

Keep Building

The History of St. Matthews UMC



This is an abbreviated history collaborated through research, recording, writing and editing over many years collected primarily by church historian emeritus Doris Brown with the help of other members of the church. We hope it will be an inspiration to you and a valuable keepsake.

1887-1938 – The Early Years

On Oct. 22, 1887 the available deed shows the first parcel of land was deeded to the trustees of St. Matthews Methodist Episcopal Church. The deed states that John T. Gross, Joseph Matthews, William Bill Nick, James Boyd, and Edward Dennis were trustees. The land was purchased from James and Mary Jane Thompson. *Other records indicate that the original property was owned by John and Rachael Brown Nick.*

This is the second Methodist church that was founded in Southern Anne Arundel County by James Thompson. The other was Franklin Methodist Episcopal Church in Churchton. Thompson was a freedman before the conclusion of the Civil War. The land St. Matthews is located on was purchased by Thompson from the Weems family and was once part of the Thompson's farm. St. Matthews was originally called Great Swamp Methodist Episcopal church.

The formation of this church was necessary because of the increased population in the Shady Side community, in those days called "the Great Swamp". This new congregation separated from Franklin Methodist Episcopal Church, thus Franklin was known as the mother church. According to the cornerstone, the church was dedicated on Nov. 6, 1887. The Rev. Julius Love was the first pastor of St. Matthews Episcopal Church from 1887 to 1889.

In November 1890, the West River circuit purchased land from Thomas and Elizabeth Offer, George and Selena Offer, and Benjamin Offer. The trustees representing the three churches were: Joshua Dennis, Franklin Chapel; Charles Matthews, St. Matthews; and William Carter, Friendship Church.

On Oct. 19, 1900, the second parcel of land was deeded from William and Mary E Avery to trustees of St. Matthews Methodist Episcopal Church. At that time the trustees were Henry Scott, Solomon Crowder, Joseph Matthews, William Bill Nick and Charles Crowder. We believe that a small church beside the road was erected between 1887 and 1900. According to history, the church was very small 29' x 48'.

The church is located approximately 19 miles south of Annapolis on Route 468 on the left side of the road in lower Shadyside area. St. Matthews was originally part of the West River circuit, which included Franklin, St. Matthews and Carter's (then known as Friendship Church) Methodist Episcopal churches.

From 1900 to 1915, five pastors served the little church on the side of the road. In 1921, under the pastorate of Rev. Ely Lofton, Carter was removed from the West River circuit, thus leaving St. Matthews and Franklin on the same circuit – the Churchton Charge, sharing the same pastor.

It had beautiful varnish ceiling beams, which is one of the distinctive signatures of the sanctuary. The altar had spokes in the railing. The floors were hardwood.

From 1922 to 1938, nine pastors served this church.

1938-1957 Early Years of Continued Progress

In 1938, we welcomed Rev. and Mrs. A. T. Middleton. It was under his leadership that St. Matthews Methodist Episcopal Church celebrated its 51st anniversary. All organizations participated in the ceremony.

In 1943, with good leadership and dedicated members, the mortgage that was recorded in 1922 was paid off. On Palm Sunday, St. Matthews Church celebrated the burning of the mortgage.

With God's continuous blessings, the church borrowed \$5,000 to help build a new parsonage. Rev. Middleton moved to the Franklin Hall until completion of the construction. The parsonage was owned by Franklin and St. Matthew's churches. Rev. Middleton remained pastor for 14 years. He was an inspiration to our congregation and community.

In 1951, St. Matthews greeted Rev. and Mrs. R. S. Abernathy, Sr. It was under his leadership St. Matthews was properly qualified to receive a certificate from the State of Maryland exempting the church from paying sales taxes. Rev. Abernathy's primary focus was making the officers of the church aware of their duties by reading the *Discipline*. During Rev. Abernathy's tenure, the parsonage loan was paid off.

In 1955 Rev. Charles Trigg (a retired minister) took over and continue to be a service to the congregation. Mrs. Trigg was a musician. After Mrs. Trigg became ill, Sis. Teresa Fountain was asked to play the piano.

