

CHURCH PROFILE



Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Institutional Church, Inc.
535 West Washington Street; Orlando, Florida 32801

DATE OF FOUNDING: 1880

DATE OF INCORPORATION: 1952

MISSION:

The mission of this church program is to maintain and operate a Missionary Baptist Institutional Church with a spiritual program consisting of:

- (1) Preaching the gospel and teaching the doctrines of Jesus Christ;
- (2) Developing the spiritual life of the individual member to be reflected in the home, church and community;
- (3) Supporting "missions" and "education" with a view towards sending the gospel throughout the world;
- (4) Promoting Christian fellowship wherever possible in order to carry out the mission of the church;
- (5) Participating in civic and community affairs for the benefit and development of humanity; and
- (6) Providing worthy programs in cooperation with Christian and charitable agencies beyond the sum of its services and organizations.

(from Mt. Zion Church By-Laws and Articles of Incorporation, revised, 1995)

MOTTO:

The Church Where Everybody is Somebody and Christ is Supreme

LOCALE:

Mount Zion Church is situated in the Parramore Neighborhood, an historic African American community in the city of Orlando, Florida. The church property borders the western edge of downtown Orlando and is within walking distance of the re-established Florida A & M University Law School (2005), the recently-opened new sports arena and the site of the soon-to-be-built new performing arts center. While in close proximity to new and proposed modern development projects, the immediate environs of the church are prime targets for substantive improvements.

BRIEF HISTORY:

Founded in April 1880, Mount Zion is the oldest known black church in Orlando. In recognition of its longevity, its landmark architectural style, and its valuable contributions to the community, Mt. Zion was officially designated as an historic place in the state of Florida in 2008.

Rev. C. J. Scott, the founding pastor, moved from Gainesville to Orlando about 1880 and organized the church shortly thereafter. The eight founding families originally worshipped in a “bush arbor,” a shelter built with small logs and covered with shrubbery to protect the congregation from the elements. The church’s first formal sanctuary was built on the corner of Robinson and Chatham Street. In 1910, under the leadership of Rev. H.K. Hill, Mt. Zion moved to “the old wooden church” at Chatham and Washington streets. There, the growing number of congregants worshipped and became increasingly involved in Orlando’s African American community. Mt. Zion also developed an active interest in missions through its affiliation with the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. The Department of Religious Education (now the Board of Christian Education) was established about 1930.

In 1946, Rev. N.G. Staggers began a 25-year tenure as pastor. Among the accomplishments during his pastorate were the hiring of a full-time church secretary, active involvement in the local civil rights cause, and the building of the current three-story brick church structure, a property now valued at more than 1.5 million dollars. (The original mortgage was paid off in 20 years.) Rev. Henry Marion Steele became pastor in 1978. He led the church to join the American Baptist Churches, USA in 1981. This affiliation enabled the church to provide medical and retirement benefits for all church staff at reasonable rates. Mt. Zion remains dually aligned with National Baptist and American Baptist organizations, with members having held many leadership roles within the denomination.

Over the years, Mt. Zion has enjoyed the dedicated service and visionary leadership of 14 pastors. At its peak, the membership was 1,200 congregants who with clergy and lay leaders forged the church into a stellar example of God’s faithful witness in the world today. Mission work and educational ministries continue to be pillars of the church, as does involvement in efforts to effect change in the community. Mt. Zion resolves to remain steadfast in preaching and teaching the doctrine of Jesus Christ and in fostering

spiritual growth and nurture both inside and outside its walls. While rejoicing in its proud legacy of 130 plus years, M. Zion looks forward to a future in which it will respond with vision to the challenges of being a people of faith in the 21st century.

CURRENT PROGRAMS, SERVICES, MINISTRIES:

Mt. Zion offers a full-range of weekday activities and Sunday worship experiences. Following are the primary ways in which it seeks to fulfill its mission in the world.

Worship

- Mid-morning Sunday worship
- Mid-week prayer service
- Deacons/Deaconess Ministry
- Trustees Ministry
- Choirs (Adult Gospel, Male Chorus, Young Adult)
- Ushers (Adult, Youth)
- Hospitality
- Liturgical Dance (Youth)

Education

- Sunday School
- Bible Institute at Zion (afternoon and evening Bible studies)
- Annual Vacation Bible School
- Children & Youth Ministry
- Young Adult Ministry
- Golden Years Ministry
- New Members Orientation/Sheepfold Ministry
- Workshops, seminars
- Library/Resource Center
- Black History Month and other special observances

Missions/Outreach

- Fresh Start Feeding Program
- Federation of Congregations United to Serve (FOCUS)
- Monthly Clothing Giveaway
- Monthly Ministry to Homeless
- American Baptist Missions Giving Program
- Specific Support to Missionary in Africa

ADMINISTRATIVE/ OPERATIONS

- Full-time Secretary
- Church clerk
- Church treasurer
- Transportation Ministry
- Culinary Ministry

ANNUAL CHURCH BUDGET

- \$275,000 (2010)

CONGREGATION DEMOGRAPHICS:

- Active membership – 170
- Gender – 33% Male; 67% Female
- Age – 72% age 56 and above; 11% under age of 30
- Race – 99% Black
- Highest Education Level – 78% with some college education
- Employment Status – 56% Retired; 36% working full or part-time
- Employment Category – 50% white collar workers (22% professional; 21 % teachers; 7% managers)
- Annual Household Income – 70% less than \$45,000
- Household Type – 42% married; 20% live alone; 16% single parents
- Years at Mt. Zion – 73% member for 20 years or more; 6% member for 5 years or less
- Distance between home and church – 40% live within 5 miles of church; 60% live more than 5 miles from church.