

# HISTORY AT ST. PAUL A.M. E. CHURCH

St. Paul A.M.E. Church was organized in Winter Garden, March 10, 1913, since there was no other A.M.E. Church in Winter Garden. The following men and their wives met at the house of the Late Reed and Sarah Toney to help organize the church: William and Annie Powell, Melvin and Melvina Taylor, West and Sallie Coleman, Felder and Susan Rodgers, Sarah Cohens, Nettie Benson, W.D. Harris, and the Reverend T.C. Kelley, Sr.

Reverend Kelley was the pastor in Ocoee, Florida and members attended church there. They had no Sunday School for their children. Their desire was to have a church in Winter Garden. After meeting, they pooled their finances and purchased a corner lot known now as Center and 11th Streets.

The ladies, every Saturday afternoon, sold food to raise money. Due to the honesty of the men, McMillian Lumber Company permitted them to purchase lumber on credit to help build the church. Reverend T.C. Kelley and Mr. Jim Richardson were the carpenters. Each Saturday, the men of the church would assist them.

While completing the church, the members were permitted to hold services in Macedonia Freewill Baptist Church. On the corner of Eleventh and Bay Streets was a building owned by Mr. Harris Coleman, where the members later rented downstairs to hold church services. The fourth Sunday in each month was Stewards and Trustees Sunday.

After the completion of the building, the members marched in with praise and Thanksgiving to God. The building accommodated between 50-75 persons. Carpenters built Benches, communion altar, and pulpit. Chairs and oil lamps were purchased. The bell gave a beautiful sound when time for the services.

Later, Reverend A. Thompson was sent as pastor. Due to the small building and increase in membership, it was necessary to add to the sanctuary. Reverend Thompson taught school, and would come to Winter Garden on Friday afternoons to do the expansion to the building. The brothers would help him in adding to the edifice. They worked late at night until the building was completed. There were two sections added, Steward and Stewardess seating, and in the rear of the pulpit a choir stand was added. A pulpit was purchased and painted.

Reverend A.W. Lybrand was sent as pastor. There was no place for the pastor to live. He, with the help of the men of the church, built two rooms adjoining the church for pastors to live in from Friday to Monday. Each minister, thereafter, helped immensely with the progress of the building of the church.

Under the administration of the Reverend Leonard Jefferson, he saw the need for a larger church. Reverend Jefferson organized a "Building Fund." Money was set aside for the building only. Each year different programs were held to raise money for the

new building. The Reverend Josephine Peterson and Dan Johnson added another feature to the building fund, "At the End." Monies would be raised under this name for the building fund.

Trustees Sam Harden, Melvin Birdsong, Robert Birdsong, Theodore Willis, Richard Brunson, and Juanita Maxey, were very instrumental in securing the loan from the bank to purchase the land for the new building. Land for the new building was purchased under the administration of the Reverends J.H. Harris, Pierre Johnson and Andrew Haywood. Melvin Birdsong and Sam Harden worked closely with the contractors while the building was being constructed. The loan was secured in 1983, with the pastor, trustees and stewards meeting with the president of the First Union Bank.

The Presiding Elder K. White, Pastor, Stewards, Trustees, Members and Friends marched from the old church, which had served us through the years and marched into our new home. Thanks Be To God! The Reverend Andrew Haywood was pastor.

In 1985, the Reverend Robert Coleman was appointed pastor. Under Rev. Coleman's leadership, again thanking God, the mortgage was burned.

Mrs. Carolyn T. Anderson, daughter of Reed and Sarah Toney resided in the house where the church was started. Until her passing in September, 2002, she held the oldest membership in the church. TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

# STRUCTURE AT ST. PAUL A.M.E. CHURCH

There are ten (10) boards at St. Paul A.M.E. Church: Steward board, Trustee board, Lay Organization, Women's Missionary Society, Stewardess Board, YPD-Young People Department, Pastor's Aide board, Hospitality committee, Usher board and Choir board all under the leadership of Rev. Frank L. Massey.

Members of the official board are elected by the Pastor. The only exception is the Board of Trustees. The trustees are elected by the Church conference. The official board directs the day to day work of the church in every detail. The success or failure of the program of the church is determined by this very important board. The Pastor is the chairman of the Official Board.

**Steward Board:** These are spiritual leaders of the church. Stewards serve and comfort the distressed and the needy. They also assist in determining the Pastor's salary, Stewards help the pastor and ministerial staff in carrying out their duties. Stewards are appointed by the Pastor.

**Trustee Board:** These are spiritual leaders who are charged with the care of the church property. They are nominated by the Pastor and elected by the Local Church Conference.

**Lay Organization:** The purpose of this organization shall be to organize and train the laity so that each lay person may utilize to the maximum the abilities and skills granted by God, in assisting with the improvement and extension of God's kingdom, and creating happiness, peace and harmony among its member.

**Women's Missionary Society:** The purpose of this organization shall be to help people to grow in the knowledge and experience of God through his Son, Jesus Christ, through continual Christian training, as well individual and collective work, thus challenging them to respond to God's redemptive plan in the world.

**Stewardess Board:** Spiritual leaders who assist the Stewards in discharging their duties, which include providing the elements for Holy Communion, such as keeping the linen clean and dressing the altar rail, keeping the serving utensils polished and clean, preparing for baptism, etc. Stewardesses are nominated by the Pastor.

**YPD/Young People Department:** This organization shall provide meaningful youth training programs in all area of church life which will provide for full participation in the total mission of the church.

**Pastor's Aid Board:**

**Usher board:** The purpose of this board is first and foremost to welcome and greet every worshipper at our worship services. To find them a seat, making sure they have our church bulletin and other available material, to keep order and minimize movement during services, to keep the attendance on record and submit same to the pastor.

**Hospitality:**

**Finance Committee:** This committee shall receive all funds collected for all purposes and shall document same prior to transmitting to the church treasurer who must be a member of the committee.

**Class Leader:** The Class Leaders serve as pseudo-pastors. They watch over their members and help with their spiritual growth. Class Leaders are appointed by the Pastor. They support the pastor in ministering to the individual needs of the members.

**Church School:** The mission of the Church School shall be to teach, train, nurture, prepare, and recruit adults and children in God's word for Christian service, emphasizing those Christian principles which are essential for effective Christian growth and participation.

**Sons of Allen:** The purpose of this society shall be encourage men to become involved in helping other men find Christ in their lives.

**Delegate:** The delegate represents the local church in the district and the quarterly and annual conference activities.

**Music Department:** This department shall work with the pastor to coordinate the selection of hymns to be played at worship services and to prepare and implement all musical activities.

**Official Board:** The official board shall be composed of all the class leaders, exhorters, deaconesses, stewards, trustees, stewardesses and presidents of all organization of a station, circuit, or mission, including the president of the Lay Organization. The officers, both junior and adult, of the Junior Church shall also be members of the Official Board and shall contribute to the funds collected for the church, pastor, presiding elder, the poor, and general funds.