A.M.E. Zion Church: Reverend Royce Myers

9. New Hope A.M.E. Zion Church: Reverend William Robinson
10. Sills Creek A.M.E. Zion Church: Reverend Charles Tillett
11. Cedar Grove A.M.E. Zion Church: Reverend Karen Miller
12. Third Creek A.M.E. Zion Church: Reverend Wayne Griffin
13. Miller's Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church: Reverend Matthew Williamson
14. South Iredell A.M.E. Zion Church: Reverend James Pease
15. Liberty A.M.E. Zion Church: Reverend Dr. Robert Lawton
16. Providence A.M.E. Zion Church: Reverend John Miller
17. Ardis Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church: Reverend Robert Macket

# Soldier's Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church



The Salisbury Station - Soldiers Memorial became a member of the Central North Carolina Conference (1879). 12 years later (1981), Soldiers became a member of the Western North Carolina Conference. Soldiers Memorial Church, located at the corner of Church and Liberty Streets for 129 years, was formerly located on East Council Street.

The beginning of Soldiers Memorial was that of the founding of The A.M.E. Zion Connection. One year before the Emancipation in 1864, three men, Barry Davis, George Willis, and a Mr. Williams, met in a boot shop in the Henderson Pines section, the property of Henry H. Bingham. Later three more men joined: Emanuel Jones, Simon Jefferson, William Boyden, and others joined. They secured help of the Freedman's

Bureau and organized a group of worshippers in 1865. The first service was in the boot shop. They later moved to the Freedman's Building on East Council Street.

The church, organized in 1864, has been known by several names: first, the "Zion Society," Zion Chapel, Salisbury Society, Salisbury Station, Mt. Zion, and finally Soldiers Memorial. Reverend Henderson was one of the early organizers. He organized many of the churches in the vicinity of Salisbury.

Improvements included: 1) building the parsonage; 2) Family Enrichment Center; 3) beautification of the sanctuary (1948); 4) The Education Building (1949); 5) Building of Zion Hill Apartment Complex (Reverend Herman Anderson [Soldiers] and Reverend Vernon Shannon, [Moore's]); and 6) sanctuary repainted (1973), wall-to-wall carpet, old pews refinished, and installed modern light fixtures.

## **Pastors:**

Reverend William H. Pitts, Reverend. A.G. Kesler, Reverend Joseph Greene, Reverend Cicero Harris, Reverend Robert Harrison Simmons, Reverend A.F. Gosten, Reverend J.C. Lodge, Dr. Goler, Reverend P.A. McCorkle, Reverend Harris, Reverend Robert Blair Bruce, Reverend A.L. Hoouston, Reverend George W. Gaines, Reverend George C. Clement, Reverend Walls, Reverend Henry P. Lankford, Reverend Samuel J. Howie, Reverend Alexander H. Hatwood, Reverend H. T. Henry, Reverend Harold J. Ofeton, Reverend Alfred S. Parker, Reverend Alfred White, Reverend Herman L.

Anderson, Reverend W.L. McDaniel, Reverend Joseph Johnson, Reverend James Samuel, Reverend Johnson K. Asibou, Reverend Claude Christopher, Reverend Murray L. Edwards, Reverend Dr. Grant Harrison Jr., Reverend Dr. David McLean, and Reverend Dr. Derrick Anderson [current].

### **Presiding Elders:**

Reverend Norment; Reverend N.K. Byers; Reverend Dr. L.C. Siler; Reverend G. Sidney Waddell, Reverend J.T. White, Reverend Herbert R. Warren Jr., and Reverend Dr. Grant Harrison Jr. [current].

### **Bishops Presiding over Conference (*of which Soldiers was a member*):**

Bishop Joseph Jackson, Bishop John Jamison Moore, Bishop Singleton T. Jones, Bishop Thomas H. Lomax, Bishop Isom C. Clinton, Bishop George Wylie Clinton, Bishop Lynwood W. Kyles, Bishop Benjamin Garland Shaw, Bishop William Jacob Walls, Bishop Raymond L. Jones, Bishop William M. Smith, Bishop Ruben L. Speaks, Bishop Cecil Bishop, Bishop George W.C. Walker Sr., and Bishop George Edward Battle Jr. [current].

# Moore's Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church



## A Brief History of the Church

During the historical stages of expansion, growth and development, the church has experienced seven periods of transition and change. They are categorized as (1) the early years of origin (1892-1913); (2) expansion (1913-1939); (3) development (1939-1975); (4) transition (1957-1981); (5) growth (1981-2001); (6) reformation (2001-2009); and (7) restoration (2010-2020).

In 1892, the Reverend Joseph Torrence organized and became the first pastor of Moore's Chapel. As noted by his granddaughter, the late Mrs. Marie Witt, who was a life member of the church, Reverend Torrence named the church "Moore's Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church" because of his love and admiration for Bishop John Jamison Moore. Bishop Moore had been very kind and understanding to Reverend Torrence during his ministry. Reverend Torrence and wife, Anna Baker Torrence; Nelson Pharr and wife, Jane Pharr; Mark Alexander and wife, Essie Alexander; and John Apostle were charter members of this church.

A deed registered on May 13, 1901, in Salisbury, North Carolina shows, "one W.H. Goler and wife, Emma Goler and one Jennie Price, sold to the Trustees of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church of America one plot of ground consisting of one acre or more or less, for the sum of eighty dollars (\$80)." The early church meetings were held as house-to-house prayer meetings in the area now known as the Moore's Chapel Church Cemetery.

In 1904, the church was moved to the present West Monroe and Partee Street location. In 1917, this church burned down. Services were then held at Hood Theological Seminary for two (2) years. In 1919, the congregation rented and later bought the Graham Memorial Church (now Gethsemane Church). Moore's Chapel later sold this church to Gethsemane Baptist Church for six hundred dollars (\$600). During the following years after the fire, the members worked hard to rebuild the Church. Adolphus Pharr and five

(5) sons (Thomas, Frank, Adolphus Jr., James, and David) laid the brick for the present church. In 1924, the Moore's Chapel congregation moved into the new church.

In 1968, Moore's Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church partnered with Soldiers Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church in the purchase of land from Livingstone College. The purchase was guided by former pastors, the Reverend Herman L. Anderson [Soldiers Memorial] and Reverend Vernon Shannon [Moore's Chapel] as well as A.R. Kelsey [Soldiers] and A.L. Mitchell [Moore's]. A loan from the Federal Housing Authority for \$487,000 was secured. Apartments were erected to provide housing for low-and-moderate income families that were displaced from urban renewal areas or as a result of governmental action. The aforementioned men spearheaded the execution of incorporation for the apartments, now known as Zion Hills Apartments, Inc. Zion Hills Apartments, Inc. is located on 6.5 acres of land on Standish Street on the west side of Salisbury, NC.

The Reverend Carolyn D. Bratton was appointed to Moore's Chapel in 2008 by Bishop George Walker, Sr. and is the first female to serve this charge. The \$50,000 debt incurred to renovate the parsonage was retired. The church then secured a loan for \$120,000 to make needed repairs at the church. A new roof was added with a copper dome and cross. Refurbishing the cemetery and erecting a monument to identify the site was another project completed. The cemetery property has now been deeded to Moore's Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church.



The kitchen was completely renovated, and a new exhaust system installed. In accordance with ADA regulations, the church was made handicapped accessible, and a concrete driveway was added. Additionally, the property adjacent to the church was purchased and converted into a parking lot. The church continues to be deeply rooted in the history of the City of Salisbury and, in 2012, was recognized by the Historic Foundation for restoration of the church's roof and the installation of the copper dome.

The Church covets recognition for three Bishops: The Right Reverends James Clair Taylor, W.J. Walls, and Raymond L. Jones; four Missionary Supervisors: Mesdames Carrie Smith Jones, Alcestis Coleman, Janie Griffin Speaks, and Mabel Miller Jones; seven Livingstone College Presidents: Dr. W.H. Goler, W.J. Trent, Samuel Duncan, F. George Shipman, Ozell K. Beatty, Bernard Franklin, and Burnette Joiner; one Dean of Hood Theological Seminary: Dr. Frank R. Brown; the daughter of the Founder of Livingstone College: the late Mrs. Josephine Price Sherrill; and six "Sons in the Ministry": The late Reverends David Pharr and William "Bill" Robinson and Reverends: James French, Sheldon R. Shipman, Michael Ellis, Alonzo Parsons, Jr. and Ronald Bethea.

Reverend Robert R. Kelley, Jr. was appointed to Moore's Chapel A.M.E Zion in February 2018 by Bishop George E. Battle, Jr. He is a native of Winston Salem and comes from the North Carolina Conference. Reverend Kelley is the nephew of a former Pastor of Moore's Chapel, Reverend William M. Conrad (1989-1993).



Reverend Robert R. Kelley Jr., Pastor & Mrs. Lisa M. Kelley, First Lady



**Daughters of Marie L. Witt (L-R):**

**Evelyn Witt Phifer, Anne Witt Knox, Brenda Witt Fleming**



**Grandaughter of Reverend Joseph Torrence,  
Founder of Moore's Chapel: Mrs. Marie L. Witt**



Daughter of Reverend Joseph Torrence,  
Founder of Moore's Chapel: Mrs. Survancie Torrence Lipscomb



Moore's Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church: National Night Out

# Marable Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church



## Historical Highlights

Marable Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, formerly named “Little Mission Church” was organized in 1908-1909, under the leadership of Bishop George W. Clinton and assisted by Presiding Elder Martin Van Buren Marable. The members held their first worship service in a building originally used as a store - located on the present plot of land at 400 Huron Street in Kannapolis, North Carolina. In 1912, the name of the church was changed from Little Mission Church to Marable Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church in honor of Presiding Elder Martin Van Buren Marable.

On February 16, 1918, in consideration of fifty dollars, paid by trustees Samuel Edwards, Frank McKenzie and J.B. Rose to Mrs. Mariah Rose and husband, William Rose, plus an additional ten dollars paid by church trustees Samuel Edwards, Frank McKenzie, J.B. Rose, Benjamin Hammonds and Elias Collins on April 7, 1919 to Cabarrus Cotton Mills [formerly Cannon Mills], plots of land were purchased “to be kept, maintained and disposed of as a place of Divine Worship for use of the ministry and membership of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in America.” On this land, the membership built a small church and worshipped there for several years.

As the years passed, so did the appointment of service for many ministers who were chosen to serve as pastors of Marable Memorial. The members worshipped in the first church during the lean years until it became so dilapidated that it was deemed unsafe. In 1925, the church was torn down and rebuilt. While it was under construction, Reverend Raymond Luther Jones continued worship service with the membership at the Colored Centerview School’s auditorium. The members worked hard and displayed a great commitment towards the completion of the church and the following year, Reverend Thomas Diggs was appointed to serve as pastor.

