

Mt Olivet Baptist Church History

1882-2023

The chief interest in history lies in the fact that it is not finished yet. Since this is true, then I shall attempt to give you a summary of the early and late progress of our church, The Mount Olivet Baptist Church located on 41-57 Stewart Avenue, Uniontown, Pennsylvania. Mount Olivet is the 1st Black Baptist Church formed in the city of Uniontown, Pennsylvania. The Mother Church of the Youghiogheny Western Baptist Association. The Mount Olivet Baptist Church, Uniontown, Pennsylvania was organized May 28, 1882, by the late Reverend Thomas H. Ford, D.D. The organization of the church was the result of the desire of a few Baptist believers who located in Uniontown and were eager to have a branch of their faith and doctrine properly organized for Christian activity. The Reverend Thomas Labarre, pastor of the Great Bethel Baptist Church of Uniontown at that time assisted in the organization. Rev. Ford served as the first Pastor from the time of organization until 1887.

Under the pastorate of Reverend Ford, a small frame house of worship was erected on the present location; the cornerstone of the original building was laid by the Reverend Reynolds and the Reverend Stevens. The Trustees and members of the organization, desired that they and their associated be duly incorporated into a body applied for a certificate of incorporation in June 1883. After proper examination of the application, it was approved and a Charter was granted on September 19, 1883, by Alpheus E. Wilson, President Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Fayette County, Pennsylvania. The following persons representing the Church applied for the Charter: Scott Trent, Titus Herrington, George Betts, Walter Stanton, Daniel R. Buckner and John H. Young. They were the original board of Trustees. The Charter was recorded, September 16, 1884, and can be found in the Recorder's Office of Fayette County in Agreement Book, NO.5 Page 187.

Scott Trent was the first Chairman of the Deacon Board. Other Deacons were, George Pendleton, Daniel Buckner, Daniel Johnson, George Betts, Titus Herrington and Walter Stanton. Julius Crosby was the first Church Clerk. The corporate name of the Church was the Mount Olivet Colored Regular Baptist Church of Uniontown. It called for a board of six Trustees to be elected annually by the members of the corporation.

The congregation was still continuing its worship in the frame building when the late Reverend P.H. Thompson, D.D. was called as the second Pastor of the Church in 1887. Prior to this call, Reverend Thompson was pastoring in Virginia when he took charge of Mount Olivet. The membership was small, but this small group rallied to his support and

the membership grew. The small frame structure was done away with and a brick building was erected in the year of 1892. The cornerstone of the brick building was laid by Reverend R. Johnson D.D., Pastor of Metropolitan Baptist Church, Washington, D.C. and the Reverend H.F.King, Pastor of the Great Bethel Baptist Church, Uniontown, Pennsylvania. The structure was erected at a cost of \$15,000. The final payment was made in August 1915 and the mortgage was burned on November 28, 1915 amidst much praising and thankfulness to God, because He had enabled us to liquidate the debt.

It was in this Church in 1904 that the Youghiogheny Western Baptist Association and the Youghiogheny Western Baptist Sunday School Convention were organized in 1904. The Southwestern District Congress of Christian Education was also organized in this church.

The late Reverend Thomas was a powerful gospel preacher and race leader in his time. He served as Pastor of Mount Olivet for thirty-seven years. Under his pastorate, Mount Olivet grew by leaps and bounds and stood out preeminently as the most outstanding Baptist Church in Southwestern Pennsylvania. He was vitally interested in Missions and Education. These two objectives he always kept before his congregation and also before the Y.W.B.A. He presided as Moderator of the Y.W.B.A., from 1913 until time of his death on January 12, 1925.

The church was without a pastor for nine months. Reverend William A. Nowlin, D.D. was called and accepted, taking full charge on the first Sunday, October 1925. A graduate of Virginia Theological Seminary and College, he was an eloquent and spiritual preacher as well as a wonderful songster. As well as being the pastor of Mount Olivet Baptist Church, he served as Corresponding Secretary and Chorister. He resigned on October 1, 1931, to accept a call to Emmanuel Baptist Church, Rankin, Pennsylvania, later going on to pastor in Norristown, Pennsylvania serving 25 years until his death.

