

## **Mt Hebron African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church History**

**By:**

**Reverend Lenora Wilder, Present Pastor of Mt. Hebron**

In the early 1800s, a group of former slaves banded together to form a community of faith. They went from house to house holding prayer meetings and Bible reading sessions (by the few who could read). These meetings eventually led to the formation of a congregation. The informal community of faith was formally established under the leadership of a traveling Methodist preacher (name unknown). This faith community became Mt. Hebron Methodist Church at Spring Hill Sand Town.

A hand written deed (recorded at the Mobile County Court House), dated September 26, 1874 shows that John and Clarissa Barnard donated property to the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Spring Hill. The trustees were Henry Carter, Manuel Robinson, Tom Nobles, and Amos Wilson. The first building was destroyed by fire in 1884. That building faced what was then called Spring Hill Avenue Extension. Consequently, another building was constructed on the property facing Knowles Lane.

Mt. Hebron was on a circuit with Ebenezer and Good Hope, (now Hope Chapel), African Methodist Episcopal Zion Churches for many years. It is said that Mt. Hebron was brought into the West Alabama Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion in 1901. This took place under the administration of Rev. J.C. Saunders. A cornerstone was laid in 1901 for the present church. Another cornerstone was set on November 3, 1918. This was done under the administration of Rev. WH. Alexander. R. Johnson was chairman at the time. A. Lewis is listed as the secretary and treasurer.

Mt. Hebron was organized as a community of faith, but the church also served as an educational facility. Mt. Hebron A.M.E. Zion accommodated students who attended the Spring Hill School. The Spring Hill School was a Mobile County School for elementary students. The school closed its doors in the late 1940s or 1950s, but the community of faith remained solid.

In 1973, Rev. Eugene Johnson was appointed to serve as pastor of Mt. Hebron. During his tenure, he remodeled the old wooden building and added the front portion of the building that now faces Spring Hill Avenue. The church building was bricked and completed in 1975. Other modifications to the church and property took place over the years. The roof was replaced under the ministry of Rev. Earl Harris.

The spiritual and physical care of the church has been charged to many pastors. Mt. Hebron has been blessed to have pastors who gave of themselves in service to the Lord.

Rev. Linda Sims (now Sims-Lilly) served as pastor from 1989 through 1998. Major work was done to upgrade the church facility under her administration.

Rev. Edna Allen pastored Mt. Hebron from 1998 to 2016. She continued to move the church forward following the foundation that was laid before her.

God saw fit to appoint Mt. Hebron with new leadership during the 2015 West Alabama Conference. Rev. Nathaniel Robinson (then Bro. Nathaniel Robinson; Traveling Minister) was appointed as the new pastor of the flock on November 22, 2015. Rev. Robinson was ordained a Deacon on January 16, 2016. Rev. Robinson focused on Spiritual rejuvenating and modernizing the physical condition of the church during his tenure. Rev. Robinson was assigned a new charge in November 2017, but God's preordained plans for Mt. Hebron continues on.

Rev. Leonora Wilder was appointed pastor of Mt. Hebron in November 18, 2017. As the work of our Lord goes forth, Mt. Hebron is encouraged to look to the Divine Wisdom of God (through the Holy Spirit) for the information, instructions, and inspiration we need for this phase of the journey.

Mt. Hebron is a refuge on Spring Hill. We are the faith community of Christ-charged to care for God's house and His people. We cling to our faith heritage. We press forward in faith seeking the promise God predestined for us. We have hope and the blessed assurance that God is with us. Mt. Hebron A.M.E. Zion Church is still a community of faith on the move to make disciples for Christ and build the Kingdom of God. Join us on the Hill!

The following ministers of the Gospel have served the Lord as pastor of Mt. Hebron A.M.E. Zion Church:

- Rev. V. James
- Rev. J. Jones
- Rev. H Hatcher
- Rev. L.W. Watts
- Rev. W.J. Evans
- Rev. McCullen
- Rev. J.B. Hughes
- Rev. R.L. McKee
- Rev. A.W. Grimes
- Rev. O.W. Newell
- Rev. L.C. McCreary
- Rev. J.B. Hughes
- Rev. Belvins
- Rev. F.L. Bufford
- Rev. Chastang
- Rev. Fred Boykins
- Rev. Eugene Johnson

- Rev. A.B. Smoke
- Rev. James Hughes
- Rev. E. Eugene Parker
- Rev. C.J. Crowe
- Rev. Earl Harris
- Rev. Linda Sims-Lilly
- Rev. Edna B. Allen
- Rev. Nathaniel Robinson
- Rev. Leonora Wilder (Present)