

Payne Avenue Missionary Baptist Church

Historical Summary

This brief history is evidence that Payne Avenue is determined to continue braving the oppositions of Satan and to follow our mission of spreading the good news of God's saving grace, as led by the Holy Spirit. This determination is enhanced by a strong devotion to our church and belief in the ability of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. When we, like other patriarchs of this great edifice, have closed our eyes in eternal rest; we, too, will leave behind this great legacy of efforts that began with a few but faithful Christian believers.

Seventy-nine (79) former members of Ebenezer Baptist Church established Payne Avenue Missionary Baptist Church, under the leadership of the late Reverend Horace J. Bailey, in the early 1930's. The vacant Christian Church property located at Payne Avenue and Lithgoe Street was purchased, and the membership chose to name the church for the street where it was located. The building needed to be renovated. While renovations were being made, worship services were held at Green School, which was about two blocks up the street from the church site. When the renovations were completed, the congregation joyfully marched from Green School to the church, led by the Austin High School Band, under the direction of Mr. Saint Clair Cobb. As the church membership grew, the need for a larger building was realized. In 1945, a new brick structure was erected at a cost of \$23,000. In 1965, urban renewal was initiated in the community where the church was located. On March 8, 1966, the present church property was purchased for \$105,000. It was the former site of the Memorial Baptist Church. In less than four years, through God's blessings, the mortgage was liquidated and a mortgage burning ceremony was held on Sunday, July 14, 1970. On December 16, 1976, just ten months after a special recognition service was held for him, Reverend Bailey died. His accomplishments in this church are matched only by his untiring service to his family and community. His unselfish deeds and caring spirit will live forever in our hearts and minds.

Prior to Reverend Bailey's death, as his health continued to decline, he recommended that the church consider one of his long time friends, Reverend Melford J. Robinson, to succeed him. In February of 1977, the church formally extended a call to Reverend Robinson. He accepted the pastoral call and preached his first sermon in June of 1977.

During this time, the church parsonage, located at 2650 Parkview Avenue, was purchased and remodeled for the pastor and his family. The church sanctuary was also remodeled. A concrete ramp was added on the rear portion of the church and improvements made to the parking area. In 1980, in an effort to meet the growing needs of the church, the H. J. Bailey annex was constructed at a cost of \$100,000 and a van was purchased. Three years later, 1983, it became necessary to renovate and enlarge the church sanctuary. The church renovations included a new handicap access ramp, a new steeple, an illuminated cross was hung in the rear of the church, expansion of the parking area, and six Sunday School class rooms were added to the H. J. Bailey annex. Total cost for renovation and expansion to both buildings totaled \$250,000.00. During the renovation period, of less than seven months, Sunday School classes and morning worship services were held at Austin East High School. Evening worship services were held in the H. J. Bailey annex. On Sunday, November 13, 1983, the membership marched from Austin East High

School to the new church sanctuary where a special dedication service was held. In August of 1985, Reverend Melford J. Robinson founded Metropolitan Baptist Church. We are thankful for the loving fellowship that exists with our sister church.

While the pulpit search committee was searching for another pastor, Reverend O. W. Willis, Jr. served as our interim pastor for eighteen months. Associate ministers assisted him: Reverends Samuel Bates (deceased), Clarence Hall, Stanley Hickey, A. J. Milton and Tyrone Steen.

The Pulpit Committee, with the congregation's blessings, extended an invitation to Reverend Dwight E. Cook on February 25, 1987. Reverend Cook accepted the pastoral call and preached his first sermon on Sunday, April 5, 1987. During Reverend Cook's leadership, the Sunday School was restructured and revamped, Sunday School classrooms in the Youth Department were completed, the way communion was conducted was reordered, the kitchen upgrade was initiated, and the two lots on the corner of Louise and Harrison Street were acquired. Reverend Cook was pastor until February 1990.

The most outstanding accomplishment, among the many that have been recorded, is the number of members who were called to the ministry and then blessed to become pastors of their own congregations. They were: Reverends Samuel Bates (deceased), James R. Blevins (deceased), J. R. Cullom, Clarence Hall, Charles McAfee, Edmond McAfee, L. A. Morris, T. H. Northern (deceased), Gregory Sawyer, Tyrone Steen, Eugene Thomas, and Dewey Wilson (deceased).

During the 1990-1993-pulpit vacancy, Reverend Fredrick Brabson was appointed as interim pastor. Under his leadership, our church charter and the weekly calendar of activities were reestablished. Reverends R. E. James and James C. Billings, along with other visiting ministers, also provided pastoral services during this period.