Under the leadership of Rev. Walter H Sewall, the longest serving pastor (1957 – 1973), there were many improvements and accomplishments. Sis. Dorothea Dennis, with great commitment and concerned, was led by the Spirit to be a booster for improvements she knew that for the church to grow spiritually and in attendance much had to be accomplished. With Sis. Dennis' encouragement, an organ was placed in the church on a trial basis. Later the members purchased the organ with payments of \$30 per month.

1957-1973 Improvements Moving Forward

In Nov. 1957, we were blessed with Sis. Teresa Fountain becoming the musician/director for the newly formed senior choir being a willing and dedicated servant.

Major improvements to the church were made between 1959 and 1965 primarily by Bro. Leonard Nick with the help of, Bro. George Crowner, and Bro. Varnell Nick. The improvements included: replacing the coal stove with an oil furnace; tiling the dining room, living room, and hall of the parsonage; the addition of an educational room, Hall, restroom, and furnace room. In 1965 the church was bricked and a cable was placed through the middle of the church to support the frame.

In 1967, the finance committee does it was time for the church to make a commitment to accommodate our financial needs. During the month of April, the congregation was invited to attend an informal information hour to be held in St. Matthews dining hall. The meeting was held to give each member an opportunity to learn more about church finances. Pledge cards were distributed by visitations so the congregation could make their commitments to support the budget, and to determine how they would like to pledge this money. The congregation immediately responded and began working towards building up the church finances.

In 1967, enhance the music ministry, Sis. Teresa Fountain organize the first children's choir with approximately 30 members. A year later, the children's choir held its first program entitled, "Sing and Speak" with Sis. Gayle Thompson serving as the president of the group. There were recitations and singing by the young choir.

In 1968, The Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church joined to become the United Methodist Church. St. Matthew's Episcopal Methodist Church under the leadership of Rev. Walter Sewell became St. Matthews United Methodist Church of the Baltimore Annual Conference. At that time, the order of worship changed and the hymnbook changed. St. Matthew United Methodist Church was on the Churchton charge, which consisted of Franklin and St. Matthew's churches. Morning worship service at St. Matthews began at 9 AM and morning service at Franklin began at 11 AM.

In May 1970, through prayer patient service and gifts, Joseph Ferguson did extensive work on the sanctuary and annex.

In 1973, the church said goodbye to its longest serving pastor, Rev. Walter H. Sewell, who served for 17 years.

In March 1973 the youth choir held a choir day. In Nov. of the same year, God bless the group and having their first recital after six years of organization.

1974-1983 – The Turning Point

In 1976, the congregation has been organized for 89 years. There were nearly 9 decades of family members. Fourteen (14) families represented the church, but there had never been an official family day. Under the direction of Rev. Richard T Herbert, Sis. Helen Gorman and Sis. Christolyn Scott, the first family day was organized. This day brought families together for worship and talent was recognize. The church members were surprised to know that we have so much talent in our church.

In 1980, to enhance the music ministry, the United Methodist men organize the Men's Choir under the direction of Sis. Teresa Fountain.

On Aug. 1981, Sis. Credella Matthews, Church School superintendent, was honored with an appreciation banquet. Celebration was held at the Lula G. Scott Center. Sis. Matthews was a faithful and dedicated servant to our young people for more than 25 years. The affair was sponsored by Sis. Doris Brown and Sis. Barbara Johnson, church school teachers