Reverend Reid R. White became the Pastor of Marable Memorial in 1957. Membership continued to work for God and Zion to grow the congregation. On February 11, 1962, following the Sunday morning worship service, members tearfully stood by and helplessly watched the church as it was engulfed by fire and burned to the ground. Trusting in God

and never entertaining doubt, weekly services were temporarily held at the Palace Theater while inspired members raised the \$10,000 needed to begin construction of a new edifice. The church was completely rebuilt and, with appropriate services, the congregation proudly entered the new sanctuary on Sunday, January 27, 1963 at 2:30 p.m. This memorable occasion was celebrated by more than 300 members and friends.

After the pastorate of Reverend. Reid R. White, Sr., Marable has been richly blessed with some of Zion's finest preachers. In the past 52 years, Marable has been blessed with the pastoral services of 14 ministers of The A.M.E. Zion denomination.

During the years 2006-2008, Marable completed the purchase and renovation of the old Centerview Hardware Store. The edifice was dedicated with a wonderful worship experience.

Our most recent appointment is Reverend Dr. William McKeith in 2013. Under his pastorate, Marable successfully paid off the mortgage of the Marable Plaza which is currently housing a barber shop and tax preparation office. He has shared a vision of the church in the way of our current mission statement: "Rising Above the 'Growth Challenge' through Worship, Christian Education, Discipleship, Evangelism, Service, and Fellowship." The church family of Marable Memorial A.M.E. Zion continues to declare: "We have a past for which we are proud, and this past will serve as an incentive in future years and the future generations. Marable Memorial cannot and shall not be destroyed by

the ravages of fire, physical elements, or time; her heritage is too great.”



Reverend Dr. William McKenith, Pastor & Mrs. Doreen McKenith, First Lady



## Sandy Ridge A.M.E. Zion Church



Though the exact date is not known, the best available information indicates that Sandy Ridge was founded around 1866 in a little Brush Arbor on the hillside near Sechler's Pond in China Grove Township, Rowan County, North Carolina. It might be proper to say that a few devout souls, perhaps, Albert Sherrill, George Reid and other faithful men and women of their time, conceived the idea of this place of worship, following the Civil War in America and the emancipation of the institution of slavery.

Reverend Bill Pethel is reported to have been the first minister to serve this little band of people, seeking to worship God in freedom and from fear. The brush arbor was only a temporary place of worship. The membership grew and the church was soon moved near

the place where the present building now stands. The first real structure was built from hewn logs, with a layer of red clay between each piece of the timbers. Much sweat, toil and privation must have accompanied this early beginning of Sandy Ridge Church. But there was "gain for their losses," and there was "balm for their pains." Here, many souls were converted, and the foundation laid for Christian homes and worthy endeavor.

While these early fathers and mothers did not have the advantages of education yet, they inspired county authorities to provide a school for their children. This same log cabin was used for a place of daily instruction. About \$15 per month was considered a good salary for the best teachers. Though it moved to another building, Sandy Ridge School became Aggrey Memorial High School. Aggrey Memorial was renovated and expanded to house the present Landis Elementary School. With desegregation, the Rowan County School Board has discarded this historical fact, but this congregation is dedicated to keeping alive the true facts and heritage of our founding fathers. Many artifacts from the former school are housed in the Aggrey Fellowship Hall.

As time rolled onward and the years grew to full maturity, another church building was erected. This small framed structure served the needs of the membership for more the 30 years. Meanwhile, the membership continued to grow, which necessitated the enlargement of this framed building. During these years, a small organ was purchased for the church choir. Though the purchase price was meager, the payments were made from extra freewill

offerings. When the last payment was made, someone suggested that these freewill offerings be continued to form the nucleus of a "building fund." This was done and, thus the foundation for the modern brick structure which now serves as the fellowship building was begun. The former sanctuary of this building was dedicated as the Aggrey Memorial Education Building on May 21, 1995 and the lower level was designated the R.W. Sherrill Learning Center.

Much inspiration and encouragement for this new church building came from such former pastors as Reverends J.E. Aggrey, J.C. Nelson, and R.E. Clement. Even in 1943, the church had a normal following of about 200 members who could be connected to about 12 or 15 families. Among the membership, during the last century, were two medical doctors - the late Dr. Levi A. Gibson and Dr. George W. Sherrill.

In the early 1960s, a beautiful parsonage was obtained enabling pastors to serve the community more adequately and effectively. The present church building was completed in September 1984, under the pastoral leadership of Reverend Dr. Derrick R. Anderson. More than \$180,000 was raised by this loyal congregation with the help of and for the glory of God. More than half of these funds were raised under the pastoral leadership of the late Reverend Dr. Jerry A. Quick, during his 14-year tenure at Sandy Ridge. Dr. Quick later served as Presiding Elder of the Wadesboro-Monroe District of the West Central North Carolina Annual Conference. The total cost of the building program, which included renovation of the previous church building, was \$330,000. The

mortgage was burned on May 15, 1994, under the leadership of Reverend Bobby L. Smith who served as the pastor from 1992-2005.

Sandy Ridge is proud of its devoted members and proud of the fact that they are a family church. The occupations of the membership have always been varied: doctors, skilled laborers, mechanics, teachers, farmers, ministers, and the trades. The late Dr. Richard W. Sherrill, one of the Trustees Emeritus, served as a General Officer in The A.M.E. Zion Church for 40 years. He served 20 years as the Manager of the Publishing House and 24 years as the Financial Secretary of The A.M.E. Zion Church, being the first layman to be elected by the General Conference to that office.

Sandy Ridge is also proud of its pastors. The former Salisbury District Presiding Elder, Dr. Lee Clinton Siler, a former pastor who returned to Sandy Ridge as a member in the 1970s. His widow, Mrs. Myrtice Siler, remained an active member until she passed in 2007. Reverend Dr. James E. Kwegir Aggrey was a professor at Livingstone College and co-founder of the Achimota College in Ghana. No less than four former pastors were elected General Officers and later Bishops in The A.M.E. Zion Church: Reverends Josiah Caldwell [Financial Secretary]; William J. Walls [Editor, The Star of Zion] who later was elected Bishop on May 20, 1924; Elizah L. Madison [Financial Secretary]; and Hampton T. Medford [Secretary-Treasurer, the Department of Overseas Mission and Editor, The Missionary Seer]. The Reverend Dr. Percy Smith, designer of the Official Logo of The A.M.E. Zion Church, was a former pastor of Sandy Ridge.

Sandy Ridge is proud to call as their own, two fine ministers of The A.M.E. Zion Church: the late Reverend John H. Partee, who retired as pastor of New Hope [and a lifelong member of Sandy Ridge]; and the late Reverend Dr. Jackson Browne, who joined Sandy Ridge upon relocating to the Landis community in the 1980s, and remained an active member prior to pastoring Moore's Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church. Reverend Browne also gave years of loyal service to Hood Theological Seminary and pastored churches throughout Zion. Two of Sandy Ridge's sons who most recently entered the ministry, under Reverend Bobby Smith, currently serve as pastors in The A.M.E. Zion Church are: Reverend Dr. George C. Banks, pastor of Goler Memorial [Winston-Salem, NC]; and Reverend Harold Jordan, pastor of Third Creek [Cleveland, NC].

Sandy Ridge also served as the beginning for the ministries of Reverend Dr. James MacArthur Sloan, who served as Presiding Elder of the North Charlotte District [WNCC]; and Bishop Louis Hunter, Sr., who was elected the 93rd Bishop in the line of succession at the 47th Session of the General Conference, and served as Presiding Prelate of the Mid-Atlantic I Episcopal District. Reverend Louis Hunter, Jr. grew up in Sandy Ridge and pastored Center Grove A.M.E. Zion [Winston-Salem District, WNCC]. Reverend David Smalls is the most recent minister to have served as an associate at Sandy Ridge, prior to being appointed pastor of Liberty A.M.E. Zion in June 2013. Others who

have matriculated through Sandy Ridge, accepted the call of ministry and served in other denominations, included Reverend Ivan Lowery, Reverend Wayne Murdock, and Dr. Walter Howard. Currently, Brother Terry L. Jackson, Jr., who grew up in Sandy Ridge, entered the ministry under the former pastor Reverend Dr. Anthony J. Freeman, and served as Local Preacher under the current pastor, Rev. Clarence J. Shuford, Jr. Reverend Jackson now serves as pastor at Glenn's Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church [East Bend, NC].

Sandy Ridge is also very proud of members who have served as public school administrators [Mr. George C. Knox, Mr. Dan Partee, Mr. Andrew T. Harris, Mr. Milton T. Taylor, Ms. Catherine Rivens] and a Connectional Officer of The A.M.E. Zion Church [Ms. Jacqueline L. Anthony, Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society Connectional Director of Communications and Editor of the Women's Section of the Missionary Seer].

# Southern City Tabernacle A.M.E. Zion Church



In 1889, Charles Holmes, a local preacher, bought the first acre of land along old Highway 29. Members and friends build the first A.M.E. Zion Church in Spencer with donated lumber. They named the church New Hope A.M.E. Zion Church.

After being at the site for several years, most of the membership decided that it would be better to relocate the church in a more centralized location to accommodate its growing membership.

With prayer in their hearts and faith in God, the members, along with the pastor, Reverend J.E. House, moved to North Shaver Street in East Spencer, North Carolina.

Here in 1897, the Southern City Tabernacle A.M.E. Zion Church was born. Among the Christian pioneers who participated in the movement were families such as the Stokes, Holmes, Clements, Fraziers, and Carters.

During the years at the North Shaver Street site, the membership grew to the extent that the pastor, Reverend A.R. Hawkins and officers of the church, saw the need for a larger building. In 1915, Reverend H.R. Hawkins and members of the congregation built the church at its present location on North Long Street in East Spencer, North Carolina. In 1918, under the leadership of Reverend Reverend B.B. Moore, the cornerstone was laid.

The men and women of faith and courage struggled on through the years to offset the mortgage of the church. This was done under the leadership of Reverend U.S. Johnson.

In the spring of 1958, with Reverend Paul E. McGuire as pastor, the sanctuary was graced with the installation of new pews, which were dedicated to the service of God by the Right Reverend William Jacob Walls.

In 1977, under the leadership of the Reverend George C. Tharrington, the congregation saw the need and expressed a desire to build a new sanctuary. While the new church was under construction, church services were held in the auditorium of North Rowan Middle School. In January 1978, the new and present edifice was dedicated to the glory of God by the Right Reverend William Milton Smith.



