

# Mount Pisgah Baptist Church Rembert, South Carolina

1863 - 1999



Reverend Anthony L. Taylor, Sr  
March 31, 1999



## PREFACE

We have recorded facts as we have found them, but there are still some unsolved puzzles. The church records are incomplete and none could be found for extensive periods in the life of the church. We realize that the history of the church is also the history of its people and the community it serves, but because of the incompleteness of records and the great span of time covered, (136 years), we cannot be exact. Another reason is because some who served before our time, did not heed the advice of the Prophet Isaiah (30:8) some 2600 years ago to "Write it before them in a table and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come forever and ever". We can in no way claim this to be a complete history of the church.

**Mr. E. H. Frierson** wrote the history of the church from 1863 to April 24, 1944. He died in October 1954. Great appreciation is expressed to E. H. Frierson who initiated a guided tour of **Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church**.

**Lulie H. Boykin** has written a partial history of the church based on interviews and visits to the church in 1938. She also reviewed records of minutes from 1930, 1933 and 1934. Her account of the partial church history is housed in The South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, South Carolina. The **History Committee** has combined the two versions and added the history from 1944 to 1999.

Again, it is our prayer that the faith of our founding fathers will prevail. We hope that this brief work will help us understand our Christian past in order that we may meet the challenges and opportunities of the present and the future.

### History Committee Members

Deacon Jimmie Dennis, Jr., Chairman; Mrs. Ida Clea, Mrs. Alice Witherspoon, Deacon Coleman Dennis, Martha W. Wright, Secretary, and Jimmie Dennis III

## MT. PISGAH BAPTIST CHURCH

### "FROM BUSH ARBOR TO PRESENT"

The **Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church** is a branch of High Hills of Santee. High Hills is in Sumter County rural area, three (3) miles north of Statesburg, South Carolina. High Hills was organized in 1770, and was incorporated in 1784.

**How did we get to High Hills?** During the time of slavery we had no place to worship. When the Revolutionary War began, Rev. Richard Furman invited different denominations, churches and preachers among all dissenters to attend a meeting at High Hills. We were considered to be dissenters, not a part of the general High Hills population. The meeting was well attended and it influenced a great change in the lives of the people.

Black slaves were not allowed to congregate or to communicate in groups. However, the Negro preacher, who had to keep his identity as a preacher concealed, devised ways of preaching to the slaves. He would tell the "Water Boy" to announce the service at a given time by singing through the fields, "**Steal Away**". All of the slaves knew to go to the swampy forest that night for worship. Another slave would be stationed at the "Big House" to ascertain whether or not acts of worship could be heard. The next morning he went through the fields singing, "**Oh I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray**". When the slave preacher gave a vivid description of Christ, his birth, his life, death, resurrection and ascension, the Negroes knew that he could not read, so they asked him in the words of the spiritual "**Were You There When They Crucified My Lord**".



Those who had been attending High Hills, especially slaves, did not feel that they were free to worship as they wanted to. They left High Hills and became united with Swift Creek Baptist Church.

**Why Swift Creek?** Swift Creek was organized in 1783 in Kershaw County in the town of Boykin, South Carolina. This too, was a white and black congregation. The church was in poor condition and had services only once a year in order to hold the title to the land. In 1828, its membership was reduced to 3, and by 1829 it had increased to 20, which included some of the founders of **Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church**. Worship was still strange to the blacks because of the once a year service. They wanted a place where they could worship as often as they wanted. Blacks and white were in the same cemetery, however, a ditch was dug through the cemetery to separate the whites from the blacks.

In 1863 some of the members came together and decided to build a church they could call their own. In rural Sumter County, two miles south of Rembert on US Highway 521 they built **Bush Arbor** on a large hump of chalk located on a hill, thus giving the name of the place of worship **Chalk Hill**. Brother Abram Dennis and Doctor Rembert deeded one acre of land to build the church on. Services were held under the Bush Arbor for about two years. Charter members for this structure were Hazard Green, Abram Dennis, Jacob McGee, Daniel Dennis, Sr., Cyrus Skinner, Sandy Butler, Legare Hampton, Dennis Jones, Sr., Manning Hunter, William Lee, Jerry Lindsey and Bessie Boykin. Rev. Jesse Boykin served as pastor.