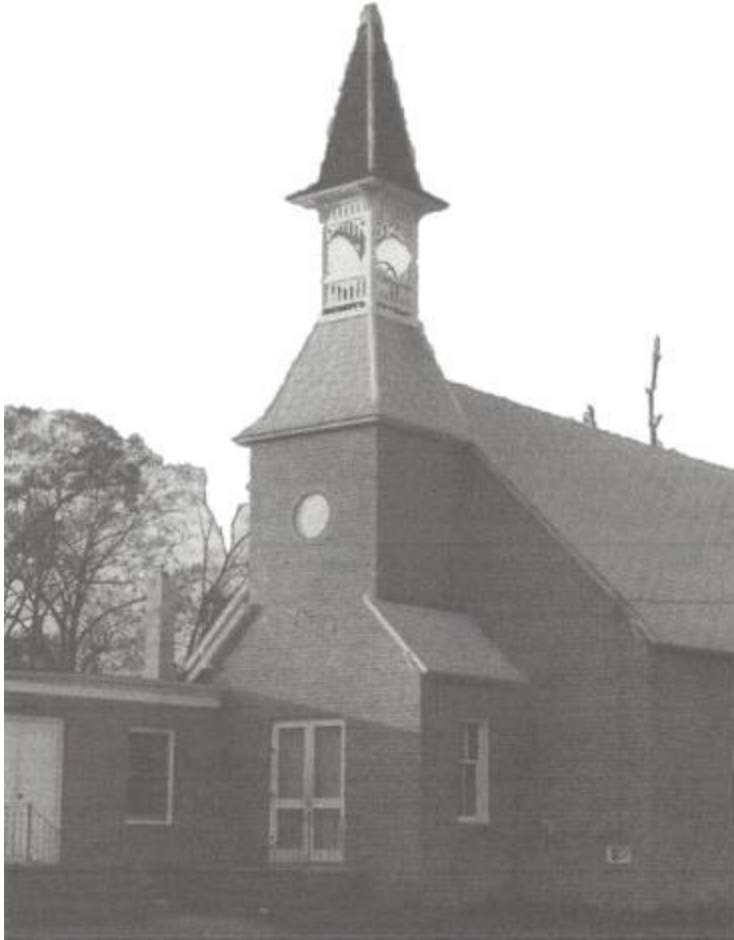
With many of the church members being seniors, the first handicap ramp with a covered platform was added. The ramp was dedicated on Sept. 27, 1981.

The seventh annual family day celebration was held on March 13, 1983. 19 families were represented. The day was dedication to Rev. and Mrs. Richard T. Herbert as a tribute. Franklin and St. Matthew's churches saluted Rev. Herbert with an appreciation banquet for 10 years of dedicated service to the church is the affair was held at the rod and reel in Chesapeake Maryland.

In July 1983, we greeted Rev. Eddie Smith. His motto was: "This is a church where everybody is somebody. Why not be a part of the church with the power of God falls just like rain."

In 1984, after nearly 100 years of changes and improvements, as our church was being challenged. We needed to renovate. Total membership was 130: our potential growth was 50. We began looking at our needs:

1. A sanctuary that since 170, in addition to 30 choir seats.
2. Adequate space for entering and exiting. Meeting the fire regulation requirements
3. Bathroom facilities
4. Multipurpose area of the seats 200
5. office space for equipment necessary for filing, printing, collating, typing, etc.
6. A study for the pastor, adequate for counseling and other ministerial duties in a professional setting.
7. Adequate space for the use and storage of equipment as well as personal belongings for choir members ushers and communion stewards during service.



We were faced with the problem of not having enough land for renovations and additions to fulfill our needs. The administrative board members, with brother arrow birth Holland as reversing chairperson, decided that we would like to pursue the question of the partial of open feel that lies between St. Matthews and Centenary United Methodist Church is. After the process of meetings and decisions, and the hiring of a surveyor, we were told of the land was once owned by Mr. John Nick, but was later purchased in tax sale by Benjamin Michelson. The land was deeded to Centenary in 1937.

It wasn't until 1986, with the commitment and determination, that the renovation chairperson, Bro. Johnnie Washington arranged for joint trustee meeting to be held on Feb. 18. The trustees of St.

Matthew share the information with the trustees and Centenary church. Centenary had indeed been given the land by Benjamin Michelson. Because of this information, St. Matthews was given a portion of the land that was needed to renovate.

On Sunday, Nov. 27, 1988, a drawing of the perspective building was presented to the congregation.

During the period of 1983 to 1989, under the leadership of Rev. Eddie Smith, we continue to grow spiritually and financially. Rev. Smith was aware of our needs and want the church to be involved in the total program we were busy experiencing many act theories for the first time.

- The usher board purchased a water fountain.
- The first in a series of monthly newsletters was published. Committee members were editor Doris Brown: reporter Thelma Holland, and typist Janet Scott.
- On Nov. 24, 1984, first time waiting of a pastor while serving the church. (Sis. Cassandra Gross, bride).
- Pews were purchased to replace the old ones.
- The junior choir changed its name to the young adult choir.