Southern City has been blessed to have had musicians who gave their devoted service to the church: Mrs. Otis Boger, Mrs. Janet Watts, Mrs. Bessie Churcher, Mrs. H. Henry Wactor, Mrs. Annie Bailey, Mrs. Zelma Drain, Mrs. Ethel Coleman, Mrs. H. Irvis, Mrs.

Bessie Craige, Mrs. Rebecca Stinson, Mr. Jonathan French, Mr. Mark Pilson, Mr. Justin Jordan, and the current musician, Mr. Timothy Jones.

### **Bishops Presiding over Conference (*of which Southern City was a member*):**

Southern City Tabernacle has grown under the leadership of the following bishops: the late Bishop L.W. Kyles, the late Bishop B.G. Shaw, the late Bishop W.J. Walls, the late Bishop William Milton Smith, the late Bishop Cecil Bishop, Bishop George W. C. Walker, Sr. [retired], and the current Senior Bishop, The A.M.E. Zion Church, and Presiding Prelate, the Right Reverend George E. Battle, Jr

### **Presiding Elders:**

The church has had such illustrious Presiding Elders as Reverends L. Moss, Bennett, Hamilton, Carson, Hunter, C.E. Norment, N.K. Byers, Lee C. Siler, Sidney Waddell, Reverend Dr. Jerry T. White, and Herbert Warren, Jr. The current Presiding Elder is Reverend Dr. Grant Harrison, Jr.

## **Pastors:**

Some of the pastors who served successfully at Southern City Tabernacle Church are Reverends J.E. House, Bolger, S.L. Leake, B.B. Moore, H.E. Wilson, J.J. Nicholson, U.S. Johnson, W.M. Jones, George Smith, J.R. Whitmire [local preacher], N.V. Jones, Clarence Carr [later elected Bishop in The A.M.E. Zion Church], Marvin Mayfield, Melvin Tate, George Tharrington, James French, S.V. Campbell, Calvin Miller, Rev. Dr. Donald Holness, Rollins S. Graham, and Thomas D. Lee. Southern City is now under the leadership of Reverend Patrick Tate.

## White Rock A.M.E. Zion Church



During the turn of the century, prayer meetings and all were held in homes. Mrs. WJ. Campbell served as minister. Reverend Flowe from Livingstone College came to the church to teach and preach. In 1906, Reverend Flowe came to Granite Quarry, North Carolina. The building was paid off with Reverend W.C. McCorkle. Renovated in 1920, Reverend Carson enlarged the building and pews.

Reverend Flowe helped with Granite Quarry Colored students. In 1929, Reverend Mrs. Campbell was responsible for installing the first gas lights. In 1940, Rev. T.H. Harris was responsible for a new structure.

### **White Rock Focus and Accomplishments:**

- Present building - Reverend J.N. Torrence, contractor; and Reverend William M. White paid off the indebtedness.
- White Rock was a circuit with New Hope A.M.E. Zion Church; and Reverend W.M. White was the first full time pastor.
- Memorial Pew Fund by Reverend M.R. Cuthbertson [1971]; and Reverend Reid R. White did the extensive renovations.
- 1981 air-conditioning and ceiling fans installed.
- Reverend H. R. Lawson - In January 1985, completion of heating/cooling of parsonage along with fuel oil and copy machine.
- Reverend Meekins - Paid off longstanding mortgage, pulpit area, kitchen, and Fellowship Hall.
- Seven-Phase Church Property Project began in 1991; and completed in 1992 with construction work on the roof, etc., purchased electric keyboard and organ; and Share Heart Food Ministry began.
- In 1994, Reverend Morgan Tann built up finances, operational procedures developed more pride and respect for the church and its properties.
- Reverend E. Leroy White - In 1994, some major accomplishments included paid off the organ, and made/purchased real estate.
- Reverend Carlton Williams - Bible Study/Prayer Meeting begun; and many contributions were made during his tenure.

- Reverend Gullick - In 1998, choirs/Buds begun; and focused on paying off loans with the Building Expansion Fund.
- Reverend Morgan Glenn - In 2009, Bible Study begun. Trustees planned and completed remodeling the parsonage; and the Bessie Shuford Fellowship raised \$10,000.
- Reverend Thomas D. Lee - New chairs, tables, and new heating and cooling unit purchased.

## **Pastors:**

Reverends C.L. Flowe, J.D. Miller, T.C. Hafler, Reverend Mrs. Campbell, W.C. McCorkle, W.D. Carson, L.A. Barker, W.A. Wheeler, C.C. Campbell, G.W. Griffin, J.W. Wador, J.J. Nicholson, O.L. Glodsy, T.H. Harris, D.A. Gaines, S.L. Bruce, J.A. Browne, C.B. Walker, D.J. Stroud, A.C. Honeycutt, J.N. Torrence, M.L. Melton, Reverend Walser, W.M. White, M.R. Cuthbertson, J.G. Flowers, R.R. White, Jr., H.R. Lawson, V.N. Meekins, M.W. Tann, E. Leroy White, C. Williams, W. Gullick, M. Glenn, and Thomas D. Lee.

# Zion Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church



The families of Douglas Young and Robert White organized Zion Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church in 1878 in the Old Rock Hill section of East Monbo Road. The first church was built on this site in 1878 under Presiding Prelate, Bishop J.W. Hood.

## **Ministers who Served the Church (*while it was called the Statesville Circuit*):**

Reverends S.D. Watkins (1891), S.M. Pharr (1892), J.A. House (1893), P.A. McCorkle (1894), C.P. Lackey (1895), R.C. Collins (1897), J.S. Smith (1898-1902), W.A. Blackwell (1903-1909), W.O. Carson (1909-1910), and C.W. Simmons (1911).

## **Ministers who Served Church (*when it joined the Salisbury District*):**

Reverends E.C. Kennedy, Louis Richardson, R.C. Jones, HD. Bonner, P.J. Stroud, Vance Monroe, M.L. Walker, C.L. Wilcox, Jr., Royce W. Myers, Maxie Houston, Sr., Leroy White, Glenn Usry [1986-1990], Carlton Williams, Alfred Johnson, Dr. Karen L. Miller [1996-1997], Keith Tillett [1997-1998], Kevin Williamson [1999-2001], Dr. Charlotte Brown-Williams [2001-2006], Rudolph Cornelius [2006-2018], and David T. Smalls [2018-present].

The church was rebuilt in 1919 at its present location. This was done under the leadership of Reverend C. C. Musgrave and Bishop L.W. Kyles.

### **Zion Wesley Focus and Accomplishments:**

- 1947: Church was reconstructed on existing site under Reverend R.M. Mitchell Jr. and Bishop B.G. Shaw.
- 1960: Reverend Louis Richardson - Church parsonage was built.
- 1969: Reverend R.W. Myers - Church was bricked, and Fellowship Hall completed with furniture.
- 1986: Revernd Glen Usry - Church parking lot was paved, church van, copier and computer purchased.

- 1991: Reverend Carlton Williams - Central air conditioning unit and new flooring placed in parsonage.
- 1998: Reverend Keith Tillett - Altar and chancel were replaced, new carpet in sanctuary, and church van paid off.
- 2001: Dr. Charlotte Brown-Williams - Necessary additional renovations to the church.
- 2006: Reverend Rudolph Cornelius - New roof on church, electrical wiring updated, church entrance doors and carpet on steps replaced, dining tables were purchased, and handicap rails installed for Fellowship Hall, constructed church Facebook page and website.
- 2018: Furniture for Pastor's study purchased, handicap ramp repaired for church sanctuary, replaced refrigerator and freezer in kitchen, and established a new vision for the church.

The church has on record seven members to become ministers:

- The Late George G. Houston, the Late Elder I.L. Houston, the Late Samuel Thomas, the Late Charles Young, and the Late Maxie Houston, Sr.
- The church served as a stepping-stone for Reverend George L. Blackwell who preached his trial sermon at Zion Wesley after accepting his call into the ministry.
- Reverend Bobbie Samuels is presently pastoring at South Iredell A.M.E. Zion Church on the Salisbury District.



## **Presiding Elders (Salisbury District)**

Reverends M.V. Marable (1891-1895), R.H. Simmons (1896-1901), P.A. McCorkle, (1902-1908), H.L. Simmons (1909-1911), E.C. Norment, N.K. Byers, Lee C. Siler, G. Sydney Waddell, J.T. White (1989-1997), Herbert R. Warren, Jr., (1998-2014), and Reverend Dr. Grant Harrison, Jr. (2015-present).

## **Presiding Bishops (Western North Carolina Conference)**

Bishop J.W. Hood (1878-1891), Bishop J.J. Moore (1891-1894), Bishop T.H. Lomax (1894-1899), Bishop Isom C. Clinton (1900-1904), Bishop George W. Clinton (1904-1912), Bishop J.W. Kyles (1912-1920), Bishop B.G. Shaw (1920-1947), Bishop W.J. Walls (1947-1972), Bishop R. Jones (1972-1980), Bishop W.M. Smith (1980-1988), Bishop Ruben L. Speaks (1988-1996), Bishop Cecil Bishop (1996-2004), Bishop George Walker (2004-2012), and Bishop George E. Battle, Jr., (2012-present).



Zion Wesley Mother of the Church, Mrs. Hazel McHenry (above)

& Reverend David T. Smalls, Pastor (below)



“For the Lord has chosen Zion, He has desired it for His dwelling place.”

Psalm 132:13



Theme: Proclaiming that God's Grace is Sufficient

Vision: Uplifting the Walls of Zion through Worship



## Sills Creek A.M.E. Zion Church



Recollections of the early years indicate that worship services were held before the church was officially organized. Several former slaves, adults, and youth would meet on Sunday under a brush arbor for worship service. The brush arbor was located on the Hart Plantation. The Hart Plantation is presently known as Bradshaw Road.

Sills Creek was officially organized for worship in August 1879. S.B. Hart, J.T. Stewart, and their wives donated 3-4 acres of land to the church. On August 19, 1879, the land was presented to R.W. Davidson and Samuel Jamison, church trustees.

Sills Creek was named after Mr. Sills who operated a mill along Sandy Clay Road and Creek. He was mostly known for his fishing ability. He was respected by his neighbors and friends. Mr. Sills and the community built a small log cabin which served as the first church. Several years later, they organized their own school for colored people in the surrounding area. The school operated until 1917. The church trustees gave the Rowan County Board of Education one acre of land to be used for a public school for colored people. In August 1918, the County opened the public school. The school operated for 22 years, closing in 1940. After the closing of the school, the church continued to have worship services. The church lost several members because of World War II, relocation, and better opportunities in town and at the textile mills.