On May 2, 1993, the congregation directed the Pulpit Committee to extend an invitation to Pastor Daniel Keys to become the fourth pastor of Payne Avenue Baptist Church. Pastor Keys agreed to accept the position and began his service on June 22, 1993. He preached his first sermon on June 27, 1993. His initial pastoral emphasis was placed upon Payne Avenue becoming a more biblically oriented church. During his tenure, the parking lot was again expanded and the church paid off the church mortgage. He resigned on February 11, 1996.

Our present pastor, Reverend Richard S. Brown, Jr., was called from Saint John Baptist Church, Knoxville, Tennessee. The Pulpit Committee extended an invitation on November 23, 1996 and he preached his first sermon on Sunday, January 5, 1997. Under his leadership; new carpet has been placed in the vestibule, the church office has been remodeled and expanded, a library center constructed, appointed a library staff, purchased new office furniture, three new computers have been purchased, updated telephone service by adding an answering machine, and secured the parking area with locking gates.

In addition to the physical church improvements; worship and fellowship services, out reach programs, and other church activities have been greatly enhanced and/or improved. These accomplishments include: an increase in church membership and income, the initiation of a Christian education program, reactivation of Nurture for Baptist Churches training, and

reorganization of the new member training class. Improvements have been made to the Sunday morning order of worship service. Special emphases are placed on the recognition of visitors; this includes: distribution of visitor badges and information cards to each visitor, visitor welcome and fellowship reception held immediately following the service, and notes of thanks, along with church related information, are sent to each visitor. The procedure for the collection and handling of tithes, offerings, and other monies has also been improved, including Sunday bank deposits. Two deacons have been ordained and added to the board. In order to verify that each member's needs are met, deacons have been individually appointed to serve as personal inspirational leaders to assigned church family members. A Music Committee has been organized. The church council was reorganized to increase member participation and to formulate short and long range planning projects. The Scholarship Fund was increased in order to better assist those who are pursuing educational endeavors. The health ministry was restarted to provide information and health related services for the members and community at large. Finally, a cash management system was put in place to better utilize financial resources.

Special recognition, centennial (100 years), birthday celebrations were observed last year for two of our senior members. The late Brother Henry Higgins' birthday was January 24; he was called to eternal rest, just two weeks later, on February 1, 1998. Mother Susie Bond's birthday was July 18. She was called to eternal rest. The church held individual services, including a reception and gifts, for each.

As in the past, the present congregation represents a group of dedicated people working for a common goal; growth in the knowledge and will of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The church continues to grow and prosper; souls are being saved and/or revived, organizations empowered to accept more responsibilities, and programs and activities are becoming more challenging. We hope for continued structural development and expansion, but more important, we pray for renewed spiritual strength to become good stewards of in-reach, as well as out-reach, programs and Christian responsibilities.

During the early years, the church initiated many organizations for the purpose of implementing programs and special activities; many of these still exist. The following is a list of auxiliaries, committees, and groups that are presently active:

- Deacon Ministry
- Health Ministry
- Library Ministry
- Kitchen Ministry
- Usher Ministry
- Adult Choir Music Committee
- Sunday School
- Youth Choir
- Brotherhood
- Youth Department
- Church Council Seniors Association
- Trustee Ministry
- Children's Choir

MOMS Ministry
Women's Choir
Women's Fellowship
Nurture for Baptist Churches
Board of Christian Education
General Missionary Society
Deaconess Ministry
Total Praise Pantomime Groups 1 & 2

New Year's Eve 1999 found us assembled together in the house of prayer as we worshipped, testified, praised, prayed and preached the old year out and the New Year in. The new millennium was upon us. Many wondered what the New Year would bring especially in the light of the many rumors concerning Y2K. But we sang that night, "We Come This Far By Faith," leaning on the Lord, trusting in His holy word, He never failed me yet. Little did we know that our faith was about to be shaken and strengthened at the same time.

In early spring of 2000, it was discovered that our building needed some major repairs. The entire floor in the sanctuary needed to be replaced. We also determined that since we were involved in such a major renovation that we would also have some steps placed in the front of the sanctuary so that members would have access to downstairs facilities without having to walk all the way across the pulpit area. The entire sanctuary was painted and electrical updates were added. We also decided to build an audio booth for the operation of our sound and video equipment. The sound system was improved as new upgrades were added. As a result of this project, Payne Avenue Baptist Church had to relocate its morning worship services for approximately 2 months. We were blessed to hold Sunday morning services in the auditorium of Vine Middle Magnet School. We soon discovered that God would commune with us even in a school auditorium. By Mother's Day the sanctuary was suitable for worship though there was still work to be done, we were so happy to be back home. in the comfort of our own church.

