

History of Thankful Missionary Baptist Church

On the sixth day of September 1882, our forefathers and mothers joined together for the purpose of organizing a church because they did not have a Baptist church in Decatur, GA. Among the founders and planters were: Rev. Frank Paschal and Dea. Robert Tanksley of Augusta, Georgia; Sister Kitty House; Dea. Reese Howlworth, Rev. Lewis Thornton and Rev. Jerry Jones. They began by holding prayer meetings from house to house. The first meeting was held at the home of Sis. Penny Houston. They named the church Thankful after the Thankful Baptist Church of Augusta, Georgia. Since there was not a black Baptist church in the city of Decatur, this made Thankful the oldest African American Baptist church in Decatur, GA and the second oldest African American Baptist Church in DeKalb County.

Rev. Lewis Thornton, a schoolteacher, served as the first Pastor for a short while, then Rev. Martin Scruggs was called. Rev. Scruggs selected what he called the best preachers to assist him: Rev. W.H. Tillman, Dr. E.J. Fisher; Rev. Cyrus Brown, Rev. Clemmons and Rev. Frank Simmons. The church began to grow by leaps and bounds. People from near and afar began to visit the church. Some bringing letters, others joining under watch care. Sis. Nancy Wilson was the first person to join as a candidate for baptism. The church grew and prospered to the extent that the members decided to purchase the old school house, which was located on the land where the original church was eventually erected. The property line ran from Bennett Street on the north, Atlanta Avenue on the east and on the south to Swanton's Branch. The people were thoroughly aroused over their property and began laying plans for the new church. By this time, the Sunday school had been organized with Dea. Howlworth as superintendent.

As the church continued to grow in membership, the school house became too small to accommodate its members. Rev. Paschal helped to solve the space problem by cutting enough pine long for a new building. With the new church came expansion. The Thankful Baptist Church joined the Hopewell Baptist Association under the leadership of Rev. Scruggs.

After Rev. Scruggs, the church continued to grow in membership and made great strides under the leadership of Rev. H.W. White, Rev. Jonah Gresham, Rev. A.L. Harvey, Rev. T.T. Gholston, Rev. L.T. Jones, Rev. W.M. Jackson, Rev. J.W. Tate, Dr. Roland Smith and Rev. A.G. Belcher.

In July 1951, Rev. W. Leon Tucker was installed as Pastor. Rev. Tucker served faithfully for more than thirty-two years as our leader, father and friend. He was our shepherd and counselor. He regularly visited the sick, buried the dead, consoled the bereaved and helped the needy. It was under his leadership that seven ministers were ordained: Rev. Henry Shields, Rev. Oral Lee Elder, Rev. Harold Turner, Rev. Barney Bailey, Rev. J.E. Love, Rev. Arthur L. Powell, and Rev. Leroy Durden.

Deacons ordained under Rev. Tucker's leadership were Dea. A.L. Rogers, Dea. Thomas Buggs, Dea. Leonard Pierce, Dea. Joseph Clopton, Dea. Dexter O. Rowland and Dea. Louis Davenport.

On the morning of September 23, 1970, when the church building on Atlanta Avenue was destroyed by fire it was Rev. Tucker who lifted the spirit of the church from its lowest ebb. On July 4, 1971, we marched from the ashes on Atlanta Avenue to our present church site on West College Avenue. We forged ahead under Rev. W. Leon Tucker until he retired.

On November 11, 1984, Thankful called Rev. James H. Morton of Detroit, Michigan. During his tenure, our church grew making it necessary to conduct two morning worship services on Sunday in order to accommodate the worshippers.

Deacons ordained during Rev. Morton's pastorate were: Dea. Jesse Mitchell, Dea. Clarence Peacock, Dea. Charles Jones, Dea. George Savage, Dea. Murray Cates and Dea. Jewel Armor. Ministers ordained during Rev. Morton's pastorate were Rev. Bill Gilbert, Rev. Thomas Smith and Rec. John Usher.

In 1987, Rev. Kerwin Broussard Lee was appointed as youth pastor of Thankful Missionary Baptist Church. He was responsible for the total leadership of preschool children (ages 3-5) and youth ministries (grades 1-12); organized, developed and conducted weekly worship services, coordinated and taught weekly bible study; trained children and youth workers; planned retreats, workshops and activities; implemented special needs ministries such as employment, outreach programs, prayer groups, summer day camps, summer enrichment programs, tutorial services and ministries that addressed social issues pertinent to young people.