- On Oct. 85 the children's choir was organized by Sis. Shirley Salisbury. The group included eight members: Carlos Bailey, Pierre Nick, Adrian Turner, Alfred Dorsey, Latoya Foote, Tamara Smith, Kelly Harris, and Yolanda Holland. The children sang on the second Sunday of each month.
- The first joint vacation Bible class was held for the church in charge.
- The first appreciation day was held. Each church member received a certificate of appreciation for their dedicated service to the church.
- The city committee was revised, renamed S.O.N.S.

On April 20, 1986, the worship service for the consecration of our new pews was held. Representatives from the families and organizations that donated a pew for the church took part in the ceremony. Some pews were consecrated his memorials to deceased family members. The following families presented pews as a gift to St. Matthew's: Crowner, Fountain, Gross, Hopkins, Matthews, Nick, Scott and Thompson. In addition, the United voices and ushers donate pews.

Also in 1996, for the first time in All Ladies Day was organized by Rev. Smith.

On March 10, 1988, marked the first family day banquet honoring Sis. Christolyne Scott and Sis. Helen Gorham for 13 years of serving as chairpersons of our family day. This affair was followed by our 13th Annual Family Day.

1989 - 1995 continued challenges and accomplishments

Rev. George A. Stansbury became the pastor in July 1989. An outdoor reception was held for our newly appointed pastor. Rev. Stansbury was aware of our needs and was eager for the church to continue to be good stewards with God's blessings.

After interviewing architects and builders in 1991, preliminary drawings were done by Lee Warner Architects, Inc. The presentation was made to the Conference Building and Locations Committee. We thought we were well on our way to construction but faced yet another challenge. We were told we did not have sufficient land for construction. The trustees went back to our neighboring church to ask for more land. Centenary was gracious again promised us the land for construction.

Our newly assigned renovation chairperson, Bro. Victor Smith Sr, was installed in 1992. On Nov. 8, 1992, Bro. Smith presented plans to the congregation. We were again involved in the largest renovation project in 105 years of our original structure. The last parcel of land was kindly given to us by Centenary United Methodist Church. The deed was officially recorded. Renovation plans went into effect an architect was hired. Accommodation was committed and dedicated to the goal of building a new church.

On July 10, 1993, the church held a groundbreaking ceremony for our renovation project. The ground breakers were:

- Rev. George Stansbury, Pastor
- Bro. Victor Smith Sr, Chairperson of Renovation
- Rev. Johnnie Washington, former chairperson
- Brother Arthelbert Holland, former chairperson
- Brother Kendal Gross, Trustee
- Sis. Teresa Fountain, United Methodist Women
- Bro. Frank Hopkins, United Methodist Men
- Sis. Sarah Matthews, oldest member of the church
- Tamara Smith, Youth
- Justin Holland, Children
- Sis. Laura Salisbury, Church School Superintendent
- Bro. John Fountain, chairperson of the PPR

There are many changes, new ideas and accomplishments during Rev. Stansbury's tenure:

- A Retiree Banquet was held at the Rod and Reel in Chesapeake Beach, honoring the men of the church. Brothers John Fountain Sr, Frank Hopkins, Clarence Johnson, Alexander Matthews, James Nick, Gerald Thompson, and Joseph Tyler were all honored.
- St. Matthews celebrated church homecoming. This is the time in church members invited their families and friends far and near to come back to the church and worship with us. We were proud of the many consonants that the church was established more than 100 years ago.
- The Baltimore-Washington Conference honored a proposal from St. Matthews. By the action, we step out in faith and became a station church with Rev. Stansbury as a full-time pastor.
- In 1993, the Young Adult Choir changed its name to the United Voices Inspirational Choir.
- A Thanksgiving banquet was held to honor the oldest eight members in recognition of their many contributions through the years at St. Matthews. Those honored were: Bro. Benjamin Brown, Sis. Pearl Gross, Sis. Mildred Brown, Sis. Sarah Matthews, Sis. Evelyn Shaw, and Bro. and Sis. Hiram and Carrie Matthews.

A New Beginning

On Nov. 21, 1998, the church held a consecration celebration. Among our guests were Dr. E. Allen Stewart, Rev. Richard T Herbert, Rev. Mamie Williams, Rev. Eddie Smith, and Rev. George Stansbury. The inspirational message was delivered by Bishop Felton Edwin May. The building was dedicated and consecrated to the glory of our Almighty God.