Sills Creek shared their pastor with four A.M.E. Zion churches: New Hope (Spencer), Bethesda (Mooresville), Cedar Grove (Barber), and later Miller's Chapel (Salisbury). Worship services were conducted twice a month until 1962. Sills Creek became famous for its July 4th summer picnic and its Camp Meeting which was held the 4th Sunday in August.

During the 1920s, another building was constructed for worship. This building was used until late 1962. In August 1935, Mr. & Mrs. R.S. Edminston donated 9/10 acre of land to the church.

During the pastorate of Reverend Seabrook and Reverend Leslie Canty (1954-1955), improvements were made to make the church more comfortable and beautiful.

Improvements included installation of new windows, roofing, flooring, a different heating system, electric lights, adding brick veneer finish to the outside of the building, digging a new well, and the addition of the pastor's study and steward room.

In 1965, Reverend Royce Myers and membership launched a drive for a new church. The new church was completed in October 1972. A separate building was constructed for a kitchen and fellowship hall. It was used until 1982.

In August 1976, Reverend Sydney Waddell was appointed to Sills Creek. Under his leadership, the church purchased a United States and a Christian flag, new hymnals, file cabinet, installed a new speaker system, installed a telephone, and had the road paved to the church entrance. The Senior Choir helped to purchase a new piano at a cost of \$2,200.

On November 13, 1977 Sills Creek celebrated Family and Friends Day, raising \$7,987.70 to pay off the church mortgage. The Mortgage Burning Ceremony was held on April 9, 1978. The Reverend William M. Smith, Presiding Bishop of the First Episcopal District of the WNCC delivered the address. Plans to construct a new Educational and Fellowship Hall were initiated in February 1981. This new addition to the property was completed in March 1982.

The church purchased additional land for cemetery space in 1979. Mr. & Mrs. Aaron Neely donated a parcel of land to the church in 1982. The addition of land now extends the property to Highway 150. Reverend John H. Partee (1982-1986) began the landscaping and beautification of the church cemetery by adding a chain link fence along the property line. Two acres of the land were also purchased.

Under the leadership of Reverend Calvin L. Miller (appointed in 1987), Sills Creek erected the picnic shelter. During his tenure in 1988, Sills Creek purchased a new copier, new speaker system, installed railings along the steps inside the church, painted and installed a new roof on the utility building, painted outside the church, installed two telephones, and paved both parking lots and driveways. During the 1989 conference year, Sills Creek was also blessed to install a new furnace, two bulletin boards, two doors for the utility building, purchased a Massey Ferguson tractor, bush hog, box scraper and house mower, and two shovels, rake, two gas cans, grease gun, two lawn mower blades, grass seed and fertilizer. A concrete patio was also built. Lights along the walkway were donated and installed by Hubert McCorkle and his son, Harley McCorkle.

The Men's Boosters Club sponsored the projects that purchased a camcorder and VCR for the Tape Ministry.



Under the leadership of Reverend E. Leroy White [appointed in 1992], Sills Creek purchased their first parsonage located on West Monroe Street in Salisbury, North Carolina. During the pastorate of Reverend Charles F. Tillet [appointed in 1944], Sills Creek renovated the parsonage, purchased a van, and replaced the church steeple. Under the leadership of Reverend Jordan B. Boyd [appointed in 2002], the church was renovated. Reverend Dr. William M. Jordan, III served only six months [appointed December 2012] and Camp 365 was birthed into existence. Under the leadership of Reverend Morgan Glenn [appointed June 2013], a new heating/air-conditioning unit was installed, and a new roof was placed on the cooking shelter.

Reverend Dr. Karen Roberts Miller was appointed to Sills Creek in June 2018. A visual security system and Wi-Fi thermostats now monitor and provide comfort to the church. New computer systems were purchased to assist with finances and security. Sills Creek added an industrial printer and made minor repairs to a leaking roof and malfunctioning air-conditioning unit.

Updates and repairs were made to the parsonage. Three Deaconess were confirmed and consecrated: Mrs. Cylista Brady, Mrs. Sarah Bowden, and Mrs. Lynette Cornelius.

The Sills Creek membership is slowly re-growing. Members live in Landis, Salisbury, Mooresville, Kannapolis, Cleveland, and Charlotte. The church property includes two buildings, a shelter, and eight acres of land.

We thank God for bringing us this far along the way. We pray that He continue to bless us to seek and to serve this present age, and plan for the future.

## **Pastors:**

Reverends Golston, J.A. Pinkston, J.L. Partee, M.J. Reddick, A.B. Torrence, Graham, McNeely, Watkins, McCorkle, Thomas Taylor, Benson, Hamilton, A.L. Barber, G.W. Griffin, G.W. Stinson, Seabrook, Leslie Canty, Stroud, W.J. Walls, S.M. Pharr, H.L. Simon, C.C. Martin, Sanford, Dailey, A.P. Morris, Dodge, Aggery, W. Myers, J.C. Sloan, G. Sidney Waddell, John Partee, Dr. Calvin Miller, E. Leroy White, C.F. Tillett, Michael R. Neal, Dr. A.C. Hunnicutt, Jordan B. Boyd, Dr. William M. Jordan III, Morgan Glenn, and Dr. Karen Roberts Miller.





## New Hope A.M.E. Zion Church



New Hope (first called Peter Holt Chapel) was organized in 1886 and was built on Highway 29 in Spencer, North Carolina. The first church was part of the Winston-Salem District, Central North Carolina Conference. Later, however, after the Western North Carolina Conference was set apart, Peter Holt Chapel became a part of the Salisbury District.

In 1890, Peter Holt Chapel was torn down and rebuilt with the church renamed, New Hope A.M.E. Zion Church. A portion of the New Hope congregation organized a new church in the southern section (the Southern City Tabernacle A.M.E. Zion Church), pastored by Reverend W.H. Haleman.

New Hope burned to the ground in 1925 and the congregation worshipped at North Spencer Grammar School. A new church was built in 1927 on the east side of the railroad track [separated - Spencer for East Spencer]. The builder of the present church was Reverend W.D. Carson [65 years in the ministry].

**New Hope Accomplishments:**

- 1956: New cemetery space
- 1968: Educational Building
- 1968-1980: Various improvements
- S&H Green Stamps collected (purchased organ, new pews, pulpit, etc.)
- October 24, 1982: Women raised \$7,310.70

As of 1986, there have been 33 pastors who served the church [22 are asleep]; and 10 presiding elders who served the Salisbury District [9 asleep]. Throughout its history until 1965, New Hope was a circuit church with White Rock A.M.E. Zion Church in Granite Quarry.

New Hope A.M.E. Zion Church is situated in the Western North Carolina Conference and was set apart from the Central North Carolina Conference on November 25, 1891.

## **Pastors:**

Reverends C.T. Helfer, W.Q. Miller, Mrs. H.C. Campbell, H.L. Holeman, W.D. McCarkle, W.D. Carson, L.A. Barber, F.L. Standerford, W.H. Wheeler, D.N. Lilly, S.L. Dodd, A.P. Morris, C.W. Griffin, J.W. Wactor, J.J. Nicholson, O.L. Glover, T.H. Harris, J. Smith, G.A. Gainer, S.L. Bruce, J.A. Browne, P.J. Stroud, C.B. Walker, A.C. Honnicutt, J.N. Torrence, W.C. Walton, M. Carter, G.B. Thomas, R.L. Clayton, Silas Redd, E.E. Little, Paul Brown, and W.E. Blacklock.

## **Presiding Elders:**

Reverends (deceased) S.H. Marable, P.T. Bennett, R.L. Moore, W.J. Hines, S.W. Hamilton, W.D. Carson, C.W. Hunter, C.E. Norment, N.K. Byers, Dr. L.C. Siler, G. Sidney Waddell, J.T. White, and Herbert R. Warren, Jr. The current Presiding Elder is Reverend Dr. Grant Harrison, Jr.

## St. John A.M.E. Zion Church



On April 3, 1897, one-fourth acre of land was deeded from Charlie Martin and wife to the trustees of The A.M.E. Zion Church for the sum of \$24,000. The site of this land was located on what now serves as the church cemetery off Milling Road, approximately one-half mile from the current church location in Mocksville, North Carolina.

Those trustees receiving the land were Elijah Gaither, Green Malone, Seal J. Neely, Edward Pettigrew, James Foster, and Addison Clement. Among the first ministers were Reverends John, Rowns, Naylor, Carter, and Clement.

As a footnote, Reverend George C. Clement would later, in 1904, become Editor of the church publication, "The Star of Zion." 10 years later, he became the Managing Editor of

The Star of Zion and, in 1916, would be elected Bishop to the Third Episcopal District and becoming the first Bishop reigning from St. John A.M.E. Zion Church.

Several years later, the church at the original location was torn down and the second St. John was built on the grounds where it currently resides. During this period, the trustees were: H.A. Gaither, Chester Carter, J.L. Gaither, and Henry Woodruff. Some of the ministers during this period were: Reverends D.C. Lynch, A.P. Morris, Collins Lee, and J. Mitchell.

In 1927, the church was remodeled under the leadership of Reverend A.A. Adjohoe. Ministers who followed Reverend Adjohoe were Reverends Lomax, Carruthers, Steward, Burk, McCullough, Spurgeon, Gray Jones, Byers, Steward, Tillman, N.V. Jones, F.M. Allen, Bruce, Bonner, Cook Pak, McMillan, and Watkins. Some of the trustees who served during this period were: J.A. Foster, I.L. Gaither, and Charlie Dulin.

In 1970, the present edifice was constructed under the leadership of Reverend Freeman Germany who had pastored for only three years. The Trustee Board, at that time, included J.A. Foster, chairman; Lilian Williams, secretary; T.S. Holman, treasurer; and Louise Gaither. Also serving on the board was Rosie Carter, W.M. Carter, Calvin Jones, Alice Barker, Thomas Gaither, and William E. Gaither.



On Sunday, April 25, 1971, the dedication of the current building was rendered. The message was brought by then the Reverend Milton A. Williams, Sr., Presiding Elder in the Western New York Conference, who would later become Bishop Williams. He was the great-grandson of Naomi Ephraim Clement who were the grandparents to Bishop George C. Clement, therefore becoming the second Bishop to be produced from St. John A.M.E. Zion Church.

In 1972, Reverend Raymond Helms was assigned to St. John where he pastored for two years. Then there was Reverend W. B.F. Blackmon who, unfortunately, passed away while serving St. John. He was followed by Reverends Michael Ellis, L.B. Speas, R.W. Myers, Michael McCray, Anthony Freeman, George Banks, Dr. F. Percy Smith, Karen Miller, Gwendolyn Hampton and, currently, Reverend Tamica L. Robinson.

Another footnote is the many wonderful ministers that pastored at St. John, Reverend Dr. F. Percy Smith who retired from St. John. He is credited for creating the Official Logo for The A.M.E. Zion Church which is used on all church documents and publications throughout Zion.