After 14 months, without a pastor, Reverend N.J. West, former pastor of Mount Olivet Baptist Church in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, accepted our call and took full charge on the first Sunday in December 1932. During his pastorate here, our church building was partially destroyed by fire which was an unknown origin. On several previous occasions the Church had been damaged by fire, but this was the worst in the church's history and it was the first time since the organization of the church that it was without a real Church Home. Through the providence of the Almighty we were able to secure quarters for worship in the Uniontown High School Auditorium and the Grand Terrace Hall owned by Mr. Bradford Carter. Mr. Carter granted us the use of his building without charge for light or heat – a very charitable and commendable act. In spite of all handicaps that confronted the church in the rebuilding program, prayer, perseverance and hard work on the part of the faithful members and friends, God made Himself manifest and the church building was

reconstructed at a cost of \$18,000. The church resumed worship in the building on November 21, 1943, although at that time it was fully completed and finished. The last payment for the restoration of the building was made March 22, 1945. Reverend West continued to serve until his passing August 16, 1952, having served 19 years.

The Church was again without a pastor for a period of nine months after which time Reverend J.T. Laster called. Former Pastor in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania and Asheville, North Carolina. He took charge on the first Sunday in June 1953. Reverend Laster planned the dedication of our Parsonage at 7 East Street, which was purchased by church on August 18, 1958.

The Church was without a pastor from August 18, 1958, until July 1, 1960, a period of one year and ten months. After much prayer, thought and meditation, the church called the Reverend Walter L. Williams, Assistant Pastor of Siloam Baptist Church, Norristown, Pennsylvania. Reverend Williams served with dignity and capably united our forces for a period of 3 years. He was called to pastor Union Baptist Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The Church struggled along without a pastor for a year. During that year the church liquidated a second mortgage and the mortgage burning services were held May 3, 1964, officiated by Reverend James Thompson of Washington, D.C. On January 14, 1954, we lost William Stockton who had labored so faithfully with us for a number of years.

The church extended a call to the Rev. E.E. Calloway, of Columbus, Ohio. He began his pastorate on July 5, 1964. After he served for a short period of two years, he ended his services on August 26, 1966.

After a year and four months the church called Reverend William A. Sawyer. He began his pastorate on the first Sunday in January 1968. Reverend Sawyer was the former pastor of Faith Baptist Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Under his leadership the church was remodeled, with the addition of another choir box and new seating arrangement with the new pews. The Sanctuary was painted and the entrance was beautified with new glass doors and carpeting for the Sanctuary. The Gospel Chorus was reorganized and The Kevin Michael Sawyer Memorial Choir was formed in April of 1971. On August 2, 1973, Mrs. Effie Johnson, last of the charter members passed away. In August of 1974, the final payment was made on our pews; new furnace was installed in the parsonage and the rear house. Later a gas furnace was installed in the church and new carpeting for the sanctuary. The dining room was remodeled with paneling. The dedication service for these improvements was held April 1, 1978. On Sunday, April 23, 1978, Reverend Sawyer preached his farewell sermon after resigning. The church moved on, a new sidewalk was laid outside adding to the beauty of the church.

On May 31, 1979, the church voted to call Reverend Kaiser W. Jones, Jr. to be the pastor. He took charge on July 1, 1979. He was ordained into the Baptist Ministry on

Saturday, August 11, 1979 at St. Paul Baptist Church, Donora, Pennsylvania by Reverend J. O'Neal, the pastor in charge. His installation was held on October 7, 1979. Many were baptized, a Male Chorus and the Mass Choir were added to the singing groups, and a new piano was purchased. The rear house was remodeled and the remodeling of the sanctuary was started. Reverend Jones resigned in July of 1985 and was called to pastor of Union Baptist Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The remodeling of the church continued with the entrance hall being beautified and windows were stained.