In 1866, the twelve charter members from the old Swift Creek built a small frame church of rough lumber on the same spot near where they had lived as slaves. It was known as **Chalk Hill**. It was a small rectangular frame building. Serving as deacons in this structure were: Abram Dennis, Jacob McGee and Hazard Green. There was no preacher during this time. However, Rev. Manning Hunter, a licensed preacher, was ordained in 1866 and served as

pastor for about thirty-five (35) or forty (40) years. The membership was small. Membership increased and another deacon was added, Dennis Jones, Sr., who did a successful job.

In 1896, the members decided that they needed a better looking church. The church known as **Chalk Hill** was torn down. The 1896 church was a much better looking building, a 32 X 60 terraced tower with a small vestibule through it into the main body of the building. Two ante-rooms were on each side of the pulpit. Some large column posts were in the middle of the church. The choir was in the rear of the church. The capacity of the building was 350 and was valued at \$100.00. A large cemetery surrounded the church on a 3 acre lot and was worth \$140.00. The name was changed to **Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church**. This structure stood from 1896 until 1930, thirty-four (34) years. The members decided to beautify the church. The rough lumber from the outside was removed and replaced with treated lumber. A committee was appointed consisting of James Alston, William Alston, Sim Davis and Preston Parker to borrow \$100.00 from Reco Sanders to buy some ceiling material. When the ceiling was finished, the choir was moved from the rear of the church and built on the right side of the pulpit. The ante-rooms were removed and the church was extended in length at a cost of about \$300.00. Isaiah Hunter painted the church inside and out for about \$150.00. Rev. Manning Hunter, who had been serving as pastor for 40 years was now deceased. Rev. I. W. Dixon was now the pastor.

In 1928, Mr. F. W. Wilson willed the church a spot on his property to erect a pool and a well across Highway 521. The members bought the cement and all met together on a certain day and completed the work. Brother Charlie Brown drew the plans. In the same year, the members bought a pulpit set for \$75.00 and a communion set for \$19.00 under Rev. E. H. Herbert's administration. All the work was done through charity by the church members, and the women furnished the food. In 1942, roofing for the top of the church was purchased as well as sheathing for \$119.00. The total for this job including the labor was \$250.00. Brother



Charlie Brown was head of the work being done and another coat of paint was put on the outside at the cost of \$100.00.

**Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church** began with twelve (12) members. In August of 1938 it had reached 200, and by April 1944 the membership was 300, according to a partial history written August 30, 1938 by Lula H. Boykins and housed at The South Caroliniana Library. A charter for the **Sons and Daughters of Job** was on one wall and the **United Sons and Daughters of Abraham** on another wall. Neither had records on file.

In the 1950's, Mrs. Julia E. Alston organized a group called the **Sunbeam Group**, made up of the children and teenagers, to work in the church. Their main reason was to buy a new pulpit set. Each little Sunbeam was given a gleaner. Well do you know, they collected enough to buy the pulpit set. Mrs. Alston then formed an organizational structure to raise money for a new church. The committee included: Julie E. Alston, President; Lottie Boyd Dennis, Secretary; Johnnie Alston, Treasurer; and Deacon Freddie Dennis from the Deacon Board. The **Sunbeam Group** raised enough money to buy enough concrete blocks to erect the four walls. The four walls stood for some years. Weeds had grown up around the walls. In 1951, the membership under the leadership of Rev. A. D. Dennis joined forces to attempt to complete the structure. The dedication and corner stone laying was completed in 1959. This structure was renovated again in 1976. An Education Wing was built with four classrooms in the basement, a dining room and kitchen, new windows and bricked in, gave the church a new look inside as well as outside.

The congregation saw the need to renovate the church in 1991. So extensive were the improvements made on the exterior and interior of the church that there are few traces of the original building erected in 1959. The entire front entrance was altered. A single 30-foot steeple replaced the bird house looking steeple. Wrought iron railings lead to one central entrance. In the vestibule, a large lighted window was installed, shedding its radiance upon those entering the

sanctuary and sharing its beauty with passers-by. The structure is brick veneer and a central heating system was installed. The entire Education Wing underwent many changes and additions. It now consists of nine classrooms, spacious halls and storage closets. The modern structure cost approximately two-hundred thousand (\$200,000.00) and the church debt was paid off in 1995. In a unique way, **Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church** is a symbol of the unity of purpose of church and government working in our nation which was founded under God. The cemetery at **Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church** is a place of peace and beauty, rich in history and deeply inspiring. Monuments stand to mark staunch old soldiers who have lived and worshipped here.