Beginning in October 1999, the church embarked on another three-year stewardship campaign to support Phase II. While this construction was ongoing, we worshiped in the

multipurpose room. The county required additional on-site parking in this phase. Due to the lot size constraints, it will be necessary to apply for a parking waiver.

Due to the perseverance of Rev. Matthews, combined with the efforts exerted by our dedicated members, we were blessed with many first time and reactivated ministries, led by many members noted for special recognition during the years 1996 to 2003.

- In 1996, under the leadership of Rev. Matthews, Psalms 95:1 was organized as a choral group to raise the consciousness level of black males in crisis.
- On May 8, 1997, the church held a retiree luncheon at the Holiday Inn for the women. This affair was sponsored by the senior choir. Honorees were: Doris Brown, Nina Bullock, Eliza Eva Dennis, Teresa Fountain, Pauline Gross, Barbara Johnson, Credella Matthews, Geraline Matthews, Christolyne Scott, and Roberta Thompson.
- In June 1997, we held a special women's day honoring our oldest women of the church: Sis. Sarah Matthews, Sis. Evelyn Shaw, and Sis. Margie Thompson.
- On Oct. 25, 1997, Bishop Felton E. May presented Rev. Matthews with the check for a tent to be placed on the grounds of St. Matthew's tent ministry. The District Saving Station was consecrated to the glory of God. Rev. E. Allen Stewart presided. Music was provided by the Spiritual Vibrations, Points of Glory, and Psalms 95:1.
- On Nov. 6, 1997, just because we care open paragraph outreach ministry close paragraph, coordinated by Sis. Patricia Gross and Rev. Matthews, held a prayer vigil on Scot Town Lane.
- On Nov. 21, 1997, Sis. Teresa Fountain was honored with an Appreciation Banquet for her faithful leadership in the music ministry.
- In March 1998, Psalms 95:1 participated in an outreach holy boldness event that was held at St. Mark's United Methodist Church in Baltimore.
- On April 15, 1998, our church was led by the Spirit to present a discussion on school bomb threats, drugs, violence and other important issues. This was organized by our youth.
- The Annapolis District held a cookout on the grounds of St. Matthew's and Centenary United Methodist Church is. Organized by the tent ministry.
- Rev. Matthews organized a Lay Speaker Service under the tent, theme: ***The 10 Commandments.***

- On Aug. 1, 1998 the anointed play ***"What's That You Said Lord?"*** was so inspiring enjoyable to others it was presented for a second time at the Maryland Hall of Creative Arts in Annapolis Maryland.
- On Aug. 29, 1998, a fun fellowship feast was held at West River Retreat Center.
- In Sept. 1998, by popular demand, the play ***"What's That You Said Lord?"*** was presented at the Lincoln Theatre in Washington DC. The members of the cast in the production consisted of participants from nine churches.
- On Nov. 11, 1998, Fall Rally Banquet was held to say: "we appreciate you" for the service you have given. Honorees were: Sis. Dorethea Dennis, Sis. Yvonne J. Johnson, Sis. Janet Scott, and Bro. James Carter.

In 1999 during Black history month, we recognize some of our successful African-Americans. Our special guest work: Chris Haley, singer/actor; Ben Harris, Bail bondsman; Vincent Leggett, writer; and Larry and Harry Reese, morticians. These guests gave members valuable information concerning their careers.

During the month of February 1999 our tutoring sessions were reactivated led by Sis. Jackie Smith, Sis. Tyra Dunscomb and Bro. Frank Hopkins. The children were given assistance in a variety of school subjects. In addition, they were given computer lessons.

April 25, 1999, was surely a blessed day for the Points of Glory. The children were blessed with their fourth anniversary, coordinated Sis. Jatisha Minor, Sis. Tyra Dunscomb, Sis. Therla Smith. This special guest speaker was the youth coordinator of Adams United Methodist Church Tarell Spriggs. The theme: **"Growing Up is Not Easy."** The children wrote essays telling why growing up is not easy. They posted the essays for others to read and enjoy.

2000 – The New Decade

The new century was dedicated to commitment dedication and spreading the word of Jesus Christ.