After two years, the church calls Reverend Ernest Abrams, Jr. as the pastor. He was installed on September 27, 1987, by his father Reverend Ernest Abrams, Sr. of Detroit, Michigan. Reverend Abrams served for about two and half years. He resigned in March 1990. Our church service was led by the Chairman of the Deacon Board, Vincent L. Winfrey, Sr.

The final debt of the mortgage was then paid off.

After much prayer for a leader, May 17, 1992, Deacon Vincent L. Winfrey, Sr., announced to Mount Olivet his divine calling to preach God's Word. The church body was in agreement to grant a license to Deacon Winfrey on June 4, 1992, he preached his trial sermon on June 27, 1992.

Reverend Robert A. Crable, Pastor of Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in Fairchance, Pennsylvania, was in charge. Deacon Winfrey's sermon topic was "There is a Sickness, But there is a Doctor in the House." The text was taken from Jeremiah 8:15-22. He preached like he had been preaching for years. He stirred everyone's hearts. There were in attendance 29 Men and 3 Women totaling 32 Ministers and 10 Deacons. On January 6, 1993 the church body decided to make plans and set the date for ordination services for Minister Winfrey. He was ordained by the counsel and Ordination Services were held on January 23, 1993 at the Mount Olivet Baptist Church, Reverend Wilbur Hubbard from Monessen, Pennsylvania preached the ordination sermon.

Mount Olivet selected Reverend Vincent L. Winfrey, Sr. to be pastor and the Installation Services were held March 7, 1993. The sermon was preached by Robert A. Crable of Mount Calvary Baptist Church, Fairchance, Pennsylvania.

Pastor Winfrey became the 11th pastor in the history of Mount Olivet. Through his tenure Mount Olivet has grown through many leaps and bounds. Many ministries have been birthed and many people have been blessed. Pastor Winfrey formed a Praise Team during his early years as pastor. In the history of Mount Olivet, he has also buried, baptized, christened, married and offered salvation to many.

On April 18, 1998, Albert Winfrey was licensed and Rev. Marvin Harris was licensed on February 12, 2000; they both were ordained to preach the gospel on March 8, 2000;

Late Evangelist Lisa Winfrey was licensed on April 29, 2000 and Minister Vincent L. Winfrey, Jr. was licensed on December 3, 2005.

Pastor Winfrey led the church with the support of his members in making many additions and renovations to the church. These changes include: central air, a new computer room with a new copier a Laptop and desk computer. A New PA system, new drums, new refrigerator, new van, new bathrooms, new roof, a new look to the sanctuary including purchasing new carpeting for the sanctuary, ramp and the vestibule, also new pews for the sanctuary. The church has acquired the deed for the property housing our van. We have also purchased air condition for the basement.

In June of 2003, Pastor Winfrey formed an 8AM Service that is continuing to prosper as many attend 8AM & 11AM services. Mount. Olivet Formed its 1st Children & Youth Conference on August 5, 2005. The Mount Olivet Nursery was formed on May 27, 2007. In June of 2010, Pastor Winfrey started a 4:30AM Prayer on Tuesday & Thursday's called "Morning Glory".

On August 25, 2007, 1st Lady Marilyn Winfrey and Minister Natalie D. Winfrey were both licensed to preach the gospel. On October 25, 2008, Reverend Vincent L. Winfrey, Jr. was ordained, on November 20, 2010, Minister Melanie Lewellen was licensed to preach the gospel; On September 24, 2011, Michael Jones & Late Curt Tollar were ordained as Deacons and on November 18, 2014, Minister Wendell Bates licensed to preach to preach the gospel.

