

THE JOURNEY OF FAITH

Route 108 to Cedar Fern Court Mt. Pisgah A.M.E. Church's History

Mr. William Richardson and a few other A.M.E. members who transferred from St. Stephens A.M.E. Church in Elkridge, Maryland founded Mount Pisgah African Methodist Episcopal Church in Jonestown, Maryland around 1898. Holding the services in a log cabin owned by George Jones – the great-grandfather of a present member, Rosie Wilson – these few members had the first vision of a permanent church facility. The Howard County land records indicated that Plato and Evelina Green purchased an acre of land near Pfiffer's Corner of Ellicott City, Maryland, on May 31, 1900. On December 5, 1901, Mount Pisgah A.M.E. Church became incorporated. The first trustees were Moses Jones, William Richardson, William Watkins, Nicholas Thorton, Edward Adams and Plato H. Green, who was also the minister. He was pastor from 1901 through 1921. Also, on December 5, 1901, Rev. Green deeded approximately ¼ acre of his new tract of land to the newly established Mt. Pisgah. Some of the other founding members were Annie Watkins, Tom and Laura Dorsey, Mrs. William Richardson and Louise Watkins (Mrs. Louise Dorsey) who joined Mt. Pisgah at the age of 12 years and remained a loyal member for 87 years. A member in good standing, Louise Dorsey had been the oldest living member until her death in December 1985.

The first facility was donated by the congregation of Old Bellow Springs Methodist Church, and was moved to the land in 1901. Several years later, this facility was destroyed by fire. Tom Dorsey and his son, Howard, under the pastorship of Rev. E. E. Hughes built the historic Mt. Pisgah A.M.E., located on Route 108, in 1923. Mr. and Mrs. Edward Adams, Mr. and Mrs. Moses Young, Rose Dorsey and Carrie Matthews assisted the Dorseys. To pay for the existing chapel the money was borrowed from Andrew Kraft who owned a meat store in Ellicott City, Maryland. The first payment on the loan of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) was made by Perry William Taylor and the last payment was made by Nat Coats.

Mt. Pisgah was one of three churches on the Elkridge Circuit through 1975. Between 1901 and 1905, Mt. Pisgah was served by the following ministers: Rev. Green, Rev. Hughes, Rev. Lee, Rev. Handy, Rev. Hayman, Rev. Baker, Rev. Ford, Rev. Bowling, Rev. Wing, Rev. Gray, Rev. Barns, Rev. Mack, Rev. Lane, Rev. Harrison, Rev. Hawkins, Rev. Young, Rev. Hines, Rev. Hayden, Rev. Curtis, Rev. Watson, Rev. Howard, Rev. Jackson, Rev. Taylor, Rev. Thompson, Rev. Swann, Rev. McGlen, Rev. Boykin and presently, Rev. Smedley. All of these devoted pastors were committed messengers of God and led Mount Pisgah through its historical journey.

In December 1993, Rev. Donald L. Smedley was appointed Pastor of Mt. Pisgah A.M.E. Plans were near completion for the move into the temporary sanctuary known as

the Mt. Pisgah Annex. Under Pastor Smedley's leadership, services began in March 1994 at the Mt. Pisgah Annex. The temporary facility provided more space, comfort and room for additional ministries of the Church. With the continued growth in membership, the vision for a new Mt. Pisgah was stronger and closer. An opportunity to make the vision a reality occurred in July, 1995, when trustee, Ron Feaster, observed a church for sale on Cedar Fern Court in Columbia, Maryland. He brought this information to the attention of Pastor Smedley and the Trustees. In August, 1995, Mount Pisgah signed a contract to purchase our present facility from Covenant Baptist Church.

On March 17, 1996, the Mount Pisgah family moved into our present facility in Columbia, Maryland. Under the leadership of Pastor Smedley, Mt. Pisgah's ministries, membership and maintenance continue to grow.

