

OUR HISTORICAL BIRTH

By the Church Historical Commission

PART 3 OF A 3-PART SERIES ON MT. PISGAH'S BEGINNINGS

In April of 1969, the Reverend Lawrence S. Odom, Sr., succeeded the Reverend Jackson. Under his leadership a minibus was purchased and the church was completely air-conditioned. After the Reverend Odom's trip to the Holy Land, the Presiding Elder of the New Brunswick District, the Reverend John Wesley Johnson, dedicated the Bethlehem Memorial Chapel on Sunday, April 9, 1972.

The Reverend Albert D. Tyson, Jr., succeeded the Reverend Odom in May of 1972 and the growth of Mount Pisgah continued under his leadership. Many improvements were made to the church during his pastorate; the kitchen and the Nurse's room were completely remodeled, new lighting, ceilings, mirrors, and other fixtures were installed. A parking lot was also acquired.

A fire destroyed the parsonage in April of 1979 and a new 17-room parsonage, which is located on Broadman Parkway, was purchased that same year.

In the year 1978, the Reverend Tyson had a vision of starting a school in Jersey City and in September of 1978, the Mount Pisgah School and Day Nursery became a reality, with its beginnings in the basement of the church. In the year 1979, a building to house the school was purchased at 577 Bergen Avenue, in Jersey City. The Right Reverend Richard A. Hildebrand, the 88th Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and Presiding Prelate of the First Episcopal District, dedicated the building and the school on Saturday, December 8, 1979.

Mount Pisgah's growth continued under the leadership of the Reverend William M. Campbell, who served from 1983 until 1991. His ministerial leadership in the church, school, and community affairs was a part of his daily commitments. He was a part of the music department and handled each one of his assignments excellently. After his illness in late 1990 and until his demise, we were served by the Presiding Elder Charles Martin and Dr. John W.P. Collier, Jr.

The Reverend Clarence B. Crawford was appointed to Mount Pisgah in March of 1991 and served as pastor for ten years until he was elevated to the position of Presiding Elder of the Camden-Trenton District of the New Jersey Annual Conference. A gifted preacher and teacher, during the Reverend Crawford's tenure the roof of the church building was replaced and the "A Capella" choir was formed.

Mount Pisgah A.M.E. Church is currently under the pastorate of the Reverend Reginald McRae, whose spiritual effectiveness is being felt by the parishioners, as well as the people in this community. He was assigned to Mount Pisgah in April of 2001.

Under his leadership: grant funds were received to expand the Ruth Missionary Society's community food bank; the Daughters of the King's leadership development ministry for women ages 21-45 was formed; the children's segment during worship service and monthly Children's Church was started; and other youth and adult ministries continue to flourish.

In addition, the parking lot was surfaced, two new vans were purchased, the entire fellowship hall renovated - including the ladies' and men's bathroom, the parsonage was completely refurbished - including the basement, and the church's entrance steps were re-built. A new sound system was also installed. In September of 2011, the new Building Fund Committee was established and plans are currently underway to complete extensive renovations on both the interior and exterior of the church.

Now in our 164th year of existence (83 years as Mount Pisgah), we find the church in a time of growth and challenge and full of thanksgiving for the leadership over the years and hope for continued strength and effective fellowship, as we engage in the various ministries in God's name.

Many of our new members who have joined the church are becoming vital forces in the church. We welcome with Christian Love our brothers and sisters in Christ from the former Saint John A.M.E. Church of Jersey City, New Jersey as a part of the Mount Pisgah family. We are extremely happy with our achievements and we can proudly look back, with fond memories, on the committed efforts of our members who were ready to build, to guide, to initiate, and to execute the plans for keeping Mount Pisgah together. We hope that the future will grant us greater spiritual effectiveness, with influential leadership that will continue to strengthen the membership and let us be the "beacons" for the community's weary.

PART 3 OF A 3-PART SERIES ON ST. JOHN'S BEGINNINGS

In April of 2013, the Reverend Julian Cooper was appointed as Interim Pastor. During this time, the members of Saint John held services at Mount Pisgah A.M.E. Church from the autumn of 2013 until the spring of 2014. Pastor Cooper's sermons were always encouraging and uplifting.

His motto was "Love One Another." He faithfully led the Saint John congregation until March 27, 2014. He has the distinction of being the last pastor in the illustrious 93 year history of Saint John African Methodist Episcopal Church of Jersey City, New Jersey.

On Thursday, March 27, 2014, a called meeting was held at Mount Pisgah A.M.E. Church consisting of the Right Reverend Gregory G.M. Ingram, the 118th Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and Presiding Prelate of the First Episcopal District, the Reverend Howard L. Grant, the Presiding Elder of the Newark District, the Reverend Kenneth L. Saunders, New Jersey Conference Treasurer, the Reverend Julian Cooper, Local Elder and Supply Pastor of Saint John A.M.E. Church and the members of Saint John A.M.E. Church.

At this meeting the future of the church was discussed. Due to the condition of the building and the exorbitant cost to repair it along with other factors, it was decided that the church should close. A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed upon by the members of the church that the closing of Saint John A.M.E. Church and the merger with Mount Pisgah A.M.E. Church of Jersey City, New Jersey was the best alternative. This recommendation was approved by the New Jersey Board of Trustees at the 142nd Annual Session of the New Jersey Annual Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in April of 2014.

On Sunday morning, June 29, 2014, the Mount Pisgah family welcomed us as new members with Christian Love. After the morning worship service, a luncheon was held for us in the dining area. A great fellowship was had by all. May God continue to bless this union.

And our history continues...

The history was compiled by the Mt. Pisgah A.M.E. Church Historical Commission

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