After a lot of prayer and consideration, Pastor Vincent L. Winfrey met with the Officers and Members of Mt. Olivet Baptist church with unanimous vote the church decided to build a new edifice. The last service was held on Sunday, August 30, 2016. On Tuesday September 1, 2015 the top of the build was tore off. Tuesday, September 22, 2015 at 6:30am the old structure of the Mt Olivet Baptist church was demolished by the City of Uniontown; A Ground Breaking Ceremony was held on Tuesday, October 6. 2015 at 4PM, in attendance included: Pastor Vincent L. Winfrey, Sr. all Associate Ministers, Late Deacon Nathaniel Hodge, former Pastor Kaiser W. Jones, Jr, Rev. Clifford Carter President of the P.B.S.C. as well as several members of our congregation. On January 9, 2016, Minister Cherise L Curry, was licensed to preach the gospel & on January 16, 2016, Minister Asa Walters was licensed to preach the gospel.

On February 13, 2016, Reverend Dr. Delonte Reeves was ordained, on September 21, 2017, Reverend Kimberly Bates & Reverend Wendell Bates were ordained and on September 24, 2017, Minister Leslie T. Strader, Jr. was licensed to preach the gospel. On November 4, 2017 our Pastor was installed as the 23rd Moderator of the Youghiogheny Western Baptist Association & a proclamation was given by the city of Uniontown naming November 4th Reverend Vincent L. Winfrey, Sr. Day.

On July 28, 2018 at 10am, Pastor Vincent L. Winfrey along with other members began a march from Youghiogheny Western Baptist Association and met some of our Congregation and other constitutions, city officials & local pastors at Great Bethel Baptist Church, we marched and sang songs with a police escort and cars to the grounds of 51-57 Stewart Ave, Uniontown, PA followed by our ribbon cutting 11am conducted by Mark Rafail and the Uniontown Chamber of Commerce; 12noon a Block Party to conclude our festivities.

2020 was a year of RESET. LIVES were changed and will never be the same Our Media Team stepped in and took us to virtual level of virtual worship, like NEVER before.

On March 28, 2021, Minister Brishonna Winfrey was licensed to preach the gospel followed by Minister LaKeya Winfrey on May 23, 2021. Our Pastor was elected and won a seat on City Council, November of 2021.

Our Church has grown through leaps and bounds. We are excited about what God is doing in this season. Down through the years many souls have been enriched, physically & spiritually.

Current Deacons are, Warren Henderson, Michael Jones; Current Ministers include Reverend Vincent L. Winfrey, Jr, Youth Pastor; 1st Lady Marilyn Winfrey, Minister Natalie D. Winfrey, Minister Cherise L. Curry, Minister Asa Walters, Rev. Robert A. Crable & Rev. Lisa A Crable, Minister Brishonna Winfrey & Minister LaKeya Winfrey.

The church is blessed with four choirs: Kevin Michael Sawyer Memorial Youth Choir, New Direction Mass Choir and the Senior Choir; Three Mime Ministries: Free Spirit, Spiritual Inspirations & Trinity; A Flag Ministry, Visual Praise; A Senior & Junior Missionary Ministry, Nurses Ministry, Ushers Ministry, Adult, and Young Adult Tribe of Judah Praise Teams; A Intercessory Prayer Team; Sunday School, Nursery Ministry; SOURCE Children & Youth Ministry; Deaconess, Trustee, Finance Committee; Community Outreach Committee, Social Services & Media Ministries.

Pastor Winfrey in his years as Pastor has taken Mount Olivet to another dimension in its Praise & Worship. Mount Olivet is the IHOP (International House of Praise). We are the MOB = M.O.B., We are different, we are set apart, we have a Pastor who is anointed. This is a house who prays and where you can receive deliverance, salvation, breakthroughs, healing and miracles. Mount Olivet is blessed to be an interdenominational ministry serving all ages and races. We are continuing to follow out the vision given through the visionary that God has sent to this house. Down through 140 years; We Trust & Believe ALL Things Are Possible through Jesus Christ. We Follow Matthew 11:12.....**the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.**