There were many activities that marked the beginning of the new century. Those included:

- In February, our Black History Month programs included: Darryle Haley, formerly of the New England Patriots; Kim Hall, Baltimore-Washington Conference videographer and producer; Dr. Gayle Fisher-Stewart, retired DC Police Capt. and Academy instructor; Joyce Howard, singer and songwriter; and Thomas Simms, Maryland State Police.
- A "12 Tribes of Israel Pageant" was sponsored and presented by the Family Day Committee. Twelve families represented the 12 Tribes.

- July 10, 2000, St. Matthew's youth sponsored a youth explosion at Maryland Holiness Camp in Lothian. The speaker was Sis. Jackie Smith.
- On Sept. 9, 2000 stepping to pray step team was organized by Sis. Cheryl Hammond.
- On Oct. 9, 2000 organized class leaders established by Rev. Matthews.
- In November 2000, Sis. Darlene Washington, Sis. Patricia Gross, Bro. Milford Gross, and Bro. Jesse Smith were honored at the Fall Rally Banquet. The affair was an expression of love and appreciation for continuing to give time and talent to the church and community.
- During February 2000, our homecoming service was celebrated with the church successfully acquired its very own community guest speaker: Sis. Gloria Turner, Bro. Marvin Jones and Sis. Lydia Lumpkin.
- Later that month, two Black History makers of presented dynamic and inspiring information to members and friends were hematologist at Anne Arundel Medical Ctr., Dr. Curtis Harris and author and Tuskegee Airmen Bro. Leroy Battle Sr.

On May 27, 2001, we became involved in revising our Financial Stewardship Campaign to quickly pay off our prior loan to prepare the way for our new sanctuary in Phase II. Informative time began the discussion to better understand our financial commitments. The commitments required extra giving beyond our regular weekly tithes and offerings. The church's goal was to raise \$200,000 over the next two years. A play written by Rev. Matthews entitled, ***"What's That You Said Lord?"*** was presented to benefit our renovation fund.

The terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001 have a broad affect throughout the nation and in our church. Beginning Sept. 23, through the month of October,, the members of the church shared encouragement and hope between brothers and sisters. This was a special time of prayer with members carrying lighted candles.

St. Matthew's, youth were very concerned about the terrorist attack on this country. This action brought about a series of prayerful thoughts and activities. During the month of Oct. 2001, the youth wrote essays using at least 50 words about the topic ***"If I could talk to President Bush about the world's major issues today I would say to him...."*** Some essays were rich of the congregation.

During December 2001, as a humanitarian project, Sis. Patricia Gross (coordinator of the Just Because We Care Ministry) sponsored a celebration Rally of Deliverance. Each participant brought items for shelter donations. Music was rendered by Psalms 95:1

In 2002 the Black History makers were: FBI agent Linday McKetney; Anne Arundel County Board of Education Human Relations Specialist Leslie Stanton; and P.G. County correctional Officer Linda Gross.

- ***"Families Dedicated to the Upbuilding of God's Kingdom"*** was the theme for the 2002 Family Day.
- The first time, Rev. Ramon McDonald of Mount Zion United Methodist Church and Rev. Roberta Matthews from St. Matthew's joined forces to establish ***"New Vision Ministries,"*** a United Christian Community that represented the body of Christ in which all races freely worship and celebrate got together
- On April 28, 2002, the first combined service was held in the evening at St. Matthew's with 110 in attendance. For the first three Sundays, alternating between the churches, there was an average of 100 in attendance. The congregations shared a series of special worship services during the summer.
- On July 21, 2002, St. Matthew's honored Rev. Roberta C. Matthews for seven years of faithful leadership at the Rod and Reel restaurant.

For the first time in 27 years, the community of Shady Side celebrated ***"The Blessing of the Fleet"*** with the festival. The day was celebrated with beauty traditions and fiber history of the bay and our watermen. St. Matthew's participated with good attendance, fellowship in servers of good food.

Sept. 10, 2002 was the first time St. Matthew's church served as a polling place for the primary election.

The fall rally banquet was held in Nov. 2002 and recognize sister Margie Thompson, Sis. Margot Barnes, brother Willie Scott and brother Clarence Johnson for dedicated service to the church. The theme of the 2002 banquet was ***"Doing God's Will."*** Our annual Fall Rally followed with Rev. Leon Kess as the guest speaker.

