

Bethany Baptist Church History

On January 8, 1923, Bethany Baptist Church was organized in the Pittsburg Community. Two ministers, Reverend J. T. Dorsey and Reverend Jackson along with a group of Christian followers established a church which remains on the original site, 1109 McDaniel Street in Southwest Atlanta, Georgia.

The first building was made by placing two railway boxcars on a one-half acre lot. The furniture was hand-made and two potbellied stoves provided the heat. Bethany Baptist Church was founded on the principles mentioned in the sayings of Jesus stated in Matthew 16:18 "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" and John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Reverend Jackson, one of the founding fathers became the first pastor. In the first twenty-five years. Several ministers were called and served. They were: Reverend J. T. Dorsey, Reverend J. L. Bryant, Reverend A. L. Collins, Reverend Goolsby and Reverend C. J. Cranford.

Bethany became known as the church in Pittsburg at the end of the car line. On September 10, 1948, Reverend Robert H. Hicks was called as Pastor of Bethany Baptist Church. Many Gospel Singers came to sing at group musical services once a month. Under his administration our accomplishments were numerous. We grew spiritually, financially and in numbers. We purchased two houses on Hubbard Street in the rear of the church. These houses were used as our first kitchen and dining areas. Later they were demolished for the purpose of expanding the church and a parking lot. In 1976 the church building was remodeled, and central heating and air installed. In 1977 the first woman was appointed and elected to the Trustee Board. The property on the corner of McDaniel and Roy along with the duplex apartment complex at Roy and Hubbard Streets were purchased. The apartments were rented to senior members of the congregation and the building was renovated from a grocery store and upstairs apartments and became Bethany Baptist Church Fellowship Hall and Educational Building.

Between 1985 and 1986 two more women were appointed to the Board of Trustees. Bethany became incorporated with the State of Georgia as **Bethany Baptist Church Inc. McDaniel Street**. In 1986 we accomplished our goal of becoming debt-free and burned the mortgage on September 28, 1986.

Pastor Hicks passed in June 1987, after serving the Bethany Baptist Church for thirty-nine and a half years. The many works he performed and the numerous accomplishments he made will stand forever as a reminder of his love for the Lord and the love for Bethany.

In November 1987, Reverend Willie L. Sullivan was called as Pastor of Bethany Baptist Church. Since this time we have made great spiritual progress through the study of God's word. Pastor Sullivan believed in the mission that the founding fathers set for Bethany and worked toward that goal. In October 1989 our first eight o'clock service was held. Under his administration many ministries have been organized to enhance the growth and mission of the church, such as, Dramatically Speaking for Christ, Willing Workers, Aerobics, The Brotherhood, Teen's and Intercessory Prayer ministries. By the grace of God and through the teaching and studying of His word, the Educational Department has developed into a vital and vibrant part of his administration.

Through spiritual and financial support, in 1992, the exterior of the Educational Building was refurbished.

On June 1997, major renovation began on the sanctuary. Under this phase a new roof was constructed, new flooring installed, pews refinished, new windows installed, new baptistery, restroom facilities, lights, central air and heat, a public address system, Piano, carpet, security system. A new steeple and portal add to the exterior of the church totaling more than \$350,000.00. The Lord continued to lead us to higher heights as we strived to excel in His service.

Pastor Sullivan served as Moderator of the Metropolitan Missionary Baptist Association and continued to teach us that we are a church of God for the people of God. To strive for excellence we were to dare not forget the scripture "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." --Matthew 6:33. Pastor Sullivan served for nineteen years until his untimely death in September 2006.

In December 20, 2006 Reverend John T. Battle and Associate Minister was elected to serve as pastor. During his administration the mortgage on the new sanctuary was paid in April 2007. The duplex apartment building was torn down to enlarge the parking area. In 2009 Reverend Battle ordained five men to the Deacon Ministry along with an Associate Minister to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Three more men were ordained to the Deacon Ministry in 2010 making a total of eight Deacons. Reverend Battle served for six years eight months until his resignation August 11, 2013.

The Deacons of Bethany carried out the Worship Service along with the help of Minister Therin Shambray. Later Reverend Roger Williams was elected to serve as Interim Pastor.

After much prayer Bethany on March 17, 2014 called, and the Lord sent Dr. Craig E. White, Sr. to be the Shepherd of the Bethany Baptist Church. Dr White was installed on August 17, 2014. Dr. White continues to be passionate about God's church and deeply concerned about the families in the Pittsburg community. He has hosted along with the church several community events and outreach programs since his installation. Currently, our focus is on restoring and preserving the church spiritually and physically. Dr. White has organized Bethany into a Departmentalized Church. We have the Departments of Worship Support, Membership Development, Christian Education, Music, Mission, and Youth Development. Each Department is led by a Deacon of the Church who Pastor White refers to as his assistants. In 2016 the addition of a Noon Bible Study and New Church Curriculum, Dr White has stimulated A Spiritual Renewal in the Bethany that is embraced by all. Pastor White inspires young preachers from the Atlanta University ITC Seminary who without hesitation become part of the Bethany Baptist Church.

May this Church stand in years to come as it has stood for the past 96 years as a living monument to our Savior and Lord-Jesus Christ.