

Mt. Zion Baptist Church History

Mt. Zion Baptist Church was founded in 1909 under the leadership of Rev. Sandy Lyons. The original site of the church was a one-room framed schoolhouse. After Rev. Lyons, the church was lead by several pastors including Rev. R. L. Leonard, C. L. Netherland and Rev. Frank White. Before resigning due to illness in 1914, Rev. White persuaded the congregation to call Rev R. A. Whitaker as their leader.

Under Rev. Whitaker's leadership, Mt. Zion's membership moved to the Wood Building and later the congregation was able to build a framed structure they called "Tabernacle." In June 1916, work began on the foundation for a permanent church. In April 1921, the congregation moved into a beautiful edifice costing \$92,000. The joy of Pastor Whitaker and the members was short lived. On June 1, 1921, during the Tulsa Race Riot, Mt. Zion was destroyed by white rioters who believed guns and ammunition were being housed inside the church. The congregation would sustain further devastation upon learning that the insurance plan for the church did not cover damage due to the riot. The membership, with dignity and an unwavering faith, refused to default on what they considered to be a "just debt" of \$50 000. During this time, Rev. Whitaker became ill and resigned. Following Rev. Whitaker there were several pastors who served short terms.

In 1937, the members called the Rev. J. H. Dotson to serve as pastor of the church. The members held worship services in the remodeled basement of the fire-damaged church. Under Rev. Dotson's leadership, the congregation succeeded in paying off the mortgage of the original church. After burning the mortgage, a building fund was dedicated to lay the seed for a permanent church. In 1952, Rev. Dotson and the members saw the fruits of their unwavering faith and belief come to completion with the dedication of the present building.

In 1953, Rev. G. Calvin McCutchen, Sr., was hired to assist the ailing Rev. Dotson. In 1957, Rev. McCutchen was called to serve as the pastor. Rev. Dotson served as the Pastor Emeritus until his death. On Palm Sunday, 1985, the Mt. Zion family broke ground on a Family Life Center. The

center was completed and dedicated on Easter Sunday 1986. Since its completion, Mt. Zion has served as a distribution center for "Meals on Wheels", a meeting place for Alcoholics Anonymous, and has been made available to various other community and non-profit groups.

Under Rev. McCutchen's leadership, the mission of the church has lead to the development of several study courses and ministries to nurture the knowledge and spiritual growth of the members. Some activities of the church include weekly Fellowship and Prayer Services and a family –oriented vacation bible school which includes a curriculum for adults. Our "Seasoned Saints" meet bi-weekly year-round and are known as the Mt. Zion Golden Respite Group. The Laverne Davis Project HELP and the J. H. Dotson Scholarship Fund have continued to grow and meet the needs of the community and the youth of our church.

In the 1990's, we saw the completion of the Family Life Center, the remodeling of the Sanctuary, the J. H. Dotson Study Hall, the R. A. Whitaker Annex, the development of "Faith Park" and the establishment of the Computer Lab. On November 8, 1998, in honor of Rev. McCutchen, the Family Life Center was renamed Dr. G. Calvin McCutchen, Sr. Family Life Center.

On Sunday, August 15, 1999, Mt. Zion burned the mortgage on the G. Calvin McCutchen, Sr. Family Life Center. November 1, 1999, our outreach ministry installed prayer lines allowing volunteers to consistently make contact with Mt. Zion members and the community for prayer. The Prayer Ministry Room was dedicated on January 2, 2000. The community and members are welcome to call our Prayer Line (918) 584-PRAY 24 hours a day.

The beginning of the 21st century brought us improvements in our audio/video capabilities, such as the ability to store sermons on a compact disk. A closed circuit television was added which allowed members that have difficulty attending services in the sanctuary to view the morning worship.

In 2002, acreage was purchased on East Apache, and in December 2005, Heavenly Treasures Book and Novelty Store was opened. The bookstore was the only black-owned bookstore in North Tulsa. The bookstore catered to the needs of churches and organizations in North Tulsa by offering choir robes, communion materials, Sunday school materials, gospel CD's, DVD's and novels.

In March of 2007, Dr. George C. McCutchen, Sr., announced his retirement as senior pastor, after 50 wonderful years of service to Mt. Zion Baptist Church. As we came to the close of almost a century of sustaining the power through faith, the gauntlet was passed.

On January 1, 2008, the Lord passed the baton to Dr. Leroy M. Cole, to continue to lead us in running this Christian race. On September 5, 2008 Mt. Zion Baptist Church was listed in the National Register of Historical Places for its rebuilding efforts in the Greenwood community following the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921. Today, Mt. Zion Baptist Church continues to be a testimony of "standing in the gap" for its members and the Tulsa community.

Under the direction of Dr. Leroy M. Cole, we have added several new ministries and restructured the current ministries. These ministries include Greeters Ministry, Counselors Ministry, New Member Orientation Ministry, Health and Wellness Ministry, Ambassadors for Christ, Noon Day Community Bible Study, Media Ministry, Liturgical Dance & Mime, Athletic Ministry, Outreach Ministry, Voice of Zion (Newsletter), Transportation Ministry and Mighty Kids for a Mighty God (Children's Church Ministry). We started utilizing our parking lot for event parking after the building of the baseball stadium.

A capital improvement campaign was established in 2012 that included the renovation and painting of the sanctuary, installing new carpet and refurbishing the chandeliers and light fixtures. J.H. Dotson Hall, the Family Life Center and gym were completely renovated. Ceramic tile was installed in all the restrooms along with new plumbing and fixtures. The ladies lounge was restructured and transformed into a bridal suite. Two new chairs lifts and flat screen monitors were added in the foyers and sanctuary.

The Media Ministry was upgraded with the purchase of high definition cameras, speakers, monitors, amps, microphones mixing board, screens, projectors and laptop. The exterior renovation of the church included painting the trim, power washing the bricks and replacing the louvers. We also replaced the roofs on the sanctuary and Family Life Center. New landscaping was added and a new Mt. Zion Baptist Church sign was installed. Three new busses were purchased extending the transportation ministry to three busses and one van. Security cameras were also installed throughout the church.

The members of Mount Zion Baptist Church understand that the most important principle is after studying the Elements of Worship and determining our spiritual gifts, we must dedicate to not give 100%, but 110 percent of our time, talent, fruits, and worship to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. As we continue our journey, let us show our dedication by remaining anchored in the Lord, and renew our faith as well as dedication under the leadership of our servant, and a man of God, Dr. Leroy M. Cole.

“Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. “

Matthew 16: 18