

## BRIEF HISTORY OF OUR CHURCH

Unity Baptist was organized from a home to home weekly prayer meeting and Bible study group of eighth God fearing, African American Christians who resided on the westside of Detroit, Michigan. One of the first meetings was held at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Atticus Kemp at 7693 Central. Shortly thereafter, the meeting moved to the home of Rev. & Mrs. Fluker at 7595 Central. The group quickly expanded to eighteen persons. In December 1926 the group saw the need to formalize and establish a church in the community; a suggestion by Mrs. Rosebud Smith; the name "Unity Baptist Church" was accepted. Rev. O.C. White was elected to serve as Moderator.

From these humble beginning, the Unity Baptist Church had its inception and continued to grow. Rev. James S. Murray was elected pastor while the group was still worshipping in the basement of the Fluker's home, and served as Pastor from 1927 – 1937. In 1927, the congregation moved into its first church building located at 7513 Bryden at the corner of Roy Street. The first church building was built with the assistance of the membership and friends without the aid of contractors. In 1937, Rev. J.H. Hankerson was called as Pastor and served from 1937 – 1939, Rev. James Goss from 1939 – 1945. Rev. Clarence E. Palmer was called to pastorate in 1945 and under his leadership the building located on the corner of Tireman Avenue and American; an old bank building was purchased and renovated into the new church. In 1947, Rev Clarence Bolden was called to the pastorate and served the congregation for approximately two years until the Rev. A. Daniel James was elected Pastor in 1948 and served until 1962. The latter portion of 1962, Unity was without an Under-Shepard and succumbed to great financial crisis. During this troubled season Deacon Rufus Jackson and various other officers led the church until a new Pastor was called.

On March 17, 1963, Rev. Valmon D. Stotts was called to the pastorate. Rev. Stotts ushered this determined congregation through a liquidation of the church debt and burning its first mortgage. Unity's congregation grew where it necessitated for greater space prompting interest of a new edifice. On Sunday March 28, 1971, Unity broke ground and began construction on Labor Day 1971 to its present multi-million-dollar church edifice. Sunday June 25, 1972; mission accomplished, and the congregation walked into its center of worship.

Under Pastor Stotts leadership, three mortgages were burned, various ministries were established, and partnerships were built; establishing a cohesive relationship with the Metropolitan Baptist District Association, Wolverine State Baptist Convention, and the National Baptist Convention U.S.A., Inc. Unity growth excelled where the church extended the sanctuary, adding an educational wing with various multi-purpose classrooms and library.

On Sunday June 13, 2010; Unity celebrated the re-naming of Tireman Avenue to Rev. Valmon D. Stotts Avenue; Rev. Stotts served as Pastor for 50 years and retired on May 1, 2013 and honor as Pastor Emeritus. From labor to reward Pastor Stotts was called home on November 30, 2014. Rev. Dr. Lee C. Winfrey, Sr. was elected as Pastor and served from January 25, 2015 – March 17, 2018. Unity Baptist Church of Detroit celebrates 92 years of telling the GOOD NEWS the Jesus died for our sins, He arose, and Jesus is coming back again!