### Pastors

If life is to make sense, yesterday's experiences must have something to do with today's living. The founding fathers of **Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church** effectively handled all church details. Preachers were called, deacons were ordained, and trustees were appointed. Those godly men who served as pastors from 1863 through 1941 and those who have served since should be commended. Today our heritage from the past in the area of pastoring has been fruitful. In 1942, Rev. A. D. Dennis became the pastor of the church. He gave his best for 52 years (1942-1994). He led the church through four stages of renovations. We have been fortunate in our choice of pastors. Death took Rev. Dennis from our midst in April 1994. Rev. Marvin Hodge served as acting pastor from April 1994 until October 1994. Rev. Hodge was then elected pastor during the Annual Church Meeting in October 1994. A common nature with all human beings, the desire to make unnecessary changes without a discussion with officers, led the church in a 2 year period of turmoil and unrest. Between 1995 and 1997, the unrest continued to the point where the church became divided and resulted in many legal battles. After two years of confusion, the church did not have a pastor from January 1997 until October 1997.



The Baptist of old were humble folks, close to the soil and very confident in the power of the spirit to train up good heralds of the Word of God. Out of this impulse, the Search Committee was led to Rev. Anthony L. Taylor, Sr. Rev. Taylor was elected to serve as pastor of **Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church** in October 1997. Thank God for Pastor Taylor. The story of his life presents us with inspiration that is noble, uplifting and humanitarian. Since 1863, **Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church** has had eleven (11) pastors, namely:

Rev. Jesse Boykin	1863-1866
Rev. Manning Hunter	1866-1906
Rev. I. W. Dixon	1906-1930
Rev. E. H. Herbert	1930-1931
Rev. E. Harvin	1931-1939
Rev. G. J. James	1939-1941
Rev. L. W. Williams	1939-1941
Rev. H. W. White	1941-1942
Rev. A. D. Dennis	1942-1994
Rev. Marvin Hodge	1994-1996
Rev. Anthony L. Taylor, Sr.	1997-Present

The church has licensed the following preachers:

Judge Alston	Wyatt Davis	Matthew Dennis
Warren Alston	A. G. Mayrant	J. E. Kirkland
T. M. Boykin	Marion L. Wade	Henry Skinner
Thomas Colclough	B. T. Hunter	A. D. Dennis
Otis Scott, Sr.	Willie Dennis	Edward Sanders
Edwin E. Bennett	James B. Haile	Dublin Dennis

## Deacons

Deacons who have served in the church and are now deceased: Abram Dennis, Jacob McGee, Hazard Green, Matthew Dennis, Dennis Jones, Sr., William Alston, E. W. Sanders, Daniel Dennis, Jr., James Alston, Sr. (Chairman), Joshua Dennis (Chairman), Dennis Jones, Jr., John Lee (Dismissed), George Jones, John Sanders, Freddie Dennis (Chairman), William Davis (Chairman), Frank Davis, Thomas Jones, Sammie Alston, William C. Wright (Chairman) and Joe Dais.

Deacons who are still serving are: Jesse Washington, Jimmie Dennis, Jr. (Chairman), Herbert Dennis (Chairman), Harold Alston, Coleman Dennis, Erthlay Witherspoon, Carlton Washington, Scipio Jones, Sylvester Covington (Present Chairman), Charlie Clea (Vice Chairman and Clerk) and Rev Edwin Bennett who is now serving as Pastor of Grant Hill.

The following people were ordained during the period of unrest but are no longer members. They followed Rev. Marvin Hodge after he was forced out by the Council of the Wateree Association: Thomas Colclough, Johnnie Davis, Gary Dinkins and Michael Sanders.

## Sunday School

The work of the **Sunday School** is the work of reaching people. According to a partial history completed August 15, 1938, and on file at the South Caroliniana Library, the **Sunday School at Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church** was organized in 1918 under the supervision of Jerry Lindsey. As the **Sunday School** progressed from 1918 to 1944 and to the present point, our church history brings us the greatest opportunity to continue the work of the **Sunday School**.

The following people have served as Superintendent of the **Sunday School**: Jerry Lindsey, Wyatt Davis, Sallie Kendrick, Morgan Diggs, Isaiah Hunter, Martin Kendrick, Sallie



Council and Frances Miller. Deacon Coleman is serving as Superintendent and has been for many years. Naomi Sanders served as Assistant Superintendent, a position she held for two years. After her resignation, Martha W. Wright was elected as Assistance Superintendent and still holds that position today. Those who have served as Secretaries for the Sunday School are: Myrteen King, Elizabeth Dennis, Rosa Colclough, Cynthia Colclough, Anita P. Hunter, Alene Floyd, Eric Davis, Angela Dennis, Shonta Dinkins, Anita Hunter and Christopher Young, who is now serving as Secretary. The only record shows the following who have served as Treasurers: Sharon Pollard, Lottie Dennis and Gertrude Dennis. In the history of the church of 136 years, the church has had 9 Superintendents, 3 Assistants, 11 Secretaries and 3 Treasurers. The **Sunday School** is one organization of the local church that has the greatest opportunity to reach all family members. God help us to go through open doors another 136 years.