From humble beginnings of 1897 to the present day, St. John has spanned two centuries and now embarks with enthusiasm into its third with faith, hope, and love - "but the greatest of these three is love" - for if it had not been for the love of those who came before us, those who are here today would not be able to enjoy the rich, beautiful history that

they affectionately call "St. John."

## Cedar Grove A.M.E. Zion Church



The beginning of Cedar Grove A.M.E. Zion Church is similar to the founding of The A.M.E. Zion Connection.

Cedar Grove A.M.E. Zion Church, located at 2430 Hilderbrand Road in Barber, North Carolina, came into existence prior to 1879 at the 16th Session of the North Carolina Conference, under the leadership of Reverend C.M. Glasher. Prior to that, African Americans attended Cleveland and Barber at Ebenezer. They attended meetings in Brush Arbors, also known as Hush Arbor, for service and prayer meeting. Soldiers for Good understood the need for a proper place of worship and on June 3, 1908, a group [trustees] purchased one-half acre of land. The deed was titled to Cedar Grove Church. The church name came about because the area was covered with cedar trees. Three years later, the church was renamed Cedar Grove Methodist Church in 1911.

On September 1, 1919, another acre was bought. The church was renamed again to Cedar Grove A.M.E. Zion, part of the Cleveland Circuit, which meant Cedar Grove and Third Creek were a circuit and shared the same pastor [First Sunday/Third Creek and Second/Fourth Sundays at Cedar Grove]. Transportation to church was by horse/buggy or walking - stopping by a branch and washing your feet before getting to the church that did not have light, water or pot belly stove.

### **Cedar Grove Highlights:**

- **Traveling Gospel Music:** In 1959, Sister Luckey organized the first choir that traveled in a truck. In 2002, the first male choir and, 2004, the first women's choir and anthem choir formed at Cedar Grove.
- **1950:** Trustees built a Fellowship Hall [Hut] where the annual picnic was held on the fourth Saturday in August. The Hut was removed in 1996 to pave the parking lot.
- **Church Renovation:** Began in 1962 and completed in 1968 under Rev. J.C. Jones. The Cleveland Circuit was discontinued in 1968-1969 when Reverend John Bennett was appointed.
- **1987:** The communion table and paraments were dedicated in memory of Rosetta Cuthbertson; and flags were dedicated in memory of Hettie Cuthbertson.

- 1992-1993: Altar furniture, pews, new bibles, carpet, candle lighters [candlestick/air-condition] were installed.
- 1999: 24.5 acres were purchased, and remodeling of the church was done under the leadership of Reverend. Kevin Williamson [windows stained].
- 2003: Reverend Dr. Patricia Tyson was pastor and the first church 15-passenger van was purchased in 2003; along with a new piano and microphones. Of particular note were the following: A.C. Winfield (18 years), John Ellis (103), Viola Fisher (109), Wilma Luckey (92), and Shirley Cuthbertson (35 years as Preacher Steward).
- 2011-Present: The Reverend Dr. Bertha Pittman has had many accomplishments since here time at Cedar Grove. She wrote and received grants from the Cannon Charitable Trust, Inc, as well as initiated several capital campaigns. Under her leadership, the trustees [Hettie J. Avery, chair, Geraldine Cuthbertson, William "Alex" Cuthbertson, Floyd Cuthbertson, James "Pete" Ellis, Margaret Ellis, Carl Harper, Elijah Belton, William "Bill" Pittman, Bro. Christopher Sherrill, and Jeff Williamson] along with stewards [Jackie Belton, Preacher Steward, Rodney Cuthbertson, Felicia Beaty, and Margaret Ellis] led the congregation in completing several projects including:  
  
Renovated the pastor's office and purchased new office furniture; renovated children's classroom, purchased table, chairs, bookcase and carpet, installed computer cubicles and chairs with iPod and laptops donated by Rodney Cuthbertson and Quinta Ellis [The classroom was dedicated in memory of Lynda Gregory, a devoted Children's Sunday School Teacher.]; installed a vertical

- lift [elevator] for handicap accessibility to the downstairs Fellowship Hall; replaced sanctuary ceiling and painted the Fellowship Hall, sanctuary, secretary's office, foyer, and pews; total landscaping was donated by Margaret Ellis, Jackie and Elijah Belton; a 55" TV for the Fellowship Hall was donated by Claudette Allen; and the mortgage was liquidated on December 31, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. [fifteen months early]. The Steward Board also led the church in the purchasing of a 2-way lighted church sign in the 2019-2020 Conference Year.
- Dr. Pittman was also instrumental in initiating the donation of 4.3 acres of land to the church by the Ellis-Barber family adjacent to the church. She also initiated the SWAGGA Afterschool Program and the SWAGGA /Cedar Grove Summer Camp founded by Elijah Belton. The Gospel Choir, under the direction of president, Jeff Williamson, Delores Williamson, Jackie Belton, Barbara Fortson, Chris Sherrill, Waverly Gregory, Gerry Sherrill Jr., Greg Ellis, Mary Ellis, and James "Pete" Ellis still goes strong travelling to cities far and near singing to the glory of God.
- The Music Department purchased an updated PA System donated by Floyd Cuthbertson. The Choir donated cordless microphones and Jackie Belton donated drums. Musicians include Floyd Cuthbertson, Ricardo Heggings, Darius Williamson, and Jeremy Fortson. Other Ministries added:

- The Praise and Worship team under the leadership of Rhonda Sherrill, Greg Ellis, Sherry Parks, Darryl Price and Bro. Christopher Sherrill; the Iron Sharpens Iron Men's Booster's Ministry, under the leadership of Bro. Christopher Sherrill; the Women of Grace Ministry, under the leadership of the Reverend Dianne Williams; and the Nursing Home Ministry, under the leadership of Sherry Parks and Bro. Christopher Sherrill.

Wilma Luckey is still living and every now and then she shares some fond memories of the church. Every now and then she comes to church, although her health does not permit her to come often. Also, Cedar Grove is blessed by the life of Mr. J.T. Steele. In 1995, under the leadership of Reverend Karen Miller, Mr. Steele was nominated Cedar Grove's Lay Council Person of the Year [Salisbury District] for the first church to have 100% participation in paying lay dues. After Mr. Steele's death in 2000, his family made a generous donation in his honor. In that respect, the church started the Cedar Grove Wall of Fame. This wall is displayed downstairs and was designed to memorialize their members whose families also made contributions. Other members memorialized include Mr. William Cuthbertson and Sister Doris Ann Connor. Also, in 2002, Brother Shirley Cuthbertson, under the leadership of Reverend LaDorsa Mays was recognized at the first Preacher Steward Banquet for serving his church in this capacity for over 35 years.

It is the wisdom and shoulders of the faithful laborers that Cedar Grove stands on, even today, as they continue the upward journey to Zion. Although many members, who offered their souls as living sacrifices for God, have gone on to glory and Cedar Grove must

never forget that it was also the strong leadership of pastors, assistant pastors, local preachers, presiding elders, and bishops who have been a part of the Cedar Grove African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Family.

The following pastors, assistant pastors, local preachers, presiding elders have presided over the conference of which Cedar Grove was a part.

### **Pastors:**

Reverends C.M. Glashber [served before the church was built], Lewis Barber [served as pastor when the church was built], B.W. Ramseur, A.B. Mosley, B.W. Monocure, F.L. Standifer, T. Harrison, G. Brooks, T.H. Harris, George Griffin, A.C. Hunnicut, Reid R.

White, C.C. Revels, J. Wesley, R.C. Jones, John Bennett, A.C. Windfield, Clyde Dungee, Karen R. Miller, Kevin Williamson, LaDorsa Mays, Dr. Patricia A. Tyson [deceased], and Dr. Bertha E. Pittman.

### **Assistant Pastors:**

Sisters Annie Leazer, Rosetta Cuthbertson, Beatrice Vaughters, and Reverends Matthew Vaughters, Samuel Shore, and Gwendolyn Hampton. Local Preachers: Brothers Eddie Fortson, Vaughn Williams, Jeff Williamson, Steve Williamson, Rev. Timothy Bridges, and Sisters Donna Cuthbertson, Dianne E. Williams, Emerald Hall, and Tajuan Kyles.



## **Presiding Elders:**

Reverends S.H. Marable, P.T. Bennett, R.L. Moore, W.J. Hines, S.W. Hamilton, W.D.

Carson, G.W. Hunter, C.E. Mormet, N.K. Byers, L.E. Silers, J.T. White, Herbert R.

Warren, Jr., and Reverend Dr. Grant Harrison, Jr.

## Third Creek A.M.E. Zion Church



On June 26, 1884, a group of men purchased a parcel of land (50 ft. by 100 ft.), 1/8th of an acre [more or less], from R.N. Roseboro and wife Mollie J. Roseboro, on which a small frame structure was erected. It was named Third Creek A.M.E. Zion Chapel. This structure was in use until 1897.

On March 19, 1897, the same group purchased another half-acre [more or less] at a cost of \$20 from Mr. & Mrs. R.N. Roseboro. An additional quarter acre was acquired on April 9, 1901 and added to the acreage for Third Creek A.M.E. Zion Chapel and their successors. The trustees who made these land purchases possible were Mr. Overdye Bridges, Mr. Scott Hill, Mr. Jesse Knox, Mr. John Knox, Mr. Henry McConneaughey, Mr. Mack Moser, and Mr. David Tomlin. This concluded the purchase of land for 49 years.

Remodeling and landscaping in the 1940s were the first works completed. Other improvements followed namely, an education annex, classrooms, kitchen, two restrooms, and fellowship hall. Reverend J. Rolland Wesley was the pastor.

On November 24, 1950, the trustees purchased a quarter acre from Mr. & Mrs. George L. Lyerly. The Trustee Board, at that time, was Mr. Eugene Houston, Mr. Odell Houston, Mr. George Hyde, Mr. H.W. Knox, Mr. J.S. Shaver, Mr. Anderson Wood, and Mr. John W. Wood.

In 1962, improvements were completed at a cost of \$16,000. The trustees were Mr. Robert Chambers, Mr. Fred Connor, Mr. Ralph Hall Jr., Mr. Eugene Houston, and Mr. James Houston. The pastor was Reverend R. C. Jones.

In 1975, at a cost of \$42,000, the edifice was bricked, new carpet, pulpit furniture, piano, and pews were purchased for the sanctuary; also, a new heat and air conditioning system was installed. Members of the Trustee Board were Mr. Robert Chambers, Mr. H.E. Houston, Mrs. Frances Johnson, Mrs. Oneita Knox, Mrs. Beatrice Powe, Mr. John Rankin, and Mr. Theodore Rankin. Reverend M.R. Wilson was the pastor.

