

TRINITY A.M.E. CHURCH 1876

Trinity A.M.E. Church is not a big church physically or in membership. It is an old place of worship, having been founded prior to 1876. This church was originally known as The Free Gospel Church and was not a member of the A.M.E. Conference as it is today.

No matter what the name of the church it has always been an active place of worship, whose members gave of themselves and their worldly goods in full measure.

The records of the church are not very complete for the earliest days, but some of the names shown as being among the founders are: the Louis Ransome family, the Ferrells, the James Singers, the Harvey Pleasantons, and the S. Sanford family and the Deschields family.

The first minister was a Rev. Boaz.

In 1905 the pastor was the Rev. Charles H. Gibson and the church was now Trinity A.M.E. Church. The Rev. Gibson was the grandfather of Mrs. Maude Hamer who currently belongs to the Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church. Maude's mother and father were married by Rev. Gibson at Trinity A.M.E. in 1904. Her mother, Mrs. Olivia Gibson, is still living in the area in 1976 at age 93.

During the 1880's and later many of the parishioners of this congregation worked for various Quaker families in Riverton.

To the north of the church, along Fork Landing Road lies an old graveyard which is still used for burials in 1976.

Each minister who has served the church has brought to the fellowship of Christians his own special talents and over the years each has contributed significantly to its continuation and growth. The Rev. Franklin Jones is remembered particularly for the amount of actual physical work involved in improving the building and making the facility a more comfortable place for those who use it for worship and fellowship.

The Rev James Colby is remembered as one of those who put much effort into an attempt to get a Building Fund underway but he was not able to continue his ministry long enough to realize any result. He was followed by the Rev. John Banks who was able to secure the necessary funds through a bank loan — that was a real milestone for the people at Trinity. Sadly, Rev. Banks went to God for his eternal rest from his labors before the work could be done and he did not see his dream fulfilled.

It was during the years that Rev. Curtis Francis was ministering to the congregation that the work of renovating the building was actually begun. Once begun it continued and finally, during the time the Rev. Ernest Dostes was in the pulpit, the job of remodeling the interior of the church was completed.

It was a day of happy thanksgiving when the mortgage was burned in September, 1970. The Rev. Thomas Hayes, who was the pastor at that time, was also able to present to his constituency, the Rev. John D. Bright, Sr., the Bishop of the A.M.E. Conference. It was not only the time of the mortgage burning, it was the first time that the Bishop had ever visited the church.

The Sunday School Department at Trinity is under the superintendency of Mrs. Grace Harris who took on this job in August of 1975. The rolls list 15 boys and 12 girls as being currently in the classes where the young people are given their Christian education. The classes are held at ten on Sunday morning and this enables both students and teachers to attend worship services at 11 A.M.

The adult members also have opportunity to expand their knowledge. There is an Adult Bible Class Meeting every Wednesday night to study the scriptures and enjoy fellowship.

Trinity A.M.E. has an active Missionary Society. It lends both spiritual and financial support to foreign and national mission programs, and within its own congregation extends to anyone in need whatever aid is required to ease the way during times of sadness or grief, illness or temporary need.

The annual Woman's Day is a special time especially anticipated by the membership. This takes place on the fourth Sunday in March. Arrangements are made to have a woman speaker, and a full Sunday dinner with all the trimmings is served to all the worshipers by the women of the church.

There are two choirs that add their gift of song to the worship services. The Senior group alternates with the Junior group. Both are directed by Mr. Thomas Townes and the accompanist is Mrs. Jacqueline Southerland.

The Church Mother, appointed to this honor because she shows the qualities of spiritual and human virtues that represent Motherhood and womanhood at its best, is Mrs. Emily Johnson.

There are several families in the church that have three generations in regular attendance. Mrs. Mary Harris, her son Irving, and her grandchild are one of these families. Still another long time member, Mrs. Carrie J. Townes, attends as does her daughter, Mrs. Betty Collins and her grandson, Clifford Collins.

Mrs. Townes remembers walking to Sunday School when she was a little girl living on Parry Road in Cinnaminson. During that time, around 1920, the area around Fork-landing Road, where Trinity is located, was known as the Wrightstown section and it was a long hike to get to services. But as Mrs. Townes relates it, going to church was one of the major events of her week and she never minded the distance.

There are 45 members at Trinity A.M.E. in this Bicentennial year under the leadership of Rev. Maurice Hughes, Sr. Though the numbers are small, their faith and steadfastness gives them the might to meet the challenges of today's world with its uncertainties and problems as they seek to do the work of the Lord and to walk in the path of righteousness. They extend their love and concern for the well-being of all people and welcome the visitor as warmly as they greet the oldest and most trusted friend.

The Lord has used His people at Trinity in the past and is using them in the present. They will stand ready to be His Servant People in the future.

To enter into the Trinity A.M.E. Church building to worship with this congregation of believers is to realize that the Lord does tell us that "Wheresoever a few are gathered in My Name, there am I also." His presence in Trinity Church is a sure and blessed presence.

Trinity A.M.E. Church
Cinnaminson, N.J.