### Church Clerks

The brethren who served as **Church Clerks** are: Jerry Lindsey, Abram Wright, Isaiah Hunter, A. G. Mayrant, E. W. Sanders, E. H. Frierson and Michael Dennis. Jesse Washington was elected in 1956 and held that position until he resigned in 1994 (38 years). Brother Jimmie Dennis III was elected as Church Clerk. The church was plagued with one problem after another, and Jimmie Dennis III resigned. As the turmoil continued, Sister Betty C. Young was chosen during the period of unrest and is serving as the Church Clerk today. Cathy L. Grant is the Assistant Church Clerk.

### Trustee Board

The **Trustee Board** was organized in 1866 with Brother Abram Dennis and Doctor Rembert serving as Chairman and Co-Chairman. Those old soldiers were: Hazel Green,

Abram Dennis, Doctor Rembert, Charlie Brown, Robert Dinkins, Thomas Boyd, Martin Kendrick, John Pollard, Thomas Jones, Frank Davis and Walter Alston.

Mr. Thomas Boyd was serving as Chairman of the **Trustee Board** in 1944. He resigned in 1949 and Mr. Eugene Dais was elected in 1950. He held that position until 1955. Mr. Robert Dinkins was then elected as Chairman. Mr. Dinkins saw the need to work the younger generation and resigned. Mr. Robert Kirkland was elected as Chairman and served until his death on December 25, 1981. Mr. Roosevelt Sanders was elected after Mr. Kirkland's death and holds that position today. Deacons Jimmie Dennis and Coleman Dennis served as past Secretaries.

The Trustee Board has had six (6) Chairmen since 1863. The present Trustee Board Officers are: Roosevelt Sanders, Chairman; Robert Parker, Secretary and Simon Wade, Treasurer.

### Missionary

The **Missionary Society** was organized in 1934. Sister Cornelia Brown was serving as President, Ida Alston, Vice-President; Sister E. R. Alston, Secretary; and Sister Margaret Bennett, Treasurer. These women did excellent work in the church. Sister Cornelia Brown was called home to rest as well as Ida Alston and Sister Bennett. Sister Daffney Pollard was elected as President; Sister Julia E. Alston, Vice-President; Sister Meta Wade Jones, Secretary; and Sister Susan Hunter, Treasurer.

Sister Daffney Pollard moved to Florida before her time was up and Mrs. Geneva D. Washington carried out the rest of her time and served a one-year term of her own. Sister Maggie Davis served a one-year term as President. Sister Bell Kirkland Dennis assumed the duties of President and served a two-year term. Sister Julia Alston was elected as President and



held that position until 1963. Sister Martha W. Wright was elected in 1963 and has served the organization in that capacity for 36 years.

Those who have served as Secretaries are: Meta Wade Jones, Lillie Richardson, Wilhelmenia Scott, Meta Sanders, Myrtle Dinkins and Lottie Dennis. The Treasurers have been: Margaret Bennett, Susan Hunter and Sallie Council. The present officers are: Martha W. Wright, President; Gertrude Dennis, Vice-President; Lottie Dennis, Secretary; and Alice Witherspoon, Treasurer. The **Missionary Society** has had a total of 7 Presidents, 5 Vice-Presidents, 7 Secretaries, and 4 Treasurers.

### Homecoming Committee

In any church, no matter how small in membership, there are some tasks which must be done through committee work. There was a need to do some church improvements and to get members and former members who had moved away involved in the improvements. In 1975, under the leadership of Rev. A. D. Dennis, the **Homecoming Committee** was established. Sister Geneva D. Washington was appointed Chairperson and Deacon W. C. Wright Co-Chairman, a position he held until his election as Chairman of the Board of Deacons. Sister Vermelle Kirkland was then elected as Co-Chairperson. Sister Naomi Sanders was chosen as Secretary. Sister Sanders resigned because of her heavy activity schedule.