On January 26, 1989, two parcels of land were purchased from Mr. Earl C. Wanzer, on behalf of the Kilpatrick heirs. One parcel cost \$2,300 and the other parcel cost \$1,200.

Under the leadership and encouragement from many former pastors, along with the generosity of dedicated members of the church family, Third Creek continued to prosper and improve with various renovations and additions to the exterior, as well as many interior enhancements. The new addition to the fellowship hall was completed in January 1993, under the leadership of Reverend Marion Jones, pastor. The improvements included enlargement of the dining area, storage room addition, two restrooms, finance room, and air-conditioning for the rear rooms of the church. The fellowship hall was named the Grayson Center in honor of Reverend & Mrs. Glenn Grayson (1984-1991) for their loyal and devoted service to Third Creek.

In July 1997, Reverend Donnie C. Kent was appointed Pastor by Bishop Cecil Bishop, along with his wife, First Lady, Mrs. Lelia Kent. Under Reverend Kent's leadership, Third Creek was "Too Blessed to Be Stressed." There were many accomplishments made and many records set. As Third Creek entered the 2012-2013 Conference Year, Reverend Kent began his 16th year as the pastor. However, on Friday, November 2, 2012, the Reverend Donnie C. Kent descended into eternal life. He was a true Christian soldier who touched the hearts of many in the Cleveland community and others as well.

On February 10, 2013, the Right Reverend George E. Battle, Jr. and Mrs. Iris M. Battle came to worship with Third Creek to present and introduce its the newly appointed Pastor, the Reverend Harold L. Jordan, along with First Lady, Mrs. Judy R. Jordan. They

were welcomed with much love. Under the leadership of Reverend Jordan, Third Creek stands on the promises of God.

In December of the 2015-2016 Conference Year, Third Creek was blessed to be a recipient of a grant from the Cannon Foundation. Thusly, a newly renovated state-of-the-art kitchen was born. New appliances (including a refrigerator, range, microwave, dishwasher, and hot-water heater and new sinks/faucets, and new flooring) were donated by members of the church. The Grayson Center received two sets of new entrance doors and refurbished carpet. Following the completion of the kitchen project, the Stewardess Board had a project of their own – a new Pastor’s Study. The study was fully carpeted and furnished with a new desk and record cabinet, love seat, two chairs, an armoire, two ceiling fans, new exterior window screens, interior blinds and curtains, refrigerator, and coffee pot. In addition, new blinds were installed in two classrooms and finance room, and two restrooms in the fellowship hall were painted and redecorated with new sink and cabinet in the lady’s room, and new blinds and curtains in the men’s room.

In the 2017-2018 Conference Year, Third Creek was once again blessed with a grant from the Cannon Foundation which allowed for an opportunity to have a paved parking lot with security gates.

We will forever rejoice with thanksgiving to God for His goodness and favor upon this our beloved Third Creek African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. The church family is

proud of its members, past and present, and the great cloud of witnesses who are now looking down upon us.

Third Creek will celebrate its 136th church anniversary during the 2020 church year. To God be the Glory!

## Miller's Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church



Miller's Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church began as a log cabin in 1874, under the leadership of Mr. Paign. A framed structure erected under the leadership of Reverend McCoy replaced the log cabin. The church had no electricity, running water or other indoor conveniences. The roads were rocky and unpaved, which made traveling uncomfortable. This, however, did not deter the faithful members from braving mud, rain and darkness to worship.

The dedication exercises were held in 1902, during the administration of Reverend A.T. Graham. There were 14 teachers, three secretaries, three beauticians, and two home and farm demonstrators in membership at that time.

Some of the first trustees and builders of Miller's Chapel included Mack Todd, John and Henry Thompson, Richard and Hamp Gibson, J.R. Neely, Joseph Litaker, Moses and John Locke, John Perkins, Henry Young, Henry Higgins, Roland and Thomas Miller, and Roland Harris.

As the years passed, Miller's Chapel prospered. New members were added under the leadership of many dynamic pastors. The church made needed improvements such as a furnace, lights, basement, pulpit set, water, pews, choir chairs, and a brick-veneered structure.

Under the leadership of Reverend J.D. Gladden, Miller's Chapel members found it necessary to make further improvements. The church was bricked, and a new sanctuary completely remodeled. Improvements were made to the basement, educational rooms, and ushers and choir rooms were added to the present structure. Reverend J.D. Gladden, a spiritual man of determination and energetic leadership, led the completion of the new Miller's Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church. His motto was "Right Giving is Right Living."

Reverend Rev. J.C. Sloan, a spiritual and dedicated leader, came to Miller's Chapel with new ideas. The church continued to grow under his leadership. Miller's Chapel purchased a new piano and an organ was donated. Reverend Sloan's motto was "Follow the Leader."

Dr. Robert B. Lawton stressed spiritual and financial moral of the church. As a result, there was an increase in tithes. The Wednesday Night Prayer Service renewed. The church



also organized several new choirs and organizations. Dr. Robert B. Lawton believed in standing firm and waiting on the Lord, because "Prayer will change things."

The late, Mrs. European Glover, sister of Dr. Robert B. Lawton, was a Christian lady. She worked in most of the organizations in the church. Mrs. Glover believed that God had been good to her so she should give something back to Miller's Chapel. As a result of her generosity, Miller's Chapel received a van, a paved parking area, and money for improvements to the Fellowship Hall. The Trustees receiving the money were Roy Litaker, chairman, Timothy Neely, Mildred Neely, Raymond Johnson Jr., and Dr. Robert B. Lawton.

The late, Reverend Matthew Williamson Sr. was a great tither. He made further improvements to Miller's Chapel. The sanctuary was carpeted during his years as pastor. He was a great singer and made sure that Miller's Chapel was a great church spiritually and financially.

Reverend Hezekiah Lawson was associate pastor under Reverend Matthew Williamson. Upon the retirement of Reverend Williamson, Reverend Lawson became the new pastor of Miller's Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church. The number of members increased under the leadership of Reverend Lawson, including the addition of retired pastor and Presiding Elder, Reverend Dr. Andrew Whitted and wife, Mrs. Annette Whitted.

Reverend Lawson emphasizes the importance of tithing, the observance of all annual days and organized Bible Study class. Reverend Lawson preaches the importance of health in his sermons. The second Sunday in each month is Youth Day with children involved in morning worship. Miller's Chapel is a member of Christian Fellowship with three other churches in the community that provides food for those in need by supporting helping ministries with donations. During much of Reverend Lawson's time at Miller's Chapel, the main project has been building a much-needed new fellowship hall. Due to the diligence of the congregation, and the tireless support of Reverend Lawson, the new fellowship hall was built. The Dedication Service was held on Sunday, November 8, 2009. The theme was "Solid Faith in Uncertain Times." Reverend Lawson's emphasis has been on the church as a community based on love, cooperation and support. This has increased greater awareness of their responsibility to all of God's Children.

### **Former Pastors (Deceased):**

Reverends T.P. Turner, R.J. Jones, W.J. Walls, W.T. Medford, Carl Paign, McCoy, A.T. Gorham, P.A. McCorkle, Murray, D.A. Kelly, R.J. Stroud, Matthew Williamson, Selem Kelly, T.L. Flowe, J.S.N. Trace, T.O. Diggs, J.C. Nelson, V.L. Carson, Frank Gibson, J.E. Jackson, S.E. Meeks, Janie Crawford, J.C. Sloan, J.E.K. Aggrey, J.P. McCurdy, S.W. Peacock, George Griffin, B.B. Moore, C.C. Martin, D.L. Seabrook, R.W. Myers, O.C. Dumas, and Robert Lawton.

### **Former Pastors (from 1949):**

Reverends Curlies Curry, Bobby Smith, and Hezekiah Lawson.

### **Former Presiding Elders (Deceased):**

Reverends B.E. Norment, N.K. Byers, G. Sidney Waddell, L.C. Siler, J.T. White, and Herbert R. Warren Jr.

### **Presiding Elder (Current):**

Reverend Dr. Grant Harrison Jr. (2014-present)

## Liberty A.M.E. Zion Church



Liberty A.M.E. Zion Church is steeped in the rich heritage and tradition of the Zion Connection. Dating back to the 1800s, members here have always been a beacon of light in the community in which she stands. However, the actual historical records of this small, but great church were destroyed in a fire some years ago. Liberty A.M.E. Zion Church regrets deeply to acknowledge that they cannot write a full and complete history. After long hours of searching, the members of the Fact-Finding Committee are now able to establish an approximate date of when their founding fathers got together and formed what is now aptly called, Liberty African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

On January 25, 1878, two agents, Ned Brown and Peter Parker of The A.M.E. Zion Publishing House, aided in the purchase of a small parcel of land nestled in the community of Cooleemee, North Carolina. This land was purchased from Martha Maroney for \$5.00, to be used as a cemetery. Near this piece of land was an old school that was used as Liberty Church.

After many interviews with old established members of this community, Liberty is confident to know that their fore parents were dedicated men and women who had a deep regard for God's work and the perpetuation of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Connection.

Dedicated persons whose names will never be mentioned in the great archives of history: Will Clement, Lomax Oakley, Thomas Neely, and Mary Hunter are remembered as those original members who sought to maintain the integrity of their church as a viable force in the midst of grave turmoil to insure their support to the Zion Connection.

In 1925, the present structure was rebuilt with grateful appreciation given to John Hopson, Sally Neely, Lula Clement, Blanche Oakley, Maggie Hooper, James Ijames, Bessie Ijames, Ida Ijames, Robert Neely, Amanda Neely, Author Miller, Essie Miller, Andrew Patterson, Sr., Estella Patterson, and Zelma Flint.

**Progress at Liberty:**

- Under the leadership of Reverend Janie Crawford, the church was bricked at a cost of \$1,500 with help from other pillow stone members: Lorenzo Maxwell, Miller Clement, Paul Fowler, Vernell Maxwell, Johnson Ijames, Freddie Ijames, Marth Ijames, Eliza Fowler, Louise Carter, Robert Pulliam, Dollie Pulliam Pruitt, Annie M. Shanks, Estella Patterson, Eller W. Hargrove, and many others.
- Under the leadership of Reverend Louis Hunter, the floor was restored, and carpet added.
- Under the leadership of Reverend James Milton, the roof was replaced, and the steeple added thanks to Martha Ijames who raised the monies; and the church also installed central heat and air-conditioning.
- Under the leadership of Reverend Mildred Lawson, Liberty enlarged their fellowship hall, thanks to one of their members, Richard S. Cuthbertson Sr., the caretaker at Camp Dorothy Walls, and cousin, John F. Cuthbertson. Pads were added to the pews thanks to Eller W. Hargrove and the piano was replaced ... "to God be the Glory!"
- Under the leadership of Reverend Dr. Bertha Pittman, the church established scholarship and capital funds. Also, repairs were done to the bathroom floors and some other minor items.
- Reverend Tamica Robinson donated the air-conditioner for the fellowship hall.
- Under the leadership of Reverend David Smalls, Liberty replaced the heating and air-conditioning system and installed a new roof, thanks to the Conference Home Missions Department.