In the process of making repairs, we also learned that the ramp would have to be repaired. This meant that those with the most physical challenges still would not be able to attend services in the sanctuary. God so blessed us that we only had one funeral without access to the ramp. The faithful brothers of this church blended their muscles together to carry that body up and down the stairs. We learned what we could do when we all work together. God birthed a vision out of this challenge, we began to dream of adding a family life center with additional classrooms and gymnasium with increased dining facilities. We now have the blue prints for this vision with a conceptual drawing soon to follow. We are trusting God to provide the needed resources through his people. Improvements were also made in the parking lot as well as the H. J. Bailey fellowship hall. A new industrial stove/oven was purchased for the kitchen.

God also blessed the efforts of our Women's Fellowship during the month of August. There was a tremendous move of God on Friday night August 18th when over 250 people filled our sanctuary to sing and dance praises unto God under the banner Freedom to Praise. The crowd never diminished even as the program lasted into the late hours. On Saturday there was a Freedom to Live luncheon led by Sister Betty Blackmon and Sunday concluded the weekend with the Freedom to Worship service, with Rev. Vivian Hill preaching. Out of this effort was

born the Payne Avenue Baptist Church Women's Chorus. This group of spirit-filled women has already represented our church well in their service within our community.

Mens Day was also a success as we witness the impact of men taking a stand for God. We learned that our brothers could sing as the Male Chorus ministered on that Sunday morning. Rev. Darius Waters challenged us to decrease as we allow the Lord to increase in our lives.

Bro. Charles Kirkpatrick stated that the Trustee Board completed the purchase of a new organ on December 19, 2000, which was installed on December 21, 2000.

In an effort to support ministry beyond the walls, a recommendation was made and approved by the Church to donate \$100 per month, to begin Jan. 1, 2001, to the Mechanicsville Medical Clinic for financial support toward operational expenses. By April 2001, sealing and stripping of the parking lot was completed and members were asked to observe the designated handicap parking spaces. Delivery of the 14-passenger Glaval Bus was completed in August 2001.

In 2001, a new ministry was started to provide support for the single mothers. It's called MOMS (Mothers Offering Mutual Support). This has proven to be a very fruitful ministry. As a result of our Brotherhood participating in a men's retreat at Cedine Bible Camp, we were also blessed to see a conference designed especially for males both young and old. It was called Super Saints Saturday. This event included classes for all ages of males in the morning and in the afternoon we praised God outside in the parking lot allowing his praises to ring all over our community. This was a great time of information as well as Godly inspiration. The annual women's conference was again a blessing in 2001.

As we began the year 2002, our Trustee Board informed us that we had reached beyond the projected goal for the budgeted year of 2001. We praised God for the faithfulness of his people in tithes and offerings. In February we celebrated Black History month in grand style. The Honorable Roland Dykes and first African American to become Mayor in Newport, Tennessee was our Keynote speaker. In April the Trustee Board received an estimate from Abstract Security to install a Church-owned system. This estimate included a cellular up-link that will provide full coverage in the event the standard phone lines are disabled. It was recommended by the Trustees that this proposal from Abstract Security be accepted.

In the year of 2003, still under the pastorate of Reverend Richard S. Brown, Jr., along with Reverend Isaiah Blackman, our Associate Minister, we were truly blessed. Our faith grew and our charity toward each other abounded as we continued to glory in God and His word. Our accomplishments included:

*Establishing a Parish Nurse who is available during Sunday Morning services.

The Nursery for ages infant through five years of age has reopened.

Audio and video equipment have been placed in the Library so that our disabled members who have difficulty attending the services in the Sanctuary can also experience the Worship Service.

*A new sign has been purchased and installed in the front of the church for advertising the programs and activities of the church.

*A new roof was installed and new kitchen equipment was purchased.

Both the Brotherhood and Women's Fellowship sent representatives to the Men and Women's Retreat held annually at Cedine Bible Camp in Spring City, Tennessee.

The church accompanied Pastor Brown to worship in Birmingham, Alabama; the Youth Choir provided the music.

*The Brotherhood again sponsored Super Saints Saturday, a glorious time of fun and fellowship among the members and churches.

*Our youth and pantomime groups have continued to grow and have participated in many activities in the district.