From 1989 to 1992, Rev. Lee served as Minister of Christian Education at Thankful Missionary Baptist Church. Responsibilities included: planned educational ministries for the entire church body in the areas of family life, nurture, outreach and recreation, evaluated educational curriculums, prepared annual budget, enlisted and trained leaders, taught weekly bible study, reorganized vacation bible school, selected messengers for local, state and national congresses and conventions; and implemented special needs ministries such as couples, drug support groups, nursing home, senior adult, young adult, single parents and singles. The fourth Sunday in August 1992, Rev. Lee was installed as Senior Pastor of Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Decatur, GA.

In December 1992, Rev. Marlin D. Harris was appointed to serve as interim Pastor for six months. Rev. Harris was called to the pastorate of Thankful Missionary Baptist Church in June 1994. During the leadership of Rev. Harris, nine deacons were ordained; Dea. E.J. Carter, Dea. Lloyd Cutter, Dea. CLJad c :, ;ur ham , Dea. Leroy Grant, Dea. Leon Parker, Dea. James Pope, Dea. Charles Rogers, Dea. Robert Thompkins and Dea. Milton White.

In August 1995, Rev. Jimmy R. Gibson of Monroe, Louisiana accepted the call to Thankful Missionary Baptist Church. He served until 1997. Under his leadership, the fellowship hall was refurbished, a church bulletin board was placed on the lawn, a male usher board was organized and the Nurses' Guild was renamed in his honor.

In 1998, Rev. C.E. Overstreet of Cleveland, Ohio accepted the call to Thankful Missionary Baptist Church. In 1999, Rev. Eddie Hunter of Alexandria, Alabama was called to the pastorate of Thankful Missionary Baptist Church.

On March 19, 2000, Rev. Jack Marks of Atlanta, GA was called to the pastorate of Thankful Missionary Baptist Church. Under Rev. Mark's leadership, the church granted Community Development Corporation status, a faith based initiative sponsored by the White House Faith-Based and Community Initiatives partnering with the Federal Government. This initiative is to assist faith based and community organizations in furthering their outreach program to people in need. The Thankful Community Development Corporation (CDC) obtained a grant from the Governor's office to help further the outreach initiative, a program entitled, "Senior's Day Out" began. A program to enrich the lives of senior citizens was developed. A ceramic class was conducted weekly.

Deacons ordained under Rev. Mark's leadership were; Dea. Jeffrey Buford, Dea. Johnny Hunt, Dea. Robert Robinson and Dea. Austin Wright. Ministers licensed and ordained under Rev. Mark's leadership were: Minister Liz Copeland, who received her license and Rev. Ernest Benson was licensed and ordained.

Additionally, under Rev. Mark's leadership, Rev. Bruce Alford from Atlanta, GA joined our church and was selected youth minister. Rev. Alford conducted monthly Youth Revivals, which were held at two local public housing sites in Decatur and Scottdale, GA. This outreach initiative to the community increased our Sunday school attendance. Breakfast was also served each Sunday morning to the children attending Sunday school. Also, the day care center reopened under a private proprietorship.

Rev. Bruce Alford was selected Director of the Mass Choir. In 2004, Minister Liz Copeland was appointed Youth Minister. Under her leadership; the youth department flourished, including an increase in youth participation in the Maggie Randolph- Walter Peek Choir, with Ms. Chassity Wallace as directress and Sister Ernestine Pattillo as Youth Minister of Music. Other great strides for the youth were the addition of Youth Church and weekly Youth Bible study, Youth Praise Team and two youth dance teams. The youth ministry grew spiritually as well as physically. Additionally, in the later part of 2004, Thankful Missionary Baptist Church launched its website. The URL address is www.ThankfulMBC.org.

In 2005, we continued with our Theme: "Just Do It". Indeed, Thankful was "doing it". Thankful's Woman's Ministry was organized in January 2005. The first newsletter, "Thankful Voice" was published in March 2005. In July 2005, Thankful opened its food bank. Food is distributed monthly to disadvantaged families in the community. The Youth Department continued to grow. Youth church was held 1st and 3rd Sunday in our chapel.

In 2006, two Deacons were ordained, Dea. Parnell McBryde and Dea. Bryant Marks. Also in August 2006, Rev. Liz Copeland was ordained. Rev. Copeland is the first female to be ordained at Thankful Missionary Baptist Church. In early 2007, under the direction of Pastor Marks, a group of young energetic men and women began a new ministry. From this ministry, a young adult choir was formed and named Young Adult Ministry (YAM).