Since the time of this conception, members of Liberty A.M.E. Zion Church have carried on the legacy and rich heritage for which it was founded with the oldest member being Andrew Patterson Jr. This church, like so many of our churches in Zion, never sought any special recognition for its work nor ever faltered or threatened to run away, when times were so cruel that we could not afford the simple pleasures of life, for "We are 'Building God's Kingdom One Soul at a Time'."

**Pastors and Servants of God** (*many who have gone to become outstanding leaders in communities, cities and states other than Cooleemee, North Carolina*):

Reverends Don Copeland, Dr. Michael Ellis, Honeycutt, Alfred Leake, T. Kendell, Kevin McGill, Metcalf, Matthew Vaughters, Mildred Lawson, Tamica Robinson, S.J. Clement, Fair, Louis Hunter, Sr. (now retired Bishop of the Southwestern Delta Episcopal District), James Milton, Hezekiah Lawson, McGriff, Robert Mackey, Dr. Bertha Pittman, Janie Crawford, Freeman Germany, Houston, Michael McCray, Wayne Griffin, Moore, Torrence, Robert Lawton, Finkley, and David T. Smalls.

**Current and Dedicated Pastor:**

Reverend Michael Mitchell

# South Iredell A.M.E. Zion Church



From the original minutes of the historical transcript (1891-1911) of the Western North Carolina Conference, prepared by Reverend Dr. James D. Armstrong and the Historical Society staff, some history of South Iredell A.M.E. Zion church follows.

The Statesville District, under Presiding Elder Reverend Dr. Martin V.B. Marable, Zion Wesley Circuit included South Iredell, Reverend S.D. Watkins, pastor.



- The First Session of the WNCC, convened at Moore's Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church in Lincolnton, NC (November 25-30, 1891) where appointments were given to the Second District [Statesville].
- The Second Session convened in Hickory, NC (December 7-14, 1892) and included Presiding Elder Marable and Reverend S.M. Pharr, pastor of South Iredell.
- The Third Session convened in Charlotte, NC (December 6-11, 1893 and Bishop Moore died December 9, 1893) and included The Right Reverend Thomas Lomax, Presiding Elder Marable, and the Statesville Circuit [Shiloh, Zion Wesley and South Iredell] was under the pastorship of Reverend J.A. House.
- The Fourth Session convened at Winston Tabernacle, Winston-Salem, NC (December 5-10, 1894) and included Elder Marable and the Statesville District (South Iredell) under the leadership of Reverend R.H. Moss.
- The Sixth Session convened in Rutherfordton, NC (December 2, 1896) and included Presiding Elder R.H. Simmons and Reverend C.P. Lackey, pastor.
- The Seventh Session convened at Soldiers Memorial, Salisbury, NC (November 3-9, 1897) and included Elder Simmons and Reverend R.C. Collins, pastor of the Statesville Station.
- The Eighth Session convened at Moore's Chapel in Lincolnton, NC (December 14, 1898) and included Elder Simmons and Reverend A.L. Newby, pastor of South Iredell on the Statesville District.
- The Ninth Session convened at Clinton Chapel in Charlotte, NC (November 29, 1899) under Bishop Lomax [there were no appointments].

- The Tenth Session convened at Winston Tabernacle in Winston-Salem, NC (December 5, 1900) and included The Right Reverend I.C. Clinton [there were no appointments].
- The Eleventh Session convened at Mayo's Sanctuary in Hickory, NC under Bishop Clinton.
- The Twelfth Session convened at Martin's Chapel in Gastonia, NC (November 26-December 1, 1902) and included Presiding Elder P.A. McCorkle and Reverend W.A. Blackwell, pastor.
- The Thirteenth Session convened at Mount Pleasant Church in Statesville, NC (November 25, 1903) and included Elder McCorkle and Statesville Station pastor, Reverend W.A. Blackwell.
- The Fourteenth Session convened at Little Rock Church in Charlotte, NC (November 23-28, 1904) and included Presiding Elder H.L. Simmons and Reverend W.A. Blackwell, Statesville Pastor.
- The Eighteenth Session convened at Mayo's Temple in Hickory, NC (November 18, 1908 [there were no appointments]).
- The Nineteenth Session convened at Center Street A.M.E. Zion Church in Statesville, NC (November 16, 1910) and included Elder H.L. Simmons and Statesville pastor, Reverend C.W. Simmons.
- The Twenty-first Session convened at Soldiers Memorial Church in Salisbury, NC (November 8, 1911) and included Elder H.L. Simmons and Reverend C.W. Simmons, pastor of the Statesville Station.

A new edifice was completed in 1997 under the leadership of Reverend James Peace, Presiding Elder J.T. White, and Bishop Cecil Bishop.

In April 2000, Reverend David Rankin served as Supply Pastor and was appointed to South Iredell during the 2001-2002 Western NC Annual Conference.

**South Iredell Accomplishments:**

- Various members donated windows for the new church. Chandeliers were donated [Mrs. Catherine Myers, Mrs. Rochelle Nicholas, Mrs. Annie Wilson, Mrs. Mary Jones, Reverend and Mrs. David Rankin] and Dr. and Mrs. Paul Walker donated a collection table. Other donations included: prayer and tithe box, sound system and lectern [Reverend and Mrs. Rankin]; a set of drums [Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Everhart], a keyboard [Mrs. Catherine Myers], large print Bibles [Mrs. and Mrs. John Marshall Heaggins], painting over the baptismal pool [Mrs. Margaret Hurlocker], and a wooden cross [Ricardo Heaggins].
- 2005-2006 Conference Year: A set of water fountains were donated by Mr. and Mrs. John Heaggins.
- 2006-2007 Conference Year: Renovations began in the fellowship hall. Trustees [Mrs. Mary Jones, Mrs. Annie Wilson, Jeanette Rankin] donated pictures for the fellowship hall and vestibule, and cabinets for the kitchen; and Stewards [William Miller, Jr. and Mrs. Catherine Myers] purchased a heater. The Pastor's Study was

- renovated in memory of husband, Reverend Royce Myers, and granddaughter, Mrs. Rochelle Nicholas, by Mrs. Catherine Myers. Mrs. Myers also renovated the kitchen in the fellowship hall and donated a van. Mrs. Mary Rankin donated a stove for the kitchen.
- 2007-2008 Conference Year: Ricardo Heaggins donated encyclopedias and books and Suzanne Davis donated books; Jeanette Rankin donated bookcases, file cabinets, and a copy machine; Mrs. Alice McCoy donated a refrigerator; and Mr. and Mrs. Chuck Drummet donated a new riding lawn mower.
- 2009-2010 Conference Year: Mrs. Barbara Sadler furnished the communion altar and Mrs. Mary Rankin donated the altar dressings for communion.
- 2010-2011 Conference Year: The altar kneeling bench was extended and elevated. Various members along with James and Cheryl Douglas donated The A.M.E. Zion Bicentennial Hymnals.
- 2011-2012 Conference Year: Robert McCoy donated a riding lawn mower to the church.
- 2013-2014 Conference Year: The church mortgage was paid off.
- 2014-2015 Conference Year: New heating/air-condition unit was installed.
- 2019-2020 Conference Year: Roof replaced

## **Presiding Elders:**

Reverends E.C. Norment, N.K. Byers, Lee C. Siler, E.E. Waddell, J.T. White, Herbert R. Warren Jr., and presently, Reverend Dr. Grant Harrison Jr.

## **Ministers:**

Reverends Isaac Houston, O.C. Dumas, Wells, Maxie Houston Sr., G.P. Gilmore, Qutrell, Walter Burton, Sadler, Sloan, Janie Crawford, Tay, Wayne Griffin, B.S. Lane, Calvin Miller, John Cowan Jr., J.D. Gladden, James Peace, Karen Miller, Terry Boyd, LaDorsa Mays, Benjamin Mays, David Rankin, and presently, Reverend Bobbie R. Samuels.

# Providence A.M.E. Zion Church



Some 141 years ago, Providence Colored Church came into existence by having prayer meetings, song services, and bible study in different homes and brush arbors located in the community known as the Hatters Shop area of Rowan County. These services were conducted through the will of God.

In the year 1891, Thomas T. Earnhardt and wife, Anna, had a vision that a church was needed for the colored community to have worship service to glorify God and improve relationships in the community. On December 17, 1891, Thomas and Anna Earnhardt deeded land to the following trustees: John P. Holmes, Stephen Austin, Roland Harky, and their successors in the office forever. As a result of this transaction, Providence Colored Church was born. It is unknown when Providence joined The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Conference.

There was no electricity or indoor facilities until the second church was built.

Providence A.M.E. Zion Church was a circuit church along with Second Creek A.M.E. Zion Church on Gheen Road in Rowan County. Services were held at Providence on the second and fourth Sundays and at Second Creek on the first and third Sundays.

Under the administration of Presiding Elder, Reverend N.K. Byers, Providence and Ardis Chapel A.M.E. Zion Churches were taken out of the intensive care and each church became a station church.

The present structure is the third sanctuary built on the property. The trustees, at that time, were Quentin Holmes, Nebraska Lowery, Milton Anglo Barger, and John Franklin Moss.

During the years that followed, the membership began to dwindle due to members seeking better employment opportunities, marriage, college bound students, and death. By the grace of God, the membership has increased.

A new fellowship hall had been added and a complete renovation of the sanctuary has transpired under the leadership of a former pastor, the Reverend Harold L. Jordan. A dedication service of the new and renovated facilities was held in May 2008.

## **Pastors:**

Reverends C.V. Flack, Griffin, Nebraska Jones, C.R. Wells, T.M. Poe, Durr, Willie Barber, George Gilmore, Dr. Andrew Whitted (\*), James Abernathy, Ola Cassell, Ruth Kirk, Gary Simmons, Reid R. White Sr., James Milton (\*), Joseph McMillian, John L. Miller Sr., Harold L. Jordan (\*), Tamica L. Robinson (\*), and Zacharias E. Allen Sr. (July 3, 2011-present).