*Pastor Brown was honored with a birthday celebration.

*We have two new Deacons in training; they are Brothers Daryl Greene and Gary Montgomery

*A new Administrative Secretary was hired.

Approximately sixty new members have been added to our church roll through Christian experience and candidates for baptism.

Another year has passed and through the continued leadership of Pastor Richard S. Brown, Jr., God is still blessing the efforts of the various ministries and auxiliaries of our church in 2004. The homecoming theme: "Living, Lifting, and Loving for Christ", best expresses our spiritual perspectives toward Kingdom building. We are now blessed to have two Associate Ministers, Rev. Isaiah Blackman and Rev. Eugene Carter. Some highlights of this year include:

Brothers Daryl Green and Gary Montgomery, Sr. were ordained as deacons.

The Women and Brotherhood again attended retreats at Cedine; and twenty-four youth attended Cedine Bible Camp for the first time.

The book, "The Fruit of the Spirit" was published, containing articles written by our Youth.

*Off-site Leadership Conference produced a list of initiatives that the church will work toward implementing. A committee has been formed to publish a church handbook.

*The Youth attended Winterfest and Youth Explosion, which were held in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee.

*A security officer was added, and cameras were installed to make the church premises safer.

*The Women's Chorus suffered the loss of two of its members: Sisters Edwina Achoe and Jacquelyn Brown.

*Various choir members participated in the Knoxville District Choir Workshop, conducted by Dr. Ronald Terry of Macon, Georgia who is the Music Department Director of the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A.

*A set of drums was purchased for the music department.

*New furniture was purchased for the youth Sunday School classes.

*For the first time, the youth pantomime group participated in the March for Jesus.

*A fellowship social was held to highlight the work of the church ministries.

*The seminar, "Who Moved My Cheese" was held in the Bailey Wing.

*We realigned ourselves with the National Education Congress, held in Memphis, Tennessee, sending 5 delegates.

*Rev. Coleman Crawford of Memphis and Rev. Wayne Johnson of Chattanooga led revivals.

*The most worthy of all is how God has continued to add to our membership, 18 new members joined.

In 2005 and since our last homecoming celebration, we have continued to experience the greatness of our Savior's blessings as we continue:

- *A new Administrative Assistant was hired
- *Seven delegates attended the National Baptist congress in Houston, Texas
- *We partnered with other area churches to build a Habitat Home on Houston Street
- *We extended our territory with the purchase of two lots on Houston Street
- *2005 Leadership Retreat in Pigeon Forge
- *New Members Ministry was formed to provide comfort and support to new members
- *Broadcast Morning Service on WRJZ 620 AM, Joy 62 Today's Church □
- *Community Partnership Training Seminar in conjunction with the Knoxville Police Department and the Law Enforcement Innovation Center to enhance communication and trust between law enforcement and citizens
- *Christian Soldiers Academy was created to serve the growing needs of the boys of Payne Avenue and community
- *The Children's choir lost their pianist, Sis. Flenora Strong who went home to be with our Lord.
- *God's Blossom was formed to prepare young girls to become spiritual mature Christian young ladies.

In the year of 2006 since our last homecoming celebration, we have continued to experience the goodness of our Lord as we have sought to A.R.I.S.E. for the glory of God. Accountability, Responsibility, Instruction, Structure and Edification. We are seeking to develop duty description for every ministry along with applying the mission statement to ascertain how each ministry supports the mission statement. As we welcome new members into our congregation, we are also seeking ways to equip the saints for the work of the Ministry.

- *The Payne Avenue News letter was printed
- A powerful Women's Conference was held, theme: "Can You Hear Me Now"
- *A weekend of appreciation was held for our Pastor, R. S., Brown, Jr. and family, marking nine years of service
- *We bid farewell to one of our oldest members, Deacon Hughlett Scandrick (97)
- *Christmas Day 2005 fell on a Sunday. Our Christmas Service lead by our youth was a powerful spirit-filled service
- *We thank God for adding to our associate ministers, Minister Elonda wood and retired pastor W. H. Hawkins
- *A successful VBS Set Sail with Jesus
- *The Gods' Blossoms and the Christian Soldiers Academy came together to celebrate a successful year of ministry
- *Our new Male Chorus lead the church in song on Father's Day

We are thankful to God for Pastor Brown and all of the great pastors who accepted His calling to lead this church. We are also grateful for Reverend Blackman, Rev. Carter, other associates, the interims, and other visiting ministers who have served. It has only been through faith in God's preached Word and their inspirational leadership that we have realized what faith in God's Word can do. Through it all, we continue to persevere.