Sister Lottie Dennis was appointed as Secretary and held that position until she felt it was time to give the responsibility to someone else. Sister Eloise Parker was then chosen and now holds that position. Brother Johnnie Alston was appointed as Treasurer. Mr. Alston had been serving as Treasurer for Mrs. Alston's **Sunbeam Group**, which began many years ago to raise funds for the beginning of a new church. Sister Alice Witherspoon was elected Treasurer when Mr. Alston resigned. She holds that title today.

Sister Maggie Davis was chosen as Food Chairperson with Sister Ida Clea as Co-Chairperson. Other members included: Myrteen W. King, Martha W. Wright, Deacon Coleman Dennis, Deacon Freddie Dennis, Deacon William Davis, O. P. Parker, Robert Kirkland, James Colclough and Harvin Dennis. Other members added as the years passed: Roosevelt Sanders, Robert Parker, Frank Sanders, Charlie Clea, Jimmie Dennis III, Bertha Alston, Maggie Lane, Carrie D. Haile and Deacon Scipio Jones.

The first "Homecoming Celebration" was a real success. It was a week long celebration beginning on Sunday, June 1st, 1975 through Sunday, June 8th, 1975. Sunday, June 1st opened the celebration with the history of the church as a play. The title of the play was "**An Appointment With History**". Area churches were invited during this week. Sunday, June 8th was the highlight of the celebration with all-day services. The first Homecoming was a landmark beginning and continued for 23 years. Homecoming resulted in the largest fund contribution in the history of the church. In May of 1999, the church congregation will return to the church anniversary celebration of 136 years. The last Church Anniversary was celebrated twenty-five years ago. Sister Geneva Washington has been Chairperson of the **Homecoming Committee** since 1974, twenty-five (25) years, and still serves in that capacity.

### Senior Choir

The **Senior Choir** was organized in 1866 under the leadership of Cyrus Skinner. The choir has experienced great success and we have locked in our hearts the memory of our members who have gone to their heavenly home. Choir Leaders were: John Holiday, James Alston and Charlie Brown. Brother Robert Dinkins was serving as Choir Leader on April 24, 1944, which represents the first phase of the church's history.



Mr. Robert Dinkins served as Choir Leader for a long period after 1944. He resigned from the **Senior Choir** as leader in the early 1970's and joined the **Gospel Choir**. Deacon Joe Dais was then elected as the **Senior Choir** leader. He served faithfully until his death August 18, 1979. Mrs. Myrteen King was elected as the **Senior Choir** leader in October 1979, and is still serving in that capacity. Sister Lucille Sanders served as Secretary until her death. Sister Alice Witherspoon was elected as Secretary and still holds that position. Sister Maggie Sanders served as Treasurer until her health failed. Sister Mary Jane Peay Dennis was elected Treasurer and still hold that position. The **Senior Choir** has had seven (7) Leaders, two (2) Secretaries and two (2) Treasurers since its origination in 1863.

### Young Woman's Auxiliary

The **Young Woman's Auxiliary** also known as the **Y. W. A.** was organized in 1957, with Sister Vermelle Kirkland as President. Bertha Alston was elected Vice-President, Lottie B. Dennis as Secretary and Theola Alston as Treasurer. Sister Vermelle is the only President of **Y. W. A.** has had since its beginning in 1957, and holds that position today. Sister Ida Clea was elected Treasurer after Sister Theola Alston was called home to rest.

The purpose of this organization is to help lift the name of the Lord and Savior through service to our fellow man and to take an active part in our church programs, both spiritually and financially. Through the years, our **Y. W. A.** has been strengthened as a result of a tremendous increase in membership. We are still experiencing commendable success through the help of God and pledge to continue our support to the Master, our church and our fellow man. The following are presently serving as officers of the **Young Woman's Auxiliary**: Sister Vermelle Kirkland, President; Sister Betty C, Marvin, Vice-President; Sister Ollie Dinkins, Secretary; and Sister Ida L. Clea, Treasurer.

### The Usher Board

The **Usher Board** was first organized in 1936, under the leadership of Mrs. Emma Alston, better known as Mrs. E. R. She was the first President. They were called **Door Minders** in the early days. Some of the early **Door Minders** were: Louise (Weesa) Dennis, Lottie Stavis, Margaret (Sug) Alston, Eva Davis, Rosalee Pollard, Harvin Dennis, Eugene (Bap) Dais, Bossie Dennis, David Parker, Beatrice Lee, Azalee Hunter, Dublin Dennis, Charlie Dennis, Theola Alston and Marie Hunter, Sallie Council and William Davis.