## **Presiding Elders:**

Reverends George Hunter, C.L. Norment, N.K. Byers, Sidney G. Waddell, Lee C. Siler, Jerry T. White, Herbert R. Warren Jr., and Reverend Dr. Grant Harrison Jr. (\*)

Note: (\*) Living Pastor/Presiding Elder



## Ardis Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church



Ardis Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was established in 1869 in the home of Brown Walker by Reverend Charles Ardis. The house in which the organization took place stood directly across the Old Mocksville Road to the west of the present structure. The original structure was erected in 1888, by a young Black congregation, under the supervision of James Hawkins. Some of the builders were James Hawkins, Ned Hannah, Brown Walker, James Chunn, and Reverend Charles Ardis.

On August 6, 1890, the trustees purchased the present site consisting of one acre [more or less], from Bishop C.R. Harris for the sum of \$30. Among its charter members and original trustees were Allen Correll, Brown Walker, James Chunn, and John Maghee. Some of the members of this church, today, are descendants of these persons.

Dr. Joseph Charles Price, founder and first president of Livingstone College, dedicated the building in the spring of 1891. Dr. Price performed the act of dedication and preached the Dedication Sermon. The church was named for its founder, Reverend Charles Ardis.

On September 14, 1894 at 9:00 a.m., the deed was filed and registered in the office of the Registrar of Deeds for Rowan County, North Carolina in Book 76, Page 486 and signed by H.N. Woodson.

Ardis Chapel has produced a long line of distinguished ministers; some of whom have gone to higher positions of service and leadership in our country. Among those persons were the late Bishop Raymond Luther Jones and the late Bishop Milton A. Williams.

The present structure was built by the contractor, the late Conrad Bost, in 1982 and completed in 1983. The plans were designed and drawn up by Reverend Dr. Calvin L. Miller, a member and now Presiding Elder of the Winston-Salem District in the Western North Carolina Conference. Arthur and Jean Miller were the liaisons with Mr. Bost. The trustees, at that time, were Carl Marlin Jr., chairman, Eugene Caldwell, Arthur Miller, Thomas Tabor Sr., and the late Reverend James L. Hauser Sr.

The trustees, under the leadership of Thomas Miller, added a new gas heating and air-conditioning system in March 1990. In the spring and summer of 1990, an outdoor bulletin board containing the bell that was in the original church, was erected in the front of the church by the trustees, under the direction of John Sifford Sr. The bell was donated

to the church by Livingstone College.

The Mortgage Burning Celebration Service was held on Sunday, March 21, 1993, under the leadership of Reverend Charles Tillett Jr. The sermon and mortgage burning were conducted by the late Bishop Ruben L. Speaks, Senior Bishop and Presiding Prelate of the Western NC Conference/Piedmont Episcopal District. Dr. Jerry T. White, who also participated in the service, was the Presiding Elder. Trustees at that time were Thomas Miller, chairman, Carl Marlin Jr., Eugene Caldwell, Arthur Miller, and John Sifford Sr.

Ardis Chapel added a new fellowship hall and renovated the present structure by Summit Development beginning in 2003 and completed in 2004. The campaign fund for this project began under the leadership of Reverend Robert Mackey. Under the auspice of Reverend Anthony J. Freeman and Reverend George C. Banks (now Reverend Drs.) - under whose leadership the plans were drawn up, the campaign fund continued.

Beginning the 2003-2004 Conference Year, Presiding Elder Herbert R. Warren Jr. guided Ardis Chapel through the beginning of the construction project. Reverend Rudolph Cornelius, who was appointed in October 2003, guided Ardis Chapel through the completion of the project. Round tables were purchased under Reverend Cornelius to enhance the beauty of the fellowship hall. The trustees, at that time, and still present included Thomas Miller, chairman, Jeff Roberts, Dirwin Propst, Arthur Miller, Robert Correll, Thomas Tabor, Kevin McCullough Sr., Carl Marlin Jr., Mrs. Jean Miller, and Mrs. Mary M. Marlin. Mrs. Miller and Mrs. Marlin were the first females to be appointed

to the Ardis Chapel Trustee Board.

The Service of Dedication for the present structure and fellowship hall was held on Sunday, April 3, 2005. The Right Reverend George W.C. Walker Sr., Senior Bishop and Presiding Prelate of the Western NC Conference/Piedmont Episcopal District, at that time, preached the dedication sermon and performed the act of Dedication.

Under the leadership of Reverend David T. Miller, Ardis Chapel liquidated the debt of the pews. The church also enhanced their grounds with remodeled sidewalks and other groundwork. At the 139th Church Anniversary, held on April 20, 2008, new stain glass windows were dedicated by the Presiding Elder, Reverend Herbert R. Warren Jr. The windows were donated by Reverend Miller and members in memory and honor of their loved ones.

Under the leadership of Reverend Trishaun Kendall, additional outdoor lighting was added. The members also established an Ardis Chapel website with live streaming for all their services. A Facebook page was created to share their ministries with others.

Ardis Chapel is blessed to have had the visionary, Reverend R. Nathan Bratton, serving as their pastor. In March 2013, Ardis Chapel installed a cross in front of the church. The church is blessed to have added a paved parking lot during Conference Year 2014. Ardis Chapel is growing spiritually and looking forward to going to higher heights in God under his leadership.

## **Pastors:**

Reverends Charles Ardis [first pastor], Raymond Jones [Bishop, deceased], Milton Williams [Bishop, deceased], James Abernathy, John Frank Massey, William Milton White, Bobby Smith, Michael Puryear, Tate, Samuel Hopkins, James Sadler, W.E. Blacklock, Matthew Vaughters, James Hauser [served at two different times], James Conrad, Benjamin Byers, Ivan Morton, Robert Mackey, Charles F. Tillett, Anthony Freeman, George Banks, Rudolph Cornelius, David Miller, Trishaun M. Kendall, Rev. R. Nathan Bratton, and currently, Reverend Martha Greene.

## **Presiding Elders:**

Reverends C.E. Norment, N.K. Byers, Lee C. Siler, G. Sidnay Waddell, Jerry T. White, Herbert R. Warren Jr., and currently, Reverend Dr. Grant Harrison Jr.

## The Salisbury District Historical Society

*presents*

### REMEMBERING MRS. MARY G. DAWKINS



Mrs. Mary Louise Gibson Dawkins was an invaluable asset to the ministry at Miller's Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church. As minister of music, she made sure the music was appropriate for the worship, based on the Christian calendar. She provided her talent as a pianist for well over 50 years, without financial compensation. As Sunday School Superintendent she ensured that the teachers and students had the necessary materials to study the Word of God.

The Missionary Department functioned very well under her leadership, despite the lack of physical bodies to fill all positions required. Because of her leadership, Miller's Chapel strived harder to see that the work of the Missionary Department was carried out. Mrs.

Dawkins stayed positive in the face of adversity, which was encouraging to everyone at Miller's Chapel. Mrs. Dawkins was unable to perform the physical tasks as a deaconess, but she insured that Miller's Chapel had appropriate music and program for their Communion Service.

The importance of the Pastor's Administrative Assistant is known throughout Zion. This was another ministry Mrs. Dawkins carried out very well. The pastor never had to worry about bulletins for Sundays and special occasions, nor contacting other churches. At some churches, several members wore many hats due to the small number. Mrs. Dawkins certainly carried her load. Serving on the Steward and Trustee Board, she was important to the ministry of Miller's Chapel. Although this may not have been unusual for other small congregations, Mrs. Dawkins continued to do all of this work from home.

Following a near-fatal accident years ago, her mobility was very limited. However, when able to come to church on Sunday morning, she played the piano; and rarely missed a Quarterly Conference where she served as Secretary.

Many people did not know that Mrs. Mary G. Dawkins served 50+ years as the Salisbury District Secretary, Church Delegate or Alternate Delegate to the District and Annual Conferences.

*Reverend Hezekiah R. Lawson II, Pastor, Miller's Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church*

*Dr. Yvonne A. Tracey, Salisbury District WH&OMS and Lay Council*

*Members of the Salisbury District Historical Society,*

*2019-2020 Conference Year, Jacqueline Anthony, Chairman*

*Drs. Grant & Joanne Harrison, Presiding Elder & First Lady, Salisbury District*





## Mrs. Mary Louise Gibson Dawkins

September 7, 1928 – December 10, 2019

Mary G. Dawkins was the daughter of the late Richard and Maidie McConnaughey Gibson. She attended the public schools of Rowan County and graduated from J.C. Price High School in 1944. She continued her education at Winston-Salem Teacher's College [now Winston-Salem State University]. She graduated with a B.A. Degree in Education in 1948. She furthered her education at North Carolina Central University. She taught in the Cleveland County School System prior to coming to Salisbury where she continued to teach until retirement. Mrs. Dawkins joined the church at an early age and worked and gave faithful, dedicated and supportive services in all areas of Miller's Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church, the Salisbury District, and the community

**Local:** Church Musician, Administrative Assistant to the Pastor, Steward, President of the Stewardess Board, President of the Deaconesses, Life Member of the Connectional Lay Council, past Superintendent of Sunday School, Secretary of the Quarterly Conference, a member of the Christian Education Board and a member of the Building Fund Committee, Local Parent Body President of the Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society and a Life Matron.

**District:** Mrs. Dawkins was Recording Secretary of the Salisbury District serving six Presiding Elders, Reverend E.L. Norman, Reverend N.K. Byers, Reverend Lee Clinton Siler, Reverend G.S. Waddell, Reverend J.T. White and Reverend Herbert R. Warren Jr.

She also served as Secretary of the Lay Council of Salisbury District for Presidents John Long, Earle Willie, John Black and Larry Holt. She served as Chairperson of the Conference Workers of the district and past delegate to the District Conference.

**Conference:** Mrs. Dawkins attended numerous Annual Conferences, General Conferences, Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Conventions, and Lay Council Convocations.

**Community:** After 32 years in education, Mrs. Dawkins retired from the Rowan County School System in 1976. She continued to help improve students academically by working as a teacher at The Learning Curve's Child Development Center, as well as, other educational centers. She was a member of Pearl White Chapter #180 of the Order of the Eastern Star. Mrs. Dawkins was a Democratic Judge of the South Ward Precinct and retired in 1999. In 2011, Mrs. Dawkins retired from Safety Taxi Company serving as President and Partner for over 30 years.

Mrs. Dawkins was mother of James, grandmother of Chantina Dawkins, and great-grandmother to Zaraya, Bryan and DeVon Stewart.



**SENSATIONAL!**  
*May 15, 2020*

*Reverend Dr. Grant Harrison Jr., Presiding Elder, Salisbury District  
 Dr. Joanne Harrison, First Lady*

*Mrs. Iris M. Battle, Missionary Supervisor  
 The Rt. Reverend George E. Battle Jr., Presiding Prelate, Piedmont Episcopal District  
 & Senior Bishop, The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church*