On January 20, 2003, the Big Brothers sponsored the Martin Luther King Prayer Breakfast The guest speaker was Rev. Dr. Dred Scott from Baltimore Maryland.

On January 24-26, 2003 the youth attended the rock retreat and confirmation rally in Ocean City.

"Celebrate as a family is the way to praise and thank God" was the theme for our 27th annual family day. The Smith – Roberts, Taylor, and Basalyga families were added to our church families.

On April 26, 2003, important retreat was held for all lay speakers, Lay Leader Todd Hicks and candidates.

On June 21, 2003, area churches held Community in Unity Day. Games were provided for children and youth. There was free food and entertainment for all ages. The event was a component of our 10th ministry.

During the week of July 7-11, 2003, vacation Bible school was held. The program facilitates worship learning and fun. There are many children in attendance.

Members of St. Matthew's met at the capital newspaper building in Aug. to stuff papers. This will be an ongoing project for the church.

2003 marked the second anniversary of the Volunteer Prison Ministry. Mr. Ronald Nix was the guest speaker.

On Sept. 6, 2003, the house of prayer, first Baptist of Shadyside, Centenary, Oakland, and St. Matthew's United Methodist churches participated in community in the Unity Day.

On Sept. 12, 2003, the youth group sponsored "Jesus, joy in Jesus" service. The speakers were Michele Miller and Darren Smith.

As we enter the year 2004, we pray that God will continue to order our steps from our hearts in bread is perfect peace as we begin to renovate our sanctuary.

The Building Continues

During her tenure (2006-2014), Rev. Anne Parker's leadership of St. Matthews was key to continuing to the spiritual growth of the church and the physical building of the new church sanctuary. Phase II continued with the construction of the multipurpose building and classrooms with builder Taurus Enterprises, Inc. The church continued its Financial Stewardship Campaign through this building process solely for the support of construction, which God blessed financially and spiritually allowing the church to pay off two mortgages for the first phase for this project early.

But there was still one more Phase that needed to be completed. The church had to "Keep Building." After all permits were approved for the construction of the new church sanctuary, a meeting was held on Feb. 4, 2009, with the Rev. Theresa Robinson (2006-2014), members from the Renovation Committee, Finance Committee and the Stewardship Committee to discuss finalizing our loan application to Sandy Spring Bank for the construction of the new sanctuary. Our Stewardship committee asked the entire congregation to re-pledge again for our continued stewardship campaign. Renewal of all pledges was a key factor before we finalized our loan and commitment to a mortgage payment. God had blessed us beyond measure and we looked forward to his guidance and direction as we had endeavored to complete this project to build his Kingdom. "Not my will Lord, but Thy will be done."

On April 17, 2011, groundbreaking service for the new sanctuary was held with Rev. Robinson as the presiding pastor. A meeting was last held on Tuesday June 26 with members from the Renovation Ministries Committee, Finance Ministries Committee and the Stewardship Committee in attendance. At this meeting we introduced Dave Ward of Taurus Enterprises, the General Contractor who would be the builder on our project. Taurus Enterprises was the company that built the first part of project and we are glad to have them back to finish the new Sanctuary.

The deed for the loan for the construction of the new Church was signed on April 21, 2011. Signees were, Trustee Chairman, Bro. Herb Matthews, Trustee Vice Chairman, Bro. Kendal Gross, and Evelyn Darden, the Attorney representing the church. Also in attendance were Sis. Carmelia Hicks, Bro. Ron Holland Sr. and Bro. Victor Smith Sr.

The prayers continued as did the giving of the congregation. Trusting in the Lord throughout this process, St. Matthews UMC held its first service in the new sanctuary on Sunday, Feb. 12, 2012.

The final phase of the building process took form in October 2016, under the leadership of Rev. Marvin R. Wamble (2016 to present), the 32nd pastor of St. Matthews, when the parking lot was paved and painted. With every phase completed, the building continues. New ideas for ministries and community outreach are springing forward. The congregation continues to serve and give, taking hold of its new vision – “Engaging, Impacting and Transforming” our church and community.