Also, during this time, the church took over the management of a daycare center and began operating as Thankful Missionary Baptist Church Child Development and Enrichment Center. In 2008, Dea. Harold Phillips was ordained as Deacon. Also, the Youth Department was reorganized under the direction of Rev. Gregory and Evangelist Loretta Washington. Activities included Youth counseling, youth worship service, and dance groups- interpretive dance and step dance, as well as male youth learning to mime. The year of 2009 brought about more changes. The Youth department's administration changed with the loss of our associate ministers, Rev. Liz Copeland and Rev. Gregory Washington and Evangelist Loretta Washington. Sis. Rozland Franklin took over the helm of the Youth Department and Youth Choir. The children's choir attendance increased. Other assistants included Sis. Charlesetta McCollough, Sis. Frances Phillips, Sis. Cherylnette Car and Sis. Lavionne Boone.

During the year 2010, Thankful Missionary Baptist Church saw an increase in ministers. Rev. Roderick Roberts and Rev. Bryant Marks were ordained as ministers and Dea. Cornelius Williams was ordained as Deacon. The Breakfast Ministry continued under the leadership of Sis. Marguerite Jones, providing breakfast each Sunday morning for the Sunday school students (children and adults).

In 2011, Thankful Missionary Baptist Church's preschool was opened under a private management. Rev. Marks continued to lead the church until his retirement on January 23, 2011. On May 27, 2012, Rev. Dr. F. Keith Slaughter was installed as Pastor. Under Rev. Slaughter's leadership, he organized the 715 Club. This club met each morning, Monday through Friday, including holidays, at 7:15 A.M. by telephone. Prayer was provided by our Pastor and other

leaders of the church. There is no membership requirement for participation. The only requirement is to have a desire and need for prayer and call I (530) 881-1400 PIN: 665731#.

On July 30, 2012, at "Get out to Vote" Rally was hosted by Thankful Missionary Baptist Church and the DeKalb Branch NAACP. Established a social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and reconstructed Thankful's website. A new church logo was established.

Under Rev. Slaughter's leadership, three ministers were licensed: Minister Renetta Hobson, Minister Robbin Holmes and Minister Burdett Lowe. Under Rev. Slaughter's administration, Thankful Missionary Baptist Church reached a milestone when the first two women in church history entered Deacon training. These candidates were: Sister Jacqueline Spears and Sister Deborah Wallace. Brother Laurence Williams was also a candidate to the Deacon Ministry.

On July 21, 2015, Rev. Corey Holmes was elected by the church body to serve as luterim Pastor. The 133rd Church Anniversary theme was "Reconstructing the Legacy". That indeed was God' s will for the season. Under Rev. Holmes's leadership, for the first time in 32 years, unity and brotherly love were brought back into the Deacon fold, bridging the gap of years past. Love and family oriented approaches were encouraged and stressed amongst the entire church family. Unity, hope and Christian love were implemented as well.

Structure, order and love were also implemented and established within all auxiliaries and ministries thus creating an environment conducive to growth and praise and worship. Rev. Holmes implemented a revised church mission statement as well as introduced his vision from God to establish our goings. Under Rev. Holmes's leadership, traditional bible study was revamped into a Mid-Week Fellowship Service. Sunday morning order of service was revamped *aswell*.

Rev. Holmes reestablished the A&C Choir, with the help of Dea. Joseph Clopton along with the church body. Rev. Holmes reestablished a vibrant and active youth Choir with the help of director, Sis. Tanika Tyson along with the church body. Rev. Holmes reestablished the Male chorus, with the help of Dea. Omer Rogers along with the help of the church body. Rev. Holmes created and established social Media Handles and a church hashtag. (Facebook-Thankful Missionary Baptist Church, Instagram-TMBC1882, Twitter@TMBC1882, Church Hashtag-#TMBC. Rev. Holmes reestablished a church Prayer line, 007 TLC Ministry (Touch 1, Love 1, Convert 1) M-F 7:00 PM Phone# 302-202-1108 Access Code- 715373.

June 2016, tje church Traveled to Bent Mountain, VA on a church trip for the first time in years. This is now an annual trip. In April 2016, for the first time in church history a Reunion Revival was introduced reestablishing fellowships with Sons of Thankful. Under Rev. Holmes's leadership Bro. E.R. Pattillo, Son of Sis. Earnestine Pattillo donated and installed new carpet in the Rev. W. Leon Tucker Fellowship Hall. Under Rev. Holmes's leadership Thankful Missionary Baptist Church saw an increase in ministerial staff. Rev. Robert Home and Rev. Beth Williams united with Thankful and have been true servants of God.

On September 19, 2016, Rev. C.R.L. Holmes was called by God and elected by the church body to the Pastorate of Thankful Missionary Baptist Church. Rev. C.R.L. Holmes has demonstrated on numerou s occasions, quality leadership skills and abilities. Rev. C.R.L. Holmes is spirt led, anointed, young, powerful, and vibrant. With God on our side and Pastor Holmes's leadership, we look forward to God blessing us as a church family by leaps and bounds.