1898

- Mr. & Mrs. Wm. Richardson, Mr. George Jones (the great-grandfather of Sister Rosie Wilson), Mr. Tom & Laura Dorsey, Mrs. Annie Watkins and her 12 yr. old daughter, Louise, met one chilly day in 1898 in the log cabin home of George Jones to discuss plans to establish a new church.

1898 – 1900

- These founding members held services in the home of George Jones.

1900

- Two faithful members, Plato & Evelina Green, purchased land near Pfeiffer's Corner of Ellicott City on May 31, 1900. Pfeiffer's Corner was located near the intersection of Old Montgomery Rd. and Rte 108. Today's landmarks for that site are the Maryland School for the Blind, the Waterloo Elementary School, and St. John's Lutheran Church

1901

- Mt. Pisgah incorporated on Dec. 5, 1901. The first trustees were Moses Jones, William Richardson, William Watkins, Nicholas Thornton, Edward Adams and Plato H. Green.
- Plato H. Green was the first pastor.
- On Dec. 5, 1901, Plato & Evelina Green donated ¼ acre of their Pfeiffer's Corner land to Mt. Pisgah.
- Upon building a new church, the congregation of Old Bellow Springs Methodist Church gave their old facility to Mt. Pisgah. Mount Pisgah's members joyfully moved their first church facility to Pfeiffer's Corner land.

1908 – 1915

- Between 1909 and 1915 this church was destroyed by fire.

1921

- Plato Green concluded his pastoralship of Mount Pisgah.

1923

- In 1923 Tom Dorsey and his son, Howard, built the historic Mount Pisgah AME Church located on Rte 108. Today's landmark for this historic church is across from Howard High School.
- Other members who assisted in this project were Mr. & Mrs. Edward Adams, Mr. & Mrs. Moses Young, Rose Dorsey and Carrie Matthews.

- The members borrowed some money for the materials and other related expenses from Andrew Kraft who owned a meat store in Ellicott City, MD.
- The members laid the cornerstone on Sept. 3, 1923. Mount Pisgah became an influential part of Howard County. The Rev. E.E. Hughes was pastor.

1924 – 1968

- Mount Pisgah was one of three churches on the Elkridge Circuit between 1924 and 1966. The other churches on the circuit were St. Stephens and Gaines Chapel. During this 42 year period, fourteen ministers served as pastor. They were: James Lee, C.C. Handy, Otto J. Hayman, Rev. Baker, R.E. Ford, Rev. Bowling, G. Oliver Wing, Frank W. Gray, J.D. Barnes, Charles H. Mack, P.C. Lane, Ramond Harrison, Thomas Hawkins, and Louis Young.
- From April 1967 to April 1968 Mt. Pisgah was without a pastor.
- During this period, the members worshipped at other churches including those on the circuit.

1968 – 1971

- Rev. Napoleon Hines was assigned to Mt. Pisgah in April 1968. Under his spiritual leadership, eight dedicated members renewed their spirit and hope. They renovated the church and purchased new pulpit furniture, some of which we are using today.
- Rev. Hines concluded his pastoralship in July 1971.
- Residents from the rapidly growing new city called Columbia, MD., began to visit Mt. Pisgah.

1972 – 1973

- Reverends William Hayden and H.R. Curtis were pastors of Mt. Pisgah.

1973 – 1975

- In April 1973, Rev. Kearney Watson was assigned to pastor Mt. Pisgah.
- Mount Pisgah and Gaines Chapel remained on the Elkridge Circuit and St. Stephens became a station church.
- During this period, Mount Pisgah's membership grew from 8 members to 25, most of whom came from Columbia, MD.

1975 – 1976

- Major Matthew Floyd, a new member and trustee of Mt. Pisgah, initiated an action to obtain an unused chapel located at Ft. Meade, MD.
- Mount Pisgah was made a mission church and came off the Elkridge Circuit under Rev. Morgan's Leadership

1976 – 1978

- Rev. Roland Howard was assigned to pastor Mount Pisgah in April 1978.
- Contractual problems caused membership to abandon the effort to complete the relocation of the Ft. Meade chapel to the Route 108 site.
- Membership grew to 75, causing members to regroup and seriously begin to planning for a larger facility to accommodate the growth.
- The Women's Missionary Society became a more viable organization and was renamed the Louise Dorsey / Lottie Scott Missionary Society. This effort was to honor the service of two of our oldest members.