Mrs. E. R. served as President for many years until her health began to fail. She resigned and Mrs. Eva Davis was elected President and kept that position until she was called home on November 29, 1969. Brother Coleman Dennis was then elected. Mr. Coleman Dennis was ordained as a Deacon; therefore giving up the position and Mr. J. C. Colclough was appointed and served in that capacity until his death in 1996.

Mrs. Catherine Wilson is now serving as President of the **Usher Board**. The church has had five (5) **Usher Board** Presidents since its beginning in 1863. Our present officers are: Catherine Wilson, President; Deacon Coleman Dennis, Vice-President; Vermelle Kirkland, Secretary; Ollie Mae Dinkins, Assistant Secretary; and Cathy Grant, Treasurer.

### Knightengales

Organizing the **Knightengales Choir** was the idea of Mr. Eugene and Mrs. Alene Dais. They began in 1954 with a gathering of children and some adult members coming to their home to sing once a week. As time passed, the group became organized in 1953. It was Mr. Albert Davis who came up with the name for the singing group. Thus, the name **Knightengales** was adopted and have been together as a group for forty-six (46) years. Those pioneers who began



with us but have gone are: Mrs. Lottie Stavis, Deacon William Davis, Mrs. Maggie Davis, Mrs. Mamie Collier, Mrs. Mamie Grant, Mr. Robert Kirkland, Francis Kirkland, Mrs. Lucille Sanders and Mr. Charlie Clea, Sr. The **Knightengales Choir** has had five (5) Presidents since their beginning in 1953: Albert Davis, Maggie Davis, Harold Alston and Robert Kirkland. The current officers are: Ida L. Clea, President; Deacon Coleman Dennis, Vice-President; and Sister Vermelle Kirkland, Secretary.

### Youth Department

The church history from 1863 through April 28, 1944 did not include the **Junior Department**. Under the leadership of Sister Julia E. Alston (Miss Ella) a group of children from the Sunday School Department was organized in 1940. This group was called the **Sunbeam Group**. She used them to put on programs and raise money for the **Sunday School** and the church. Some of those in the first **Sunbeam Group** were: Myrteen King, Mary Kendrick, Julia Davis, Lottie Boyd Dennis, Annie Mae Williams, Essie Mae Rembert, Geneva Alston, Ruby Mae Dennis, Ruth and Naomi Dennis, Carolyn Wade, Myrtle Holloman, Edna Council and Sallie Sanders.

After that **Sunbeam Group** had been organized and most of them had reached the age of 12, a decision was made by the **Senior Missionary** to have those who may desire to be part of the **Youth Department** under the **Senior Missionary**. In the absence of a viable **Youth Department** in the church, the **Junior Missionary** was organized. The **Sunbeam Group** members plus the addition of the following people: Alice Witherspoon, Ethel Sanders, Julia Mae Sanders, and Betty and Paralee Sanders. Through the **Junior Missionary** organization, they learned what mission was and how they could respond by being active in the church. In 1950, Martha Wade Wright was given the task of working with the juniors. The first play presented by the junior was "**Slabtown Convention**". By this period of the church's history, the **Junior**

**Missionary** had grown in membership. Added to the list of juniors were: Kathleen Kirkland, Debbie Wright, Jean Alston, Rosa Marie Dennis, Pamela Davis, Yvonne Clea, Brenda Dinkins, Angela, Nicole and Cassandra Dennis, Patricia Dennis, Cynthia Grant, Cynthia Colclough and many more.

The **Youth Department** has presented many plays. Some of them were: "**Jesus is Coming**", "**The Minister's New Car**", "**Tom Thumb Wedding**", "**A Church For Sale**", "**Three Rusty Nails**", "**Is It I Lord**" and "**Bicentennial 1976 Celebration**". In 1974, when the first homecoming celebration was observed, the **Junior Department** presented the church history with a play called "**An Appointment With History**". The homecoming celebration was a week long event. The juniors were very much a part of the celebration. The **Youth Department** was very active from 1940 until 1995 and 1996. The church experienced a period of turmoil and the juniors did nothing during the period of unrest. After the church settled down in 1997, the **Youth Department** changed its name to **Youth Ministry** and for the past two years Minister Richard James has been chairing the youth activities with the help of: Francis Dais, Joseph Davis, Eloise Parker, Linda Wilson, Debbie Singletary and Anita Hunter. The **Youth Ministry** is growing in membership and participation. The current officers are: Karen Davis, President; Stacey China, Secretary and Cassandra James, Treasurer.