Church History Update July 2006 through July 2007

In this year of 2007, since our last homecoming celebration, we have continued to experience the blessings of God upon his people. Christ continues to purge and prune his branch so that it may bear more fruit. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. (Johns 15:2) I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. John 15:5 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. I John 15:8, The process is fruit, more fruit and finally much fruit. We the members of Payne Avenue Baptist Church desire to bear much fruit for the kingdom of Christ. We are moving through transition to transformation as we strive to take a stand for Jesus Christ. We praise God for the continued relationship between Pastor and parishioners. Under the guidance of Pastor R. S. Brown, the Holy Spirit has stirred this congregation to reach new heights. We praise God for the many souls that he has added to this fellowship both through baptism and Christian experience. A financial audit was completed so that we might make improvements to our recording of transaction and to ensure the accuracy of our reports.

*We celebrated a successful VBS

*God blessed both our spring and fall revivals

*We added to our associate ministers Minister Dorothy Johnson who also was hired as our administrative assistant.

*We praise God for Brother Anthony Rodgers who announced his call to the ministry.

*We bid farewell to one of our oldest members Sister Beatrice Penson (94)

*During the ~07 TBM&E Congress, Payne Avenue had the second highest number in registration and participation.

All our choirs sang together in mass for several engagements.

*The Men Conference (Super Saints Saturday) was held again.

*We enjoyed having watch night service with the Freedom Fellowship Church and Pastor Wakefield.

*We held another fellowship social providing members an opportunity to become informed and sign up in the various ministries of the church.

*We helped to sponsor Brother Byron Bell for a mission trip to Africa

We bow in humble submission to the will of God as we bid farewell to the beloved members of this congregation who have preceded us into that eternal rest. Their memories are deep in our hearts and minds. We thank God for their contributions to this church and the kingdom of God. We remember them in our midst, hand-in hand, pressing towards the mark of the higher calling in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We remember them for their noble lives, lovable dispositions, and spiritual fellowship.

In the song "Onward Christian Soldiers," 'we find words that depict our passion. Like a mighty army moves the church of God, brothers we are treading where the saints have trod. We are not divided All one body, one in hope, and doctrine, One in charity'.

Church History Update July 2007 through July 2008

One of our cherished songs of old opens with a verse that says God has smiled on me. He has set me free. God has smiled on me; He's been good to me. These words certainly express the praise

of the Payne Avenue Baptist Church family as we reflect upon the activity of God among his people. Thru many dangers toils and snares we have already come and grace will lead us on. We praise God for the fellowship of the believers that God has continued to enhance by adding souls along with the abiding presence of his Holy Spirit. The Payne Avenue Baptist Church has continued to pursue the mission of the master through spreading the gospel and the making of disciples. One can sense the transformation as we bridge the gap between the old and the new. Isaiah 43:19 states "Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert."

During this year, we celebrated the following:

- *We continued our Watch night fellowship with the Freedom Fellowship Christian Church as we journeyed there for our New Year's Eve service.
- *Traveled to Harlan Kentucky to worship with Pastor Clarence Hall and the first Baptist Church. Rev. Hall is a son of Payne Ave. Baptist Church
- *Rev. Willie Paul was the preacher for our fall revival
- *The Youth lead us in an exceptional Christmas drama; many souls were touched.
- *We supported Sarah Moore Greene School as well as Austin East project grad program
- *We shared gifts through the angel tree project and the shoe box ministry
- *Refurbished basement of sanctuary with new carpet and paint throughout including the library area.
- *Refurbished the nursery with new carpet and paint
- *Enlarged the finance room
- *Painted the fellowship hall
- *Placed new carpet in all class rooms
- *Placed new carpet in the Administration area along with a new coat of paint
- *Updated the Pastor's study with new paint and wall boarder, along with new furniture

In the midst of our joys and celebration, we also tasted a measure of sorrow as we bid farewell to our precious members who were called from labor to reward since our last homecoming celebration. We know that one day we will have another gathering beyond this land of shadows and sin in that land where we will never grow old.

In the song, "Don't Feel Noways Tired," we find words that express our passion which gives power to our purpose. We don't feel noways tired. We've come too far from where we started from. Nobody told us that the road would be easy, but we don't believe the Lord brought us this far to leave us. Therefore we endeavor to Serve the Lord with Gladness.

For more information about our church, please feel free to contact us by emailing us at payneave@bellsouth.net.