

SAINT PAUL UNION AMERICAN M.E. CHURCH 1903

In the City of Wilmington, Delaware, in September, 1813, the Union American Methodist Episcopal Church was formed when Peter Spencer, a black minister, led 45 of his followers and formed a separate church after he and other black members were denied participation in the rites of the local Methodist Episcopal Church.

This denomination is separate from, and not to be confused with, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) denomination to which the Trinity and Mt. Zion Churches belong. The Union American Methodist Episcopal Church numbers approximately 500 churches in 1976.

In 1903 there was not a Union American Methodist Episcopal Church in Palmyra, but there were a goodly number of people who wanted such a church to be established. So, as has so often been the custom among men and women who are very much desirous of having a place in which to worship in their own fashion, these people offered one another the hospitality of their homes, and in this way they were able to meet for worship, fellowship, study, and prayer.

During this time, Bishop Jacob Ramsey was the presiding bishop, and he of course lent all the aid and support he could in the continuance of the effort.

In 1926, under the leadership of Reverend Ennis, the present property on Third Street, between Market and Arch Streets, in the Borough of Palmyra, was purchased. It is thought that this building housed an early mission established in West Palmyra about 1891 by the original Palmyra Methodist Episcopal Church congregation.

Those who were highly instrumental in the progress of the church and who also functioned as officers are remembered still by many of the currently active constituents. Though they have gone on to glory, they left behind fond memories and grateful hearts for the fullness of their service. We can only list a few . . . Mrs. Lizzie Handy, Mrs. Ella Garfield, Mrs. Cogna, Mrs. Martha Vincint, Mrs. Carroll Birkhead, Mr. Raymond Hilton, Mr. A. D. Daniels, Mr. Wallace Myers, Mrs. Emma Gale, Mr. John Pratt, Mrs. Mattie Stevenson, Mr. John Williams, Mrs. Helen Williams, Mrs. Bertha Flourney, Mr. George Farrow, Mrs. Anna Shockley, and Mrs. Beatrice Johnson.

Today, the Sunday School Department is under the direction of Mrs. Delores Roy. Each age group is offered instruction on Sunday morning in the fundamental Christian beliefs. The youth groups of the church lead many of the worship services . . . as a matter of fact, are completely in charge of the entire service on the second Sunday of every month.

For those who wish to offer their voices in song to the Lord and their fellow church members, there are two choirs currently active at St. Paul. The Adult Choir is under the direction of Mrs. Lillian Cherry, and the Youth Choir is led by Mrs. Helen Hunter. They alternate from Sunday to Sunday, or if it is convenient, they will occasionally both be heard at the same service.

The Missionary Society is another active wing of the life at St. Paul. It offers both spiritual and financial support to foreign and national missions and designates one Sunday of each month for special observation of missionary efforts.

The Reverend Milton D. Brooks began his pastorate of the church in 1967. Under his guidance and care it has continued to grow and serve the Lord and the people.

The current officers of the church are: Trustees — James L. Scott, Jr., President; George W. Cherry, Sr.; Francis Williams; Manuel Skinner; Moral L. Person, Sr.; Elmer Hinson; John Jones; and Ronald Hyman. The Church Treasurer is Mrs. Phyllis Scott. The Recording Secretary is Mrs. Janet Johnson. The Church Clerk is Mrs. Louise Vaughn. The Church School Superintendent is Mrs. Delores Roy, and the Church Editor is Mrs. Marva Jones.

There are many, many long time members at St. Paul who have been active in the church and whose services to their fellow Christians cannot be measured in words.

Mrs. Helen Skinner is one of these. She has been in the St. Paul Family for sixty-one years. Mrs. Kathryn Branch is another. Her years with the church number 59. Still another is Mrs. Ellen Davenport, who for fifty-five years has called St. Paul her spiritual home.

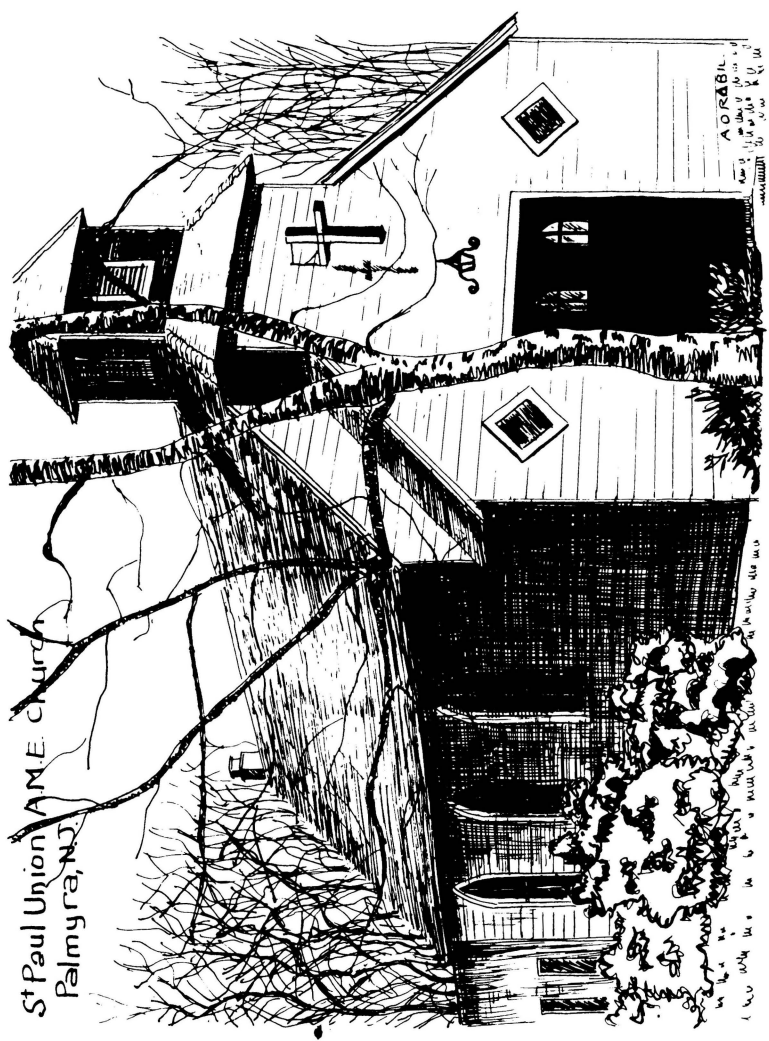
Three generations of one family active in the church is not uncommon. Mrs. Lucille Hinson is joined at worship by her son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Hinson; her daughter, Mrs. Maryanne Morris, and her granddaughter, Vida Hinson.

The Cherry family is still another that covers three generations. Mr. George Cherry, Sr., is the head of the family. His sons and their wives also attend St. Paul and bring along their children. This is indeed a family church which counts this continuation of membership from one generation to another to be a special blessing.

Whether it be at worship service, Sunday School, a fellowship get-together, Vacation Bible School, a special choir performance or whatever the reason for entering the doors at St. Paul, the feeling is always the same. Within this small structure, sturdy and simple in its design and appointment, all are welcomed, all are made to feel at home, all are seen as brothers and sisters in Christ.

The members of St. Paul give thanks for the opportunity to serve the Lord. The community gives thanks for the presence of this church and its people who show in their lives and faces the true joy of being centered in the Almighty.

We pray for this church and for all our churches, asking that the future be filled with wondrous blessings.



St Paul Union A.M.E. Church
Palmyra, NJ