### The Gospel Choir

The Christian religion is a singing religion. Paul admonished us to be filled with the spirit. As we blend our voices, hearts and hands, may they all become a symphony of service rising to the throne of grace, and making glad the heart of God.



The **Gospel Choir** was organized in the early 1950's. It began with Mr. Boyd Grant going to the homes of Hayes and Meta Sanders, James and Sylvia Alston and Rev. Elijah Bolden once a week to practice note singing. The note singing turned into an organized **Gospel Choir** with Mr. James Alston as President. The early members were: Johnnie Alston, James Alston, Hayes Sanders, Meta Sanders, Lillie Richardson, James Sanders, Helen Alston, Robert Alston, Gertrude Alston, Priscilla Alston, Rosa Colclough, Ollie Alston, Sallie Council, Brownie Sanders, Mattie Rembert and Louise Davis. James Alston resigned as President and Johnnie Alston was elected. As time passed, the following members joined the **Gospel Choir**: Rebecca Davis, Evelyn Dennis, Fannie Dennis, Queen Dennis, Ruth Sanders, Mary Hunter, Herbert Dennis, Teresa Dennis, Catherine Dennis, Ollie Mae Dinkins, Albert Davis, Gertrude Dennis, Felicia Lloyd, Elizabeth Mayrant and James Mayrant.

Johnnie Alston served for a number of years as President and God called him home. Evelyn Dennis was then elected. The church was in an uproar and became divided to the point where some members departed and joined another church. Mr. Albert Davis was elected President before the division took place. The present officers are: Albert Davis, President and Catherine Wilson, Vice-President.

### **Male Chorus**

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands". Organizing the **Male Chorus** was the idea of Robert Parker. Organization was talked about since 1994. The real organizational structure was formally completed in 1997 and took a new meaning with Mr. Colclough on the piano and Gregory Dennis on the organ. Members are: Robert Parker, President; Sylvester Covington, Vice-President; Francis Dais, Secretary; Francis Kirkland, Jr., Treasurer; Albert Davis, Ernest King, Marion Wade, Jr., Leo Dennis, Sr., Richard Wilson, Deacon Charlie Clea,

Larry Sanders, Lionel Grant and Anthony Hunter. Pastor Taylor and Minister James are honorees in the **Male Chorus**.

### **Adult Choir**

During the mid seventies, a group of young people approached Rev. A. D. Dennis and the Deacon Board with the expressed interest of organizing a choir for the young adults in the church. Before this time some of them were members of the **Youth Choir**. The group organized in 1976 with eight (8) members: Mary Dennis, President; Myrtle Dinkins, Vice-President; Linda S. Wilson, Secretary; Gladys Grant, Treasurer; Lillie Alston, Barbara Allen, Cynthia Brown and Francis Miller. The choir continued to grow in membership during the period of the next ten (10) years. Mary Dennis served as president for about five (5) years before resigning the position. Myrtle Dinkins was elected president and served until 1997.

By 1990 the choir had grown to more than twenty-five (25) members. The choir has also changed its name to **The Adult Choir** with the increased number of adults joining, both men and women. The choir experienced changes in the mid-nineties during a period of turmoil within the church, but never faltered. In 1998 **The Adult Choir** celebrated its twenty-second anniversary with seventeen (17) members. **The Adult Choir** has had three (3) presidents: Mary Dennis, Myrtle Dinkins and Lillie Alston, the current president.

### **The Pastor's Aide Ministry**

**The Pastor's Aide Ministry** was organized in 1977 under the leadership of the late Rev. A. D. Dennis. The following officers were installed at **Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church** by the late Rev. A. D. Dennis: Mrs. Elizabeth D. Miller, President; Mrs. Alice C. Witherspoon, Vice-