1981 – 1983

- Rev. Jesse Taylor (1981-1982) and Rev. Albert Thompson (1982-1983) were pastors of Mt. Pisgah.
- Under Rev. Thompson, Mount Pisgah worshipped at Phelps' Luck Elementary School.
- In March 1983, the members moved back to the historic church located on Route 108.

1983 – 1990

- Mount Pisgah's vision for a new church facility continued under the leadership of Rev. Dana Swann who was assigned in April 1983 and served until May 1990.
- Rev. Swann started an 8:00 a.m. service to accommodate the growth in membership. Rev. Swann brought visibility to the church by reaching out to the Ellicott City & Columbia communities and becoming involved in community projects and activities.
- Rev. Swann improved the church's administrative capabilities and brought audiovisual and computer technology into the church and moved forward with plans to build a new facility.

1990 – 1993

- Rev. Alphonso McGlen was assigned to pastor Mount Pisgah from June 1990 until April 1993. Under his leadership, the membership continued to grow, making it necessary to move again. Mt. Pisgah moved to Thunder Hill Elementary School on January 6, 1991. God blessed Mt. Pisgah under his leadership by making it possible to acquire land and a building adjacent to the original church property in January 1992. On April 1992, the trustees and members of the church petitioned the Howard County Zoning Board for an Exception of Occupancy for a temporary facility on the newly acquired land. The exception was granted in 1993. During his assignment to Mt. Pisgah, Rev. McGlen expanded the music ministry.
- Rev. Ronald Boykin served as pastor at Mt. Pisgah from April 1993 until December 1993.

1993 – 1999

- The Trustees had neared completion of the renovation of the Mount Pisgah Annex and were making plans to move into our temporary sanctuary.
- Rev. Donald Smedley was appointed pastor of Mount Pisgah in December 1993.
- Under Rev. Smedley's leadership, services began in March 1994 at the Mount Pisgah Annex.
- In July 1995, Trustee Ron Feaster observed a church for sale on Cedar Fern Court in Columbia, Md.

He brought it to the attention of Rev. Smedley and the Board of Trustees.

- In August 1995, Mount Pisgah signed a contract to purchase our present facility from Covenant Baptist Church at a cost of \$1.4 million dollars.
- On March 17, 1996 the Mount Pisgah family moved into the new edifice on Cedar Fern Ct.
- During this time our Missions and Ministries have increased to over 25 and our membership to over 500.

2000 – 2001

- During this conference year, the missions, ministries and membership continued to increase.
- Mount Pisgah purchased its first van to support the missions and ministries.

Conference Years 2000 – 2001

- Purchased and erected outdoor tent for multi-purpose services & events.
- Started annual retreats

Conference Years 2002 - 2006

- The church continued its stewardship through missions, ministries and maintenance.
- Added several new ministries: Dance(Women's, Children & Men's), Children's Choir, Prayer, Men's Prison, Men's Choir, Girls Power
- The mortgage for the new facility was paid off.
- The first phase of the multi-media construction was begun
- Co-hosted the 2005 Church School Convention
- Co-hosted 2005 Annual Conference Membership continued to increase

Conference Years 2007 - 2009

- Completed the media ministry by adding 4 stationery cameras, large screen in the sanctuary, and one in the overflow
- Restructured the overflow with theater styled seating
- Installed entirely new roof that cost over \$50,000
- Purchased all new folding chairs & tables for the church
- Hosted the 2008 District Conference
- Co-Hosted the 2007 Church School Convention
- Increased Men's Prison Ministry
- Established the Women's Prison Ministry
- Visitation Ministry established
- 30 day Prayer Fast for the Church Family enacted
- Wednesday Route 1 Food Shelter and the
- House of Ruth Support Ministries established.