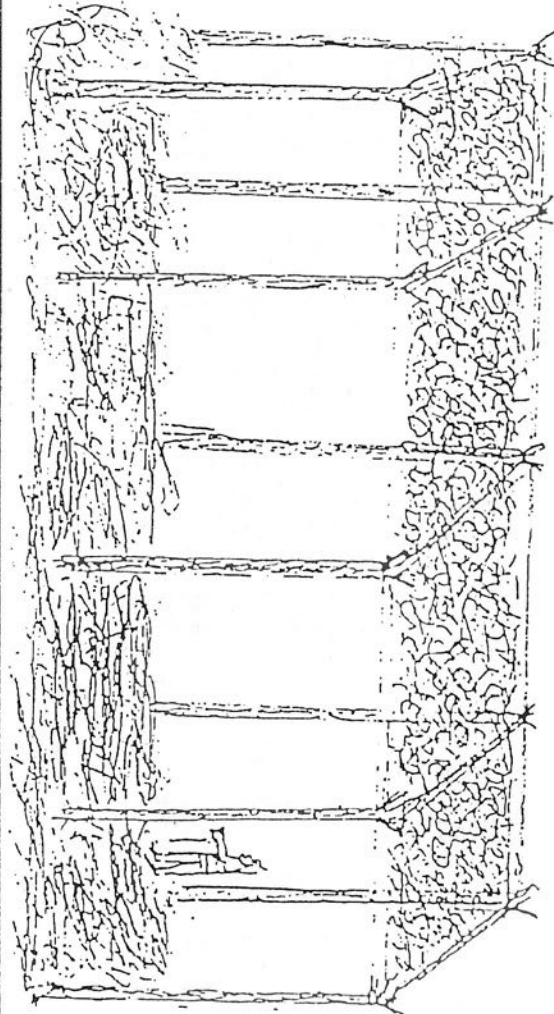


President; Mrs. Lottie B. Dennis, Secretary; and Mrs. Mary Jane H. Peay, Treasurer.

This organization had a total of twelve (12) members. The **Pastor's Aide Ministry** has to its credit many wonderful things, the portrait of the late Rev. A. D. Dennis in the Dining Room, furniture in the Pastor's study and the candle holders. The organization has also sent the Pastor to the State Convention for years.

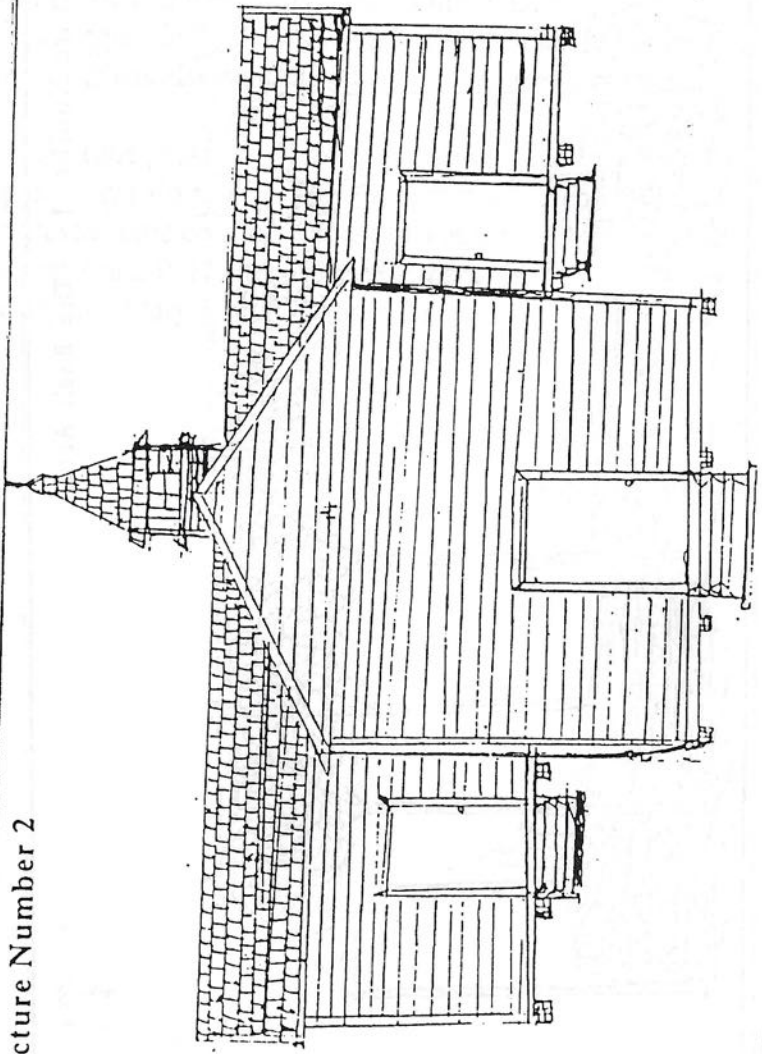
As time passed on, the organization steadily grew. Today this group is thirty (30) strong. New officers were elected when the church encountered some conflict. These officers are: Alice C. Witherspoon, President; Anita P. Hunter, Vice-President; Myrteen W. King, Secretary and Mary Jane P. Dennis, Treasurer.

Structure Number 1 - The Bush Arbor  
Built: 1863





Structure Number 2



PRESENT STRUCTURE

